

HOW TO LEARN YOUR POTENTIAL SUPERVISOR'S MANAGEMENT STYLE IN A JOB INTERVIEW



Summary: *Not only should you practice how you will answer the questions asked in the interview, you should have in mind some questions you might ask a potential employer.*

Most of us have spent hours preparing for an interview. We recruit our friends and family to role play, in an attempt to be ready for any type of interview question.

However, this is only part of preparing for the interview. Not only should you practice how you will answer the questions posed during the interview, you should have in mind some questions you would like to ask a potential employer. Asking questions during the interview will mean that you have the tools to make an educated decision if the position is offered to you.

Thinking this way is new for many people. In the employment market of days gone by, applicants were expected to answer questions politely and wait to hear whether or not they landed the job. This is no longer the case, especially in Madison's employment market. Often times, you will find that you have a choice between positions with our low unemployment rate.

However, there is a delicate balance in how you go about gathering information during the interview. It is crucial to avoid coming across as someone who is trying to take over the interview, or who is just generally "pushy". Remember, all the information in the world won't make a difference if no one wants to hire you.

So, because your time is limited, you'll need to make the best of it. What types of questions should you ask? For the majority of employees, their supervisor's management style has the most bearing on their overall happiness on the job. A few strategic questions relating to this area should help you to uncover whether or not you would be happy in a particular work environment.

Below are some areas in which supervisors differ in their management style:

- **Show of appreciation:** Many employees find that it's very important for their contributions to be acknowledged. A good way to learn about this area of management style without appearing overly "needy" is to ask how employees know whether they are doing a good job.
- **Response to errors:** Most of us do not respond well to negative reinforcement, yet a surprising number of managers still use this approach. As a follow up question to the one listed above, ask the interviewer what action is taken when an employee makes a mistake.
- **Respect and growth:** Respect and growth are very much related in the work environment. A manager who does not respect an employee demands that work be accomplished, but doesn't offer opportunity for growth. Most of us are happier in an environment in which we are allowed to do the job for which we were hired, but also offered the opportunity to learn new skills. This means that our manager respects us enough to allow us to grow, and stands behind us if we take a wrong step.

It's helpful to actually write your questions on a piece of paper and read them over before the interview. This may be a bit more work, but it's great to be in a position to be choosy!