

Questions

to ask prospective employer

Intro

When I prepare for the job interview, questions pop-up in my head naturally: I read company's website, job description, etc. - and I want to learn more. But I also have this habit of noticing good questions being asked when the tables are flipped and I am an interviewer as well as noting good examples from the articles and discussions I read. This is how this list came about.

I know from my own experience that good questions allow a candidate to stand out. At the very least they mean that person is prepared and pays attention. Very good questions can even redeem a candidate in interviewer's eyes.

But the main reason to ask questions is learning. Even if there would be no offer in the end - this is a chance to learn things from the company's insider as well as just a chance to connect with the person across the table. And if there **is** an offer, the questions will definitely help deciding whether to say "yes" or "no".

I usually look through this list before my interviews and copy the questions which I feel like asking into my notebook. This way I make sure that questions that I really want to ask are written down and some others that may seem interesting/appropriate in the moment are in my active memory.



Questions

About the Company

- What are the goals for the company for next 3 years and the strategy to achieve them?
- How many clients company has and who they are?
- Who do you consider your top competitor, and why?
- What are the biggest opportunities and challenges that company has at the moment?
- What at the moment is holding the company back?
- What is the management style in the company/department/team?
- Can you give me some examples of the best and worst elements of the company's culture?
- What do you like the most about working for this company? And what you don't like?
- If you could improve one thing in the company, what would it be?

If the Company is a Startup

- Is the company profitable at the moment?
- What are the plans for next couple of years: develop the business or sell?

About the Project

- What is the place of the project in the company?
- What are the challenges of this project?
- What are the goals of the project? Are they clearly defined?
- Who are the stakeholders and what are their goals? Are there conflicting goals?
- How many teams / people work in this project / on this product? How they interact and work together?

About the Job

- The person who previously did this job - where did they move on and why? (*In case of new position:* how has these responsibilities were handled in the past?)
- What are the day-to-day activities of the person in this role?
- What are the challenges of this position?
- How do you usually onboard people to this role (e.g. mentors, formal onboarding process, etc)?
- What are the most important qualities for someone to be successful in this role?
- What are your expectations for this role during the first 30 days, 60 days, 1 year? What is the most important thing I should accomplish by each of those time-slots and how they would be measured?
- To whom this role would report? Could you tell me more about this person, their management style, expectations, etc?
- What is a best way to connect with the team? How would you describe team's culture and the best way to fit in?

About interviewer

- How long have you worked in this company? What did you do before this?
- How has the company changed since you joined?
- Has your role changed since you've been here?



Ask hiring manager

- How long have you worked in this company? What did you do before this?
- How has the company changed since you joined?
- How do you help your team grow professionally?
- When your staff comes to you with conflicts, how do you respond?
- What is the performance review process like? How often would I be formally reviewed and what metrics would be used? Or maybe the company/team embraces "On-the-Spot" feedback culture?

Ask potential team member

- How many teams / people work in this project / on this product? How they interact and work together?
- What is a best way to connect with the team? How would you describe team's culture and the best way to fit in?
- If there is a conflict inside the team - how is it usually resolved and what the conflicts are usually about?
- What do you and the team usually do for lunch? Does anyone on the team hang out outside the office?

About me

- Do you have any reservations about my qualifications for this position?
- How do I compare with the other candidates you've interviewed for this role? What things would you suggest I should improve?