

Turn Around Questions Questions You Might Consider Asking During an Interview

At most interviews, you will be invited to ask questions of your interviewer. This is an important opportunity for you to learn more about the employer and for the interviewer to further evaluate you as a job candidate.

It requires some advance preparation on your part. You don't have to wait to the end of the interviewer's portion of the Question and Answer phase for your turn to ask questions. You should work toward having a discussion with both of you asking and answering relevant questions. Here are some guidelines for asking questions:

Prepare five-ten good questions.

Understand that you may not have time to ask all of your questions. But ask questions concerning the job, the company, and the industry or profession. The best time to ask questions is often right after you have answered one of the interviewer's questions.

A job interview is an opportunity for you to learn more about a potential employer. Indeed, what you learn from an interview may determine whether or not you want the job you're interviewing for.

The following are examples of the types of questions:

Promotion opportunities:

- What career paths have others generally followed after completing the program?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- Does this position offer exposure to other facets of your organization? If so, which ones and how?
- What characteristics best describe individuals who are successful in this position or with your company?

Management philosophies:

- How would you describe your organizations personality and management style?
- How is the work environment affected by the organizations' management style?

- Can you tell me about the management style of the company as a whole? In the department?

Performance evaluations:

- How often are performance reviews given? By whom?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What are your expectations of me (primary duties) during the first 90 days? 6 months? First year?
- To whom does this position report?

Training:

- I read in your literature that your training program is comprised of three six-month rotations. Does the employee have any input into where he will go at the end of each rotation? How do you evaluate the employee's performance during the training period?
- How many individuals complete your training program each year?
- When does the training program begin?
- What is the length and structure of the training program?
- Do most trainees advance fairly rapidly through the program?
- What career paths have others generally followed after completing the program?
- Does the company encourage its employees to pursue additional education?

The Company:

- How do the position and the department contribute to the overall company mission and philosophy?
- If I work hard and prove my value to the company, where might I be in five years?
- I read in Business Week that a major competitor of yours is increasing its market share in your main market. What plans does your firm have to regain its lost market share? (If you have an idea you could share it with the interviewer.)
- How would you describe the organization's culture/ environment?
- What makes your organization different from its competitors?
- What industry-wide trends are likely to affect your organization's strengths and

weaknesses?

- What is your competitive advantage in the marketplace?
- What is your approach with regard to the use of technology?

The Job:

- Please describe for me a typical day (or week).
- What is the most urgent or difficult part of the job?
- Why was this position created?
- Why did the previous person in this position leave?
- What are the expectations of the supervisor?
- What freedom would I have in getting the job done?
- How much decision-making authority and autonomy are given to new employees?

The Department:

- What is the organization structure of your department?
- What is your vision for your department over the next two to three years?
- What major challenges is the department currently facing?
- Can you tell me more about the other people in the organization with whom I would be working? May I meet with any of them before accepting an offer of employment?
- What is your preferred method of communicating with your team/department?
- How are new strategic initiatives communicated to the team/department?
- Is your department considered to be a profit center or cost center? What are the financial expectations of the department?

Personal:

- Can you please tell me how your career has developed at XYZ Corp. Would someone entering the firm today have similar opportunities?
- What do you see as my greatest strengths and weaknesses in terms of this position?
- (If not right for this position) Now that you have interviewed with me, are there other positions in the company that I might be qualified for, or do you have suggestions of other people and companies I might talk with?

(Try to get a referral from them.)

- What other positions and/or departments will I interact with most?

Questions NOT to be asked during the interview:

During an interview, some questions asked may raise a red warning flag. For example, asking, "Would I really have to work weekends?" implies that you are not available for weekend assignments. If you are available, rephrase your question. Other inappropriate questions that have been asked include:

1. What kind of parties do you have?
2. Will I have access to the internet?
3. When can I start taking vacation?
4. I've accepted another job offer, but I was curious, what salary are you offering?

Also, avoid initiating questions about compensation (pay, vacations, etc.) or tuition reimbursements. You might seem more interested in paychecks or time-off than in the actual job.