

5 Red Flags to Avoid In a Job Interview

INTRO

Welcome to *The Workforce Link*, where we're offering forward thinking conversations for the workforce, linking employers and job seekers to a brighter tomorrow. I'm your host Sundi Jo Graham.

Job interviews can be a bit intimidating. Maybe your palms are getting sweaty right now just thinking about the process. I've been there.

But here's something you should be excited about. Sitting in front of the employer for an interview means you made it through one stage of the hiring process and that the employer feels you have what it takes on paper to go to the next level.

Now the question is... can you communicate the skills and experience you put in your resume or application in person? Sure you can.

On today's episode of *The Workforce Link Podcast*, we're going to talk about some red flags employers are looking for during job interviews, so that you can avoid them, be confident during the interview, and ultimately land the job.

REVIEW REMINDER

Before we dive into today's episode though, I have a question for you. Are you enjoying this podcast? If so, would you mind sharing it with a friend or co-worker who would enjoy it as well? Maybe you have a friend preparing for a job interview who could use some extra tips to make it go smoothly.

And if you haven't already, would you mind leaving a review for *The Workforce Link* wherever it is you enjoy listening? Let us know what you enjoy about the show. It means a lot to us, and it helps us stay visible so that others can easily find us.

PROMO - JOB CENTERS

And if you haven't already, go check out our Central Missouri Job Centers.

With 8 different locations throughout the Central Region, we have an excited staff waiting to assist you with all of your employment-related needs.

Columbia, Rolla, Jefferson City, Lebanon, Lake of the Ozarks, Fulton, and more!

Whether you're looking for employment, want to go back to school and earn an education, or you're an employer trying to find your next great team member, our Job Center staff can help!

Find your closest Job Center location today at cwdregion.com/jobcenters.

DISCUSSION

Alright.. Now let's dive into today's episode on the 5 red flags that may keep an employer from hiring you.

1) WHAT YOU'RE WEARING

What you wear into an interview matters. And it's often the first thing employers are paying attention to. If you walk in with a wrinkly shirt, holes in your jeans, and flip flops, how do you expect the employer to take you seriously?

Yes, there's the old saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover," but we've gotta be real here. Your book cover is going to be judged when you walk into that job interview, and if it smells like it's been sitting in a moldy basement for 10 years, no one wants to read it.

Dress for the part. Now, I'm not saying that you need to dress in a fancy suit if you're going to apply for a job as a mechanic, for example. But you can still look nice.

If you're applying for a position as a CNA, for example, don't be afraid to walk in there with some scrubs to show the employer you're ready to get to work. But make sure your scrubs look nice.

If the employer doesn't sense that you can be well-groomed to sell yourself for the job, they're probably not going to trust that you can do what's asked of you on the job. That's just the reality, especially if you're applying for a customer service-oriented position.

Remember, dress for the part.

2) LACK OF COMMUNICATION

Are you talking too much? Not saying enough? Mumbling when you answer questions? These are all red flags.

And communication doesn't just include talking. It includes your nonverbal behavior as well. Are you making eye contact? How's your body language? Don't sit with your arms crossed. Don't slouch in the chair.

Don't just answer questions with a "yes" or "no." Explain your answer, but don't write a book when you're doing so. If you can't communicate well in the interview, can they trust you to do so on the job? Again, especially if it's a customer-service job.

Be prepared to talk through your resume. For example, when the employer says, "Tell me more about...", you need to be ready to answer the question.

Remember, it's important for you to show the same skills in person that you said you had on paper.

3) SPEAKING NEGATIVELY ABOUT PREVIOUS OR CURRENT EMPLOYERS

This is big no no. If you go into the interview explaining why your boss is horrible and your co-workers are dumb, a red flag is going to pop up faster than you can say "workforce development."

First of all, it sets a negative tone for the interview. Secondly, it makes the employer question your character. What are you going to say to others about him/her if they hire you and things don't work out?

That doesn't mean you have to pretend everything was perfect at your previous job, or your current one, but remember that there is a time and place for everything. And the job interview isn't the time to disrespect others. You can be honest without being Negative Nancy.

So when you hear the question, “Why are you leaving your current job?” or “Why did you leave your previous position?”, be prepared to answer well. Give a positive response without lying or setting yourself up to create a negative atmosphere.

Here’s an example. Say you’re working in a retail position right now and your boss doesn’t acknowledge you, despite the fact that you show up early everyday, your sales reports are great, and there are never any complaints. You want to work at a place where you’re acknowledged for your hard work, so another retail opportunity comes up.

The employer asks, “Why are you leaving your current job?”, instead of saying, “My boss never acknowledges anything I do and I’m sick of it,” you could say something like, “I would love the opportunity to thrive in a positive work environment, and that can be very difficult in my current position. I believe that’s something your company can offer and I would love the chance to be a part of it.”

You didn’t lie. But you also didn’t drag your current boss through the mud. You painted a picture that the environment wasn’t ideal without disrespecting anyone.

PROMO - ELEVATOR PITCH

Before we continue with today’s episode, I want you to picture something.

Picture yourself standing behind the counter at the shoe store. A customer walks in and wants to buy the best pair of shoes you have. They want a quality product, but also want to save money. There’s another shoe store across the street having a huge sale, but the customer came to you first. You only have a few minutes to explain why the customer should buy your shoes vs. the shoes across the street.

You help the customer try the shoes on, all the while explaining the benefits of the cushioning, the upgraded technology, the comfort, and not to mention, how fantastic they look.

Think of your elevator pitch the same way when you’re in a job interview with a potential employer. Your elevator pitch is a brief explanation describing the benefits of buying a product – except YOU are that product!

An elevator pitch is one of the most important tools you have when applying for a job. When you position yourself with confidence, clearly summarizing your experience, your skills, your desirable characteristics, the employer is ready to listen.

Put in a nutshell, you're going to impress the employer.

We want to help! That's why we created *How to Create the Perfect Elevator Pitch*, a free guide with four proven simple steps that will help you wow your next employer!

You can download it for free at cwdregion.com/elevatorpitch

And now.... back to the show.

DISCUSSION CONTINUED...

4) MAKING IT ALL ABOUT THE MONEY

Of course money is an important factor when pursuing a job, but if you walk into the interview making that the top priority, it immediately puts a red flag in the air.

And if you bring it up too early in the interview, it looks just like that... that you're only interested in the money, not what you can actually bring to the position.

Try to make sure the employer brings up the money. Let them steer the conversation. If they don't, then bring it up at the end of the interview, but do so professionally. Don't say something like, "Well, how much does it pay?", or "Well, this is how much money I'm going to need to start?" Instead, ask, "Can we discuss salary details if you don't mind?"

Your goal shouldn't be to go in discussing the money. Your goal should be going in and making a great first impression. If you've done that, then the topic of salary will most likely be brought up without hesitation.

5) JUST FILLING A GAP

The last thing employers want to hear is that you're only taking this job until you find the next great opportunity. Onboarding a new employee is very costly, whether it's retail, corporate, fast food, etc. They want to make an investment in the right person.

Let me just be honest here.. Even if you are trying to take this job until you find something else, do NOT.. I repeat.. Do NOT tell the employer that. Just keep it to yourself. Unless the employer just blatantly asks you, then well.. Don't lie to them.

Try to avoid talking about how hard it's been trying to find a job.

Many, many years ago, I was between jobs and was getting pretty desperate. I had applied for an Office Manager position for a retail company, but I'd also applied for a job as a painter. The last thing I wanted to do was paint, but I needed a paycheck.

I interviewed for both and got a phone call one day. The guy asked me if I wanted to start on this day and I didn't catch the first part of the conversation where he said his name. I immediately said, "Is this for the painting job?" He laughed and said, "No, this is for the Office Manager position."

Now.. that worked out in my favor and my boss also made fun of me for it forever after that, but that wasn't an ideal answer.

The painting position was definitely something I only wanted temporarily until I could find something else, but I certainly wasn't going to say that in the interview. I needed a job! I don't think they ever called me for the job. My facial expressions probably spoke loudly that the last thing I wanted to do was paint houses.

Remember, non-verbal communication says a lot.

Show the employer that you are serious about this position. Show them that you're willing to invest, which makes them more willing to invest in you.

RECAP

Alright, let's do a quick recap of what we've gone over today on how to keep employers from having some red flags in the interview.

1. What you wear matters.
2. Communicate clearly.
3. Keep your answers regarding your current or former jobs positive.
4. Don't make it all about the money.
5. Be careful not to communicate that you're just interested in this job until you find something else.

Remember, that it's not just about what your experience and skills say on your resume or application. There are a lot of other factors that matter.

Good luck in your job search. And if you need some assistance with interview prep, we have some free workshops available for you at cwdregion.com/workshops.

CLOSING

That's it for today's episode.

Have a great week, my friend, and we'll meet again in the next episode. Until then..
Remember this... There's always a brighter tomorrow if you're willing to find it.

Links:

[Job Centers](#)

[Elevator Pitch](#)

[Interview Workshops](#)