

Success in the modern workplace

☰ YouGov analysis of what matters to employers and employees



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Introduction

Technology has changed the way we work across most industries. However, there's no doubt that human interaction and collaboration are hugely important for the success of both individual employees and businesses.

This white paper uses YouGov RealTime data to look at what matters most to people in the workplace, including employer and employee interview expectations, which perks would encourage someone to move jobs, and what attributes people think have helped them most in their career.

We also compared these responses with those of retired people and children aged from 12 to 15, giving an indication of how workplace attitudes have shifted and are likely to shift in the future.

02 Biggest job interview mistakes

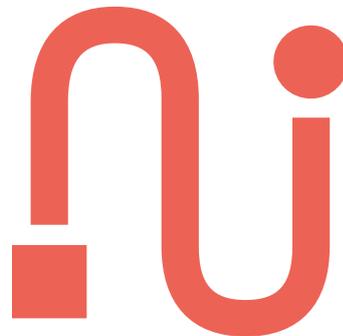
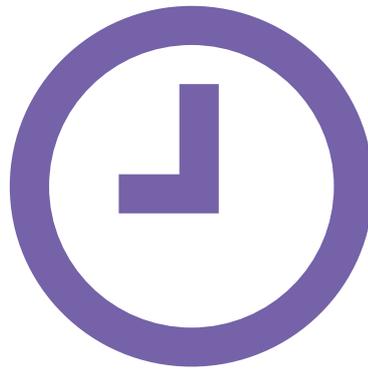


02 Biggest job interview mistakes

Interviews are stressful: you have to look the part, act the part and hope that ultimately you impress the person, or people, on the other side of the table. One would hope that most interviewers would accept the occasional nerve-induced faux pas, but are some behaviours unforgiveable? We asked employers which job interview mistakes they found hardest to overlook.

We put the same question to retired people to see if the world of work has changed since they hung up their boots. Children aged from 12 to 15 also gave their view on what slip-ups they think would be most likely to cost them a job in the future.

It's often forgotten that interviews work both ways - potential employees also need to be impressed by the employer - so we asked workers what they think would be the worst thing an interviewer could do.



Bad candidates

Current bosses and those who are retired agree on the worst interview behaviours.

Lying and dishonesty are seen as the biggest red flags, indicating that job-seekers might be better off admitting if they lack experience or certain skills than trying to bluff their way through a question.

Showing a lack of interest and being unprepared for the interview take second and third place respectively.



Top three worst things a candidate can do in an interview

According to bosses and retired people

- 1. Lie or be dishonest**
- 2. Show a lack of interest**
- 3. Be unprepared**

Employees have their say

On the other side of the coin, employees are most put off by interviewers asking them personal or inappropriate questions. They also agree that not fully engaging in the interview, showing a lack of interest or appearing not to listen are off-putting.

After that, interviewers being condescending or belittling, and being rude or having bad manners would put candidates off a company.



Top three worst things an employer could do in an interview

According to employees

- 1. Ask personal or inappropriate questions**
- 2. Show a lack of interest**
- 3. Not listen or pay attention**

The data indicates that the main advice for both parties is: don't waste each other's time. Only apply for a job if you really want it, and only interview a candidate if you have sufficient time for them and genuinely think they could fit the role.

Children think the workplace is like school

Children aged from 12 to 15 have quite a different view when it comes to bad interview behaviour. It appears that the things they are likely to get in trouble for at school heavily influence what they think would be inappropriate in the world of work.

Swearing, being rude and lateness are seen as the worst behaviours a candidate could display. They also wouldn't expect to make it to the second stage of the interview process if they broke wind.

As their answers are so different from adults, it raises the question: at what life stage or age do different behaviours become important?



Kids appreciate good manners

Worst things to do in an interview

1. = Swear

1. = Be rude or display poor manners

2. Be late

3. Break wind

Real life interview horror stories

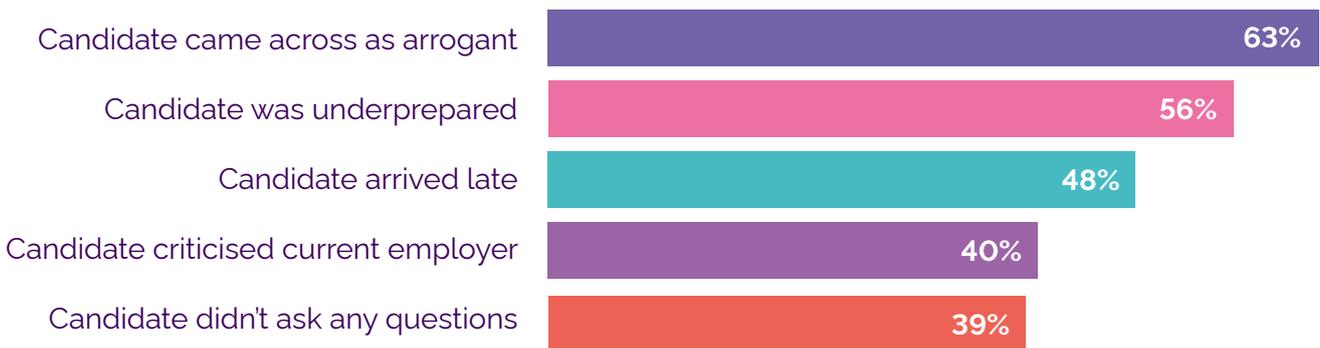
While the previous section looks at hypothetical situations, we also asked about real experiences. Bosses said the worst thing they've actually experienced in an interview was a candidate coming across as arrogant, followed by being underprepared or late.

But employees are less likely to report having made one of these mistakes than bosses are to have seen them, either due to ignorance or embarrassment. For instance, around a third (32%) concede they've turned up to an interview underprepared, but 56% of bosses say that a candidate has.



Arrogance is the number one interview behaviour to avoid

Which if any of the following have happened in an interview that rang alarm bells for you? Employers



Candidates admit being underprepared for interviews

Which if any of the following have you ever done in an interview? Employees



03 Attracting talent



03 Attracting talent

Nowadays it's common for companies to offer "soft" perks such as free snacks, gym membership or a games room to attract new talent. But now these have become commonplace in many offices, are they now expected as standard, and do recruiters need to come up with different benefits to get new hires in the door?

We asked bosses, general employees and retired people what would most inspire them to move to a new company.



Convenient hours and office location most important to bosses

Companies looking to attract senior talent should note that bosses would be most likely to jump ship for flexible hours, a convenient office location and the ability to work from home. All of these choices come above benefits such as health or life insurance.

Retired people mostly agree, but also said that the chance to take on more responsibility would have encouraged them to move. Interestingly, working from home didn't rank as highly among this older group.

Benefits which help with work-life balance most important

Which of any of the following would be appealing to you? Employers



63%
Flexible hours



62%
Convenient office location



62%
Ability to work from home



57%
Opportunity to challenge myself



44%
Assurance of career progression

Retired people have similar job deal-breakers

Which of any of the following would be appealing to you? Retired people



53%
Convenient office location



51%
Flexible hours



49%
Opportunity to challenge myself



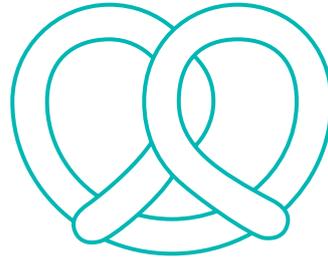
48%
Assurance of career progression



45%
More responsibility

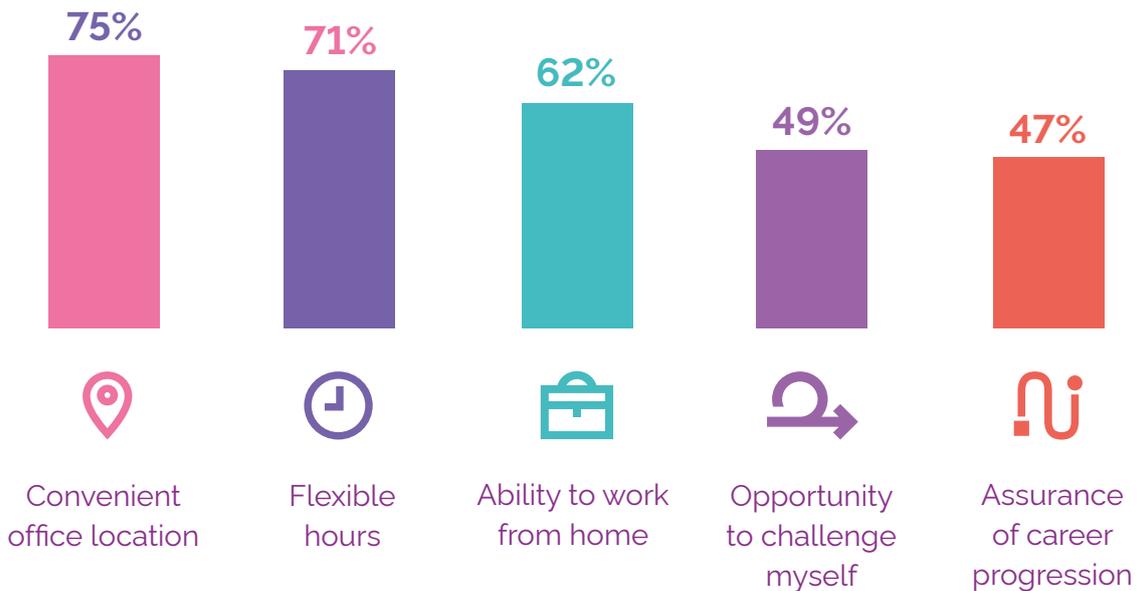
Employees could be swayed by free snacks

Employees in general have similar needs to employers. However, they're much more likely to say that free snacks (28% vs 16%), gym membership (21% vs 14%) and a discount scheme membership (17% vs 10%) would appeal to them.



Location, location, location applies to work too

Which of any of the following would be appealing to you? Employees



04 The key to success



It's often said that when it comes to work, it's not what you know but who you know. However, once offered a professional opportunity it's up to the individual to make the most of it.

We asked employers, employees and retired people which attributes and qualities helped them to get into the position they're currently in.

We also asked children aged from 12 to 15 what they think will be most important for them to have a successful career.

What does it take to be successful at work?

Bosses said the main thing that helped them become successful was experience.

This may not be very helpful to those just starting out in their career, but will perhaps reassure them that success does not happen overnight and that to get anywhere you have to spend time learning the trade. Hard work, knowledge and expertise were also deemed important.



Perseverance is key for a durable career

What are the three main personality traits/attributes you feel helped you to get to the position you are in? Employers

- 1. Experience**
- 2. Hard work**
- 3. Knowledge / expertise**
- 4. Intelligence**
- 5. Determination**

Most helpful traits for getting a foot in the door

Aside from senior management, we asked employees and retired people what they thought were the most important attributes for getting a job in the first place.

Retired people consider hard work to be most important, as well as being reliable and honest.



Older people rate “down-to-earth” qualities

What are the three main personality traits/attributes you feel helped you to get to the position you are in? Retired people

- 1. Hard work**
- 2. Knowledge / expertise**
- 3. Reliability / consistency**
- 4. Intelligence**
- 5. Honesty**



Being friendly and organised is seen as essential for kick-starting a career

What are the three main personality traits/attributes you feel helped you to get to the position you are in? Employees

- 1. Experience**
- 2. Hard work**
- 3. Friendliness**
- 4. Knowledge / expertise**
- 5. Being organised**

Are schools teaching children the wrong things?

We asked children aged from 12 to 15: What are the first three things you think of when you think about what qualities, in general, would help you get a job? Again, their answers linked to their school experience.

Children chose "qualifications" as the top sign of future success. As this was not included in any of the adult answers, it could indicate that too much emphasis is put on exam results at school - or it could be that once qualified, people forget how education helped them reach their current position.

Children rated "intelligence" in second place followed by hard work – both important when it comes to navigating school life. In fourth place, the kids chose punctuality, which wasn't featured in any adult list.

What do children think is most important for getting a job?

1. Qualifications
2. Intelligence
3. Hard work
4. Punctuality
5. Skill



05 Which personality traits are most valued at work?



06 Which personality traits are most valued at work?

We also asked which personality traits employers value in workers, as well as what employees like to see in a boss.

Best employee qualities

Bosses and retired people consider honesty and being hard-working the most important attributes in employees.

Children mostly agree but they also think that being punctual is essential for a good employee, possibly because so much emphasis is put on time-keeping at school.



Bosses

1. Honesty
2. Hard work
3. Loyalty



Retired people

1. Honesty
2. Hard work
3. Reliability / consistency



Kids

1. Hard work
2. Punctuality
3. Honesty

What are the worst qualities an employee could display?

The biggest warning sign for employers when it comes to employee behaviour is laziness, followed by dishonesty and arrogance. Retirees agree that these are the top three worst employee behaviours.



Laziness



Dishonesty



Arrogance





What makes a good – or bad – boss?

What do employees like to see in their employer?

1. Honesty
2. Fairness
3. Flexibility
4. Loyalty
5. Trust

Employees need a boss who behaves with integrity. On the flip side, employees say that the worst attribute an employer can have is dishonesty, followed by laziness and arrogance.

1. Dishonesty
2. Laziness
3. Arrogance
4. Unfairness
5. Rudeness



What type of boss would kids least like to have?

When asked what traits they would least like to see in a future boss, rudeness was the most given answer from children. They also don't want their boss to be too bossy.

1. Rudeness
2. Bossiness
3. Meanness
4. Anger
5. Arrogance

Conclusion

It appears that despite the workplace having changed substantially over the past few decades, basic manners and hard work are still essential for getting on. Children, who have no experience of the workplace, value broadly similar behaviours.

Kids' disproportionate fixation on punctuality and their conviction that qualifications are the key to professional success could change once they leave the school gates for the final time. Practical work experience opportunities at school could give children more realistic expectations.

Job-seekers and those who are currently hiring should note that being underprepared or not engaging are among the worst-received interview behaviours. It seems that rather than "trying something out" both sides should only go ahead if they are genuinely interested.

The data indicates that employers wondering what it takes to attract top talent should keep it simple. A convenient location may be down to luck but offering greater flexibility and empowering employees to manage their own time is attractive for many.

YouGov RealTime can survey all of these groups and more. Get in touch to create your own bespoke survey and reach the audiences you're interested in.

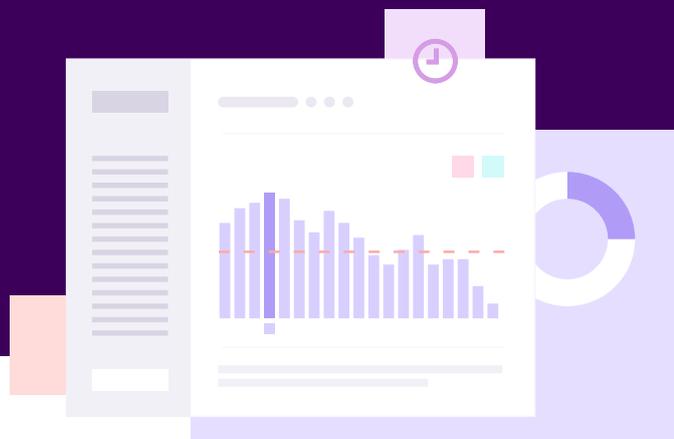
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All data in this paper is from February and March 2019.

The tools behind the research



Plan and Track

YouGov's Plan & Track service combines the detailed audience segmentation power of Profiles with the brand tracking capabilities of BrandIndex. It helps clients understand and target key consumer segments, track the effectiveness of advertising, marketing and public relations strategies and campaigns, and measure brand perception on a continuous basis. All of this data is collected in the YouGov Cube, our connected data set which holds over 260,000 data variables collected from over 300,000 YouGov panellists in the UK.



RealTime Research

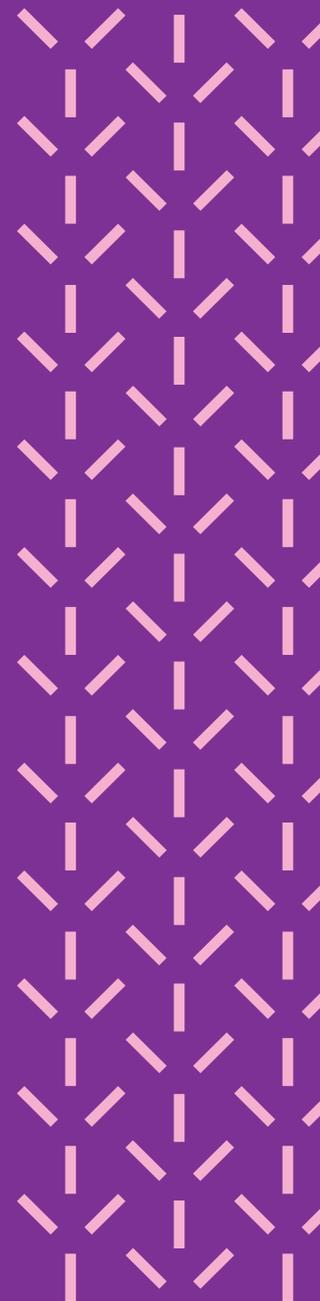
YouGov RealTime research provides survey results as soon as the next day from our industry-leading omnibus and targeted research services, with live reporting available on most services for an even quicker read on results. Whether you're looking for domestic or international research, YouGov's vast, engaged and highly profiled panel enables you to reach consumer and business audiences at a fraction of the cost of a typical ad-hoc study.



Custom Research

YouGov Custom Research engagements leverage cutting-edge research and analytic techniques with an eye for assessing the economic impact of your actions. Our industry experts deliver you crucial insights and tools to plan and make strategic and tactical decisions while maintaining a focus on tangible outcomes. We have expertise across a variety of sectors, including consumer products and retail channels, financial services, luxury goods, technology, education, public policy, and more.

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