



HAPPEN

If you want to know, just ask

Some experienced interviewers will tell you they can actually learn more about you by the questions you ask than by the answers you give. Learning to ask relevant, insightful questions can go a long way to strengthening your candidacy – especially if you take the process one step further.

You can do this by working with the key points in the interviewer's answers and linking them to your unique ability to do the job.

Let's look at this in action. In an interview with your potential boss you've just asked him or her for an example of their management style (after all isn't it time you reaped the benefit of a behavioural question or two in reverse?).

Whatever example they give, agree with it, and find a similar example from your own experience to show you understand the need and can meet it. i.e. "Yes, I've worked with a senior manager who was also offsite a good deal but needed to be kept absolutely up to date. The way I managed that was by (your example). Are there changes you'd like to make in the current tracking set up to be kept more informed?"

By opening up a focused discussion on a key issue you are demonstrating both initiative and job fit, as well as creating a positive connection with your potential boss. Not only a smart way to distinguish yourself, but also a good way to increase the odds of being invited back for a follow-up meeting. There is obviously so much more to discuss.

There are two things to remember when asking questions.

Avoid "What's in it for me?" questions concerning salary, working hours, etc. They leave a terrible impression that you are more concerned about yourself than the job. Wait until the information becomes relevant, ideally when you actually are being offered the job.

The other thing to remember is to pay attention to how you ask the question. It is, as we all know, not what you say, but how you say it. Through small changes in voice, tone, inflection, phrasing, emphasis, etc. you can easily communicate an engaging spirit of professional enquiry rather than an abrupt demand for information. Practice getting the pacing and sound of your questions just right so you invite the open response you want.

By the way, you'll want to keep it brief, blending in about 3 questions in an interview depending on the situation. Also be sure to ask the right question at the right level. For instance, don't expect HR to have detailed information on the job.

Here are some great introductory phrases to kick off your questions, and some suggestions for specific inquiries. Notice the neutral language and the likelihood the response will let you open up a dialogue to showcase your abilities and / or ask a follow-up question.

1. Can you describe...

- The 3 top priorities for this role?
- A typical day, week, month in the role?

2. Can you tell me...

- What you like to see achieved in the first 3 to 6 months?
- How the position became available?

3. Can you give me an example of...

- Your management style?
- The customer's needs / expectations?

4. What would you say are...

- The main issues or problem areas that need attention right away?
- The resources / support are available to do the work?

5. I know that (your research), I am curious to know more about (something related to Dept. / job / future)

6. How would you describe....

- The corporate culture / what it's like to work here?
- What sets this company apart from its competition?

7. How is ...

- Professional development supported in the organization?
- Performance review and feedback handled?

8. I am very interested, **what are the next steps in the process?**

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