

Twelve Most Common Mistakes at Interview...

1 Not answering the question It's important to listen carefully to what the question asks you to cover. If you do not cover all aspects of what is asked this will impact your performance.	2 Not keeping the answer focused on competency area Interviewers will tell you which behavioural competency area they are seeking to explore with a question. Focus your answer on the aspects that are relevant to this area.	3 Wrong level of evidence Your response and evidence needs to be appropriate for the level of role you have applied for. If you have applied to lead an organisation, evidence from a narrow departmental or operational level is not enough to demonstrate suitability.
4 'We' rather than 'I' The interview aims to understand what you have personally done. You need to be clear about your personal role and contribution. While working in teams is important you need to focus on your individual actions and the part you played.	5 Talking generally rather than specifically Questions will look for specific examples of what you have done. This requires real concrete examples. While you may have been involved in many instances that may be relevant try outlining the one which is the most important, challenging and complex. This is likely to offer your best evidence. Avoid talking about what you do generally and focus on a specific example.	6 Trying to provide too many examples It can be tempting to try to convince a commission of your suitability by referring to several examples which you feel are relevant. However, with limited time you are unlikely to outline any of these with sufficient detail. Pick your best example and provide more detail about the situation, the task and aim of what you were looking to achieve, your personal actions and the outcome.
7 Re-using the same example Responses require you to provide examples and using your best examples is important. However, you also want to show the range of situations you have managed. If you use the same example across different questions you will be unable to showcase the breadth of your experience.	8 Old examples The older your examples are the less effective they tend to be. If you have to rely on examples from many years ago it raises questions about why you have not got more recent relevant examples to offer. It is best if examples are within the last few years – this helps to show what your most recent experience is and what that is relevant to the role you have applied for.	9 Modesty The commission need to hear about you, your personal behaviour and contribution and your achievements. If you are overly modest and do not talk about these things, this can lead to you receiving a low rating. Whilst it can be uncomfortable to talk about your own achievements it is necessary to provide the evidence required to perform well.
10 Not explaining the context It is useful to remember that not all members of a commission will know the context behind examples you wish to share in an interview. The context often highlights why the instance you wish to present came about. This is useful in creating an understanding of the scale of the challenge, its complexity and why the level is relevant to the role you have applied for. Commonly candidates rush too quickly to say what they did without outlining the context.	11 Reacting to probing questions The commission will follow up their initial question with further probing questions. Reacting to these as if they were some form of personal challenge will mean you miss the opportunity to understand how the commission are seeking to assist you. These questions are a way to clarify details important to the competency area they are exploring, a way to re-direct you to aspects of the question you have not yet answered and to ensure you make use of the time available.	12 Not using the time available If you do not use the time available to provide as full an explanation of the context, what the issues were, how you decided to do what you did, what you did and what impact it had then it is challenging to achieve high ratings. While an interview is a discussion between you and the commission, if you do not use the time available you limit your chances of doing well.

Nine Most Common Mistakes at Selection Presentations...

1 Not preparing You are likely to receive your presentation topic and instructions (e.g. how long you will have and how any questions may work) in advance. This gives you plenty of time to prepare. If you do not use this time to come up with a well-researched, thoughtful and impactful presentation you have not taken the selection process seriously. Preparing can also mean reading the instructions you have been provided so you know what are, and are not, permitted to do (e.g. handouts may or may not be allowed).	2 Focusing on the most obvious publicly available information If you prepare by using lots of the information about the organisation that is published on their website, or in other obvious public sources, your presentation will be limited and is unlikely to show that you have genuine insight into the organisation's challenges and opportunities.	3 Facts over insights Your presentation topic is likely to ask for what you think. If you simply focus on facts and figures about the organisation this won't show your understanding, insights or ideas for future direction and improvements.
4 Personal biography You have a limited time within which to provide your presentation. The commission have already seen your application and CV. There is no need to provide a personal biography – this is not what your presentation topic has asked for. Make best use of the time by getting straight into presenting the topic you were provided with.	5 Ensure you cover everything you were asked to There may be several parts to the presentation topic. If you only cover some of them you will be unlikely to perform well. Make sure you have prepared and practiced the presentation to ensure it covers everything that is included in the topic.	6 Being unstructured Presenting is about communicating your understanding and ideas. To communicate effectively and ensure you cover everything required, you need to lead your audience (i.e. the commission) through your thinking – this requires some structure. Try to provide a brief overview of what you will cover, provide your main presentation, summarise the key points. Within each section be clear when you are moving from one point, thought or principle to another. Make it easy to follow
7 Not Practicing You will have a lot to say in a little amount of time. You do not want to have so much you run out of time and you don't want to have too little to say so you don't use the time fully. Good presentations and presenting takes practice. Practicing will help you see how long it takes you and whether you have too much or too little. It will also make sure you can present the contents fluently..	8 Talking too quickly If you have too much to say it can be tempting just to talk more quickly. However, please remember the commission are trying to listen to you, follow your thinking and make notes. If you are very quick then your audience will miss some of what you say and this may impact your assessment.	9 Reading Using notes to provide a well-structured and professional presentation is perfectly normal. However, this should not be confused with reading from a pre-prepared script. You want your presentation to be interesting, engaging and flowing. Directly reading from a script can hinder the quality of your presentation and does not give confidence that you are presenting your own thinking.