



## Correcting the 5 Most Common Mistakes Mid-Level Job Seekers Make

Moving from mid-level management to the corner office requires many things: the right experience, expertise and top-notch performance. It also requires interviews—and lots of them.

Even though [mid-career professionals](#) have experience interviewing they can still make critical mistakes, often because they don't understand what's expected when interview for senior-level positions. Recruiters and hiring managers are not only trying to assess a candidate's skills and competencies but are also judging their ability to communicate, about themselves and their goals, especially those related to the job in question. Yet some professionals go into an interview feeling smug about their experience and uninterested in anything other than talking about themselves. That approach won't get you very far, no matter how seasoned and successful you've been in the past.

Based on the five most common mistakes I see mid-level professionals make during [job interviews](#), I've compiled a list of ways to avoid them. Here is what you *should* be doing in preparation for, and during, high-level interviews:

1. **Do extensive background research.** You should always go into an interview for a senior level job knowing specifics about the company, such as details about recent projects, the company's finances, its marketing strategies and any challenges it is facing. Know the [backgrounds of those with whom you're interviewing](#) as well as the company's reputation in the industry and within its sector. The more senior the position, the more specifics you want to have. Search for press coverage in business or trade magazines, and get a copy of the company's prospectus or recruitment pack, which will give you more detailed information than can be found on its website. Armed with this information you will be able to ask informed questions and give thoughtful answers.
2. **Talk about accomplishments, not responsibilities.** An interview is not the time to rattle off a list of responsibilities. While that's important— and should be detailed on your resume— you should be talking about what you have accomplished with those responsibilities in mind. What concrete things have you gotten done during your tenure in your current position? And how has that impacted the company— especially in terms of the

bottom line? You don't need to be overly detailed, but don't be too vague either. For example, if you oversee the global customer service team, making broad statements like "I increased efficiency by 50 percent" doesn't give information about the specific actions you took or strategies you put in place to get those results. It would be more instructive to the interview to say, "I increased efficiency in our shoe manufacturing division by 50 percent" and then outline the steps you took to get there.

3. **Be confident, but not overconfident.** You may feel your experience should speak for itself but it doesn't— you still have to speak about it and [advocate for yourself](#), no matter your level of experience. All the steps that someone more junior has to take, like updating their resume, researching the company and preparing for the interview, you have to do too. Having confidence is important and necessary to move up in an organization, but there's a fine line between confidence and arrogance, so walk it gingerly.
4. **Ask a lot of questions.** Although you are the one being interviewed you should also be [doing some interviewing of your own](#). Ask smart, insightful questions about the company, its challenges and its goals. Remember that you're trying to sell yourself, and you can't do that if you don't know what the company is looking to buy. Your questions should help you understand the organization's immediate and ongoing needs. That will allow you to cast your experience, expertise and goals in a way that helps them see that you are the right fit for their needs.
5. **Send a recap note after the interview.** Most candidates believe sending a simple "Thank you" note or email after an interview is the right thing to do. But for a higher-level position that's a major *faux pas*, and one I see often. At this level in your professional career sending a simple thank you note isn't enough. Not only do you want to thank those with whom you interviewed, your note should include a recap that says, "Here's what I learned about your needs during our interview and here is how I can help you meet those needs."

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