

# QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW



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### *About the Author*



Adrienne Tom is a multi-certified, award-winning executive resume writer with a passion for guiding senior professionals through the discovery of what sets them apart. Collaborating together, Adrienne offers expert resume writing, interview coaching, and job search support to astute business leaders so they can level-up, land faster, and increase their earning power.

In addition to 15+ years of experience in the career services industry, Adrienne holds 9 certifications, has secured over 20 national and international industry awards, and is an Advisory Board Member for Career Professionals of Canada.

Look for Adrienne's work in: Resumes for Dummies, Modernize Your Resume, Best Canadian Cover Letters, and Best Canadian Resumes.

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## Do You Have Any Questions For Me?

### *The Question Every Candidate Should Be Prepared to Answer In An Interview*

Job interviews aren't meant to be an interrogation — they are supposed to be a dialogue. An interview is as much about making sure the company is a fit for you as it is that you are a fit for the company.

### Preparing for the Interview

Before the interview, at a minimum, you should research the company — and the interviewer(s), if you know that information ahead of time.

At a minimum, conduct a Google search. Take a look at the company's website. Look for the interviewer's LinkedIn profile. While you're on LinkedIn, see if the company has a profile on the site. Also check out the LinkedIn profiles of other key employees of the company. How long have they been in their current jobs? How long have they been with the company? What was their background before they joined the company? (Did they come from competitors, or from other industries?)

Your research will not only help you understand the company better, it will help you ask more informed questions in the interview.

And that's the subject of this report. If you haven't asked questions as the interview progresses, there will likely come a time in the interview when the person conducting the interview says to you, "So, do you have any questions for me?"

That's where your research comes into play. Surely, as you were learning more about the job and the company, you were curious about a thing or two. Even if you weren't, it makes a huge (negative) impression on interviewers when you don't ask any questions. That can either signal that you're not interested enough in the job to muster up any questions — or that you didn't know anything about the company coming into the interview, and you weren't paying attention enough to latch onto any information shared in the interview. Both scenarios don't bode well for your employment prospects.

With that in mind, here are more than 80 questions you can ask in a job interview. Choose 4 or 5 of them (at a minimum) and write them down on an index card or sheet of paper you can reference at the appropriate time during the job interview.

## Questions You Should Ask

1. How long has this position been open?
2. Is this a new position? If so, why was it created? If not, why did the person who held this position leave the position?
3. What are the company's priorities, and what specific results would be expected from me in the first 90 days or so?
4. What kind of opportunities for advancement are available?
5. Why did you (the interviewer) join the company? How long ago was that? What is it about the company that keeps you here?
6. Did my résumé raise any questions I can clarify?
7. What do you look for in an employee?
8. What type of training is required and how long is it? What type of training is available?
9. What would my first assignment be?
10. What are the skills and attributes most needed to get ahead here?
11. How regularly do performance evaluations occur?
12. Do you have a job description available for this position?
13. Are there any expansion plans for the company?
14. What are the opportunities for on-the-job training and further education?
15. Do you have a tuition assistance or book reimbursement program?

## Questions To Ask Headhunters and Recruiters

1. Are you dealing with the client's HR people, or do you have direct contact with the hiring manager?
2. How many candidates have you placed with this client? How long have you worked with this client?
3. May I have a written job description?
4. Where is the position located?
5. To whom does the position report?
6. Is this a new position? If not, why is the position open?
7. What happened to the person who previously held this position?
8. How long have you been working on the assignment?
9. What does the position pay?
10. Are there any pay or compensation constraints that I should take into consideration?
11. What can you tell me about the person who will be interviewing me? What is his or her position, title, management style?
12. Who will make the final hiring decision?
13. After you present my résumé, when can I expect to hear from you regarding the status of this position?

## Questions To Ask Human Resources Professionals

1. Why do you enjoy working for this company?
2. What attracted you to this organization?
3. Can you describe the work environment here?
4. How do you describe the philosophy of the company or organization?
5. What do you consider to be the organization's strengths and weaknesses?
6. Can you tell me more about my day-to-day responsibilities?
7. How soon are you looking to fill this position?
8. How do my skills compare with those of the other candidates you have interviewed?
9. I have really enjoyed meeting with you and your team, and I am very interested in the opportunity. I feel my skills and experience would be a good match for this position. What is the next step in your interview process?
10. Before I leave, is there anything else you need to know concerning my ability to do this job?
11. In your opinion, what is the most important contribution that this company expects from its employees?
12. What are my prospects for advancement? If I do a good job, what is a logical next step?
13. Assuming I was hired and performed well for a period of time, what additional opportunities might this job lead to?
14. I know that for the position for which I am interviewing, the company decided to recruit from outside the organization. How do you decide between recruiting from within and going outside?
15. What advice would you give to someone in my position?
16. What major problems are we facing right now in this department or position?
17. Can you give me a formal, written description of the position? I'm interested in reviewing in detail the major activities involved and what results are expected.
18. Can you please tell me a little bit about the people with whom I'll be working most closely?

## Questions To Ask Hiring Managers

1. What specific skills from the person you hire would make your life easier?
2. What are some of the problems that keep you up at night?
3. What are some of the skills and abilities you see as necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
4. What would be a surprising but positive thing the new person could do in first 90 days?
5. What challenges might I encounter if I take on this position?
6. Will we be expanding or bringing on new products or new services that I should be aware of?
7. What are your major concerns that need to be immediately addressed in this job?
8. What do you see as the most important opportunities for improvement in the area I hope to join?
9. What are the attributes of the job that you'd like to see improved?

10. What attracted you to working for this organization?
11. What have you liked most about working here?
12. Are there any weaknesses in the department that you are particularly looking to improve?
13. What are the department's goals, and how do they align with the company's mission?
14. What goals or objectives need to be achieved in the next six months?
15. What areas of the job would you like to see improvement in with regard to the person who was most recently performing these duties?
16. From all I can see, I'd really like to work here, and I believe I can add considerable value to the company. What's the next step in the selection process?
17. What is currently the most pressing business issue or problem for the company or department?
18. Would you describe for me the actions of a person who previously achieved success in this position?
19. Would you describe for me the action of a person who previously performed poorly in this position?
20. What are the most important traits you look for in a subordinate?
21. Could you describe to me your typical management style and the type of employee who works well with you?
22. How would you describe the experience of working here?
23. If I were to be employed here, what one piece of wisdom would you want me to incorporate into my work life?
24. What have I yet to learn about this company and opportunity that I still need to know?
25. Can you please tell me about the people who will look to me for supervision?
26. What happened to the person who previously held this job?
27. Customers are expecting companies to protect their data. Does the company have a privacy policy for its Web initiatives, and how does the company balance the momentum for ever-increasing personalization with rising concerns for privacy?
28. What are the success factors that will tell you if the decision to bring me on board was the right one?

### **Other Probing Questions (often for high-level assignments)**

1. What are you hoping to accomplish, and what will be my role in those plans?
2. What initial projects would I be tackling?

### Questions That Are Defensive (designed to protect the employee)

1. I understand the company has experienced layoffs within the last two years. Can you review the reasons why they were necessary?
2. Are there formal metrics in place for measuring and rewarding performance over time?
3. If I were a spectacular success in this position after six months, what would I have accomplished?
4. How much freedom would I have in determining my objectives and deadlines?
5. How long has this position existed in the organization? Has its scope changed recently?
6. Do you foresee this job involving significant amounts of overtime or work on weekends?
7. Are my tasks limited to my job description, or will I be performing duties outside the described job scope?

### Questions Designed to Get Feedback

1. Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job and fit in?
2. How do I compare with the other candidates you have interviewed?
3. Can you give me any feedback that would make me more attractive to the company in the future or that I could benefit from next time?
4. Is there anything else you need from me to have a complete picture of my qualifications?

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