



Appropriate questions to ask an employer

SHOULD I PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK AN EMPLOYER DURING AN INTERVIEW?

It is important to have a few questions ready before going an interview. Also, formulate questions based on information you hear during the interview. Here are some possible questions to choose from; they are separated into the type of position you are applying for (hourly or salary positions). Remember you may take a few notes during the interview. At the end of the interview, give an overview of your abilities and skills to reinforce that you are the best candidate.

QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR AN HOURLY POSITION

WHAT ARE THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THIS POSITION?

Ask this question only if you need clarification on the job description or requirements.

TO WHOM WOULD I REPORT? WHAT TYPE OF MANAGEMENT STYLE DOES MY SUPERVISOR UTILIZE?

It is always good to clarify the name of the supervisor. It is also helpful to know the type of management style the individual utilizes; useful information in deciding whether to accept the position. You need to know what style supports your ability to do your best work.

IF HIRED FOR THIS JOB, WHEN WOULD I RECEIVE PERFORMANCE AND/OR SALARY REVIEWS?

This question is also helpful in determining if there is a probationary period.

WHAT ARE THE NORMAL HOURS OF THE POSITION? WHAT IS YOUR POLICY ON OVERTIME?

Once an offer is made, if you have commitments that require you to work specific hours, be truthful. It is better to be upfront, rather than let your schedule be an issue after you are hired.

WHEN ARE THE PAY DAYS AND WHAT WORK PERIOD DOES THAT COVER?

It is important to know how the pay system works; are you paid weekly, by-weekly or monthly. Is there a delay of the first 1-2 weeks when you begin the position? You want to eliminate any surprises regarding your salary to be sure you can live within the company's pay structure.

IS THE JOB A FULL-TIME REGULAR POSITION THAT IS EXPECTED TO BE IMPORTANT TO MEETING THE COMPANY'S CURRENT AND FUTURE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES?

Changes are always being made to jobs; you want to be sure the information you received on the job is complete. Ask for clarification if you are unsure; it is important to understand your commitment.

BASED ON MY SKILLS, WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WOULD I HAVE FOR ADVANCEMENT?

By asking this question, you will not only learn about the company structure but also show the interviewer you are open to new things and want to grow with the company.

IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU CAN PROVIDE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY?

This is a good question to ask as the interview is winding down. The interviewer has the opportunity to shed light on any areas that were not addressed during the set of interview questions that he/she feels are relevant to the position for which you have applied.

WHICH OF MY SKILLS OR STRENGTHS DID YOU FIND TO BE MOST RELEVANT TO THIS JOB WHEN YOU READ MY RESUME?

Your resume landed you the interview. Knowing what they are looking for in a candidate will be helpful while emphasizing your skills and strengths throughout the interview, and in your follow up correspondence.

QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A SALARIED POSITION

WHY IS THIS POSITION AVAILABLE? IS THIS A NEW POSITION OR A REPLACEMENT?

You may want to learn whether this job was created to meet new business initiatives or growth or a new job that was created as a result of combining other jobs. If it is a replacement, it may be an indication that the work is still important and therefore you can get a feel for the stability of the position.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE COMPANY AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FACING THE COMPANY AT THIS TIME? IS THERE A STRATEGIC 3-5 YEAR PLAN AND HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THIS ON-GOING PROCESS?

Get a feel for the company's direction and if it would be a good fit for you. Be alert to any clues regarding the person's satisfaction with the company. See if you will be part of the process of future planning.

WHAT OTHER DEPARTMENTS WOULD I INTERACT WITH ON A REGULAR BASIS?

This question will give you some idea of the size of the team and possibly your role on the team. If you are a person who works better alone, you would want to avoid a large team situation.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR COMPANY IN RELATION TO YOUR COMPETITORS? WHAT DOES THIS COMPANY OFFER THAT DISTINGUISHES THEM FROM THE COMPETITION?

If the interviewer has pride in the company, they will gladly point out what they do best and what they have to offer that the competitors do not.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WOULD I HAVE FOR ADVANCEMENT? IS THERE ANY FORMAL AND/OR INFORMAL EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY?

Show that you are a person who is flexible and enjoys a challenge. You are open to new ideas and embrace change, rather than fight it. You are interested in increasing your skills, looking for tuition reimbursement or other professional development benefits.

DO YOU HAVE A DATE IN MIND WHEN YOU EXPECT TO HAVE THIS POSITION FILLED?

This question will give you some indication as to a timeline for the process. If this is the initial screening, it might be several weeks until second interviews are offered. If this is a quick fill position, the decision might be reached by the end of the week. You would want to know if there is another level of interviewing and when they hope to fill the position.

IF I AM HIRED, IS THERE A FORMAL ORIENTATION PROCESS, HOW WILL I BE INTEGRATED?

The first 90 days on the job is a critical time for any new hire. It is helpful to know what will be expected of you as you start a new job, and the opportunities you will have to receive assistance and direction.

DO YOU OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FLEXIBLE HOURS OR TELECOMMUTING FROM HOME?

If this is an area of interest, be sure to ask the question. More companies are offering this option and it may be an important issue for you to consider.

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***Remember every interview is an opportunity to practice and hone your skills.  
Enjoy the experience ~ your positive attitude will show through and leave a great impression on the employer!***