

Bulletin Board: Perfect job may not be the first offer

by Amy_Winter

Job-seekers may discover that their "perfect" job isn't so ideal. Approximately 25 percent of workers regret accepting a new position within the first year, according to an estimate by the global outplacement agency Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. The agency recommends leaving the position sooner rather than later if the employee is unhappy and remorseful.

"There is nothing to gain by staying in a position you regret taking, but there is a lot to lose," said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer. "By trying to stick it out, it is likely that the individual's performance will decline and that his or her attitude will worsen, both of which could tarnish the individual's reputation and damage future job prospects."

Challenger believes the 25 percent rate probably increases in a tight job market because workers are more willing to take the first job possibility. If candidates take more time to reflect on the job offer, there is a better chance of a proper fit.

"It is a big self-esteem boost when a company wants to hire you," said Challenger. "The excitement and relief of getting an offer often cloud our judgment, and we tend to jump at the first offer that comes along. The tendency to take the first offer increases the longer you are in the job market.

"However, the first offer is not always the best. Take some time - three to five days - to let the initial excitement fade and re-examine the opportunity with more objectivity."

Common reasons employees become dissatisfied with jobs:

- The position turns out different from what the worker assumed.

- The new employee doesn't work well with co-workers.

- The worker and supervisor don't get along well.

"It is natural to have second thoughts in the first month or two of any new job," said Challenger. "Any type of major change elicits such thoughts, whether it is taking a new job, moving into a new house or buying a

new car. However, if the feelings of regret persist after six months, it is time to sit down with your supervisor and discuss the situation."

Challenger offers job-seekers advice before choosing a job:

- Don't feel obligated to take the offer right away.

- Talk to friends and family about the position.

- Don't compromise on elements you feel are important (benefits, salary, etc.)

- Be yourself at the interview. If you feel you can't be yourself, it probably isn't a good choice.

For more information, visit www.challengergray.com.

ANSWER THE QUESTION - OR NOT?

Female workers may come in contact with interview questions that are not only inappropriate but also illegal. In order to find out if a female job-seeker is reliable or to learn about her motivation, employers need to ask certain questions. However, many times the employer doesn't realize he or she has crossed an ethical line during the interview process.

When a woman knows the law, it puts her in a dilemma, according to attorney and legal analyst Jeff Isaac. She can refuse to answer the question, or she may feel obligated to answer the illegal question in order to have a chance at getting the position.

Isaac offers this advice to women:

"Follow one of two courses of action: Ignore the question and deflect conversation to another topic area, or answer as succinctly as possible and then introduce a new, more appropriate point for discussion. The interviewer may even recognize the professional misstep and appreciate how well you were able to manage

the situation."

Isaac mentions these topics as illegal to discuss in a job interview: race, color, sex, religion, national origin, birthplace, age, disability or marital status.

On the other hand, these elements are considered legal to ask during an interview: availability, qualifications, education, experience and hobbies.

Isaac says he would be surprised if more than 50 percent of employers knew what topics fall into the illegal question category. He recommends employers use common sense when asking questions. Employers also need to keep in mind that each state has its own discrimination laws.

"It's not uncommon for women to be asked about marital status," Isaac adds. "In some outrageous instances, women are asked when they plan to start a family even before they're asked to present their resume."

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