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Questions to Ask During an Interview

Interviews should be two-way conversations. You must ask questions and take an active role in the interview. This demonstrates the importance you place on your work and your career. Asking questions gives you a chance to demonstrate your depth of knowledge in the field as well as to establish an easy flow of conversation and relaxed atmosphere between you and the interviewer. Building this kind of rapport is always a plus in an interview.

Remember, you are not just there for the interviewer to determine if you are right for the position but your questions can help you determine if this position is right for you. Some of your questions should evolve from research you've conducted on the company in preparing for the interview.

Following are some guidelines for your questions as well as some examples.

- Ask questions requiring an explanation. Avoid close-ended questions. Questions which can be answered with a "yes" or "no" are conversation stoppers.
- Don't interrupt when the employer is answering YOUR question.
- Ask job-relevant questions. Focus on the job, the company, products, services, people.
- Prior to the interview, write your list of Interest Questions and take them with you.

Interest Questions Ask questions requiring an explanation. Avoid close-ended questions. Questions which can be answered with a "yes" or "no" are conversation stoppers.

- Don't interrupt when the employer is answering YOUR question.

Why do you want someone for this job?

- Force the interviewer to explain why this job can't be done by one of his current employees. The answer may give you a valuable job description.

Job Satisfaction Questions

Ask questions that relate to the responsibilities, importance and authority of the position as well as those investigating the rewards for a job well done and the long range career opportunities.

Past Performance Questions

Why isn't this position being filled from within the company?

- You may discover that nobody in this organization would accept it or that your future fellow employees are not a very experienced group.

Were they promoted or did they leave the company?

- If the turnover has been high, you have a right to suspect that the job may leave something to be desired. Or it could mean that you can expect to be promoted quickly.

How did you get started in the company?

- A good way to get to know the interviewer better and gain insight into the promotional path the company follows.

What are examples of the best results produced by people in this job?

- Here you may discover you are overqualified

Additional Questions

- What would my responsibilities and duties be?
- What is the philosophy on training and development here?
- Has there been downsizing within the company? How is it handled?
- What projects would I be involved in now? In the future?
- May I meet some of my potential co-workers?
- Who will be the manager and how much contact will I have with him/her?
- Any travel required?
- Why is this position open?
- What type of turnover do you see company wide?
- What is the company culture?
- What will be the top priority of the person who accepts this job?
- How will performance be measured? And by whom? How often?
- Can you describe the company's management style?
- Does the organization support ongoing training and education for employees to stay current in their fields?
- How is this department perceived within the organization?
- Is there a formal process for advancement within the organization?
- What are the traits and skills of people who are the most successful within the organization?