

No April Fools' Prank: Interviews Heat Up with Outlandish Demands, Support Iguanas and Fistfights

Unprofessional Behavior Likely to Cost Offers

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, March 27, 2024 — Despite expecting professionalism in interviews, U.S. hiring managers say they've seen it all from candidates — and job seekers report they have a few wild stories to tell about recruiters, too.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

Half of hiring managers say being rude during an interview (68%), late (55%) and/or wearing unprofessional dress (53%) would cause them to not hire a candidate.



Additionally, being uninformed about the company and/or position (47%), using unprofessional body language (44%) and/or not asking questions (27%) may also be detrimental.

Behavior Blunders

Hiring managers most commonly see inappropriately dressed candidates while more than 2 in 5 have encountered candidates talking negatively about their previous job or manager (45%) and answering phone calls or texting during interviews (41%).

About 3 in 10 have had candidates overshare personal information (36%), check their watches (33%), swear during interviews (32%) or get caught lying (28%).

Other reports of unusual interviews include:

- “A person came in for an interview half an hour late. He acted excited about the position and said he could start right away. Then he said I have conditions though. He starts naming all of these things, pizza on Fridays, having off every other Friday. Then he walked out.”
- “[A candidate] pretended to get a phone call from another employer offering them more money.”
- “This one time during the interview the candidate brought in their iguana and asked if we would compensate the iguana for being with her at work every day.”

Interviewer Missteps

More than 1 in 3 job seekers (35%) admit they have done something during an interview, either big or small, that may be a bit outside of the norm.

For around 1 in 10, that means they have overshared personal information (11%), checked their watch (10%), talked negatively about their previous job/manager (8%) or generally had an interruption (by a pet or child) during a remote interview (8%).

Job seekers, however, are not the only people involved in the interview. Nearly two-thirds (65%) have had an interviewer do any of these actions during an interview. Nearly 1 in 3 job seekers have had an interviewer answer a phone call during an interview (32%) or check their watch (30%). For 1 in 5 (20%), an interviewer overshared personal information.

Candidates also recounted their wildest interview experiences:

- “I saw a physical fight break out between two employees in the office and the manager interviewing me rushed over to break it up and got knocked out by one of the guys in the fight.”
- “An employee came in and quit while I was being interviewed.”
- “The person interviewing me went into labor.”

“Though these eccentric interview antics may elicit a chuckle, both the candidate and hiring manager should honor each other's time, striving to uncover not only if the job seeker has the proper qualifications, but also if the applicant would be a good fit with the company’s culture,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO.

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 1,007 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 9 to 26, 2023, among 1,002 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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