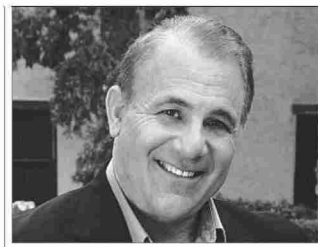


BUSINESS INSIGHT

Finding employment

Find job interview queries iffy?



Jeff Isaac, lawyer

Jeff Isaac, based in San Diego and dubbed The Lawyer in Blue Jeans, says that with unemployment at record highs, job candidates find themselves dealing with illegal interview questions.

What are appropriate questions in a job interview?

Questions involving an applicant's availability, qualifications, education, experience and hobbies.

What questions are illegal?

Many employers engage in small talk and in their attempt to get to know the applicant, inquire into forbidden areas.

Questions regarding family, availability as related to children and marital status, are common questions that come up, all seemingly innocent, but that are specifically forbidden.

Women seem to receive

more of these questions. Employers do this many times without knowledge of the law.

How does an applicant respond to questions outside of the law?

Many times applicants also are unaware of the law, but even if they are aware, it may be against their interest to resist the answer because they risk taking themselves out of the running for the job.

One way to respond is to first make a subjective determination as to whether there is bad intent on the part of the employer, and consider answering directly if you determine there is none.

Or in the alternative, focus on the relevance of the question to the job qualifications and make an effective switch from the actual question/answer to your qualifications.

Isn't it more difficult to deflect illegal questions during a recession?

Many people are out of work. Employers are in the driver's seat, and many times with good intentions, they will conduct interviews that may be breaking the law.

It becomes a Catch-22, in that the candidate wants a good job and wants to be amenable to answering questions but doesn't want to be a victim of racial, sexual or other forms of harassment or discrimination.

Although the law specifically dictates what categories are off limits, it is the ultimate responsibility of the candidate to make the decision as to the answer.

Jobs are hard to find, but no one wants to be put in a corner, answer a question that clearly is illegal, thus setting up major problems going forward if hired.

—Dawn House

