



9 Things Never to Do in a Panel Interview

So you've prepared for the phone interview, a video chat, the one-on-one interview and the salary conversation with HR. But, if you've forgotten to plan for a possible panel interview, you've missed a step.

Panel interviews, for those who haven't encountered them before, involve a candidate sitting across from three or more hiring managers and meeting with them all at once in a 45- to 60-minute interview – cue the panic sweats and vision of a firing squad. Anxiety is normal, but the job interview jitters can be mitigated by anticipating and preparing for these panel interviews. After all, many companies are including these types of meetings in their hiring processes due to time constraints and multiple stakeholders.

As you account for this new step in your job search, there is plenty that you'll need to do to bring your A game. However, there are also nine things you should *never* do in a panel interview – here we break them down.

Do not...

1. **Only address the most senior person in the room** – Everyone in a panel interview may have a vote on whether you join the team, so do not make the mistake of responding only to the senior-level team members. Give everyone your attention, look each person in the eye when responding and give their feedback equal weight.
2. **Forget interviewers' names & roles** – Before any interview, learn the names and responsibilities of every person who will be in the room. Part of your interview prep process is to research each person and get familiar with their names, title and roles. And in the event another interviewer is sprung on you at the last minute, try your hardest to remember their name and address them directly.
3. **Get flustered and give up** – Interview questions can be hard, especially the oddball ones. However, that's no excuse to lose your cool – deep breaths and thoughtful responses are always best. And if you don't know an answer, a great reply is, "I'm not confident in my answer to that one, but I can follow up with you after this interview."

4. **Get defensive** – It's easy to get defensive when interviewers ask about a gap in your resume, recent unemployment or a touchy termination. However, in situations like these, it's best to bite your tongue. You've prepared for these questions, remember? Simply deliver your anecdotal response confidently and whatever you do, don't get defensive. No one wants to hire a hot head.
5. **Ignore your body language** – “You have to stand up straight. You have to smile, look at the person's face,” says body language expert Dr. Lillian Glass. But more importantly, she says, “You have to be interested, not [just] interesting. Be concerned about what you're doing and about what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you. That's where people really get in trouble, especially millennials. Being too self-absorbed in the workplace can harm your chances for success. You have to talk about what you provide and contribute to the company and your body language [should reinforce] that.”
6. **Rush** – Nervousness can make you whiz through answers and seem harried. Simply put: Slow. It. Down.
7. **Forget to balance answering with listening** – Don't be so worried about the next question that you forget to listen to your interviewers. Be sure you are taking in as much information as you are sharing. After all, the interview process is like dating – each side wants to discover whether the other is the right fit.
8. **Leave the room without asking key questions** – From learning labs to formal mentorship programs, get a sense of what the company offers in the way of professional growth and development opportunities. After all, if you proceed with this company, you want to know that you have a future there and opportunities to be challenged.
9. **Wrap up before getting everyone's contact information** – You want to acknowledge each person who interviewed you, so make sure to get business cards as you go in order to send thoughtful thank-you notes. Also, try to jot down a note or two as you speak with various team members so that you can include a specific detail in each of your correspondences.