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Do Job Candidates Lie? Do Employers Conduct Illegal Interviews?

About 38 percent of New Zealanders have been asked an illegal question during a job interview this year and, what's possibly more surprising, 89 percent of those surveyed by the Seek online job advertisements platform answered it.

Illegal questions may include family planning intentions, voting intentions, whether the potential employee is married or not, religion, age or current employment status, according to Seek's website.

Seek says its survey found 37 percent of New Zealanders think it's acceptable to stretch the truth during a job interview, with the most commonly accepted lie being the reason they are looking for a new job.

"This lie was considered acceptable to more than one in 10 – 16 percent – of job seekers," it says.

Many Kiwis have taken pay cuts in the past and most would consider it in future and "61 percent of New Zealanders who have taken a pay cut voluntarily did so for improved work-life balance."

More than half of Kiwis have felt the need to take a mental health day but haven't actually done so, the survey found.

“Two in five, or 44 percent, have lied when taking a day off for their own mental health, despite most, or 84 percent, agreeing that their colleagues should be allowed mental health days,” it says.

It also appears some New Zealanders have unrealistic salary expectations of their first career job – 17 percent expect to earn more than \$70,000 a year and 42 percent expect to earn \$50,000 or more, “signalling a potential disconnect between actual entry role salaries and expectations,” Seek says.

The minimum adult wage is currently \$16.50 an hour or \$34,320 a year.

However, it doesn't appear that we're great negotiators. “While 58 percent of New Zealanders believe they are underpaid, more than half, 52 percent, have never asked for a pay rise. Perhaps what's even more surprising is that 31 percent don't believe they ever will.”

More than one-in-five, or 22 percent of those surveyed, have a second income. Of that, 39 percent comes from another job, freelancing accounts for 24 percent, or 16 percent from investments.

The survey also found 15 percent admitted that they would not talk to anyone about an upcoming interview, including their family and friends.

The question 18 percent of New Zealanders find most stressful to answer during an interview is ‘what is your greatest weakness’ while 12 percent find it difficult to say why they think they're the best person for the role and the same number get stressed out when asked ‘where do you see yourself in five years?’.

The survey also found that if people can't be offered more money, the most valuable incentive is time off. It found 37 percent of Kiwis would opt for more annual leave and 31 percent for flexible hours if there's no more money on the table.

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