



## **Nine Things Never to Say in a Job Interview**

By Charles Purdy, Monster Senior Editor

When you're searching for a job, landing an interview can feel like a huge success -- and it is, but for most open positions, the interview is only one step in a long hiring process. For some jobs, dozens of people may be interviewed, and the competition will be fierce. Don't take yourself out of the competition by saying one of these job-interview killers:

### **1. What sort of perks do you offer?**

Save talk about benefits and perks for the negotiation stage -- that is, after you've gotten a job offer -- or until the interviewer raises the issue. (A recruiter for a large computer manufacturer relates that many interviewees ask about "how many free products" they'll get after they're hired. But if you ask this question, you'll never get hired.)

### **2. What does your company do?**

Believe it or not, recruiters and hiring managers say they get asked this question all the time. Before you go into your job interview, research what the company does, and come up with some specific ways you can help it do whatever it does better.

### **3. My last boss was a real %\$#!**

Complaining about your last job only reflects badly on you. Even if you're telling the truth, it makes you look like a complainer and poor sport (exactly the type of person no one wants to work with). It's great to talk about challenges you faced, but the focus should be on the positive results you achieved.

### **4. I love your glasses.**

Never compliment interviewers on their physical appearance -- doing so can come off as inappropriate or just plain creepy. Paying compliments is fine, but they should be related to the professional realm. For instance, you might want to praise a recent success the company or interviewer has had.

## **5. My feet are killing me!**

Complaining about physical discomfort will be perceived as negativity -- or as you making excuses for not performing well in the interview. (An HR manager in Silicon Valley tells of a candidate who complained of a headache caused by "partying too hard last night." Needless to say, this candidate didn't get the job.)

## **6. I got fired from my last position.**

You never want to lie in a job interview -- but there are more graceful ways to explain that you were fired.

"My boss and I had very different ideas about what our department should be focusing on, and it soon became clear that I'd be happier in a new role -- like this one." Keep the focus on what you learned from the past, and bring the focus back to why the job you're interviewing for is the right one for you.

## **7. I just want a job -- any job!**

This may very well be true, but desperation is not appealing. The interviewer needs to know that you want the particular job you're interviewing for -- and that you're a great fit for it.

## **8. I don't know.**

If you really don't know the answer to an interview question about you or your background, try "I'll find out and get back to you by the end of the day." But if the question is about what you'd do in a hypothetical workplace situation -- or is an off-the-wall or brainteaser question such as "How many golf balls would it take to fill this room?" -- your response should show your thought process. Go ahead and think aloud: "First, I'd have to determine the volume of the room. Then I'd have to subtract the volume of the furniture...." And so on.

## **9. My biggest weakness is that I work too hard.**

Your interviewer knows this answer is a bunch of malarkey. So how do you answer the "what's your biggest weakness" question? Choose something

not directly related to the role you're applying for that you've made positive efforts to improve. For example, you could say, "I can be nervous about speaking in front of large groups -- so I enrolled in Toastmasters and then volunteered to present some seminars at my former employer. So that's becoming less and less of a problem for me."