

OPINION

When to ask applicants for documents

I read somewhere that you're not in favor of asking job applicants for their scholastic records, birth certificate, marriage certificate, police clearance and other pre-employment documents during the first stage of the hiring process. What's the reason for this? Help me understand. — *Masked Rider.*

Except for the scholastic records, how does the birth certificate, marriage certificate, police clearance, *barangay* clearance or court clearance help you determine an applicant's capacity to perform the job? I'm not saying these other documents are unimportant. My point is that you should not clutter your mind and work desk with unnecessary papers.

Those are integrity documents to prove that a person is trustworthy, but they kick in only after you've chosen that person as your best candidate. Integrity papers must be distinguished from records like the diploma, transcript of records, government licensure certificate, or related major trade certificates issued by reputable organizations which prove a person's capacity to do a job.

A hiring manager can simplify things with a copy of the applicant's resume and transcript of records. You can even proceed without the transcript to focus on the most important part of the interview process — the asking of situational questions that give off indications that an applicant can do the job. Concentrate on what an applicant can do and ask for proof before asking for documents that can come later.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The first thing you should do is to come up with a list of situational questions to help you determine the capacity of an applicant to do the job. Forget about the insignificant questions about the applicant's strengths and weaknesses, which can be revealed via other means. At any rate, the internet offers many tips for answering the typical interview questions and your applicant can easily memorize them.

Instead, create a list of 30 questions designed to reveal a candidate's capacity for handling specific work situations. Classify them into easy, moderate, and difficult, with 10 per category.

You can start with easy questions to help build rapport with the applicants: What kind of a person do you think would work best in

this job? What would you want to accomplish within the first 90 days of doing this job? Can you identify the top three issues in this type of job? What has your major contribution been to your current employer?

The moderate questions can be along the lines of: What has been the most difficult task in your current job? How did you manage it? How about the easy ones? If the applicant has an MBA: How would you manage a boss without one? What do you like best about your current job?

The difficult questions could include: How would you handle a worker who leaked trade secrets to a competitor? How would you prevent these incidents from recurring? If I talk to your boss after this interview, what would he tell me about your performance?

STANDARD QUESTIONS

Develop a pass-fail scoring system for the interview responses. Eliminate the moderate grades to preclude the grading of some candidates as "average." Such a grading scale could assign 1 to represent "fail," 2 "below average," 3 "above average" and 4 "pass."

Over 30 interview questions, the maximum score should be 120 points. Put together your shortlist of three candidates by score.

Inform the number one candidate that he's on the shortlist, without telling him his rank. E-mail that applicant with a request to undergo a pre-employment medical check-up (if applicable) and a checklist of all the other documents you require, such as the birth certificate, marriage certificate, and identification card. Be sure to comply with the data privacy law.

Regarding integrity documents, you can ask for a clearance from the National Bureau of Investigation in lieu of the others, such as the police, *barangay* and court clearances.

If the number one applicant fails the medical exam or can't submit the integrity documents by a reasonable deadline (say within three weeks), then notify the next candidate on the shortlist.

Last, make the interview process part of a consensual decision-making system with the help of your department colleagues or boss depending on the nature of the job to be filled. This way, even if you give a top score to one candidate, the other interviewers could temper whatever positive or negative bias you have.

IN THE WORKPLACE
REY ELBO

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Calling for managerial participants in our "Non-Competitive Benchmarking on Managing Attrition" on May 26, 2023. Understand what you're missing in the process of reducing employee turnover. Chat with REY ELBO on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or e-mail elbonomics@gmail.com or via <https://reyelbo.com>



Inequality seen worsening if senior HS made optional

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

A PROPOSAL to make the last two years of high school optional to fast-track students' entry into the workforce will worsen inequality among working professionals, analysts said.

"Making senior high school (SHS) optional will not improve economic conditions and will likely perpetuate the income disparity between those who finished college and those who did not," Christopher A. Tan, country head of PHINMA Education Philippines, told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail.

If students are not job-ready once they reach Grade 10, making SHS optional will not make them employable, Mr. Tan said.

Terry L. Ridon, a former youth party-list legislator and currently the convener of think tank InfraWatch PH said the measure "will create formal divisions," in the workforce because "those without 12 years of study will essentially be relegated to manual, menial and low-value work."

"Employability and job availability is not due to the number of years of study but it is mainly attributable to the actual quality of basic education," Mr. Ridon said in an e-mail.

The K-12 (Kindergarten to Grade 12) curriculum was implemented following the passage of Republic Act (RA) No. 10533 or The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, adding two more years to basic education with the intent of

making graduates employable and globally competitive.

The Philippines at the time was the only Asian country and one of three in the world — the others being Angola and Djibouti — with a 10-year basic education curriculum.

After noting the financial burden of an additional two years of high school with no guarantee of employment, Deputy Speaker and Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo filed House Bill No. 7893, making senior high school (SHS) optional and providing a pathway for more immediate graduation.

"The failure of the K to 12 program to provide its graduates with promised advantages exacerbates the additional burden on parents and students imposed by two additional years of basic education," Ms. Arroyo said in the bill's explanatory note.

"There should be an option for the young to graduate from basic education soonest, after four years of high school," she added, noting that students who wish to pursue tertiary education or attain a professional license can opt for the additional two years of basic education.

Mr. Ridon said that "if fundamental education metrics on mathematics, science and languages have not progressed in the last few years, it is a symptom of the failure to ensure quality education in our schools."

INCENTIVES

Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian has called on the private sector to provide more employment opportunities for

SHS graduates in the technical-vocational-livelihood strand.

Senate Bill No. 2022 or the proposed Batang Magaling Act calls for work immersion programs to be incentivized under RA 11534 or the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act.

"Industry partners shall be allowed an additional item of deduction from their taxable income of the value of expense incurred for the skills development of SHS graduates," Mr. Gatchalian said in the bill.

"The intention is to give incentives as a form of deductible. So, if you accept senior high school students in your company as part of their work immersion program, that work immersion program can be used as a deductible," Mr. Gatchalian said in a statement on Monday.

"Historically, what moves a low-income country to mid-income levels is a combination of developing a robust industrial or service base and sustained investment in human capital," according to Mr. Tan.

Mr. Ridon added that employability is highly influenced by the general state of the economy. "As long as strategic impediments in the economy continue to exist, such as poor governance, social and environmental compliance, job opportunities will remain limited," he said.

In the 2023 national budget, funding for all education agencies was the equivalent of 3.6% of gross domestic product, according to the group Alliance of Concerned Teachers.

Supreme Court rejects illegal dismissal lawsuit filed by SM Hypermarket guards

THE Supreme Court has affirmed a ruling by the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) and the Court of Appeals that had rejected an illegal dismissal claim of two SM Hypermarket security guards.

In a 10-page resolution made public on April 24, the tribunal said Pierre T. Perez and Edwin A. Moriles failed to show that their employment had been terminated by Firestar Security Agency.

"Without an employer-initiated dismissal, an employee cannot claim to have been illegally dismissed," it said.

"Before the employer is burdened with proving just cause for terminating employ-

ment, the employee must first provide substantial evidence of actual termination from employment."

The High Court disagreed with the security guards' argument that they had been verbally removed from employment, adding there was no proof that they had been dismissed.

It agreed with the NLRC that Firestar showed no intention of terminating their employment since they previously asked the security guards to explain their absences.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by the two for the alleged nonpayment of

salary and overtime pay before the labor arbiter.

The Court of Appeals, NLRC and labor arbiter ruled in favor of Firestar and SM Hypermarket, saying the two stopped reporting to their posts without filing official leave in 2008.

"No shred of evidence supports their claim of dismissal other than their self-serving conjectures," the tribunal said.

"With no proof to speak of, this Court sees no reason to reverse the consistent findings of the Court of Appeals and the labor tribunals." — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

NEDA,
from SI/1

"Pursuant to the Philippine Constitution stating that education should have the highest budgetary priority, the Department of Education (DepEd) and state universities and colleges have medium-term investment targets amounting to P2.05 trillion and P225.39 billion, respectively," the NEDA said.

"The DepEd has 17 priority programs and projects, which include the improvement and maintenance of school facilities. With regard to tertiary education, there are 3,123 priority programs and projects by various state universities and colleges," it added.

The departments of Social Welfare and Development, Labor and Employment, Human Settlements and Urban Development, Agrarian Reform, and the Office of the President also have investment targets worth more than P100 billion.

"The agencies are expected to ensure that the priority programs and projects to be allocated with resources or submitted for inclusion in the National Expenditure Program and/or funded under the General Appropriations Act, are responsive to the PDP and included in the Public Investment Program," the NEDA said.

"The Department of Budget and Management shall accord priority to programs and projects included in the Public Investment Program in its review of the submitted budget proposals," it added.

In March, the NEDA Board, chaired by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., approved 194 flagship infrastructure projects worth P9 trillion. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**

Banking,
from SI/1

"The result is a widening gap between the country's enormous underbanked population and the expanding range of innovative financial technologies lying just beyond its borders," it added.

McKinsey said the Philippines is working to make the financial sector more inclusive through digitalization.

"Regulators are laying the necessary groundwork for digital financial services and digital-first business models. The sectoral regulator has recently introduced new digital banking licenses, created a real-time payment system, and established a standardized QR network," it said.

The bankable population in the Philippines is expected to grow by 30% to 85 million in 2030 from 65 million in 2022, McKinsey said.

"In this dynamic environment, new entrants that move swiftly and offer products tailored to the needs of underbanked businesses and consumers, both in urban and rural areas, will be able to establish strong market positions, while latecomers will struggle to stand out in an increasingly crowded field," it said. — **K.B. Ta-asan**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link bit.ly/Banking050523

BSP,
from SI/1

This could be below 7.6% in March and will also be the slowest in seven months.

April inflation data will be released on May 5.

Factors that could pose upside price pressures include the impact of African Swine Fever infections in the Philippines, El Niño, and geopolitical tensions abroad, eManagement for Business and Marketing Service Managing Director Jonathan L. Ravelas said.

"The BSP will still hike rates by 25 bps. A pause is likely if we see the deceleration of inflation," he said in a Viber message.

Bank of the Philippine Islands Lead Economist Emilio S. Neri, Jr. said aside from the Fed's decision, the country's first-quarter gross domestic product (GDP) data, April core inflation and the foreign exchange market would also be key considerations for the BSP at its meeting this month.

The first-quarter GDP report is set to be released on May 11.

"The BSP still needs to hike as inflation is still too far from target and service inflation has been sticky," Mr. Neri said in a Viber message.

Core inflation quickened to 8% in March from 7.8% in February and 2.2% a year earlier. This was the highest since 8.2% in December 2000.

Meanwhile, International Monetary Fund Representative to the Philippines Ragnar Gudmundsson said the Monetary Board's decision would likely depend on both the headline and core inflation figures for April.

"Ultimately, the objective remains to anchor inflation expectations, gradually return to the 2-4% target range, and safeguard the country's external position," Mr. Gudmundsson said in an e-mail.

The BSP currently sees inflation averaging 6% this year before slowing to 2.9% in 2024, well above its 2-4% target.

Mr. Medalla earlier said headline inflation is expected to be within their 2-4% goal by the fourth quarter.

He has said that if inflation further eases for the next six months, the BSP might consider cutting policy rates.

However, the BSP chief also said it would be dangerous for the Philippine central bank to cut rates faster than the Fed because it could cause the peso to depreciate against the dollar.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS
Manila Electric Company (Meralco)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Meralco will be conducted virtually via <https://company.meralco.com.ph/corporate-governance/SERVE> on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. with the following agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stockholders held on May 31, 2022
4. Report of the President and Chief Executive Officer
5. Approval of the 2022 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements
6. Ratification of Acts of the Board and Management
7. Amendment of Article I Section 2 and Article II Section 6 of the Company's By-Laws
8. Election of Directors for the ensuing year
9. Appointment of External Auditors
10. Other business that may properly be brought before the meeting
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting of Stockholders will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary and at the website of Meralco, www.meralco.com.ph.

The Board has fixed the close of business on **March 6, 2023** as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the meeting. The stock and transfer books of Meralco will not be closed.

In accordance with Article I, Section 3 of the Company's Amended By-Laws, any instrument authorizing a proxy to act shall be submitted to and received at the principal office of Meralco on or before **May 2, 2023, 5:00 p.m.**, addressed to the attention of the Corporate Secretary c/o Corporate Governance and Compliance Office, Ground Floor, Lopez Bldg., Meralco Center, Ortigas Avenue, Brgy. Ugong, Pasig City. Soft copies of the proxies can be emailed in advance to stockholder.affairs@meralco.com.ph. Validation of proxies is set on **May 12, 2023, 10:00 a.m.** at Meralco Compound, Ortigas Avenue, Brgy. Ugong, Pasig City.

The conduct of the annual stockholders' meeting will be streamed live, and stockholders may attend and participate via remote communication and vote in absentia, using the online portal <https://company.meralco.com.ph/corporate-governance/SERVE>. The guidelines for online voting and participation is set forth in Annex "C" of the Definitive Information Statement downloadable at the company's and Philippine Stock Exchange EDGE's respective websites. Similarly, the Company's SEC Form 17A (Annual Report) and other pertinent documents, are available for download at the said websites.

(Sgd.) **SIMEON KEN R. FERRER**
Corporate Secretary