



Helping Organizations Define and Develop Top Talent

Interviewing & Applicant Screening

Interviewing job applicants gives you the opportunity to learn more about their skills, work style, personality, interests and suitability for the position. It is also a minefield full of potential lawsuits for those who are not aware of the law and what may be asked. If you would like to test your knowledge about the interviewing process, take our true and false quiz. Following the quiz, you will find the correct answers to the questions as well as some helpful tips designed to assist you in the interviewing process and to help you avoid potential problems.

Quiz

- 1) During an interview, you may ask a female applicant about whether or not she has children or is planning to have children in the near future. It is suitable for you to ask this question to find out if the applicant has any childcare issues that may interfere with her work schedule.
- 2) It is appropriate to inquire with the candidate you are interviewing if they belong to any clubs, societies, lodges or organizations to find out if he/she is a well-rounded individual.
- 3) It is appropriate during an interview to inquire if your applicant is able to speak any foreign languages.

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4) During an interview you should ask your candidate if he/she is a recent college graduate to find out how long they have been out of school and in the job market.

5) While performing a reference check on the candidate you are considering for hire, you may ask a former employee about the applicant's past attendance record. However, it would be inappropriate to inquire about what type of illness kept the employee sick for three weeks.

Correct Answers

1) **False**

Keep in mind that when you are interviewing a job candidate that any question that is prohibited on a job application is similarly prohibited in an interview. You may not ask an applicant if she is pregnant, has children or is planning to have them. If you know an applicant has children, you may not ask whether he/she has made provisions for childcare.

2) **False**

Be careful when asking about hobbies or outside activities. It is discriminatory to ask about clubs, societies, lodges or organizations to which the applicant belongs that might indicate race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, etc.

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3) False

Don't ask what language the applicant knows unless the job specifically requires the applicant to speak and/or write a particular language fluently.

4) False

It is rarely appropriate to ask an applicant's age, although there are a few exceptions to this. For example, if required for the job, you may ask if the applicant is over a particular age such as hiring for a bartender or cocktail server. Be aware that some questions about an applicant's education may be interpreted as seeking information about age. While it is fine to ask where an applicant went to school, asking what year he/she graduated from high school or college, or inquiring if he/she is a "recent graduate" may be deemed discriminatory.

5) True

When contacting references, the key to gaining maximum relevant information about an applicant without creating liability for invasion of privacy is to ask questions related directly to job performance. For example, inquiring about the applicant's past attendance record is fine, but questions about the type of illness that kept the employee on sick leave for three weeks is not.

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Build Rapport – It is necessary to make candidates feel comfortable enough to open up. Should include a warm and cordial greeting, small talk, and a smooth transition into the interview.

Ask Open-Ended Questions – You should ask the applicant questions that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”. This enables you to obtain sufficient information to supplement the resume, aimed at getting the applicant to talk.

Ask Probing Questions – Additional questions in response to previous answers that enable the interviewer to get detailed specific information about an individual’s past performance. Used to nail down generalities and get beyond what the applicant wanted to tell.

Silence – Listen and let the candidates talk; the candidates will tend to break the silence barrier and perhaps give more detail to answers, give the candidates time to formulate answers.

Restatement – Paraphrasing of what you think the candidates meant. Allows applicant to feel like he/she is understood; can encourage more information and response.

Nonverbal Acceptance – Smile, nod, eye contact.

Attentiveness – Good eye contact, lean forward, acknowledge what the candidates say, maintain good posture.

Pats on the Back – Praise the candidates for something he/she has accomplished. Tends to encourage the candidates to talk more.

Downplay of Negatives – Encourage the person to talk about a problem. Downplay the negative so that the candidates feel comfortable talking about the problem.

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