

## DEALING WITH YOUR JOB INTERVIEW – VARIOUS SCENARIOS

One common complaint among job seekers is that they go on interview after interview and never receive a job offer. If you fit into this category, consider the possibility that you might be unknowingly sabotaging yourself by offering a weak interview performance.

Below are typical interview scenarios, common job-seeker mistakes and the best way to [manage](#) each situation.

**Scenario No. 1:** The interviewer came out swinging, asking tough but appropriate questions regarding a professional hiccup: your employment gap and job-hopping image. The question either left you stuttering with an incoherent message or sounding defensive because you were confrontational.

**What you should have said:** When the interviewer read your résumé, she knew about your job- search challenge and invited you in for an interview. As such, your hiccup wasn't a deal breaker, but a negative response could be one. Explain your situation without getting emotional or hotheaded by saying, "In the past I made the mistake of accepting a position based on salary alone. That mindset led to hopping from one job to another, because I was never completely satisfied. Now, I'm looking to work for a company where I'm compensated well and the company values complement mine."

**Scenario No. 2:** The interviewer asked, "Why should I hire you?" You listed strengths that align with the open position. Although there's nothing technically wrong with your response, you could have taken your answer a step further.

**What you should have said:** "That's a fair question. Instead of providing a canned response, I'd like to participate in an audition interview so you can see my work ethic firsthand." An audition interview is when you perform the tasks of the position as though you were hired. This way, the hiring manager can see your performance before extending an official job offer.

**Scenario No. 3:** "Why are you looking to leave your existing position?" is another typical question, one that you were expecting but weren't quite sure how to address. Your motive is grounded in bad feelings, and you blurt out, "My boss is out to get me. I'm tired of being looked over for promotions."

**What you should have said:** Honesty is always the best policy when answering interview questions. There is a difference, however, between shooting yourself in the foot and providing a straightforward response. If you're leaving a position because of office politics, the interviewer doesn't need to know the specifics. As a result, a neutral response such as, "I've advanced as far as I can with ABC Co. So I'm looking for a position where I can manage a larger territory and bring in lucrative accounts," works well because it's truthful without oversharing.

**Scenario No. 4:** Since the average person searches for a new job about every two years, the interviewer wanted to know how long you planned to stay with the company if hired. Not sure how to respond, you said, "Until retirement." At first blush, the response sounds like a good one, because you're making a commitment to the hiring organization. But the response comes off as brown-nosing and not entirely believable in today's environment.

**What you should have said:** Show your ambition alongside your dedication by saying, "I plan on staying on board as long as I'm contributing to the department and growing professionally."

**Scenario No. 5:** You committed an interview misstep by arriving late. Nervous, you rambled with a long excuse, bringing prolonged attention to your blunder.

**What you should have said:** Apologize and move on quickly. Extend your hands and say, "My apologies for my late arrival. I'm enthusiastic about the position and am looking forward to discussing how my accomplishments support the open requirements."

**Scenario No. 6:** Toward the end of the interview, you were given an opportunity to raise questions. You asked typical questions, such as, "How soon do you expect to make a decision?" but stopped short of asking for the job outright.

**What you should have said:** "Based on today's conversation, do you have any reservations about extending me a job offer? If the interviewer provides a reason for hesitation, resell your qualifications. If the interviewer says "no," respond with, "I'm interested in the position. Can I have the job?" You'll be surprised that many will hire you contingent on a referral check.

**Scenario No. 7:** At one point during the interview you were asked about your salary requirements. Based on advice you read over and over again, you throw back the question by asking, "What's the [budget](#) for the position?" Unfortunately, you did this one too many times, and the interviewer became irritated.

**What you should have said:** It's acceptable to avoid answering the salary question one or two times, but answer the question when asked a third time. You can provide a range by saying, "Based on the responsibilities of the job and my proven success in driving profits, I'm looking for compensation within the \$60,000 to \$75,000 range."

With the right responses, you can turn those awkward interview situations around and land the job you want.

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