

Interview questions

Q: Have I answered all your questions?

Before you begin asking your questions, find out if there's anything they'd like you to elaborate on. You can do this by saying something like: "Yes, I do have a few questions for you — but before I get into those, I am wondering if I've sufficiently answered all of your questions. Would you like me to explain anything further or give any examples?"

Not only will they appreciate the offer, but it may be a good chance for you to gauge how well you're doing, says Bill York, an executive recruiter with over 30 years of experience and the founder of the executive search firm Tudor Lewis.

If they say, "No, you answered all of my questions very well," then this may tell you you're in good shape. If they respond with, "Actually, could you tell me more about X?" or "Would you be able to clarify what you meant when you said Y?" this is your chance for a redo.

Q: Who do you think would be the ideal candidate for this position, and how do I compare?

Hoover recommends this question because it's a quick way to figure out whether your skills align with what the company is currently looking for. If they don't match up, then you know to walk away instead of wasting time pursuing the wrong position, she says.

Q: Who would I be reporting to? Are those three people on the same team or on different teams? What's the pecking order?

It's important to ask about the pecking order of a company in case you have several bosses, Vicky Oliver writes in her book "301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions."

If you're going to be working for several people, you need to know "the lay of the internal land," she says — or if you're going to be over several people, you probably would want to get to know them before accepting the position.

Q: How has this position evolved?

This question lets you know whether this job is a dead end or a stepping stone. Who do you consider your major competitors? How are you better? This question is not for the

faint of heart, but it shows that you are already thinking about how you can help the company rise to meet some of its bigger goals, says Peter Harrison, CEO of Snagajob.

Q: Beyond the hard skills required to successfully perform this job, what soft skills would serve the company and position best?

Knowing what skills the company thinks are important will give you more insight into its culture and management values, Hoover says, so you can evaluate whether you would fit in.

Q: How would you describe the company's culture?

Hoover says this question gives you a broad view of the corporate philosophy of a company and of whether it prioritizes employee happiness.

Q: Do you have any hesitations about my qualifications?

While this question puts you in a vulnerable position, it shows that you are confident enough to openly bring up and discuss your weaknesses with your potential employer.

Q: What do you like most about working for this company?

Hoover says this question lets you "create a sense of camaraderie" with the interviewer because "interviewers, like anyone, usually like to talk about themselves and especially things they know well." Plus, this question gives you a chance to get an insider's view of the best parts about working for this company, she says.

Q: Can you give me an example of how I would collaborate with my manager?

Knowing how managers use their employees is important, so you can decide whether they are the type of boss that will let you use your strengths to help the company succeed.

Q: Can you tell me what steps need to be completed before your company can generate an offer?

"Any opportunity to learn the timeline for a hire is crucial information for you," Hoover says. Asking about an offer rather than a decision will give you a better sense of the timeline because "decision" is broad, while "offer" refers to when it's ready to hand over the contract.

Q: How would you score the company on living up to its core values? What's the one thing you're working to improve?

Harrison says this is a respectful way to ask about shortcomings within the company — which you should be aware of before joining. As a bonus, he says, it shows that you are being proactive in wanting to understand more about the internal workings before joining.

Q: What are the challenges of this position?

If the interviewer says, "There aren't any," you should proceed with caution.

Q: If you were to hire me, what might I expect in a typical day?

This shows your eagerness about the position, Harrison says, and it gives you a better idea of what the job would be like on a daily basis so you can decide whether you want to pursue it.

"A frank conversation about position expectations and responsibilities will ensure not only that this is a job you want, but also one that you have the skills to be successful in," he says.

Q: What have past employees done to succeed in this position?

The main point of this question is to get your interviewer to reveal how the company measures success.

Q: What type of employee tends to succeed here? What qualities are the most important for doing well and advancing at the firm?

This question shows the interviewer that you care about your future at the company, and it will also help you decide if you're a good fit for the position, Oliver writes. "Once

the interviewer tells you what she's looking for in a candidate, picture that person in your mind's eye," she says. "She or he should look a lot like you."

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?

Becca Brown, the cofounder of the women's shoe-care company Solemates, interviewed 20 to 30 job candidates a year in her various roles at Goldman Sachs. She told Business Insider she wished candidates would have asked her this question.

"I like this question, and yet no one ever asked it because it's difficult to answer," she says. "It's an important question for anyone to be asking him or herself, and so if ever a candidate were to ask this question, it would have stood out."

She continues: "I think this is a good question for interviewees to ask because as a candidate if you see where the person interviewing you is headed, you can decide if that trajectory is in line with your career objectives. While they don't have to be completely correlated, it's helpful for the candidate to have some indication of the interviewer's direction."

Q: Is there anyone else I need to meet with?/Is there anyone else you would like me to meet with?

Hoover says that knowing whether the company wants you to meet with potential coworkers will give you insight into how much the company values building team synergy. In addition, if the interviewer says you have four more interviews to go, you've gained a better sense of the hiring timeline as well, she says.

Q: How do you help your team grow professionally?

Harrison says this question shows that you're willing to work hard to ensure you grow along with your company. This is particularly important for hourly workers, he says, because they typically have a higher turnover rate and are looking for people who are thinking long-term.

Q: When your staff comes to you with conflicts, how do you respond?

Knowing how a company deals with conflicts gives you a clearer picture of the company's culture, Harrison says. But more importantly, asking about conflict resolution

shows that you know dealing with disagreements in a professional manner is essential to the company's growth and success.

Q: Is this a new position? If not, why did the person before me leave this role?

This might be uncomfortable to ask, but Harrison says it's not uncommon and shows you are being smart and analytical by wanting to know why someone may have been unhappy in this role. If you find out they left because they were promoted, that's also useful information.

Q: Will I have an opportunity to meet those who would be part of my staff (or my manager) during the interview process?

Getting the chance to meet with potential teammates or managers is essential to any professional interview process, Hoover says. If they don't give that chance, "proceed with caution," she says.

Q: What are some of the problems your company faces right now? And what is your department doing to solve them?

Asking about problems within a company gets the "conversation ball" rolling, and your interviewer will surely have an opinion, Oliver writes. Further, she says their answers will give you insights into their personality and ambitions and likely lead to other questions.

Q: How do you evaluate success here?

Knowing how a company measures its employees' success is important. It will help you understand what it would take to advance in your career there — and can help you decide if the employer's values align with your own.

Q: What's your timeline for making a decision, and when can I expect to hear back from you?

This one tells them you're interested in the role and eager to hear their decision. "Knowing a company's timeline should be your ultimate goal during an interview process after determining your fit for the position and whether you like the company's

culture," Hoover says. It will help you determine how and when to follow up, and how long to wait before moving on.

Q: Where do you see the company in three years, and how would the person in this role contribute to this vision?

Asking this question will show your interviewer that you can think big-picture, you're wanting to stay with the company long-term, and you want to make a lasting impression in whatever company you end up at, Harrison says.

Q: What's your staff turnover rate, and what are you doing to reduce it?

While this question may seem forward, Harrison says it's a smart question to ask because it shows that you understand the importance of landing a secure position. "It is a black-and-white way to get to the heart of what kind of company this is and if people like to work here," he says.

Q: I read X about your CEO in Business Insider. Can you tell me more about this?

Oliver says questions like this simply show you've done your homework and are genuinely interested in the company and its leaders. (It doesn't have to be Business Insider — any reputable news provider will do.)

Q: What's one of the most interesting projects or opportunities that you've worked on?

"I like this question because it gets me thinking about my own experiences, and my response changes depending on what I was or am working on — and in theory, should always be changing if I'm challenging myself and advancing," Brown tells Business Insider.

Brown says that by asking for a specific example, candidates can get a better picture of what the job entails and how people function in certain roles.

"I always liked getting this question because it would make me reflect on what experiences I was excited about or proud of at the time, and it would make me want to create more of these types of opportunities and experiences," she says.

Q: Is there anything else I can provide to help you make your decision?

This simple question is polite to ask, and it can give you peace of mind to know that you've covered all your bases, Hoover says — "it shows enthusiasm and eagerness but with polish."

Q: Do you need me to clarify or elaborate on anything I said or that you read on my résumé?

Offer to go into greater detail on any answers you may have given, or any jobs or accomplishments on your résumé. The hiring manager will likely appreciate it.

Q: Is there anything we haven't covered that you think is important to know about working here?

Hoover says this is a good wrap-up question that gives you a break from doing all the talking. She says you may also get "answers to questions you didn't even know to ask but are important."

Jacquelyn Smith, Vivian Giang, and Natalie Walters contributed to previous versions of this article.

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