

[Beware the Five Landmines of Interviewing](#)

Lack the time to prepare for your candidate interview? At minimum, learn to avoid these common mistakes.

By: Eric Herrenkohl

We're all busy -- so finding the time to prepare to conduct a job interview can be tough. But if you spend a little bit of time with the steps below, you'll add a lot more value to the hiring process and make better decisions.

Here are 5 mistakes made every day by hiring managers with some simple steps you can take to avoid them.

1. Fail to define a clear picture of the job's requirements

If you don't see a target clearly, chances are that you will miss it. Do you have a clear picture in your mind of the performance you want to see from the position you are filling? Are you and the other people interviewing candidates in agreement on what you are looking for in the person you hire?

Get everyone involved in the hiring process together in a room. Agree on the priorities of the job and the kind of accomplishments that make a candidate a top contender. You would be surprised at how rarely this happens in some companies.

2. Fail to create a scorecard for the interview

Before the first interview takes place, create an [interview scorecard](#) that lists the key accomplishments and skills you want in the person you hire. You might have 7 criteria (sales skills, organizational skills, leadership abilities, etc.) for which each interviewer scores the candidate from 1-5. This helps you to grade every candidate objectively against criteria that are important for the job.

Additionally, encourage every interviewer to write down what candidates actually say during the interview, rather than what they thought was said. When interviewers review these verbatim notes it will jog their memories and recall the candidates' actual responses. In turn, this will enable everyone to more accurately discuss the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and decide who makes the next round of interviews.

3. Fail to ask open-ended, accomplishment oriented questions

If you had to walk into an interview right now, with zero preparation, could you ask good questions and learn everything necessary to make a judgment about the candidate? Ask the following questions and you will conduct a good interview.

- What do you consider to be the biggest accomplishments of your life and your career?
- Why so?

Of course, with more preparation you can ask more focused questions. But open-ended follow-up questions allow the candidate to describe what he or she has [accomplished in life](#) and the opportunity to provide details that prove their expertise. Try these questions in your next interview; you will be surprised at how much you learn.

4. Fail to listen

When you conduct an interview, what percentage of time do you spend talking? In most interviews, if the percentage exceeds 25%, you're talking too much. Here's how to fix that problem:

In most interview situations, you should be asking open-ended questions, listening, asking a follow up question, listening, and then repeating the process. Stop "telling," and start asking and listening. Your hiring decisions will improve.

5. Fail to do a post-game debrief

Optimally, you should have multiple people interview a candidate. If you don't, you should. You get the most value from having multiple people interview a candidate.

Immediately after everyone has interviewed the candidate, or as quickly as possible thereafter (within 24 hours at the most) meet with the other interviewers to do a post-game debriefing to discuss your impressions.

You'll be amazed at what other people catch that you miss and vice versa.