

6 Questions to Ask in Every Job Interview

As seen on: www.cb.com/1Pu1UAv

1. What does a typical day look like in this position?

You already have a basic gist of what this position entails after reading the job description (at least you *should*). But, it's important to remember that the formal description really only tells you so much. Often, those paragraphs are recycled year after year, without ever being updated to reflect staff changes, shifting responsibilities, technology updates, and other factors.

So, asking your interviewer what sorts of tasks you can expect to complete on a daily basis is definitely recommended in order to get the insider scoop. It'll give you some greater insight into the actual responsibilities of the position, as well as an idea of how the company, the department, and its team members' general functions.

2. Who would I be directly working with?

Chances are you already know whom you'd be directly reporting to—he or she is more than likely in the interview room with you. But, since your relationships with your co-workers can have a pretty big impact on your life, you might want to know more than just the person you'd be working *for*. You want to know about the team members you'd be working *with*.

This is your opportunity to find out more about where this role fits into the big picture. Does the position require you to communicate and liaise between numerous departments? Or, would you just be operating with your specific team in order to get things done?

You can also use this prompt as your launch pad for several follow up questions: How big is the team currently? Is it growing rapidly? What are some of the other employees' backgrounds?

Use this opportunity to find out more about the organization's existing staff. It'll show you how all of the company's puzzle pieces fit together—and help you determine if you'd be a good fit.

3. What is the most important skill the person in this position needs to be successful?

Let's face it—most job descriptions describe unicorns. Sure, the employer may be looking for a candidate who is a Photoshop whiz *and* a creative writer who can also juggle while doing a handstand.

But, their chances of actually finding that? They're slim to none—and they already know that.

So, instead of obsessing over what traits and skills you *don't* have, zero in on what the interviewer thinks is the most crucial thing you'll need in order to do well in that position.

Asking this helps you cut through all of the clutter of the job description, and also determine how well you could actually fulfill the duties of this role. After all, if they're ultimately seeking someone bilingual and you can hardly remember the alphabet from your high school Spanish class; this might not be the job for you.

4. What's your favorite part about working here?

Work is a huge part of your life—so, ideally, you want to love what you do. And, while other peoples' experiences aren't always a completely accurate prediction of what your own will be, it's definitely still helpful to ask this question.

Ask your interviewer what he or she likes most about working for the company. If she can't stop ranting and raving about the dozens of different things she loves about her employer? Well, that's probably a good sign.

But, if she pauses for a minute only to say, "Well, our dental coverage is pretty decent," it might be a red flag for you.

Employee attitudes can be contagious. So, if you're required to work with a bunch of people who'd always rather be somewhere else, it can have a huge impact on how you view your own work. Asking this question gauges the level of satisfaction and happiness with the employer—something that will be important if you end up landing and accepting the job!

5. How would you describe the culture of this company?

We all know that interviews exist largely so that the employer can determine whether or not you're a good fit for their organization. But, you should also treat it as your opportunity to ascertain whether or not the company and position are a good fit for *you*.

Culture has become a bit of a buzzword, but it's still an incredibly important part of your employment experience. And you don't need me to tell you that culture can vary greatly between employers.

Have your interviewer give a brief description of the company culture. Would she describe it as warm, encouraging, and family-like? Is it high energy, innovative, and constantly pushing to be on the cutting edge?

Pay close attention to what words your interviewer uses in order to get a good feel for what qualities the organization values. If she says words like "fast paced" and "deadline driven" and you're someone who needs to breathe into a paper bag at the thought of having a tight turnaround time, you might need to reevaluate things.

6. What are the next steps in the interview process?

Tell me if this scenario sounds familiar: You stroll out of the interview and get into your car, feeling like you just totally aced that meeting. Suddenly, it hits you. You have *no idea* what happens now. You never asked. Will there be another round of interviews or was this it? Will the interviewer call you? Will she email you? Will she send a carrier pigeon?

Interviews encourage enough anxiety without feeling like you're totally out of the loop. So, before shaking hands and leaving the office, make sure you've inquired about what you can expect for next steps.

Not only will it help to ease your nerves (and probably inspire compulsive email refreshing for the next week), but it also demonstrates your level of interest in the position and entire process.

Job interviews can be stressful, but they're much more manageable if you're adequately prepared. However, most people assume being adequately prepared means having their *responses* memorized and ready to go—they never even think about their *questions*.