

THE GRADUATE COACH GUIDE TO THE BEST QUESTIONS TO ASK AT EVERY INTERVIEW



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Introduction

You've probably heard the saying, if you don't ask you don't get.

The questions we ask can determine what happens for us. They can influence what people think about us and, in a large way, what we find out and therefore learn. According to ancient wisdom, a man's knowledge comes from the fact that he knows what questions to ask.

But do you realise that the sorts of questions you ask can also help to get you the job?

Asking good interview questions in a job interview is extremely important. Many overlook this. In fact, some of the graduates I have coached who were successful in an interview believed they got the job precisely because they asked insightful questions that helped the interview see what sort of person they were. Your questions reveal how you think, what your motivations are and how you're likely to settle into and perform on the job. Thinking carefully about what you will ask could pay off for you, especially since interviews are won on the tiniest of differences.

So, then, the questions you ask at a job interview are just as important as the questions you answer. There is an art to asking the right questions at a job interview. This short document reveals a selection of the most insightful ones you can ask.

How Should You Use this Document?

- 1 Read the questions carefully and adapt them to suit the position and industry you are interviewing for.
- 2 Imagine yourself asking these questions.
- 3 Write down all questions and take to the interview with you as evidence that you've done the work to prepare for the job interview.**

The Questions

Here are the best questions to ask at every job interview.

Questions that demonstrate your interest in the role

You must show the interviewer that you are interested in the role. The interviewer will be looking for signs that you are a good investment, are likely to settle into the job quickly and to excel in it. It's all down to you! The questions you ask will demonstrate whether or not you have the right attitude to make this happen.

- 1 What skills and competencies do you look for when you are recruiting?
- 2 What are the key priorities in the first few months of the job?
- 3 What challenges do you feel I will face in this role? Particularly in the first 6 months?
- 4 How is performance measured and how often is it reviewed?
- 5 Where could I be in 2 and 5 years' time if I do well?

Questions that show your interest in, or understanding of, the organisation, its culture and its industry

Interest is the currency you need to keep motivated in the job and to acquire the knowledge you will need to excel in it. No one wants to employ anyone who doesn't really care about the organisation or who will not fit into its culture because they will become more a liability than an asset. These questions will help you to convince the employer that you have what it takes to do well.

- 6 What makes your organisation successful?
- 7 What are the biggest challenges currently facing the organisation now and in the next 5 years, and how are you addressing these? (mention any you know of) (this question can be rephrased as the 'biggest opportunities')
- 8 How would you describe your organisational culture and working environment? (mention anything you've noticed)

Questions to help you build empathy with your interviewer

We have said a lot about the importance of getting the interviewer to like you. Although it may not sound very professional, this is frequently a determining factor in the decisions an interviewer will make. Your interviewer may look scary but beneath this hard exterior he or she is just like anyone else: we all like people who understand us and make us feel valued.

9 What is your favourite and least favourite thing about working there?

10 What advice would you give to a new employee?

Remember to write these questions down and take with you to your job interview. They will act as evidence that you've done the leg work and are serious about making the right impression!