



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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The Interviewing Edge

Physically challenged candidates often experience negative feelings during the job search process. They encounter difficulties first in getting and then in successfully closing an interview. Also, such candidates are apprehensive about disclosing their disability and the kind of assistance they would require.

Candidates believe that it is easier for them to open up if the potential employer initiates the discussion. Employers need to be specific in addressing such issues. Candidates are hurt by apprehensions that their disability will affect their performance. Employers' hiring decisions can become biased due to their own misunderstandings about the disability. Consequently, companies lose talent and candidates lose their opportunities.

Breaking ice

Employers should frame interview questions to keep the candidate comfortable. The following questions could act as icebreakers:

- Is any special accommodation in terms of equipment required during the interview process?
- What kind of assistive technology did the candidate use in his or her previous employment and how useful was it?
- What other support systems can augment the candidate's performance, apart from technology?
- Ask candidates to demonstrate (with examples) the integration of assistive technology in their routine work.
- Are there any specific accommodation requirements that candidates are seeking in the job and what are its benefits?
- Was there ever a mismatch between the company's information systems and the technology that the candidate used?
- Does the candidate anticipate any handicap with the technology in use, and if yes, what?

Such candid discussions will surely close the interview process successfully. Rejecting candidates merely on the basis of a candidate's physical disability is akin to handicapping their own hiring efforts!