

GET THE JOB

Asking Your Own Questions

It's tempting to spend so much time prepping for questions which you may be asked in a job interview that you forget to ask your own.

Employers are likely to make a series of tried-and-true queries to any potential job candidate: Why should we decide to hire you today? What unique experience do you bring to the table? What are your strengths as an employee – and your weaknesses?

Of course, resumes should answer these questions, but hiring managers are not looking for facts and figures so much as how you present yourself in an interview setting. In other words, are you boastful or more of a leader, are you nervous in person or confident in your abilities?

Asking the right questions, however, can bolster your candidacy as surely as any great answer. Here's how to achieve the perfect give and take:

WHAT TO SAY

Try to frame your questions such that you're also looking forward to long-range goals, and future career prospects. It's easy to focus on the



immediate things that need to be addressed, to the exclusion of bigger-picture projects that will ensure a lengthy tenure

with your new employer. What sort of budget will you be working with, and is that set in stone? What training

programs are available for professional development? What have prior hires done to be successful, and what pro-

motion opportunities did they earn?

Also, don't forget to find out more about how you came to be sitting across from the hiring manager at this company. Don't simply ask what experience is required. Ask what types of skills are missing on the current team that the new hire will be expected to possess. What's the biggest challenge that someone in this position typically faces? Will the principal responsibilities evolve?

TIMING YOUR QUESTIONS

Posing a smart question shows that you've done your homework. Researching the company shows initiative, a genuine passion for their mission, and a flair for analytical thinking that is required for any leadership position.

But remember that timing is important, too. You can do all the right research, and even prepare the perfect query, but if you interrupt or talk over the hiring manager, it could be for naught. Your questions should also arrive within the natural flow of conversation, so that they do not sound rehearsed.

At the same time, don't wait until the end of the interview, where candidates are typically asked if they have any questions to add. Their minds may be made up by then.

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