

# INFORMATION JOB APPLICANTS ARE RELUCTANT TO SHARE DURING AN INTERVIEW

***"What makes the difference between you winning or losing out on the hire?"***

by Mary Newgard | Capstone Search Group

You are competing with another agency for the same candidate. What makes the difference between you winning or losing out on the hire? The answer for me is an exceptional interview process. 2021 taught us that the saying "the early bird gets the worm" is 100% true.

Insurance organizations with efficient hiring processes more successfully hire top talent. This starts with gathering critical information that candidates are often reluctant to share as early as possible. Below are my suggestions for how to phrase interview questions to collect the information you need.

## 1) Compensation

It's a no brainer and yet over 50% of the time when hiring managers arrive at the offer stage, they still have not asked the candidate for their compensation expectation.

Ask the question: "What is your 'easy yes' offer?" Now, applicants can envision the offer letter and help you fill in the details. Ask for salary, bonus (incentive and signing), PTO, benefits, additional perks, T&E, home office equipment, and start date.



## 2) Separation Details

With so much acquisition activity in the market, most agency executives and experienced producers are bound by employment contracts.

Ask the question: "Did you sign an employment agreement or non-compete?" Request a copy to read through the terms, earn out details, and payback clauses.

## 3) Relocation

The person appears to be a local candidate, but what if two, three, or five years down the road they want to relocate? This applies to candidates of all ages, so you cannot stereotype based on total career experience.

Ask the question: "At any point do you think relocation is in your future?" Then, go on to explain what your policies and support are for employees through transfers, flexible schedules, telecommuting, or remote/work-from-home.





#### 4) Fear of Change

A candidate willing to interview and a candidate ready to make a job change are two totally different people. Due to the prevalence of counteroffers and reneges, you need to know the applicant's appetite for risk.

Ask the question: *"Do you think you're truly ready to leave your current employer?"* Then, relate to the applicant on a personal level. We've all gone through job changes. Take off your hiring manager hat and become a counselor/advisor on successfully navigating a career change.

#### 5) Less Responsibility

When applicants say they want to find a job with less responsibility, a lot of hiring managers think the person doesn't want to work hard. That's the wrong assumption. Scaling back and finding more work/life balance are legitimate reasons why people start a job search.

Ask the question: *"Tell me about your ideal role."* Less responsibility could mean a person is looking to leave management but would be a strong individual contributor. It could mean an account manager tried the AE role but really doesn't think it suits them. They might be a dependent caregiver who needs flexible hours. No matter the situation, highlight how your company customizes roles and career opportunities.

#### 6) The Family Factor

Career moves are a family affair. At a minimum candidates rely on family members as trusted advisors. More common is the impact their career has on their spouse's job, the children's education, mortgages, benefits, etc.

Ask the question: *"Have you taken time to discuss your career goals with family and friends?"* Their answer becomes an opportunity for you to: a) Live out your values as a family-first culture; b) Talk about those influencers' fears and objections; and c) Provide solutions to help with the transition including job opportunities for their partner or timing the move with the school year.

#### 7) Job Instability

Employment situations are fluid and change during the interview process. Often this is outside the applicant's control.

Ask the question: *"Remind me again why you are considering a new job opportunity."* This question will draw out answers related to employment status including RIF/Reorg, termination, 1099/temp instability, or pending M&A. You can use this to your advantage when reinforcing why it's a smart choice to join your company.

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