

Can you send me a list of questions to ask?

“My last boss just couldn’t be pleased. For example, he would tell me to not do something without first checking with him. But, sometimes I couldn’t find him to do that and then, when he finally got back to me, he would get mad because I wasn’t doing anything. But the really neat thing about him was that he didn’t mind if you needed to leave work early.”

This might be the response of a job applicant when asked by the interviewer, “Tell me what you liked and disliked about your last supervisor?” What do you think you might learn from those four short sentences? Do you think that person has a lack of initiative or is someone who follows instructions well? By closely listening to some additional follow-up questions, you could probably find out a great deal about the kind of employee this person is.

We had a lot of response from our last e-blast concerning interviews. First of all, I do not want to intimidate anyone who is required to do interviews. Many of us are put into that job without any training and expected to do a good job. However, now more than ever, it really takes some skill to be an effective interviewer. But, just like any job, you can always learn and become more skilled so the purpose of this e-blast is to give you some ideas on how you might ‘hone’ your interviewing skills.

The first priority of a good interviewer is to understand what result they are after. That result should be finding an employee that fits into your organization well and meets the expectations placed upon him or her. By constructing questions based upon the specific job and the specific location, there is a greater likelihood that can happen.

It may take some time and effort initially to develop your interview questions but, once you have developed them for a particular position, you can then use them over and over. Think about a funnel when you are coming up with your questions. The funnel is wide at the top where you put the liquid in but very narrow at the bottom so the liquid is very focused when it comes out. Your questions should be constructed in the same way.

An example of a poorly constructed interview question: “Can you use Microsoft Word?” This question is like many of the personality tests on the market today. Many people are going to give the answer that they feel the interviewer wants to hear—“yes”. But, are they power users of this computer program or do they know a little about it, or do they really know how to use it at all? If the interviewer is satisfied with the answer and moves onto the next area of the interview, they have learned little. However, do not feel that you cannot use this type of question. But, you must be prepared with secondary and tertiary questions that elicit the information you are seeking.

An example of a better way to construct the above question: “Give me examples of how you used Microsoft Word in your previous job?” This question forms the top of the funnel—it is a broad question. The way the question is phrased forces the job applicant to be rather concise or focused with his answers. You should still have your secondary and tertiary questions available but there is a good chance you will not need to use them.

Visit www.staffdevelopmentservices.com/question for more examples of primary, secondary and tertiary questions to help you become an even better interviewer!

**“To be successful you must accept all challenges that come your way.
You can’t just accept the ones you like. ”**

Mike Gafka

Best Regards,
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