

Questions to Ask Your Potential Employer

07.05.2012 | posted by camilleb | [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Email](#)

Happiness on the job sometimes comes down to one person: Your manager. Your manager can matter more than money, title or benefits. People don't always quit jobs, they sometimes quit bosses. Many workers leave a position because they're unhappy with their bosses.

On the other hand, if you genuinely like and respect your boss, your job can be rewarding, fulfilling and even fun. But how can you ensure that you and your potential boss will get along? While there are no guarantees, you can often recognize a boss who's right for you -- if you ask the right questions.

1. The Ideal Employee

Do you want to know what your potential manager will expect from you? Ask them, "What's your ideal employee like?"

If their ideal employee works long hours on a regular basis, expect to do the same. If their ideal employee is someone who never questions procedure, don't plan to arrive and immediately implement new ideas, or the ideal employee works independently, rest assured that you won't be micro-managed.

2. The Skinny on The Staff

You can tell a lot about your potential manager from his staff. Ask him, "Can you tell me about the people I'd be working with? How long have you worked with them?"

Pay attention to how well your potential boss seems to know their staff. Can he list their individual accomplishments? Is he proud of them? Then note their tone and energy when he talks about his team. Do they sound upbeat and positive? Or is there a hint of frustration or disappointment in his voice? Also note how long his staff has worked with him. High turnover can be a red flag, and happy employees are more likely to stay put.

3. Result and Rewards

Do you want to excel on the job? If so, then you need to know how a potential manager defines excellence. Ask them, "How do you measure success on the job?"

You may be accountable to complete projects to deadline and under budget. Perhaps you'll need to reach a certain benchmark in your performance, for example a dollar value in revenue or a percentage of satisfied customers. You should also ask about the typical career path for an employee who successfully meets his goals.

4. A Problem Solved

Sooner or later, a problem will arise. And you need to know how a potential manager will handle it. Ask him, "What's your approach to solving problems?"

Knowing how a potential manager solves problems can give you insight into his management style. Do they prefer to take charge and make a decision independently, delegate tasks, or collaborate

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