



Questions to ask in an interview:

The best interview questions tell you about the person behind the resume, revealing the candidate's personality, strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, skills and abilities.

The best interview questions also benefit job seekers by giving them an opportunity to speak to details that don't fit on a resume.

1. From everything you've learned about this role and our company, tell me how you feel you'd make a contribution?

This interview question sorts people into two categories: contenders and also-rans.

Those who have really prepared will love this opportunity to shine and stand out, demonstrating that they have done all the homework that can absolutely be done in today's world of instant information. Those who haven't will stumble and try to put some generic response together, which will be obvious.

2. Why should we hire you?

This is among the best interview questions because it asks candidates to define what sets them apart from the intense competition in today's job market.

Faced with a big stack of resumes telling a similar story, this question helps you determine the best candidate. An interviewee who does a great job explaining how his unique experience, education, industry credentials, and personal interests will power your business will do the same thing for your company once hired.

3. If you could start your career over again, what would you do differently?

While no one likes to dwell on past regrets, this can be a good question to ask.

Asking a candidate to explain the major decisions he has made, highlighting the positive and negative, reveals the person's ability to make calculated decisions based on past professional and personal experiences. It also lets candidates share their vision for the future and their ambitions.

4. When I contact your last supervisor and ask which area of your work needs the most improvement, what will I learn?

This is a wonderful question because it's the one that actually garners an honest response from the candidate. No amount of finesse will influence this answer because when the supervisor is brought into the conversation, the candidate knows the truth will come out anyway. Essentially, it's the same question as 'what is your biggest weakness,' phrased in an unexpected way.

5. Describe the best boss you ever reported to.

This is a great interview question because it tells you about past relationships.



Because it highlights the personality and work types the applicant meshes with best, the interviewer can gain greater insights into the candidate's communication skills, work style and potential cultural fit.

Follow up with questions about what made the relationship click -- was it personality, performance, or perhaps a cheerleader type of boss? Does the candidate prefer autonomy to handholding, or was he inspired by a mutual drive to achieve organizational goals?

6. Tell me about what motivates you.

7. What frustrates you?

Ask these questions in sequence to better understand the interviewee's motivations. If what drives the interviewee matches the position and your corporate culture, you have a winner.

When the candidate then talks about past frustrations, he reveals details about his personality, diplomacy skills and ability to work on teams.

Does the candidate answer by discussing minor irritations -- or ways that he successfully resolved serious conflicts over time, budgets, or priorities? The latter are candidates who have positive intelligence.

8. Tell me about the toughest negotiation you've ever been in.

Every job involves negotiation, and this question yields insight, not only in their direct negotiation skills, but also how the job seeker navigates difficult situations, Marx says.

The best negotiators answer this question by laying out both sides of the problem and then explaining how they aligned the issues or followed a process to a mutually-agreeable solution.

9. How do you involve your staff when an important company strategy decision needed to be made?

The candidate's answer tells you whether a manager is secure enough to involve others in strategic decision-making.

How the job seeker involves his staff -- via written communication, one-on-one or in a group setting -- tells you a lot about their management style.

10. Where do you see yourself in five years?

With this question, it's not what the candidate says but how he says it that's important. If you see someone's eyes light up at the thought of the future, then you can tell this is a very ambitious person who knows where they want to go and will do everything in their power to help ensure your organization gets them there.



More general questions to ask in an interview:

Why do you want this job?
Tell me about yourself?
What have you done that saved money for your company?
Why should any company hire you out of 5 applicants?
How do you handle difficult clients or difficult situations?
List 5 major achievements.
What would you consider yourself good at?
What sort of person are you? Socially?
What are your strengths?
What are your weaknesses?
What do you know about our organization?
How would you approach this job?
What do you look for in a manager?
How do you decide on your objectives?
How do you manage your day?
In what environment do you work best?
What motivates you?
Where do you see yourself in the next five years?
How do you work in a team?
What contribution do you make to a team?
What would your colleagues say about you?
How would your boss describe your work?
Describe your ideal work environment?
Tell me about a time when you successfully managed a difficult situation at work?
How would you approach a project?
What can you bring to this position?
What can you offer this company?
Why are you considering leaving your present job?
Why have you stayed so long / short while?
Why were you out of work so long? What have you done during that time?
Why were you made redundant?
What sort of salary are you expecting?
What do you think your value are?
What training courses have you been on?
On taking this job what would be your major contribution?
How do you respond under stress?
What makes you think you can be successful with us?
What are the major influences that encourage you to take this job?
What questions do you have for us?