

GET THE JOB

Asking With Purpose

How Good Questions Can Improve Any Interview Conversation

A job interview often feels like a test of answers, but hiring managers also notice the questions a candidate brings. Thoughtful questions can show preparation, curiosity and respect for the employer's time. They also help applicants learn whether a role, team and workplace fit their goals.

That matters because an interview is a two-way conversation. The U.S. Department of Labor advises job seekers to research an employer before an interview, and strong questions are one clear sign that research has happened. When candidates ask informed questions, they can move beyond general impressions and gather useful facts.

Good questions usually begin with careful reading. A job posting, the employer's website and recent news coverage can all point to topics worth asking about. Instead of asking for information that is easy to find online, candidates can use the interview to learn how the work is done day to day.

WHAT TO ASK

Practical questions tend to be the most useful. Asking



© ADOBE STOCK

about the main duties of the role, the first few months on the job and how success is measured can help a candidate understand expectations. Questions about who the position reports to and how the team works together can also give a clearer picture of daily life.

Candidates can also ask about training, feedback and

opportunities to learn new skills. Those topics show interest in doing the job well, not just getting the offer. They can also reveal whether the employer has a clear plan for helping new hires get started.

HOW TO SHOW INTEREST

The wording matters. Open-

ended questions often work better than yes-or-no questions because they invite fuller answers. For example, asking "What would success look like in this role after six months?" is likely to produce more detail than asking whether the company has goals for the position.

It also helps to build on what the interviewer has

already said. If a manager mentions growth, a candidate might ask how the department has changed in the past year. If the interviewer describes a fast-paced setting, it is reasonable to ask how priorities are set when several deadlines arrive at once.

WHAT TO AVOID

Some topics are better saved for later stages. Questions about pay, vacation and other benefits are important, but many career experts suggest first focusing on the work, the team and the employer's needs unless the interviewer raises those subjects. Early questions should help build a professional conversation.

It is also wise to avoid asking too many questions at once. A short list of well-chosen questions can leave a stronger impression than a long list read straight from a notebook.

In the end, good interview questions do two jobs at once. They help candidates collect the information they need, and they show employers that the applicant is prepared, engaged and ready to take the conversation seriously.