



Ghosting, and Other Job Search Sins

8 top blunders to diss your way out of a job offer.

Some mistakes are less forgivable

The investor Warren Buffet famously said, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.” The same goes for job searches: as a job seeker, you can invest an enormous amount of time, effort, and expense into your job hunt—even make it through the interview—then undo all of your hard work with one foolish or careless misstep. And there are plenty of mistakes that can cause a job search to go sideways. While some recruiters are more understanding, and not all errors are fatal, there are blunders that will leave most employers salty enough to end your candidacy on the spot.

1. Be late to or unprepared for an interview. Fail to be on time or do your research for one of the most important occasions in your life, and an employer will doubt your commitment to any future working relationship. Not only rude, these blunders reveal poor time management and arrogant indifference to others’ time. If an emergency *does* arise, calling well ahead so that others can plan *might* salvage the interview—but that’s at the employer’s discretion. A general rule of thumb: don’t expect the interviewer to meet with you if you’re late, even by one minute.

2. Tabled by typos. Can’t stress this enough. Employers list communication skills as a top quality. So, expect them to ditch résumés and cover letters containing poor grammar and typos. If you’re sloppy with details concerning your own critical documents and business, what can companies expect when you handle theirs? And lying? Deal killer.

3. Hangry and thirsty. Food for thought: eat something before you interview—being cranky on an empty stomach won’t go over well. Employers want people with a positive attitude and self-control, not Chatty Cathys, Debbie Downers, or Nervous Nellies. Also, enthusiasm works in your favor, but desperation and pushiness are definite turnoffs for hiring managers.

4. Phubbing. Yeah, go ahead. Answer your phone during your interview—you know, the phone you *should* have turned off before the meeting. Show a recruiter where your priorities lie. Just don’t be surprised when you never hear back from them.

5. Helicopter parents. Don’t bring mom and dad to your interview. Or, worse, have them negotiate on your behalf. More than awkward, it will brand you as unprofessional, lacking confidence, and not mature enough to hold your own in the real world.

6. References. Preparing for interviews includes *never* submitting references without first having those persons’ permission. Don’t put people on the spot by not providing them with relevant details to support your candidacy. Both you and your advocate will look bad when the employer calls them to ask about your qualifications and gets a surprised “Who?”

7. Ghosting. The hiring process can be time consuming and costly for an organization. There can be hundreds of résumés and individuals to review, plus pressure to fill a position quickly. So, don’t be an interview no-show; it’s off-the-scale rude. Don’t leave an employer hanging by ignoring their calls or emails regarding a job offer. And, don’t fail to follow up and follow through with a thank you after an interview or any professional interaction. Radio silence will earn you a reputation for being ungrateful, unreliable, unprofessional—and unemployable.

8. The smear campaign. You’re upset at not getting the job. Still, take the high road and exercise self-control. Yes, rejection hurts. But, trolling and doxing those who didn’t hire you can have far-reaching negative consequences and hurt you more. Also, talking smack about your former boss or colleagues will have prospective employers wondering if you’ll badmouth them, too. Unprofessional behavior—online or off—will make you come across as being a questionable hire.

Few job offers are guaranteed and, with so much competition for the same open position, your chances often are tenuous, at best. “... *If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.*” — Warren Buffet



i n a nutshell:

Few things are as inexcusable—or as prevalent—as lack of respect when it comes to ending your job candidacy:

- **Being late**
- **Failing to research companies, winging interviews, and not properly preparing references**
- **Submitting typos and lies**
- **Exhibiting attitude, arrogance, and ignorance; whining and revealing lack of maturity**
- **Giving employers the silent treatment; flaking out**
- **Ranting online, badmouthing others, broadcasting your liability factor**

For hirers and hirees alike, word travels fast. Don’t give employers the impression that *your* needs come before theirs. Ideally, your next post should be #CollegeCollegeWasRight! because you GOT the job!