

QUESTIONS TO ASK AND AVOID WHEN INTERVIEWING FOR A JOB SALARY HISTORY

The success or failure of a job interview doesn't rest solely with the answers you give the hiring manager. The questions you ask can also speak volumes.

Some of the highly questionable queries included:

- "Do I have to be at work every day?"
- "Would you consider going on a date with me?"
- "Can I have three weeks off every three months to pursue my music career?"
- "Can my husband finish this test for me?"
- "Is the boss single?"
- "Do you want to take a ride in my new car?"
- "Can you help me search for an apartment?"
- "What job is this for?"

Peculiar or presumptuous inquiries such as these can quickly undermine an otherwise solid interview performance. On the other hand, posing intelligent and informed questions shows the interviewer you're a serious candidate while also helping you to determine if the role is right for you.

Here are some smart questions worth asking:

- While researching your company, I learned that [fill in the blank]. Can you tell me more about that? Impress interviewers by making it clear you've done your homework. Learn as much as you can about the organization before your meeting.

- Closely review the company's website, marketing materials and recent financial reports. Tap your professional network for anecdotal insights and follow the company on LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook.

Weaving some beyond-the-basics information you uncovered into your questions showcases both your interest and resourcefulness.

- What types of training and development programs do you offer? Generally speaking, it is unwise to ask an employer what the company plans to do for you once hired; at least until the interviewer has sent signals that a job offer is likely. But bringing up training and development opportunities in an initial interview isn't the same as jumping the gun about salary, benefits or vacation time.

Companies seek candidates who are committed to continually expanding their skills. If applicable, mention several pertinent proficiencies you've gained through professional development programs in the past.

- What are some potential career paths within your company for a person starting in this position? This question shows you're goal-oriented and career-minded. It also emphasizes your desire to grow with a company. Considering the significant amount of time, money and resources that companies invest in hiring and training new staff,

it's beneficial to indicate that you're looking to stay onboard long term.

-Why is this job open? Some questions are less about strategically pitching yourself and more about eliciting details that shed greater light on the job and the company.

For example, it's a good sign if the previous person got promoted or the position was newly created because the company is growing. If, however, there's been high turnover or your would-be predecessor is "no longer with the company," consider these warning signs that warrant another question or two.

-What do you enjoy most about working here? Job seekers don't always think of it this way, but an employment interview is a two-way street, and the efforts to impress should go both ways. Good interviewers will play up the advantages of working at the company, because they want to win you over. Asking this more personal question and getting the individual to explain why she is with the company can provide invaluable insights.

Pay attention to how the interviewer responds to this question. Was the answer delivered quickly, with detail and enthusiasm? Or was there an awkward pause followed by a vague, tepid endorsement? Remember: Happy, satisfied employees won't have any difficulty describing what they like about their job and the overall organization.