

Don't be an April Fool During a Job Interview: Halloween Costumes, Undressing and More

Unprofessional Behaviour Costing Canadians Job Offers

TORONTO, March 27, 2024 — Getting an interview is a big step forward in the job application process, but it can make or break a candidate's ability to get hired. While it may seem obvious to most that professionalism is expected, both Canadian hiring managers and job seekers say they've seen some pretty wild behaviour.

According to a newly released Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey, almost three-quarters of Canadian hiring decision-makers (70%) say being rude during an interview will result in them not hiring a candidate. Other interview behaviours that will cost a candidate a job offer include being late to an interview (56%), being uninformed about the company or position (50%), wearing unprofessional attire (43%), using unprofessional body language (42%), and not asking questions during the interview (27%).



Job Seeker Behaviour Blunders

The most common blunders hiring managers encounter during job interviews include applicants

discussing their previous job or manager in a negative light (45%), dressing inappropriately (38%), answering a phone call or texting during the interview (36%), oversharing personal information (32%), checking their watch (28%), or getting caught lying (28%).

Hiring managers also report some outlandish behaviours from candidates who appeared oblivious to what is acceptable during a job interview. For example:

- “I had a candidate ask if they could take their shirt off.”
- “He refused to stop driving the car during our virtual interview.”
- “I had a candidate show up late and look like they had crawled out of bed and came straight to the interview. At the end of the interview, he decided to tell me he couldn’t start working for a few months because he has holidays planned and he doesn’t feel like working right away.”
- “Someone dressed up for an in-person interview as a pumpkin because it was October 31.”
- “When asked why they wanted the job, they stated their mom wanted them to get one.”

Interviewer Missteps

One-third of job seekers (32%) openly admit to doing something inappropriate during an interview.

Most commonly, 1 in 10 Canadians confess to oversharing personal information (13%) or checking their watch (10%). A smaller proportion admitted to swearing during an interview (6%), texting someone (5%), answering a phone call (5%), or talking negatively about a previous job or manager (5%).

Job seekers, however, are not the only people making interview blunders. More than half of job seekers (54%) have reported inappropriate behaviour by the interviewer, including checking their watch (27%), answering a personal phone call (25%), and oversharing personal information (12%).

Some candidates also recounted their wildest interview experiences:

- “The interviewer drifted off topic and started rambling about how his son had been arrested while on vacation in Mexico with friends — the story went on for 15 minutes.”
- “An interviewer wanted to know all the details of my husband’s death, who had been in an accident.”
- “Midway through the interview the fire alarm sounded but the interviewer continued. I watched as people were evacuating and asked if we should evacuate, but the interviewer explained the sprinklers had not turned on so it was likely a false alarm. I expressed that I was not comfortable and would prefer to evacuate. She smiled, stood

up, opened the door and said thank you for your time.”

“Though these eccentric interview antics may elicit a chuckle, both the candidate and hiring manager should honour 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 Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker survey was conducted online within Canada by the Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from November 9-26, 2023, among 509 Canadian adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

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.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing 492,000 people globally in 2023 and more than 11 million since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com/CA.