



p-TIPS

Interviewing productively (10 mistakes managers make)

One of managers' most important roles is hiring, and decisions on whom to offer a position can affect the productivity and profitability of the entire enterprise. Everyone recognizes when the wrong person is hired for a job, usually including the employee in question. How can bad hires be avoided? The staff writers of bnet (<http://www.bnet.com/>) offer a list of 10 common mistakes managers make during job interviews.

- 1) You talk too much. Give a concise company history, speak of its mission and goals, but don't go on about your own role, personal life, or feelings about the organization or colleagues. Concentrate on the candidate's ability to do the job.
- 2) You gossip or swap stories. Don't inquire about difficulties the interviewee's current employer may have or gossip about others in the industry. This wastes time.
- 3) You're afraid to ask tough questions. Don't be too friendly with someone you like or feel comfortable with. Ask everyone the same challenging questions. Also, an initially nervous applicant may shine when given an opportunity to demonstrate problem-solving ability.
- 4) You fall prey to the halo effect (or the horns effect). An elegantly dressed candidate who answers the first question satisfactorily may make a good first impression, but listen to all her answers before making a decision. The reverse may also hold: the mumblor with messy hair may be a genius in disguise.
- 5) You ask leading questions. Ask which software programs someone is familiar with, not "You're experienced with PhotoShop, aren't you?"
- 6) You invade their privacy. In many countries, it's illegal to ask personal questions. Focus on the job, not on home life, ethnic background, financial status, or club memberships.
- 7) You stress the candidate out. Some managers try high-pressure techniques to determine how an applicant will cope, but these don't really mimic workplace stress.
- 8) You cut it short. Plan interviews of about an hour to ensure that decisions are based on sufficient information.
- 9) You gravitate toward the center. If all applicants seem like possibilities, you're not getting enough information or assessing it accurately.
- 10) You rate candidates against each other. Use established criteria to evaluate each interviewee instead of comparing individuals.