

Hiring questions to ask & avoid

For legal and other reasons, it's important to ask the right questions during a job interview, and to avoid the wrong questions.

■ Legally, what *can* you ask and what *can't* you ask during a job interview?

Richard I. Lehr, general counsel to the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, lists 10 questions that provide solid, pertinent information about possible job candidates yet don't infringe on personal rights guaranteed by our legal system.

Here are the questions and their most effective phrasing, as Lehr related to Idaho Nursery Association members:

1. Is there any reason why we cannot rely on you to work when scheduled and to work weekends or overtime when necessary?
2. Have you missed work for any reason

other than vacation or holidays during the past three years?

3. There are times when the schedule for providing our service will be hectic due to the weather and other circumstances beyond your control. There may be a lot of pressure involved. What kinds of circumstances have you been in where you have had pressure deadlines to meet? How did it turn out? What did you do to achieve that result?

4. We want customers to think that the services we provide are better than our competitors'. What do you think would provide this result?

5. There are times when each of us must deal with people we don't like. Tell me about such situations you have been involved in. What did you do? How did it turn out?

6. There are times when we have to deal with customers who are very mad or disturbed about something, even though it is not our fault. Have you ever been involved in such a situation? What was the situation? How did you deal with it? What



Richard Lehr: ask hires the right questions

was the result? Looking back on it now, should you have dealt with it differently, and if so, how?

7. Were you ever placed in a situation where you were asked to compromise your values, and if so how did you handle it? Do you have any regrets about that now?

8. Do you recall any situation at work or away from work where you believe that

you were criticized unfairly? What was the situation? Why do you think it was unfair?

9. Are you most comfortable supervising others or being supervised? What were the attributes of the supervisor you most admired? What were the attributes of the supervisor you least admired?

10. What type of people have you most enjoyed working with? Describe those circumstances. Which individuals did you least enjoy working with, and why?

Remember, Lehr warns, that a relationship must exist between the answer to a question and the individual's ability to do the job. If not, the question may very well be illegal.

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