1. **Showing up late**. Be sure to allow yourself ample time to get to your interview. You must factor in unexpected circumstances, such as train delays or heavy traffic. If you know you're going to be late, call to let your interviewer know.
2. **Being unprepared to describe your experiences**. An interview is a test—and you should never walk into a test unprepared. Take some time to prepare your rehearsed responses, and think about how you will handle the questions your interviewer might ask. Practice describing your experiences aloud or conduct practice interviews with a partner.
3. **Answering questions with only a yes or no**. Your interviewer needs to get to know you, and he or she will be unable to do that if you don't volunteer information about yourself. Be sure to support your answers with examples.
4. **Fidgeting**. If you are tapping your foot, playing with a bracelet on your wrist, or constantly shifting in your seat, you won't look professional. And if you don't look professional, you won't get hired.
5. **Speaking too quickly**. You may want to get in a lot of information, but you don't want to speak so fast that your interviewer can't understand you. Take a deep breath before you begin answering questions and slow yourself down. Conduct practice interviews with a friend to make sure that your speaking voice is steady and even.
6. **Avoiding eye contact**. If you avoid making eye contact, you will be unable to establish a personal connection with your interviewer. You should be attentive and engaged in what your interviewer is saying.
7. **Not researching the company**. Q: "What do you know about our firm?" A: "Uh . . . not much." Answers like this will not get you hired.
8. **Lying**. Don't lie about or embellish your job experiences or academic record. Your interviewer is going to check these things out. If an interviewer catches you lying, you won't be hired. If your employer finds out about your misrepresentation after you've been hired, you will be fired—it's as simple as that.
9. **Not answering the question asked**. You want to highlight your experiences in the interview, but you should be careful to always answer the question being asked. Don't be so intent on launching into a great story about you that you avoid the question altogether—your interviewer will notice.
10. **Revealing too much**. Your interviewer is neither your best friend nor your therapist. She wants to learn about the skills and qualities you will bring to a job. She does not want to hear about your personal life or problems.
11. **Not "selling" yourself when you answer questions**. You should answer questions in a way that brings out the qualities that will serve you on the job. If you are asked how your best friend would describe you, say something like, "I think my best friend would describe me as loyal and dependable. People always know that they can count on me."
12. **Speaking poorly of, or belittling, past job experiences**. Disparaging other employers or jobs will make you sound unprofessional, negative, and hostile. And it will make the interviewer wonder what you would say about his or her company to others. Try to focus on what you learned from other jobs.
13. **Dressing too casually**. Your interviewer wants to hire a responsible professional. Make sure you look like one.
14. **Not asking any questions about the company**. By asking some good questions, you will prove that you are very interested in the job—and that you were motivated enough to research the position and the company.
15. **Not thanking the interviewer at the end of the interview**. In the business world, a little courtesy goes a long way. Your interviewer will appreciate and notice your good manners.
16. **Forgetting to send a thank-you note**. Demonstrate your professionalism and courtesy by sending a note. You will also be more likely to stand out in your interviewer's mind if he or she has a reminder of the interview.
17. **Forgetting to bring extra resumes to the interview**. You may be asked for another copy of your resume, and you may have to submit an extra copy with any forms you have to fill out. Make sure that you are prepared.
18. **Neglecting to prepare a list of references**. Type up your references (with contact information) for your interviewer. He or she will not be interested in taking down all the names and numbers by hand, and it will be an inconvenience if you have to send the information at a later date.
19. **Forgetting the interviewer's name**. You should always bring a note pad (preferably in a professional leather portfolio) to an interview. Write down the interviewer's name if you think you won't be able to remember it. Thank the interviewer by name at the end of the interview.
20. **Going to an interview on an empty stomach**. You will feel more alert if you've had a nutritious meal, and you won't get hungry if the interview ends up lasting much longer than you had anticipated. And, of course, you won't have to worry about your stomach rumbling in the middle of a question.
21. **Using slang**. Nothing makes you sound more unprofessional than peppering your speech with like and y'know. If you can't speak like a professional, your interviewer will question whether he or she can trust you to interact with clients or supervisors.
22. **Chewing gum, eating, or smoking**. These are obvious no-nos.
23. **Answering your cell phone**. Turn off your cell phone before you get to the interview.
24. **Interrupting the interviewer or talking excessively**. Don't ramble or go off on tangents. You want to showcase yourself and give the interviewer a good sense of your accomplishments, but make sure you don't cut the interviewer off or preclude him or her from asking questions. He or she has limited time to speak with you.
25. **Freezing up**. Relax! It's only an interview. If you are well prepared, you should feel confident and stress-free. Smile and be yourself.