INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Negative Interview Behavior
Introduction

Are you struggling to find a job? It could be your interview behavior. Having the skills and abilities for a job is important, but your personality and attitude are factors, too. Do not let your actions ruin an interview, sending your application to the bottom of the pile.
Don’t be late

First impressions are important, and you can’t take them back.

Arriving late to an interview sets you back, and it’s difficult to overcome. Always arrive early. Account for traffic, construction, and potentially getting lost. Map out the route ahead of time, and if possible, drive the route in advance to practice and find parking options.
Chewing gum during an interview can be both distracting and aggravating.

You want the interviewer to focus on your skills and abilities, not the scent of your gum. While it can be helpful to chew gum before the interview, be sure to throw it out prior to walking through the door.
Don’t lie

Lying will only get you so far before you are caught.

Interviewers want to hear real answers to get a sense of who you are. Don’t tell them what you think they want to hear. If it’s an important skill you don’t have, it might not be the job for you. It’s better to be open about your capabilities rather than wait for your employer to find out the truth.
Don’t be negative

Having a pessimistic attitude about a former job, boss, or experience isn’t something you want your interviewer to see.

Never speak ill of a former employer. Nobody wants to hire a person who talks poorly of a former employer, as companies don’t want to be talked about negatively in the future. If you’ve had a negative experience, find the positive aspects of it or focus on a different experience all together.
Don’t interrupt the interviewer

Be polite and wait until the interviewer completely finishes a thought before responding.

An interruption can be frustrating for the individual speaking. Not only is it impolite, but they could take the question in a different direction than you think. Allowing them to finish their thought also gives you more time to think about your answer.
Don’t forget about body language

How you present yourself can have a large impact on how you’re perceived.

Minimal eye contact and slouching can indicate a lack of confidence in yourself and your abilities. Having good posture and a positive presentation can provide a strong first impression. Also, don’t forget to speak up. It doesn’t do you any good if the interviewers can’t hear your answers.
“Never try to be someone you’re not, or answer a question the way you ‘think’ it should be answered. The best way to avoid this is to be honest. I promise it will help you and the potential employer to make a mutually beneficial decision on how to move forward.”

– Nick Pressley, senior project manager for Arrow Container

Appearing too eager to discuss pay and benefits can send the wrong impression.

While the proposed amount can affect your decision about the job, you don’t want to seem greedy. You should want the job, not the benefits. If you don’t get an offer, none of that will matter anyway.

Consider your conduct. If you’re getting interviews but not offers, your behavior could be hurting you. Reflect on your interviews and identify if you behaved in any way previously mentioned. When in doubt, ask a trustworthy friend or colleague to lead a mock interview and point out habits you might not notice.
More in the Interviewing Skills Series:

Etiquette to Impress | Preparing for the Interview | Sealing the Deal