

How To Talk About Your Professional Mistakes During An Interview

When a recruiter asks you to divulge the details of a professional mistake you've made on the job during an interview for a position, your phrasing is crucial. Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

Make sure you pick the right mistake. Picking the wrong error you made definitely won't work in your favor.

Steer clear of these answers

Alison Doyle, a job search and career expert, author and founder and CEO of CareerToolBelt.com, writes in *The Balance* about what you shouldn't say, in response to the interview question "What have you learned from your mistakes?"

Doyle writes, "You want your example of a mistake to be honest. However, it's a good idea not to mention a mistake that would be critical for success in the new position. For instance, give an example from your last position that isn't specifically related to the job requirements for the new position."

"It's also a good idea to mention something that is relatively minor," Doyle adds. "Also avoid mentioning any mistakes that demonstrate a flaw in your character (for example, a time you got in trouble for fighting at work),"

Don't blame someone else

Richard Moy, a Content Marketing Writer for Stack Overflow, writes in *The Muse* that you should not "pass the buck" when responding to the interview question "Tell me about a time you made a mistake."

"Hey, we all make mistakes. And anyone you'll interview with for any job knows this. But, when you know something was your fault, do yourself a favor and own up to it. Nobody wants to work with someone who's always pointing fingers, and yet, too many applicants I met with went out of their way to convince me there was nothing they could've done differently. This was a huge bummer, especially when I had grown to like the candidate a lot," Moy writes. "When in doubt, choose a blunder you can articulate the details of, and open up as much as possible."

Answering this question is a balancing act — it's all about choosing your mistake wisely and not misplacing the blame while showing that you're still the one for the job.

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