General Guidelines for Conducting an Interview

Both the success and the validity of an interview as a selection tool depend to a large extent on the manner in which the interview is organized and conducted. All members of the interview team are to be advised that any notes taken during the interview may become part of the public record. Once an interview has been scheduled, an administrator should find it helpful to follow these guidelines:

1. Establish rapport. Treat all applicants with fairness, equality, and consistency.
2. Describe the job and organization
3. Explain the purpose of the interview.
4. Use the same structured interview guide with all applicants. Ask the same general questions and require the same standards for all applicants. Follow a patterned, structured interview plan. Apply the same general criteria to all applicants.
5. Federal, state, and local laws prohibit employers from asking certain questions (either directly or indirectly) during the screening/selection process unless valid job-related requirements can be proved. Questions in the following areas should be avoided: age, race, sex, national origin, religion, marital status (married, single, divorced, engaged, living with someone), dependents, child care problems, housing (own home, rent, live with parents), arrest records, health status, type of discharge from military, willingness to work on Saturday (or Sunday) unless inability to assign the person to such work would cause “chaotic personnel problems”, any information from minority or female applicants not routinely requested of white or male applicants.

YOU CANNOT ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:
A. race or color;
B. gender, unless job-related;
C. applicant's religion or religious customs and holidays; recommendations from church officials;
D. if applicant, spouse, or parents are native-born or naturalized; date of citizenship; or for other proof of citizenship before hiring; (Proof of citizenship required on I-9 Form)
E. marital status before hiring, the number and age of children, who cares for them, and if applicant plans to have more;
F. to see military service records about military service with any country other than U.S.;
G. nationality, racial, or religious affiliation of school attended;
H. how foreign language ability was acquired;
I. inquiries about arrests, (as contrasted with convictions), except pending charges;
J. listing of all clubs to which the applicant belongs or has belonged;
K. that a candidate provide a photograph before hiring or that one be taken during an interview;
YOU CAN ASK:

Q. for applicant's current and previous address and phone number;
R. whether applicant is eighteen (18) years of age or older;
S. whether the applicant is lawfully authorized to work in the United States;
T. if applicant has served in the U.S. armed forces including branch of service and rank attained; job-related experience acquired in the military;
U. academic, professional, or vocational school attended; language skills such as reading and writing, foreign languages, grades, degrees, majors, etc.;
V. criminal convictions; any pending felony charges;
W. personal and instructional and other work references not relating to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or ancestry;
X. willingness to perform job functions;
Y. willingness to work required work schedule and under prescribed working conditions.

Sample Interview Guide

DATE ______  TARGET POSITION: Executive Secretary to the Board

APPLICANT'S NAME ________________________________________________

INTERVIEWER'S NAME _____________________________________________

INTERVIEWER'S TITLE _____________________________________________

Preparation Checklist

( ) Review application materials for past jobs/experiences which are most relevant to the interview.

( ) Make an estimate of the time that will be available to cover each question.

Outline for Opening the Interview:

_______ Greet applicant giving name and position.

_______ Explain interview purpose.
1. Acquaint the interviewer(s) and applicant.
2. Help organization make fair decision.
3. Help applicant understand organization and position.
   a. Describe position (include job qualifications and performance responsibilities)
   b. Give information on company (include specific employment requirements for the position; make sure applicant has reviewed the job description and can perform essential functions.)

Describe interview plan:
1. Brief review of past jobs/experiences.
2. Questions to get specific information about those jobs/experiences.
3. Information on organization and position.
4. Answer applicant's questions about organization and position.
5. Both will benefit from using this plan.
6. Will be taking notes.
7. Approximately ___ minutes will be allotted for each question.

WORK BACKGROUND:

Job Experience: ________________________________________________________________

1) Briefly describe your present/previous work situations. What were/are your major responsibilities/duties?

Managing Conflict

Dealing effectively with others in an antagonistic situation; using appropriate interpersonal styles and methods to reduce tension or conflict between two or more people.

Key Actions

Opens discussions effectively—Establishes a clear and compelling rationale for resolving the conflict.

Clarifies the current situation—Collects information from relevant sources to understand the conflict.

Remains open to all sides—Objectively views the conflict from all sides.

Stays focused on resolution—Stays focused on resolving the conflict and avoids personal issues and attacks.

Develops others' and own ideas—Presents and seeks potential solutions or positive courses of action.

Initiates action—Takes positive action to resolve the conflict in a way that addresses the issue, dissipates the conflict, and maintains the relationship.

Closes discussions with clear summaries—Summarizes to ensure that all are aware of agreements and required actions.

Tell me about a time when you came up with an effective rationale for resolving a conflict. What did you do? What happened?

Describe the most difficult conflict you've been involved in. What actions did you take to resolve the conflict? What happened?
DOCUMENTATION – “IF IT ISN’T DOCUMENTED, IT NEVER HAPPENED”

Document Everything! Whether evaluating an employee’s performance or administering some form of discipline, make sure you keep a written record of events...even if it’s just a note to yourself.

BENEFITS OF DOCUMENTATION:
- Provides Recognition
- Prevents Later Denial
- Supports Future Supervisors
- Minimizes Misunderstandings
- Provides Emphasis
- Reveals Patterns of Conduct
- Aids Your Memory
- Stimulates Thought
- Reveals Supervisory Pattern

KEY COMPONENTS OF DOCUMENTATION
- Include Facts
- State what the employee should have done (the rule employees are required to follow)
- State what the impact of the negative behavior is on the company
- Provide suggestions or directives stating what you want the employee to do to improve
- Inform the employee of any of the documentation that will be placed in the personnel file—ask for his/her signature and provide a copy

HOW DO I DOCUMENT?
- Be complete and clear – factually specific
- Present all relevant information
- Clearly identify the problem clearly identified (would a third party understand the issue?) State any rules violated
- Provide specific examples

Examples: What’s good, what would you change in these examples?
“On May 24, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. you were directed by your supervisor, Donald Duck, to repair the lock on the door to room 715. At the end of your shift, the lock still had not been repaired.

“Your job with the company requires that you be present and perform your job duties so as not to adversely impact the efficient operations of the company. Your repeated absence from work has adversely impacted the operations of the front office and staff morale. When you are out, others must perform your essential functions in addition to their own. “

“Your conduct on February 5, 2010, was discourteous and disrupting of other employees. Using your cell phone at your desk during the work day to make calls of a personal nature disrupts the work of other employees. You are expected to refrain from engaging in personal phone calls at your desk during your scheduled work time. “