

7 career mistakes you should avoid at all costs

Have you ever gone to an interview unprepared, or overpromised to your boss and under-delivered? We've drawn together a list of those errors that most of us have made with some suggestions on how to learn from them.

1. **Being unprofessional on social media.** Thousands of Aussies have missed out on great jobs or lost their existing ones thanks to inappropriate behaviour on social media. Whether it's the drunken profile picture, offensive comments or unprofessional language. Clean up your [act](#) and turn on privacy settings, says Pete Noblet, senior regional director at recruiter [Hays](#). Use social media instead to improve your personal brand profile.
2. **Not understanding your employer's expectations.** Have you ever sat back and thought, "what does my boss expect of me" or "what does the company expect of me"? Do you know the company's [values](#)? Have you read its mission statement, says Noblet. If not, you're almost certainly not meeting expectations. It's not hard to overcome this one. Just ask.
3. **Not being a team player.** Yes, we know you like to work independently. The trouble is that in most workplaces "not being a team player" is seen as something negative, says Noblet. Anyone can learn how to be a team player. Here's how:
 - Get to know your workmates and respect them
 - Ask yourself "how could I be more flexible" instead of saying "no"
 - Play more of a role in group meetings and planning sessions
 - Look for solutions to problems faced by the team or individuals.
4. **Being unprepared for interviews.** Noblet laughs when he remembers being asked at his very first interview at age 20: "Do you know what it is we do?" He didn't, but he never made the mistake again. Thanks to the Internet there's no excuse to be unprepared, says Noblet. Read the company's website, catch up on news articles and know where to go for the interview.
5. **Not managing up.** The fine art of managing up is about ensuring your boss and the organisation look good. If you don't do it, you could be seen as a clock watcher. You need to go above and beyond the tasks required to do this. Bring your boss ideas, talk positively about him or her and come with solutions when you have problems. It will help you [get noticed](#).
6. **Overpromising and under-delivering.** 'Sure I can complete the stocktake by Friday' or

'no problems, we can build that capability into our sales system'. But really you can't and you're never going to deliver. When you don't, your boss and or colleagues are annoyed with you. Whilst it's tempting to tell the boss 'YES I CAN', it's better to under-promise and exceed expectations. "Employers respect you when you're realistic," says Noblet. You'll become known as someone who delivers.

7. **Turning down opportunities because you're not ready.** Whether it's a project or [promotion](#), don't find excuses not to take on the extra responsibility. Don't be scared, says Noblet. Your boss offered you that project or job because he or she thought you were capable. Step out of your comfort zone and move forward in your career.