

Top 10 questions to ask your prospective employer in an interview

Use these top 10 questions to learn what you need to know about the job you're interviewing for, and impress the interviewer.

You've landed the job interview, and it's going well. There's that awkward pause as the interviewer runs out of steam. The guy who could be your future boss asks, "Do you have any questions?" This is your chance to find out what you need to know about the job and the company and impress the interviewer with your interesting and thoughtful questions. Here are ten questions to help you find out what you need to know.

1. What are the top three qualities an employee needs to be successful in this job?
2. What would I do during a typical workday?
3. How will I be trained or introduced to the job?
4. What is a typical career path from this job?
5. What are some of the goals and challenges your group is likely to face in the next year?
6. How would my job performance be evaluated?
7. What are some of the things that you like about working for this company?
8. Who would I work with?
9. What hours do people typically work?
10. What are the next steps?

Let's look at what you can learn from these questions. In most cases, there's no right or wrong answer - you just need to be able to assess if you are comfortable with the answer.

What are the top three qualities an employee needs to be successful in this job?

If the interviewer says he values attention to detail, good writing skills, and the ability to juggle several tasks at once, you've learned a lot about his expectations. You'll also be able to assess if the job is a decent match with your skills.

What would I do during a typical workday?

Ok, it's obvious why you would want to ask this. But watch out for a possible problem - if the interviewer says, "Well, every day is different," he may not know what he wants. There may be confusion about responsibilities. If you get that answer, say, "Tell me about the sorts of things I might do over a typical week or month."

How will I be trained or introduced to the job?

Understand if you're on your own on day one or if there's a plan for getting you up and running successfully.

What is a typical career path for this job?

This may not apply to some types of jobs.



What are some of the goals and challenges your group is likely to face in the next year?

You're looking for two things here - information about what's likely to happen, and whether people are thinking about the future. A company is more likely to be successful if its staff is thinking ahead.

How would my job performance be evaluated?

There should be a clear answer to this. If there isn't, you may be at the whim of an arbitrary boss. Most companies have a process for performance evaluations.

What are some of the things that you like about working for this company?

If the interviewer can't come up with a couple of things he likes about the company, you may want to learn more before accepting a job offer.

Who would I work with?

Find out about the people you might work with - is it a large group, or small? Are they your peers? Are there any people you can learn from?

What hours do people typically work?

If most people work 7 AM to 3 PM, and you like to roll in at 10 AM, you may have a mismatch. You may also want to explore how much people work - is this strictly eight hours a day, or are you expected to work a lot of additional hours?

What are the next steps?

You want to find out if there will be another round of interviews, if you'll hear back by a certain date, and what the hiring process will be.

Doing a job interview is a two-way street. Your potential employer wants to learn about you, but you should learn as much as you can about the job and people you'll be working with. Use these questions to help you figure out if the job is right for you.