



# Utah SBDC

Utah Small Business Development Center  
Leading Entrepreneurial Growth

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

--Theodore Roosevelt

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## 10 Mistakes Made During Job Interviews

Hiring is one of the hardest parts of managing a team. A lot is riding on the initial meeting, and if you're nervous or ill-prepared—or both—it can make you do strange things. The following mistakes are all too common, but they're easy to avoid with some advance preparation.

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### 1. You Talk Too Much

When giving company background, watch out for the tendency to prattle on about your own job, personal feelings about the company, or life story. At the end of the conversation, you'll be aflutter with self-satisfaction, and you'll see the candidate in a rosy light—but you still won't know anything about her ability to do the job.

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### 2. You Gossip or Swap War Stories

Curb your desire to ask for dirt on the candidate's current employer or trash talk other people in the industry. Not only does it cast a bad light on you and your company, but it's a waste of time.

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### 3. You're Afraid to Ask Tough Questions

Interviews are awkward for everyone, and it's easy to over-empathize with a nervous candidate. It's also common to throw softball questions at someone whom you like or who makes you feel comfortable. You're better off asking everyone the same set of challenging questions—you might be surprised what they reveal. Often a Nervous Nellie will spring to life when given the chance to solve a problem or elaborate on a past success.

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### 4. You Fall Prey to the Halo Effect (or the Horns Effect)

If a candidate arrives dressed to kill, gives a firm handshake, and answers the first question perfectly, you might be tempted to check the imaginary "Hired!" box in your mind. But make sure you pay attention to all his answers, and don't be swayed by a first impression. Ditto for the reverse: the mumbler with the tattoos might have skills that go undetected at first glance.

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### 5. You Ask Leading Questions

Watch out for questions that telegraph to the applicant the answer you're looking for. You won't get honest responses from questions like, "You are familiar with Excel macros, aren't you?"

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## 6. You Invade Their Privacy

First of all, it's illegal to delve too deeply into personal or lifestyle details. Secondly, it doesn't help you find the best person for the job. Nix all questions about home life ("Do you have children?" "Do you think you'd quit if you got married?"), gender bias or sexual preference ("Do you get along well with other men?"), ethnic background ("That's an unusual name, what nationality are you?"), age ("What year did you graduate from high school?"), and financials ("Do you own your home?")

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## 7. You Stress the Candidate Out

Some interviewers use high-pressure techniques designed to trap or fluster the applicant. While you do want to know how a candidate performs in a pinch, it's almost impossible to recreate the same type of stressors that an employee will encounter in the workplace. Moreover, if you do hire the person, they may not trust you because you launched the relationship on a rocky foundation.

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## 8. You Cut It Short

A series of interviews can eat up your whole day, so it's tempting to keep them brief. But a quick meeting just doesn't give you enough time to gauge a candidate's responses and behavior. Judging candidates is nuanced work, and it relies on tracking lots of subtle inputs. An interview that runs 45 minutes to an hour increases your chances of getting a meaningful sample.

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## 9. You Gravitare Toward the Center

If everyone you talk to feels like a "maybe," that probably means you aren't getting enough useful information—or you're not assessing candidates honestly enough. Most "maybes" are really "no, thank yous." (Face it: He or she didn't knock your socks off.) Likewise, if you think the person might be good for some role at some point in the future, then they're really a "no."

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## 10. You Rate Candidates Against Each Other

A mediocre candidate looks like a superstar when he follows a dud, but that doesn't mean he's the best person for the job. The person who comes in tomorrow may smoke both of them, but you won't be able to tell if you rated Mr. Mediocre too highly in your notes. Evaluate each applicant on your established criteria—don't grade on a curve.



## Sales Tip of the Month

### Closing Rule: Always Be Checking

**Always Be Checking.** The best way to know when it's time to close the sale, according to closing guru Linda Richardson, is to return the old ABC adage from "Always Be Closing" to "Always Be Checking." The idea is to constantly get feedback from the prospect about whether it's safe to close. That way, when you do close, it becomes less of a "moment of truth" and more like a natural extension of the conversation that you're having with the prospect.

At convenient points during the sales call (after you have positioned your message, responded to an objection, answered a question, etc.) ask a question that draws out more information and which reveals the prospect's state of mind relative to the progress of the sale. Nothing elaborate, just normal conversational stuff like:

- How does that sound?
- How would that work?
- What do you think about...?

Asking for feedback not only gives you critical information about the prospect's problems and potential to accept your solution, but also increases your confidence when it comes to asking for the sale or the next step.

When you're checking, avoid leading questions like "Does that make sense to you?" or "Do you agree?" while nodding your head. Prospects will almost always respond to such questions by nodding along with you, without really agreeing. Instead, ask questions that encourage the prospect to provide you with vital information. Example:

**INEFFECTIVE:**

*Rep (nodding):* "We have the best gadget in the business. Do you agree?"  
*Prospect (nodding back):* "Uh huh." (Thinking: "Yeah, I hear you.")



**EFFECTIVE:**

*Rep:* "Do you think our service program could satisfy your needs?"

*Prospect:* "We need a global deployment for service."

*Rep:* "I can see why that's important. We have international partners who deliver our services. How would that meet your concern?"

According to Richardson, the best part about "always be checking" is that half the time the client will say preemptively close the sale for you by saying something like "So, when do we start?"

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## Resources

### **Best Practices of High Performance Entrepreneurs**

This customized training and consulting helps business owners, their management team and their advisors, to work together to maximize and accelerate the business development process.

This is more than rapid growth; it is about sustainable, profitable and equity producing growth.

**The cost is only \$95.00 per year and has a market value of \$2,000 per year.**

The reduced price is only available because it is offered through the Small Business Development Center.

This is a resource that every existing business that is interested in business growth should utilize.

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## One-on-One Counseling.....

If you would like more information or would like to meet with a personal consultant, send an e-mail or call our office. We have several resources to help you take the next steps in your business.

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## For More Information

This newsletter can be shared freely with your friends, co-workers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. If you would like to unsubscribe from this newsletter then please send an email to [bking1@weber.edu](mailto:bking1@weber.edu) and put "Unsubscribe from SBDC Newsletter" in the subject line and indicate your full name and email address in the body.

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**This Month's Schedule of Classes:**

Saturday, Nov 3 10:00am – 12:00pm	Start Smart Business Start-up Seminar	WSU Davis Campus, Room 117 2750 North University Park Blvd, Layton	Free
Tuesday, Nov 6, 20 & 27 6:00pm – 9:00pm	Plan Smart Business Planning Class	WSU West Center 5627 S 3500 W Roy, UT 84067	\$65
Saturday, Nov 10 10:00am – 12:00pm	Money Smart Introduction to Finance	Ogden Business Information Center (BIC) 2444 Washington Blvd, Ogden	Free
Tuesday, Nov 13 6:00pm – 8:00pm	Hispanic Start Smart Business Start-up Seminar	Ogden Business Information Center (BIC) 2444 Washington Blvd, Ogden	Free
Saturday, Nov 17 10:00am – 12:00pm	Start Smart Business Start-up Seminar	Ogden Business Information Center (BIC) 2444 Washington Blvd, Ogden	Free
Ten session Course Sept 26 – Dec 5 (attend all) 6:30pm – 9:30pm	FastTrac Growth Venture Entrepreneurship Course	Davis Applied Technology College 450 South Simmons Way, Kaysville	\$500 Scholarships available

Please pre-register for all classes so we can make sure to have materials for everyone.  
To pre-register send an email to [bking1@weber.edu](mailto:bking1@weber.edu) and state the class you are interested in attending.



Governor's Office of  
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