

INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

Following are a series of best practice suggestions and tips to aid you in conducting interviews effectively.

- **Prepare.** Many hiring managers neglect to review a candidate's paperwork prior to the interview. Reviewing a résumé in front of the interviewee is an indication of disorganization and poor preparation.
- **Set the tone.** Let your candidates know that you're glad to meet them. Also, express your appreciation for the time they've taken to come in. Explain how the interview will proceed and then try to follow that format as closely as possible.
- **Prepare a script.** Don't underestimate the value of preparing several questions beforehand. Too often, busy managers forget until it's too late what they wanted to ask. Ask open-ended questions as well as ones that might elicit a more detailed response. For example, you may say, "Tell me what led you to apply for this position." Later, you could ask, "We're very deadline oriented here; could you tell me about experiences during which a deadline might have been difficult to meet?" And then listen carefully to the responses. Try to ask a good mix of questions — those that give insight into behavior, elicit opinion, demonstrate experience, and reveal background. When the interview is over you should have a fairly good sense of the person's likes and dislikes, along with their strengths and weaknesses.
- **Listen to your instincts.** If a candidate seems too good to be true or seems to lack the skills you need, be honest with yourself as you assess the meeting. In some cases, you may need to pose more pointed questions.
- **Know what you want.** If you don't know the skill set required for the open position, chances are you might not ask the right questions, which may confuse the candidate. Make a list of what you're looking for and then ask pointed questions so that when the candidate walks out the door you know whether or not he or she is a viable choice.
- **Manage your time.** If you've set aside an hour for an interview, do your best to stick with that schedule. But be prepared, too, to cut the meeting short and jump to the more concluding questions. Don't waste your time or the candidate's by stretching the meeting out. If there's no match, no amount of conversation is going to change that.
- **Write it down.** Forget about remembering everything that transpires during an interview. You'll want to take notes so that you can review the meeting at a later time. This will be especially important if you're interviewing many people for the same position

SAMPLE QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE AVOIDED

You cannot ask any question during an interview that relates to an applicants race, color, religion, age, gender, national origin, or disability. In some states, inquires about a candidate's sexual orientation is illegal. The following questions are a dew of the questions that should be avoided

Age

1. When were you born?
2. How old are you?
3. How old are your children?
4. Do you have the energy/stamina to meet the demands of this job?
5. Do you view your maturity as one of your strengths?

National Origin or Race

- Where were you born?
- Where is your family from?
- What is the origin of your name?
- Is English your first language?
- What is your race?

Religion

- Do you belong to any religious organizations?
- What are your religious obligations?
- What holidays do you observe?

Sex or Gender

- What is your maiden name?
- Do you have any children?
- Do you intend to have children?
- What child care arrangements have you made?
- Are you married?
- Are you gay/lesbian/bisexual/heterosexual
- Why aren't you married?
- Who do you live with?
- Do you have a significant other?
- Will you feel comfortable in a conservative environment?

Mental History

- Have you ever been treated for any mental condition?

- Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist?

Handicap/Disability

If the applicant has an obvious disability, under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Connecticut law, employers may not ask about the existence, nature, or severity of a disability.

But if there is a question concerning the performance of a job-related function, employers may ask non-disability related questions such as:

- Can you perform the (essential or marginal) functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation?
- If the applicant requests an accommodation, the employer may ask for documentation of the applicant's disability.

Medical Information

- Have you ever been treated for any of the following conditions or diseases?
- Have you ever been treated for any mental condition?
- Is there any health-related reason you may not be able to perform this job?
- Have you had a major illness in the last five years?
- How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year?
- Do you have any physical defects which preclude you from performing certain kinds of work? IF yes, describe such defects and specific work limitations.
- Are you taking any prescribed drugs?
- Have you ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism?
- Have you ever filed for workers' compensation benefits?

The following questions should be asked only when there is a bona fide, job specific reason to ask them. If asked of one candidate, they should be asked of all candidates for the same position.

Acceptable Alternative Questions

- Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job's attendance or travel arrangements?
- Are you able to work in the United States on an unrestricted basis?
- Are you able to perform the duties on the job description with or without reasonable accommodations?
- Have you ever been convicted of a felony crime?
- If hire, can you provide proof that you are at least 18 years of age?
- Do you have any conflicts that would prevent you from working the schedule discussed?
- What languages do you speak fluently?
- Have you worked under any other professional name or nickname?
- Do you have any relatives currently working for this company?
- Would you have any problem working overtime, if required?
- Would anything prohibit you from making a long-term commitment to the position?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY ASK

1. What school, college or vocational program did you attend? Did you graduate? Tell me about your experiences there?
2. What degrees do you hold?
3. Tell me about the worst and best class you've ever taken?
4. What is your experience with (a particular software application)?
5. What were some of your specific responsibilities in a previous job?
6. How many words a minute do you type? (if necessary for the job)
7. Do you speak, read, or understand (a particular language)? (if necessary for the job)

Sample Open-Ended Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your most challenging and least challenging job.
3. Tell me about a job you liked the most and least and why.
4. Tell me about a time when you tried to do something and failed.
5. Where do you see yourself in five years?
6. What are your ambitions for the future?
7. Why did you apply for this job? Why are you seeking a position with our company?
8. What things are most important to you in a work situation?
9. Describe some situations in which you have worked under pressure or met deadlines?
10. What qualifications do you have that you feel would make you successful here?
11. Why are you leaving your present job?
12. In your last position, what were the things that you liked the most or least?
13. Tell me about your most significant accomplishment?

14. If I spoke to your previous employer, what he/she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
15. What motivates you the most?
16. Describe what you feel would be an ideal work environment?
17. Why should I hire you?

When analyzing an applicant's answers, the interviewer should look for the following:

- Specific knowledge of a topic, citing examples to support statements.
- Candid answers, talking openly about mistakes or weaknesses and what they did to correct it, what they learned, or how they would do it differently.
- Focus on why the situation occurred and what they learned, not just what happened.
- Admission of some failures and analysis of successes; maybe even admitting when they were due to pure luck.
- Strong self awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, and limits.
- Honesty.
- Eye Contact.
- Manner in which they speak (clear or mumbling).
- Movements and mannerisms- be aware of anything unnatural.