

Smart Questions to Ask

CREATE LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Asking smart questions during your interview not only demonstrates your interest in the position and company but also helps you gather important information to make an informed decision about whether the job is a good fit for you. Learn how to ask thought-provoking, insightful questions that set you apart and leave lasting impressions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN INTERVIEW

Some of these questions may or may not be appropriate for your situation. Since your questions may be answered by the interviewer before you have a chance to ask them, it is always good to bring 4 or 5 questions written down to your interview so that you can ask at least 2 or 3 questions.

1. How would you describe a typical workday/week?
2. What assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. What are the top priorities of the job for the successful candidate?
4. How many people work in this team/office/department?
5. With whom will I be working most closely?
6. What are the current opportunities the company (or the department) is currently exploring?
7. How does this position fit in your organization's structure?
8. How would you describe the culture at _____?
9. How does this position contribute to the overall goals and objectives of the department?
10. Besides what is listed in the job posting, what are you looking for in the ideal candidate? *or* What are some of the qualities necessary for someone to succeed in this position?
11. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
12. What is the organization's commitment to diversity?
13. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
14. What location would I be working at if I was the successful candidate?
15. Can I clarify anything more for you about my skills, education or experience?
16. What are the prospects for career growth and advancement?
17. What are the next steps in the interview process? When should I expect to hear from you?

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

Don't ask questions that have already been answered during the interview. If you have prepared a list of questions and some of them have been addressed during the interview, do not repeat them as it will appear that you were not paying attention.

1. "What does this company do?" or anything question relating to what you could have found on the company website. (Do your research ahead of time!)

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2. "If I get the job when can I take time off for vacation?" (Wait until you get the offer to mention prior commitments)
3. "Can I change my schedule if I get the job? (Negotiate hours of work only after receiving a job offer. If working hours are a "must have" for an employment agreement, you may wish to ask about the hours of work in the interview)
4. "What is the salary that you will offer me?" - (Don't bring up salary or benefits in the initial interview. This is a major mistake. Most companies are competitive with each other and will offer similar salaries and benefits. The interviewer may choose to bring up the information, but you should not initiate the topic. If you do, you will give the impression that you are more concerned with salary than the position)
5. "What kind of education do you have?" (Avoid asking any personal questions or questions that will put the recruiter on the defensive. This includes questions such as the interviewer's educational background, marital status, past work experience, and so on)
6. "Did I get the job?" (This will appear as someone not understanding the process – have patience)

WHAT IF THEY ASK ABOUT SALARY?

They may ask you about salary to find out how close you come to what they are willing to pay and if you are realistic about current salary ranges and rates. If you mention a salary that is low it shows that you are not up to the mark. If you mention too high you have ruined a chance to get a job. Here are some options:

1. "That is a great question, I'm really interested in finding out what salary range you are offering."
2. "That's a tough question. Can you tell me the salary range for this position?"
3. "I'm ready to negotiate to discuss an amount which is fair to both of us if I am given the position."
4. "From my research from similar positions, I understand that the range for this job is between \$_____ and \$_____. I would be happy to negotiate an amount that is fair to both of us if I am given the position."

FINAL ADVICE

The key to a successful interview is good communication and rapport with the recruiter. One of the fastest ways to damage this kind of relationship is by exhibiting ignorance about the organization and asking inappropriate questions or no questions at all. So next time the interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions for me?" there's no excuse to say "no."