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A Fact Sheet

Highlights

The interviewer should be prepared to ask questions concerning the job, the industry, or the company.

Three types of questions that should never be asked during an interview include those that 1) make the interviewer re-explain something, 2) could have clearly been answered through the company's website or other materials, and 3) are about only one topic.

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Job Search 101: Answering the Right Interview Questions (Part II)

The ability to ask the right questions successfully during an interview is just as important as giving good answers and is the focus of this issue of *The Workplace*. A job interview is a two-way process that is used to determine if a match exists between the company and the prospective employee with both parties having equal responsibility. Even though the company representative(s) will usually set the interview agenda and the pace, the applicant will be invited at some point to ask questions.

Always be prepared to ask good, relevant questions. There are two types of questions that the applicant should be prepared to ask: 1) those that ask for clarification, and 2) those concerning the job, the industry, or the company. Questions that ask to clear up something the interviewer said are usually asked at the point that clarification is needed. When asking a question for the purpose of clarifying a point, preface the question by restating the interviewer's comments. Prefacing your questions with the interviewer's comments tells the interviewer that you were listening.



Questions concerning the job, the industry, or the company may require preparation ahead of time and are usually, but not always, asked toward the end of the interview process. Such questions may come from trade journals, company newsletters, or national and/or local newspapers. Being able to raise concerns about regional or national market trends and their impacts to the company with which you are inter-

A serious job hunter is always prepared to ask questions about the job, the industry, or the company during the interview process.

viewing show that you stay current with topics that could impact the company. Topics for questions include strengths and weaknesses of the company, upper management's view of the position, strategic plan for the next five years, company's management style, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the job, evaluation procedures, and chances for advancement. The rule of thumb is to prepare at least five questions to ask the interviewer.

Keep in mind that having good communication skills is one of best assurances for doing well during an interview. Half of communicating effectively is giving information in a manner that is organized and easy to understand; the other half of communicating effectively is listening. During the interview, be patient and listen attentively to what is being said. Look at the interviewer when he or she is talking. Nod when something is said that you agree with or that you are sure he or she would like for you to understand. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify what is being said when it is appropriate.

...questions ...that 1) make the interviewer re-explain something, 2) could have clearly been answered through the company's website or other materials, and 3) about only one topic ... show a lack of preparation, attentiveness and initiative ...

Three types of questions should never be asked during an interview. These are questions that 1) make the interviewer re-explain something, 2) could have clearly been answered through the company's website or other materials, and 3) are about only one topic. These types of questions show a lack of preparation, attentiveness and initiative and generally result in ending any chances of subsequent interviews or job offers. Equally as damaging as asking the wrong questions is not asking questions.

Sources:

Careers: Putting Your Degree To Work. (2001). <http://www.gradview.com/careers>
CareerBuilder, Inc. (2001). Job Interview Types. <http://careers.latimes.com/>.



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