

7 THINGS INTERVIEWERS MUST NOT SAY DURING AN INTERVIEW



Are you currently interviewing candidates for the first time? Maybe you're worried about how to phrase a particular question without overstepping the mark or perhaps you simply want to make sure that your company's interview questions aren't too imposing or break legal boundaries. Whether you are interviewing for the first time or would like a point of reference – make sure you avoid any awkwardness by staying clear of the following topics:

1. I was looking at your Facebook profile and I noticed that...

It's no secret that many potential employers will research the interviewing candidate on social media and/or give them a quick google ahead of the interview – and this is fine! However, steer clear of mentioning your findings or personal opinion about a candidate based on their social media presence. Not only is this a subjective opinion that you are forming – it's highly unlikely what they got up to last Saturday night has any correlation to their ability to perform the required tasks for the role which they applied for!

2. Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

Aside from being completely unrelated and weird, this is an intrusive question and it can make candidates feel very uncomfortable! If you would like to make general conversation stay clear of anything that could be misinterpreted by the candidate and opt for safer questions about the weather or maybe their plans for the rest of the day.

3. How would you manage in a team full of men/women?

Whilst it's obviously important to ensure that any potential hire will fit well into the current team dynamic make sure you avoid questions which highlight a candidate's gender or personal characteristics. The fact that the candidate is female/male in a predominantly gender biased office doesn't impede their ability to do the job. Moreover, if you ask this question and the candidate doesn't get the job you are at risk of the candidate thinking that you made a sexist decision.

4. How much do you want to earn?

Quite often, this is seen as an unnecessary and awkward question by candidates. If asked this question, you may picture yourself in your penthouse on the beach – of course, everyone wants to earn as much as possible. Instead, based on the answers given by a candidate during the interview process you should be able to gauge how much the company can justify allocating towards the salary for this candidate against the general market and the skills that they have to do the job.

5. I'm interviewing another X people this week for the same job; why should I hire you?

Aside from the fact that you're asking a candidate to compare themselves to people whom they know nothing about it's a very awkwardly phrased question which could easily rub a candidate up the wrong way. Instead, ask them (based on your conversation/their communication about the responsibilities of the job role) how their experience and personal traits could add value to the organisation. From this answer, you can personally make comparisons between the answers which they give and the answers given by other candidates throughout the process.

6. Do you have any problems socialising in the office on Fridays?

Whether office socializing is part of your work culture or not, it shouldn't matter whether someone likes to go out for a drink on a Friday as it has no bearing on their ability to do the job they are interviewing for. Ensuring that there is a good, diverse team will mean that your workforce will have mixed interests and skill sets but these should complement each other.

The easiest way to compare this to real life is to think of your office team as a football team – whilst it would be great to have a Lionel Messi, if you had 11 Lionel's and no defensive players / goalkeeper your team would have a fundamental defence problem! Instead of directly asking a candidate about work socializing, make sure that during the interview you highlight the company culture and any other additional perks/incentives that may interest them.

7. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

This is why this question is ineffective – how many people can truly say that they are in exactly the position/role/walk of life which they envisaged this long ago? It's highly unlikely that you are going to be able to effectively estimate economic change and the impact that this will have on the need to evolve in the industry. All the candidate is going to be able to answer in a roundabout way is that they want to be as successful as possible or they'll throw a textbook high-flying job title at you. You'd hope that you'd be able to gauge from the previous answers given throughout the process whether this candidate has a genuine drive to do well. Instead, ask them an open question about their career goals and how they think that this role would help them to reach those goals.

Whether a candidate is successful or not you want them to enjoy the experience and leave the interview process feeling like your company is one that they would like to work for, whether that's now or in the future. Bad interview practice doesn't bode well for a company's reputation, especially with online review sites like Glassdoor at the candidate's fingertips in an age where the importance of a company's online brand is only ever increasing. Make sure you represent your brand in the best possible way by conducting a professional interview, stay away from personal questions and couple it with detailed constructive interview feedback and timely responses.

*If you are unsure what questions you should be asking at interview, **DSA Executive** can help you prepare an in-depth interview programme for you and your managers to follow. This will not only ensure that all candidates are treated fairly, but will alleviate any tendencies to ask unnecessary and inappropriate questions. More importantly, the questions will help to identify the strongest candidates and those that will best "fit" the business, the culture and the scope of the role.*

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