



Interrogation Dos and Don'ts

by Meric Craig Bloch



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An interview of the implicated person must be planned carefully. You are not looking primarily for information anymore, and the implicated person is not likely to give you additional facts that you can reasonably use. An interrogation does not seek the free flow of information. Ideally, you want to structure the conversation so that the implicated person admits the necessary facts to you.

Do keep questions short and factually clear.

Do remind the implicated person that he or she has a duty to cooperate with the investigation.

Do tell the implicated person that you want to know his or her side of the story.

Do ask him or her to identify any individuals should interview in order to close the investigation and understand his or her perspective.

Do use silence as a weapon. Ask a direct question and wait for a response.

Although you should not have a script, **do** compose in advance the specific leading questions for which you need a yes-or-no admission.

Do verify an alibi if either it seems plausible or you are given verifiable information. This reinforces process fairness and avoids a possible wrongful-termination claim later.



Do ask only one question at a time.

Do question the answers you get.

Do guard yourself against giving away information.

Don't lose your temper. This turns over control to the implicated person, and you will lose the interrogation. It may also be an attempt to distract you.

Don't make promises or threats of any kind. Don't even hint that you are interested in a bargain for the implicated person's testimony. An investigation is no place for plea bargaining.

Don't lose your patience or persistence. Among other reasons, this strengthens the perception that you already have sufficient information to prove the misconduct.

Don't make excuses for implicated persons. Let them make their own excuses. If, for example, the person admits taking the money but feels it was not stealing, he or she still admitted taking it. How the person characterizes it may be irrelevant to your investigation.



Don't lie. Whatever you tell must be the truth. Otherwise, if the implicated person detects the lie, he or she will believe that you are bluffing and have no proof of his or her wrongdoing.

Don't show surprise at any answers. Use your poker face.



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