



The 2 Questions You Should Always Ask in an Interview

We tend to focus our attention on recruiters and employers when looking for a job and that makes a lot of sense. Recruiters, after all, are the gatekeepers. They determine whether or not we even get in the door to have an interview. And, employers, of course, deserve a lot of scrutiny as it's their culture and leadership which determine an organization's prospects for success (and our future employment).

It's a logical approach, but it is also insufficient to ensure success. If our goal isn't simply to get hired – if what we're trying to do is get employed and stay that way – then we have to devote as much time and effort to evaluating the one person who will most determine that outcome. And, that person is our new boss. They set the conditions under which we will work and they are responsible for ensuring we have the necessary resources and support to perform at our peak.

How can you assess a prospective boss? They are always included among those with whom you meet when invited in for an interview, so use that session to learn what you can about them. Your goal, however, is not to acquire personal information, but rather to assess their leadership style and principles.

Interview the Boss-to-Be

As we all know, bosses can perform their job in three different ways: hands-on, hands-off and somewhere in between. The first evaluation we must make, therefore, is of their leadership style. Do they, for example, provide each person in their unit with a lot of direction and closely monitor their accomplishment of the assigned work? Or, do they provide a minimum of direction and expect each worker to find their way on their own? Do they welcome questions and requests for guidance from those in their unit or would they prefer that workers figure things out on their own?

There's no right or wrong answer – one leadership style may be perfect in one unit and an entirely different style might work better in another. What we want to know, therefore, is whether or not we're comfortable with the style of the person who would be our new boss. That presupposes we've thought about and identified the style that works best for us. With that as our baseline we can ask a boss-to-be the first of our interview questions: **How do you assign and oversee each person's work in your group?**

Bosses can also come with any one of three very different sets of principles: good, bad or mixed. Unfortunately, there are bosses who abuse their workers by creating debilitating working conditions or by their own biased or coarse behavior. They create toxic working environments that sap the energy, commitment and, eventually, the performance of those they supervise. So, if we go to work for such bad bosses, we set ourselves up for failure on-the-job and for a serious setback to our career.

Good bosses, on the other hand, are like a springboard. They provide the inspiration and role model for our own success. They recognize us when we make a contribution, encourage us when we are stymied and shore us up when we need help. Good bosses enable us to be as good as we can be on-the-job, and only that kind of performance provides us with the security we all seek in today's economy. So, our second interview question for a boss-to-be should ask: **How do you see your role both in the unit as a whole and with each of the people who work for you?**

Yes, of course, there are other questions we can ask during an interview. We need to make sure we thoroughly understand what the job entails and what the expectations of us will be if we take it. While such insights are important, however, they will not ensure our success. More than any other single factor, it's the character and values of our prospective supervisor that will determine how we fare on-the-job. So, the best way to assess our prospects is to interview that person – our boss-to-be.

Thanks for reading,

Peter

Visit me at Weddles.com

Peter Weddle is the author of over two dozen employment-related books, including *A Multitude of Hope: A Novel About Rediscovering the American Dream*, *The Success Matrix: Wisdom from the Web on How to Get Hired & Not Be Fired*, *WEDDLE's 2011/12 Guide to Employment Sites on the Internet*, *The Career Activist Republic*, and *Work Strong, Your Personal Career Fitness System*. Get them at Amazon.com and www.Weddles.com today.