

CORPORATED MANAGEMENT / HUMAN RESOURCES

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ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

ACE THAT INTERVIEW BY KNOWING WHAT TO ASK AND WHAT NOT TO

HOW TO



QUESTIONS

- **QUESTION TIME:**
 - Ask about the responsibilities your potential position entails, and how a typical day usually goes.
 - Ask whether it is a new position. If it is a new position, find out how it fits within the organisation or department, what it aims to achieve, and how much influence it will have on the overall performance of the department/organisation.
 - Ask about the people that held the position you are applying for before you – what was the difference between someone who was good, and someone who was really great? Ask for the reasons why they left (if applicable).
 - Ask what the typical career trajectory is for this position.
 - Ask whether travel is a possibility, and how much of it should be expected, as well as whether you might be required to relocate at some point.
 - Ask about the company's management style.
 - Ask about prospects of growth and advancement – this would indicate your interest in your future within the organisation.
 - Ask about the members of the team you would be joining – how many of them are there, what their roles are, and what the team dynamics are like.
 - Ask what the company's plans are for the future. Once again, it would indicate your interest in a long term commitment.
 - Ask how your performance will be measured, and what aids are offered for improvement/development (for example, training, mentoring, coaching, etc).
 - Ask the interviewer to describe their ideal employee. By asking this, you seem interested in improving yourself.
 - Ask how much influence you can have from the position you are applying for.
 - Ask how your role would change within a year. You want to be seen as someone that constantly improves and moves forward, as opposed to someone satisfied with doing the same job.
 - Ask whether the position you are applying for has any pressing concerns that you would need to tackle straight away. By asking this question, you show that you understand the urgency of certain issues, and that you are willing to delve into the work straight away, finding solutions to the company's issues from the outset.
 - Ask about expected challenges you would be facing in this position.
 - Ask about something you have heard in the news about the company – for example, if they have recently merged with another company, how has the merger affected the products/culture/management approach.
 - Ask what else you can talk to them about regarding your qualifications, or anything they would like to find out more about.
 - Ask for examples of projects you would be working on.
 - Ask what the largest problem facing the employees is at this point in time, and whether you would be allowed to help resolve this.
 - Ask how best you can contribute to the department's success.
 - Ask the interviewers why they like working there.
 - Ask whether there is any reason why they wouldn't hire you.
 - Ask how you can exceed your employer's expectations in the role you are applying for.
 - Ask about moving forward – how long will they take to get back to you, and if they want you to join, when you are expected to start.

QUESTIONS NEVER TO ASK

- Information that can be easily found online – Do your research before going for the interview.
- Pay, time off or any other benefits – wait for a later stage in the process.
- "What does the company do?"
- Whether they are doing any background checks, or monitoring Internet usage.
- Gossip you have heard about the company.
- How fast you can change positions after being hired, or how quickly you can be promoted.
- Too many questions about the interviewer's background.
- Whether you got the job – wait to find out!



By EVA CHRISTODOULOU
eva.christodoulou@leaderonomics.com

CONGRATULATIONS! You made it through the initial selection process and landed an interview with the company you want to work for. You have even made it through the tough competency-based questions, and managed to appear eloquent, dynamic, and determined.

Then you reach the point when the interviewer asks you "Do you have any questions?"

Sadly, many do not adequately prepare for this last part of the interview.

A study conducted by CareerBuilder in December 2012 that surveyed more than 2500 employers reported that 32% of hiring managers saw not asking questions at the end of an interview as one of the most detrimental mistakes applicants could make – it shows that they are not interested in the position, or that they lack confidence.

Having your very own list of questions to ask, indicates to the interviewer what kind of an individual you are, and it conveys the following attributes:

- It demonstrates your enthusiasm and interest

Having a list of questions to ask the interviewer indicates that you are excited to be there and you are keen to find out as much about the job and the organisation as possible.

You can even make a list of questions you would like to ask and bring it along on a piece of paper with you. Don't be shy to do that – it indicates that you are a well organised, methodical person.

- It shows that you are well prepared and knowledgeable

Remember that interviewers expect you to ask questions. To them, it indicates that you are serious about the position, and that you have done thorough research before going there.

Take this as an opportunity to show that you have been following the news on the organisation and the economy, and that you are aware of potential ripple effects of any news that directly or indirectly relate to the organisation.

Show them that you have done your homework, and that you have found out as much as possible for the company and the position.

At the end of the day, a job interview is an opportunity for you to find out as much as possible about the employer as well. Just like the interviewer is trying to assess your fit in the company, at the same time you should also be trying to assess whether the organisation is a good fit for you in terms of values, goals, and career progression.

Moreover, as this stage of your interview is towards the end of the process, you should aim to finish strong and leave a lasting positive impression on your interviewer.

By shying away and not asking the right questions, even if the rest of the interview went well, they may begin to question whether you are the person they are looking for.

So make sure that you take advantage of the opportunity by asking the right questions. Ensure that you use each question to your advantage. Just remember to come off as confident, but at the same time avoid seeming pushy.

Below are some useful questions you should be thinking about asking at the end of your interview, and some that you should avoid asking.

As for how many questions you should be asking, I'll leave that to your discretion – you should sense the interviewer's tone and patience, as well as their interest in what you are talking about or asking.