

Insufficient company research most common interview pitfall

Researching information on your new employer is vital during your job search and for your interview preparation. You might think that that's a bit obvious, but believe it or not, it's the most common mistake candidates make during a job interview, according to a recent survey.

In the survey, 44% of executives said the most common interview pitfall for today's candidates is insufficient company research. Other mistakes include:

- Lack of preparation to discuss career plans and goals
- Limited enthusiasm
- Lack of eye contact
- Difficulty discussing experience
- Late arrival

Knowledge of the employer's benefits and downsides can help you determine more about an organisation and your potential place in it, and give you the opportunity to ask informed questions during your interview.

Interview research

Before meeting your potential employer, you'll need to be aware of the following:

- What the company does and how it runs.
- The company's financial state - are they expanding or downsizing?
- Major competitors.
- Skills they are looking for, such as education, previous experience.
- What you can offer them.

Having a general overview about the company will also give you confidence during the first interview, so that you can ask relevant questions, referring to your research.

Rather than asking how many employees are in the company, which you could have found out yourself, using that information in a question implies you have taken time and effort to prepare for the interview. The interviewer will take this as a sign that you are serious about the company, your job and your future career.

"Conducting effective research can give job seekers a decided edge over the competition when applying for a position," says Max Messmer, chairman of *Accountemps* and author of *Managing Your Career For Dummies*.

"The more information candidates have about potential employers, the better prepared they will be to demonstrate this knowledge during the interview."

He stresses that prospective employees should be able to answer the following key questions before the first meeting with a personnel manager:

- What business is the company in?
- What products and services does it sell?
- Who are its primary competitors?
- What current industry issues or events are of interest to the firm?
- What are the company's mission, vision and values?

The survey was developed by *Robert Half International*, a staffing service for accounting, finance and book-keeping professionals.