

APSEA So Chap. Mini-Trng Session February 2013

TOPIC:

“Your Turn To Ask Questions In The Job Interview”

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How many times have we heard, “Do you have any questions?”, at the end of the interview.?

When this question is asked in the interview, surprisingly, the most common answer is “No.”

Not only is this the wrong answer, you have missed an opportunity to find out information about the Office or Branch you want to work in. It is important for you to ask questions; not just any questions, but questions relating to the job position, the Branch, and the Office/Department..

Example: Two candidates are interviewing for the same job. They are both asked the same question at the end of their interview - “Do you have any questions?”

Henry asks, “I was wondering about benefits, and when they would become effective? Also, what is the yearly vacation allowance? And, does the company match on the 401K plan?”

These are not the best questions to ask at this time. Assuming that this is the first interview, it is premature to ask about benefits. This is a “What’s in it for me?” question, and could be interpreted as self-centered, and lacking interest in the job position itself.

The next candidate, Chris, says, “No, I think you just about covered everything that I wanted to know. I’m sure I’ll have more questions if I get selected for the job position” . This is a very passive response, which doesn’t demonstrate interest or imagination. Once you get the job, if you get the job, it may be too late to ask questions.

It is important for you to ask questions to find out about the challenges of the Unit and the Job you applied for . In some cases the interviewer will be listening to hear the types of questions you ask. The best questions will come as a result of your listening carefully to what is asked during the interview. A good answer would be:

“Yes, I do have some questions. From what you’ve been asking me during the interview, it sounds like you have problems communicating with other governmental agencies. Can you tell me a little more about the current situation, and what the first challenges would be for the person selected to fill the position?”.

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This answer shows interest in the problems presented in this position - and how you could be the possible solution. It is also an opportunity to get a sense of what will be expected. By preparing ahead of time you can think about what information you need to know before you consider accepting the position you are interviewing for, if selected.

You will have to use your judgment about the number of questions you ask, or when to ask them. Think of this as a conversation. There will be an appropriate time to ask certain types of questions, like those about work schedules, benefits and vacation. To be on the safe side, it is best to read the Mission Statement, Goals & Objectives of the Unit and concentrate on questions about the responsibilities identified in the Duty Statement for the position, until you get the actual offer.

Appropriate questions to ask depending on the timing and the person interviewing you:

About the Unit, (Branch or Office)

What do you consider to be this Unit's biggest challenge now and in the future?

Why would someone want to come to work here? Careful, (Could be turned around to you – “Why would YOU like to come to work here?”)

If I asked one of your employees, “What is the best thing about working here?”
What do you think he/she would say?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this Unit, (Branch, or Office)?

What qualities do you look for in employees who join this Unit?

What would be the challenges I would face during probation?

How has this job been performed in the past? What changes would you like to see?

What are your concerns about this job position and the person you hire?

When you change your present way of thinking and begin to think of the interview as a two-way process you will see that it is important for you to find out as much as possible about the Unit, Branch, or Office, before & during the interview. Questions will give you the opportunity to find out if this is where you really want to work before you say “Yes”, if selected to fill the vacant position.

See you at the next APSEA Mtg where we will continue to discuss these Mini-Trng sessions. Pp