**What an applicant has done is a better indicator of future job success than what the applicant believes, feels, thinks, or knows. The following questions are useful in getting applicants to discuss work realities rather than notions or suppositions.**

1. Tell me how you increased teamwork among a previous group with whom you worked.
2. Describe what you liked and disliked about how you were managed in previous positions.
3. Recall a time when you made what you consider a mistake or a bad decision on the job. How did you handle the situation?
4. In your past work life, what kind of co-workers or clients rubbed you the wrong way? How did you respond?
5. Tell me about a time when you set specific work goals for yourself. How did things turn out?
6. Describe a time when you had to criticize or discipline the performance of someone who worked with you or for you. How did you handle the situation? What was the result?
7. Walk me through the major highlights of your career so far and tell me where you want to go next.
8. Tell me about a work emergency or crisis of some kind in which you were involved. What was your role? What did you do?
9. We’ve all felt stress in our work lives. Tell me about work-related situations that cause stress for you. How do you typically handle such stress?
10. In your most recent position, what did you learn? How did you apply this learning?
11. Tell me about a challenge you faced in a previous work situation. How did you respond?
12. Every manager has to learn to delegate well. Describe a work situation in which you delegated responsibility successfully. Then tell me about a time when your delegation of responsibility did not work out well. How did you handle that situation?
13. What approaches worked best for you in the past in communicating with your boss? With your co-workers? With your subordinates?
14. Tell me about a time when you took charge as a leader in a work situation without being formally assigned to that role by your boss.
15. What experiences have you had working with people of different ethnicities, age, or physical ability levels?
16. In the past have you had a preference for working mainly with men or women? Explain your answer.
17. Tell me about a time when you felt you went beyond the call of duty in helping a client.

Useful Probes for Interviewing

Although probing for more extensive answers from candidates is not allowed in strictly structured interviewing environments, the practice is still widely used. It can be applied fairly if each candidate is given the advantage of approximately the same degree of probing by interviewers.

1. Please clarify what you mean by ...
2. How did you feel when that happened?
3. Why do you think you reacted as you did?
4. Did you consider other options at the time?
5. Please give me more details about ...
6. How do you think others felt about your actions at the time?
7. Looking back on the experience, how do you see things now?
8. What was going through you mind when you took that action?
9. Did the outcome of your action satisfy you?

10 Interview No-No’s – Common Mistakes Made During An In-Depth Interview

In-depth interviews are decisive for the interviewer and the interviewee in understanding what the job requires and what the employee has to offer. Don't make the mistake of not selling the position to an applicant by neglecting these 10 common errors.

1. **Don't be afraid to ask tough questions.**

If you uncover anything during the reference checking or employment history review process that warrants tough questions, do not be afraid to ask about it during the interview. It is important that you begin your relationship with a new hire on a frank basis.

1. **Don't oversell your company.**

Interviewers make mistakes by bragging about how things are booming, while not giving specifics to back up claims. He follows this up with a pat statement like "Since the company was founded a little over a decade ago, we've been on the right path and that road is now smoother than ever." An adept interviewer will lay out the strengths and weaknesses of the firm, putting them in perspective. Do not paint an unrealistic picture of your company in order to lure an applicant on board.

1. **Don't ask for information you already have.**

Interviewers ask, "Why don't you tell me about yourself? Let's see, how long ago did you start your current position?" This shows a lack of interest in the candidate since this information was obtained earlier. The interview should be used to obtain new information or to confirm or reject tentative information already acquired.

1. **Don't allow yourself to be interrupted unless there is an emergency.**

The interview is sometimes interrupted twice, first by a salesperson sticking his head in the door and then by a telephone call. Too many interviewers allow the interview to become disjointed by not taking steps to prevent interruptions. Your office door should be closed. Put calls and messages on hold.

1. **Don't talk too much.**

Interviewers tell applicants, "Well, I'm sure you have a lot of questions about the company and the job. Let me try to anticipate some of them for you." This is a classic case of an interviewer who loves to hear his own voice. At the most, an interviewer should say one word for every four spoken by the person being interviewed.

1. **Don't use the interview as your therapy.**

Too many interviewers use their sessions to spout out their concerns about the company. When an interviewer vents emotions in an interview, he or she may feel better, but may lose a prospective employee in the bargain.

1. **Don't be afraid to spell out in detail the requirements of the position.**

When one applicant got a word in edgewise and asked about the specific requirements of the job, she was brushed off with the pat answer, "But then, I wouldn't be concerned about that if I were you. I've always believed that if you can sell, you can sell." It is imperative that people know what is required of them before beginning a job. The interview is the time to outline the job's requirements, as well as your criteria for evaluating success in the role.

1. **Don't gossip or swap war stories.**

Many interviewers try to find familiar ground they can tread over with the applicant. Though this might seem like a comfortable way to get an interview under way, inquiring about friends and relatives can get things sidetracked, wasting a huge amount of time. The interview should be devoted to obtaining as much information as possible in order to make a sound hiring decision.

1. **Don't put the applicant on the defensive.**

There is no point in creating unnecessary tension during the interview. Knowing an applicant's personality strengths and weaknesses is vital to making the best hiring decision. A speech embodying a long-held philosophy is inappropriate, but a frank discussion of the importance of detail in the job -- And how she might deal with the detail aspect of the job -- Would be constructive and would allow both people to make a more reasoned decision.

1. **Don't be afraid to make the interview as long, or as short, as you deem necessary.**

The final mistake commonly made is that interviews are concluded in an unnecessary rush. As interviewers notice the time, they realize they are late for another appointment and excuse themselves hurriedly. To be effective, the interview should make the fullest use of everyone's valuable time. There are not set guidelines on length, so long as you clearly spell out the anticipated length of the interview and so long as the time is spent wisely.

****Are You Ready for These Bone-chilling Questions?****

The best job candidates are asking the toughest questions -- Are you prepared to answer them?
- By John Kador

Superstars -- The most highly sought-after job candidates -- Can afford to be picky. Even in today's economy, the competition for the most talented contributors is brisk. For that reason, superstars can get away with asking prospective employers some very tough questions. If recruiters want these superstars, they had better be prepared.

    **"Candidates need an accurate job preview and it sometimes takes hard questions to get it," says Dr. John Sullivan, professor and head of human resources management at San Francisco State University. "The hiring manager's ability and willingness to answer these tough questions should be a major factor in any candidate's decision to accept an offer."**

The following are 15 of the toughest interview questions that recruiters must be prepared for:

1. What's the gross profit margin of the division I will be working in? What percentage of the total profit from the company does it generate? Is it increasing or decreasing?
2. What's your company's "killer application"? What percentage of the market share does it have? Will I be working on it?
3. Can you give me some examples of the best and worst aspects of the company's culture?
4. What makes this company a great place to work? What outside evidence (rankings or awards) do you have to prove this is a great place to work? What is the company going to do in the next year to make it better?
5. What would I see if I stood outside the front door at 5 o'clock? Would everyone be smiling? Staying late or leaving early? Would they be taking work home?
6. Lots of your competitors have great products and people programs. What is the deciding factor that makes this opportunity superior? Are you willing to make me some specific "promises" on what you will do to make this a great experience for me, if I accept a position?
7. Can you show me that the company has a diverse workforce and that it is tolerant of individual differences? Does it have affinity groups or similar programs that I might find beneficial? Is there a dress code? Can you give me an example of any "outrageous conduct" this firm tolerates that the competitors would not?
8. Does your company offer any "wow!" benefits? Pay for advanced degrees? Paid sabbaticals? On-site childcare? Relocation packages? Mentor program? How are these superior to your competitors? Job sharing? Flex-time arrangements? Telecommuting? Workout facilities?
9. When top performers leave the company, why do they leave and where do they usually go?
10. When was the last significant layoff? What criteria were used to select those to stay? What packages were offered to those that were let go?
11. Does the company have a program to significantly reward individuals that develop patents/ great products? Is there a program to help individuals "start" their own firms or subsidiary? Will I be required to fill out non-competed agreements?
12. How many approvals would it take (and how long) to get a new $110,000 project idea of mine approved? What percentage of employee-initiated projects in this job were approved last year?
13. How many days will it take for you (and the company) to make a hiring decision for this position?
14. Who are the "coolest" people on my team? What makes him or her "cool? Can I meet them? Who is the best and worst performer on the team and what was the difference in their total compensation last year? Sell me on this team and who I get to work with. What makes my closest co-workers fun/great people to work with?
15. What is your "learning plan" for me for my first six months? What competencies do you propose I will develop that I don't currently have? Which individual in the department can I learn the most from? What can he or she teach me? Can I meet them? Does the company have a specific program to advance my career?