# Conducting proper interviews can head off trouble

Q: We have had a string of cmployces who didn't work out for various reasons. We are careful in our screening, but some people who are great at interviewing don't seem to come through on the job. Any suggestions for better screen

A: Interviewing job applicants is a skill as well as a talent. Some interviewers have a natural ability the converse, while obtaining important insights and information on the interviewee, but according to the mail I received, that's not the part.

nnyone who conducts interviews ould take a look at John Kador's

book, "The Manager's Book of Questions: 751 Great Interview Questions for Hiring the Best Person" (McGraw-Hill), which presents open-ended questions designed to get to the heart of the matter. Asking interviewces the right questions, listening carefully to what they say and how they say it, and making a mental note of what they don; talk about are important factors in hiring the right person. Also take note of your initial gut reaction to the person - does he seem warm, open and forthright or cold, rigid and authoritarian? Or is he so open that you might worry about his ability to act professionally?

Most people are on their best behavior during interviews, but

they do give clues to what they are really like if you fine-tune your listing skills and know what to

IGNORING ATTORNEYS ADVICE CAUSED FUTURE JOB PROBLEMS

JOB PROBLEMS

Q: I've heard differing opinions on how to respond on a job application to questions about criminal records. As a juvenile, I was arrested for a felony and received probation. My attorney told me the records would be sealed and if I were over asked whether I'd been arrested, I was to say no.

I am ready to change jobs, but now people say I should answer yes to such questions because potential

When I once told the truth about it, I then had to provide more information about what I've been doing since. What s the point of having it sealed if you have to divulge the details, at a later date?

A: Your court records wore scaled, so you made a scrious mistake not listening to your attorney's advice. Lying about an adult criminal record would be grounds for dismissal, but juvenile court records are sealed to protect the child's future. According to Fred Mark Dry, a Chicago attorney concurrating in criminal law, the courts are strict about maintaing

employer can find out, and it would give cause for termination.

When I once told the truth about it, I then had to provide more information about what I be been doing since. What is the point of provide work and the stated if you have to the state of the stated if you have to the state of the state of

Once you divulge your juvenile record to an employer, you've opened a can of worms. It's understandable that an interviewer would ask for more details. Before you start a job search, discuss the situation with an employment lawyer to see if the information you revealed to your present temployer can be passed on or must be kept confidential.

RIGHTS TO EMPLOYEE'S

Q: Do I need my supervisor's per-mission to see or obtain a copy of his or her personnel file, and can they deny my request?

A: No and no., An employee has the right to receive a copy of his or her personnel file, but your compa-ny will require a written request before releasing the

Having problems on the job? Write to Lindsey Novak in care of Tribute Media Services, Inc., 435 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1500, Chicago, Ill. 50811. She can also be contacted at AtWorkbyLN@AOL.com

# Beating summer work doldrums

By Alice Bredin, Tribune Media It has been stuffy and hot in

my home office recently because we are learning how the cooling system in our new home office holds up under the intense mid-summer heat. So far our system summer heat. So far our system is failing, and we have been adding air conditioners and fans

adding air conditioners and lans gradually to find the porfect combination of cooling devices. Even with the fans and air conditioners, I find myself more lethargic in my home office in the summer months. Part of my sloth is attributable to the heat and the fact that not a lot of fresh air circulates around New York City during July and

August.
Unfortunately, summer is one of my busiest times of the year, so lethargy is not an option. To

combat my malaise, I have been level.
boning up on some ways to keep A 5 percent reduction can seri-

my energy levels up.
Two of the healthiest and easiest ways to stay alert are to drink lots of water and to get

drink lots of water and to get some exercise.

You may have heard the advise that you should drink at least eight to 10 glasses of water a day, but you may not realize how important water can be to your performance in the home office.

The reason water

The reason water is so crucial The reason water is so crucial is that every chemical reaction that occurs in your brain requires water and, therefore, even a 2 percent reduction in your amount of body water will make you less productive. Tasks such as problem solving, making judgments and responding quickly are all affecting at this

As a percent reduction can serrously impair mental functioning. Sometimes when you feel fatigued, you may be experiencing dehydration. If you are not drinking enough water, try these steps to make sure your body is hydrated. hydrated:

steps to himke sure your body.

1) Fill a 64-ounce (equivalent to eight 8-ounce glasses) jug or pitcher of water and keep it in your kitchen or office. Drink from that pitchen during the day to ensure that you consume the necessary amount of water.

2) Consumer water gradually, bon't try to get it over with and drink most of your day's quota quickly. Aside from being uncomfortable, you will not have met your body's need for fluid you must take the water in over the course of the day.

3) Avoid dehydrating your body. If you drink coffee or tea you need to consume two cups of water to counteract the dehy-drating effects of each cup. Other substances that dehydrate you body isolade. you body include:

·Carbonated, caffeinated

Decongestants, antihistamines and many prescription drugs.

•Pollution and pollen - they cause your body to "flush" at a faster rate.

Exercise can also help you stay alert. The job of your cardiopul-monary system (heart and lungs) is to pump oxygen into

your blood and then pump the blood around to all the vital places in your body that need-it to operate efficiently. As you can image, your brain is one of the major destinations for this blood. Your gray matter makes up only 2 percent of body weight, yet it uses 25 percent of all the oxygen ind glucose (blood sugar) you ake in. But when you're sitting at

your desk, your lungs breathing quietly, your heart at rest, you are sending less oxygen to your brain than when you're exercis-ing and giving the heart and lungs enough of a workout to encourage blood flow to the

After a few hours of sitting at your desk without a break, your brain activity naturally slows because those vital ingredients,

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blood and oxygen, are in lower supply. The practical effect of this situation is that part sluggish brain has a harder time remembering things, coming up with new ideas and solutions, and just plain staying elect.

Sending oxygen-rich blood to your brain will not only increase your energy level, it will help you remember things, solve problems and may even make you feel more optimistic.

Alice Bredin is author of the "Virtual Office Survival handbook" (John Wiley & Sons) and host of The American Express Small Business Exchange Web site http://www.americanexpress.com/smallbusiness. You can write to her at Tribune can write to her at Tribune Media Services, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611, or e-mail her at BredinA@aol.com

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