



# Stanford eCorner

## A CEO's Questions for Job Applicants

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**February 25, 2015**

**Video URL:** <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3486/A-CEOs-Questions-for-Job-Applicants>

As co-founder and CEO of ZenPayroll, Joshua Reeves says he leaves aside questions about skills and achievements when interviewing job applicants, focusing more on a candidate's values and motivations. Asking why people made transitions in their career, and what their hopes are going forward, can reveal if alignment exists between the values of the individual and the organization.



### Transcript

So most of my interviews, I am now usually the last person in the interview process, because there is lot of other folks involved before that. So my interviews are primarily focused not on skill set, but on values and motivation. So the way I usually love to have that discussion, I mean, the main tip is that why? Which is whenever someone answers, it's easy to see them get into a pattern of listing out accomplishments or skill sets. Ask why? Ask if they made a life change, why they made that change? And so I always usually phrase the question. To me life is about chapters, I love reading, so I call them chapters. My colleague loves baseball, he calls them innings. But I ask for these different chapters, you have been through, why did you make that transition? What were you looking for? What was different? What was working, what wasn't working? And then for this next chapter you are envisioning what do you want? What are you looking for? Now because the whole goal of the interview is not to have me grill them or them to grill me. It's to understand if there is an alignment. The whole point is just to get to know each other better. Understand your values, motivation and skill set and then figure out, hey there is a match here in terms of what we need and what we want and what you're interested in doing and providing.

And so that's one of the ways that I get to that answer.