

11 Key Hiring Questions You Should Ask

From LifeHealthPro.com

Have you ever made a wrong hire? Have you selected staff only to discover the person you hired should never have even been considered? University of Chicago research shows that 80 percent of the reason you choose employees is due to appearance. It also shows that your current interviewing skills only up your chances of selecting great people by 2 percent. The reason is candidates have more experience interviewing than you do. They are likely to tell you what you want to hear, not what you need to make informed decisions. Instead of hiring based on whether you like a candidate, use objective questions and evaluate the answers based on scores.

Ask all of your candidates the same questions and rate them according to how closely they adhere to the "correct" answers a perfect candidate would give. Simply invite the top three scorers back for a second interview for further evaluation.

If you use this measured approach, you will make fewer emotional decisions that often end up in lost time, money, momentum and morale.

Here are 11 questions you can ask:

1. Why did you leave your last job? (5)
2. How did you decide to select your last job? (5)
3. Let's assume you have been working here a year. What transpired to let you know it was a great place to work? (If they talk in terms of helping the company or their own career opportunities, full points are awarded.) (10)
4. What do you consider your biggest success? (10)
5. What do you consider your biggest failure? (10)
6. What is your biggest behavioral weakness? (10)
7. Ever cold called before? (20)
8. What are your goals? What is your plan to hit them? (5)
9. Who was your longest client (or the longest-running client of your company)? Why did they stay with you? (5)
10. Why do you want this job? (5)
11. Sell me this pen/pencil? (35)

Total possible points - 110

Bad answers get 0. Great answers get total credit.

If you are hiring staff, you need to also evaluate basic grammar skills. The basic math skills required for the job should also be tested. Here are two basic skill checks you can do with the candidates:

Ask them to solve a simple eighth-grade word problem. For example:

"If Jill went to the store with \$10 to buy milk for \$2.50, a newspaper for \$1 and get \$5 worth of gas, but took the milk back for a refund because it was spoiled, how much would she be left with?"

Dictate a paragraph to the candidate and ask them to write it out longhand. Check for spelling, grammar and whether you can actually read their writing.

Kerry Johnson, MBA, Ph.D. is a best-selling author and frequent speaker at financial planning and insurance conferences around the world.