

## You Just Blew Your Interview – Now What?

By Anthony Balderrama, CareerBuilder.com writer

January 2008

Although you prepare yourself for every interview question you might be asked, nerves can get the best of you. It's only natural that you overanalyze your performance, worrying that you rambled on too long about one topic or didn't say enough about another. You probably didn't ruin your chances with those little mistakes. If the interviewer responded to each of your answers with a furrowed brow or furious scribbling, however, you might have reason to worry.

Instead of dwelling on the situation and giving up hope for a second interview, get proactive and do some damage control.

### **What did you do wrong?**

First, you need to know what went wrong. You might have walked away knowing the interview didn't go as well as you had hoped, but you can't fix the problem until you know what it was. So think about your answers, your body language and anything else that an interviewer would notice.

"It is usually not one mistake that determines whether you get the job or not," says Carole Martin of Interview Coach. Interviewers notice a series of mistakes that hint at your personality and work ethic. For example, if the conversation about your work history consisted of you explaining why you left every job on your résumé, the interviewer probably wondered if you can commit to the position for a long period of time, she says.

**The easiest way to land your résumé in the "no pile" is to bad-mouth a former boss, says Bill Behn, national director of staffing, SolomonEdwardsGroup. You've just told the interviewer that you won't keep your negative opinions to yourself if you ever leave the company.**

**Also, knowing nothing about the position or company you're interviewing with demonstrates a lack of preparation and overall interest the company.**

If you did any of these things or something else you know was just as damaging, decide how you can convince the interviewer you have something to offer the company.

### **Follow up with the interviewer**

The best course of action is to write a follow-up letter or make a phone call, Martin says. All job candidates should write a thank-you letter after an interview, but if things didn't go well, use it to make your case for a second chance. It can work. After a particularly poor interview, a candidate sent a well-written thank-you note, Martin recalls. It not only got him a second meeting, he eventually landed the job.

The follow-up letter should leave a bigger impression than your initial meeting, according to [marketing](#) and [management](#) expert Mark Stevens.

"Recently, I interviewed a senior [executive](#) whose résumé was brilliant. My expectations were sky high. And disappointment went into free fall when he barely said a word during the interview. When he left, I remember tossing his résumé in the wastebasket," Stevens says. The following day the candidate sent Stevens a poetry book about human loss and a letter explaining that his mother had just died. He admitted in his letter that he didn't perform at his best and would like another shot at the job, which he got. "He turned out to be a star team member," Stevens says.

You don't always need to send a book of poetry to get that second interview, but you do need to be just as articulate and thoughtful about what you say in your letter. This letter is your one chance to say what you wish you'd said in the interview

Think about how the interviewer perceived you and try to erase that idea from his or her mind. [Recruiters](#) think many candidates don't view themselves as potential representatives of the company they're interviewing with, Martin says. But that's exactly what you are. "The way you present yourself in an interview is seen as the way you will represent the company," she says. "A bad impression will not be looked upon as a good sign for your ability to relate and connect with others."

In your follow-up, tell the interviewer that you know the conversation was not what either of you had in mind. Make it clear that you normally perform better in business and were just having an off day. You don't want to whine or beg because that is guaranteed not to get you a second chance. Just be honest about what went wrong and why you're worth a second chance.

### **Keep looking**

Once you've sent your letter or made the phone call, the interviewer will contact you if he or she wants a second meeting. You don't want to hound him for an answer. Instead, keep job hunting. An even better opportunity might be waiting for you.

**Throughout the process, remember that you have nothing to lose by asking for a second chance. "Employers, who are humans after all, are usually willing to listen to reasons why someone made a mistake and give them a second chance," Behn says.**

The only way you're certain not to get a second chance is if you don't ask for one, Martin says. So don't sit there and torture yourself over the interview: Do something about it.

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