

## Ask Job Interview Questions That Set Yourself Apart

Prepare queries that reinforce your value.



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During job interviews, ask questions that elicit useful information about the company culture.

**MOST INTERVIEWS** conclude with an invitation for the candidate to ask questions. Too many job seekers let the opportunity slip with a feeble throwaway question or two. Some even decline to ask anything with an insistence that they know all they need to know at present.

[This is a lost opportunity](#) that could have markedly increased the odds of winning the job. The concluding candidate questions are a great opportunity for the job seeker to reinforce his or her value proposition, learn more about the hiring organization and ask for the sale.

[See: [8 Careers for Creative People.](#)]

## **Reinforce your value proposition.**

For every job opening, a candidate should present a clear and convincing [job fit thesis](#). Every communication between the hiring entity and the candidate should reinforce that rationale. Since all job interviews seek to answer questions of ability, willingness and fit for a given position, the final candidate questions must underscore these germane features.

Consider these questions:

"I have found wisdom in the saying 'that which gets measured gets done.' How will you measure success in this role?" This type of question shows a seriousness of purpose and a maturity that expects accountability. Immediately, the hiring manager starts to think that it would be nice to have a team member who seeks to be held to a performance standard rather than avoid it.

"Tell me about the success or shortcomings of the prior occupant of this role." This interrogative also conveys maturity and emotional intelligence because the candidate appreciates that all positions do not exist in a vacuum of time or context.

"What would you like to see accomplished as part of a 90-day quick-start plan?" This candidate expects to show up and add value on day one. He or she understands the importance of priorities and planning. Who would not want such a team member?

## **Learn more about the organization and position.**

Interviews are designed to be two-way evaluative experiences. The employer is evaluating the candidate but so also is the job seeker evaluating the employer.

As such, incisive questions can lead to insight concerning [the nature of the organization](#). The questions should be open-ended and not inquire about information that is publicly available. In fact, the candidate should do some level of research on the hiring organization to tailor questions as a form of follow-up.

Consider these questions:

"What do you like best about the company and your role?"

"What would you change about the company if you could?"

"I have read reviews online that this is a very aggressive operating environment. Can you tell me more about the culture of the organization?" The candidate should not be afraid to follow with questions that demonstrate good listening skills. For example, "What do you mean by laid-back or a performance-oriented culture?"

[See: [16 Low-Stress Jobs.](#)]

Most hiring managers or recruiters are in "sell mode" and will not be starkly candid about their [organization's shortcomings](#). Others, however, will be surprisingly reflective and, frankly, the failure to be open also tells you something about the company.

### **Make a trial close.**

In sales, there is a well-known technique called the trial close. In it, the salesperson seeks to remove any barriers to the sale by flushing out what the hiring manager is thinking.

Consider these questions:

"Is there anything else I could tell you about my candidacy to help you ascertain my suitability?" Some employers are caught flat-footed by this question, but it shows that you are interested and prepared to earn the position. Some interviewers will take the opportunity to ask a follow-up question that is giving them pause.

[See: [8 Skills That Set Millennials Apart at Work.](#)]

"I am very interested in this position, what are the next steps in the process? When should I follow up if I have not heard from you?" A skilled interviewer should be prepared for these questions, but in any case, the candidate will show a seriousness of purpose and professionalism by foreshadowing a follow-up.

Job seekers are sometimes so eager to finish an interview that they do not squeeze the last bit of value from the experience. Most interviewers will allow the candidate to ask questions, but even if they do not, the job seeker should not be shy to ask for the opportunity.

Interviews are a [mutual evaluation experience](#). The savvy job seeker will use good questions to reinforce his or her suitability for the role, learn more about the position and company and attempt to seal the deal.