

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

There are basically two strategic reasons you should be asking questions during the interview process:

1 – To make sure this position, department, and company are a good fit for you.

2 – To gather information to help you better understand the needs of the company, so you can interview more effectively and “sell yourself.”

Asking questions is also important in order to demonstrate your engagement in the interview process. Candidates that don’t ask thoughtful questions may come across as uninterested, unmotivated, and even a little unsophisticated.

Therefore, here are some sample questions based on the two reasons above:

Make sure this position, department, and company are a good fit for you.

- I understand the responsibilities of this position as they are stated in the job posting. But perhaps you could give me an idea of what a typical day (or week) may look like?
- What are the most challenging aspects of this position?
- What would you consider to be the most important aspects of this job?
- What are the performance expectations of this position over the first 12 months?
- Please describe your training program or process.
- Where does this position (or department) fit in the overall organization of the company?
- How would you describe the company “culture”?

To gather information to help you better understand the needs of the company, so you can interview more effectively and “sell yourself.”

- What do you see ahead for your company in the next five years?
- What have been the department's successes in the last couple of years?
- What are the major challenges facing the company or department?
- What are some of the company’s short-term and long-term goals?
- What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
- What’s the most important thing I can do to help within the first 90 days of my employment?

Use the information you gather from these questions to further your candidacy. For example: *“I understand that your company will be expanding into the technology consulting industry. I have a strong computer background and contacts in that field that may help during this expansion period.”*

Your final questions:

- What is the next step in your selection process?
- Do you have a timetable for making a decision? (Ask only if not addressed by question above.)

Do not ask about things that you have already been told or are obvious. For example, if the job posting lists the responsibilities of the position, don’t ask what job duties are. Don’t ask basic questions about the company that you could have researched on the company website. Notice that these sample questions DO NOT include inquiries about salary! In fact, most questions dealing with your compensation and benefits (even tuition reimbursement) are OFF LIMITS. Be mindful as to which people can answer what questions. A human resources staff person may be able to answer questions about the company, whereas the hiring authority is better equipped to answer specific questions about the nature of the job.