

Giving An Effective Introductory Statement

For an introductory statement to be effective, the candidate must believe everything the interviewer is saying. To enhance credibility, keep the following points in mind:

1. Maintain direct eye contact with the candidate throughout the statement. Perhaps put your interview sheet aside, to let the candidate know that what you are about to say is very important.

2. Smile and act friendly. This is especially important when you mention that the candidate is not expected to be perfect and that he should feel free to change information on his application.

3. Nod your head in agreement with your own statements. For example, when saying, “The most important thing today is to be completely truthful” the interviewer should nod in agreement with that statement. This will reinforce the sincerity of the message.



Expanded Statements For Other Areas of The Interview

A candidate is much more likely to tell the truth if an expanded statement is made when introducing different topical areas during the interview. Each of these statements follows this basic formula:

- 1) Explain what area will be covered next
- 2) Use non-descriptive words when introducing the area
- 3) Contrast significant with less significant behaviors

When introducing an area, the interviewer should use non-descriptive language to remove some of the stigma associated with the behavior. For example, shoplifting should be referred to as taking something from a store without paying for it; the use of illegal drugs should be referred to as experimenting or trying social drugs; and stealing merchandise from a job should be referred to as taking merchandise without permission.

During an expanded statement, it is important to contrast serious behaviors with less serious behavior. As an example, a candidate could be told that there is a big difference between a person who is a career criminal and depends on burglaries, robberies, and auto theft to earn an income, compared to an individual who may have violated the law on an isolated occasion. Hearing this, the candidate considers his own criminal behavior as much less serious than it could have been. This makes it psychologically easier for the candidate to tell the truth about the crimes he did commit.

The following are examples of expanded statements that could be used to introduce some of the topical areas of the interview:

Use of Alcohol

“One area I’d like to cover with you concerns alcohol use, as it affects job performance. Now we realize that even a very responsible person may find himself in a situation where he stayed out a little too late celebrating with friends and called in sick the next day. That sort of isolated incident is a lot different than an employee who has a bottle of whiskey in their lower desk drawer and gets drunk during work hours several times a week.”

Use of Illegal Drugs

“John, the next area I would like to discuss with you concerns illegal drugs. Departments are primarily concerned about people who are currently addicted to a drug, or who might take advantage of their position to sell drugs. We realize that if you go back far enough in someone’s life, most people have at least experimented with social drugs. Now, there’s a big difference between occasionally trying a drug in a social situation like a party, as opposed to someone who uses drugs on a regular basis, especially at work.”

Shoplifting

“John, the next area I would like to cover with you concerns taking merchandise from stores without paying for it. Now, some people I interview I would consider to be professional shoplifters. Practically on a daily basis, they go into a store, usually with a friend who distracts a clerk, take hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise, and then turn around and sell it. Most people I talk to aren’t professional shoplifters, but I’ve found that even an honest person may take an occasional item from a store — perhaps because they were in a hurry and the line was long, or maybe they didn’t have quite enough money with them.”

Thefts from Employers

“John, this next area concerns taking merchandise or product without permission from places where you’ve worked. Now in the last five years, you’ve worked with (name items candidate has worked around). There’s a big difference between someone who takes large quantities of merchandise from a job on a regular basis, as opposed to an honest employee who may end up with an occasional item here and there.”

Criminal Activity

“John, this last area concerns doing things against the law. We realize that even the most law-abiding citizen may have gone through a period in their life when they did do some things wrong. One of the most important things we look at in this area is whether a person is completely truthful about things they have done in the past.”

Part One Summary

- A candidate will form impressions of the interviewer within the first 30 seconds of the interview.
- Rapport can be established by initially asking the candidate background questions that are non-threatening and easy to answer.
- The interview should begin with an introductory statement that allows the candidate to feel comfortable making admissions against self-interest and also creates the impression that the truthfulness of his responses will eventually be learned.
- Topical areas covered during the interview should be introduced with an expanded statement that uses non-descriptive language and contrasts serious behavior with less serious behavior.
- We guarantee that the extra minute spent in using expanded statements to introduce a topical area will result in more admissions from candidates.