

Yesterday's *Daily Advisor* gave you 20 key questions to use in interviewing job candidates. Question content is key, of course, to getting the information you need. But so is another factor -- *interview technique*.

Here's an example of what we mean: Say you want to know how the jobseeker will function as part of a team. Would you say to the applicant, "You're a real team player, right?"

Of course not. That question telegraphs the answer you're looking for. The candidate will likely answer "yes," whether or not it's true.

In fact, that erroneous technique even has a name. It's called "broadcasting the answer." And it's one of the no-no's in a prewritten training meeting on interview techniques for managers and supervisors found in our "everything-HR-in-one-resource" website, *HR.BLR.com*. Here are a few more tips on interviewing techniques from the same prewritten training meeting:

**--Plan the Interview.** Writing the questions you'll ask in advance provides multiple benefits: It aids consistency by making the same inquiries of all applicants (an important protection against later discrimination claims). It avoids the "double thinking" you have to do to formulate the next question while listening to the answer from the last one. You'll conduct the interview with more confidence, which, in turn, will transfer to the jobseeker, putting everyone more at ease. And you won't forget anything important.

**--Lock in the Logistics.** Be sure to confirm interview time and place, to supply travel and parking directions, and to alert Reception that your candidate is coming. The whole process will go more smoothly if you start it right.

**--Ask only job-related questions,** and ask them in an open-ended manner. "Tell me how you handled \_\_\_\_\_ in your last job" is much more effective than "Have you handled \_\_\_\_\_?", which may elicit only a yes or no answer. Always try to use "why" and "how" in place of "what."

**--Use the "echo" technique** to probe for more information. That's done by simply repeating the candidate's last answer. Example: If a jobseeker says, "I left my last job because it didn't challenge me," reply with, "You left because it didn't challenge you?" You're almost certain to an explanation of the original answer. A short silence following the original answer can also open the door for more.

**--Take notes,** but don't make doing so a focus of the interview.

**--Avoid questions that probe protected areas,** such as age, national origin, marital status, and health. Among its thousands of HR aids, *HR.BLR.com* offers a very useful checklist of acceptable and unacceptable ways of asking the same question. You can examine it [here](#) by signing up for a free trial. (No obligation to purchase.)