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Five Interview Questions You Should Always Ask

By Judi Perkins

These five questions go beyond the obvious ones, such as the title of the job, the job description, to whom it would be reporting, and other such basic questions. In fact, it's unlikely you'll even need to ask those questions, as they're usually outlined for you.

With some preparation and thought, you should be able to easily come up with 15 – 20 first-interview questions to ask. But these five – in some form – should always be asked.

Not only will they help you to ascertain if the job for which you are interviewing meets the criterion of your perfect job, but the answers, when put together, will give you a fairly accurate picture of what's really going on behind the interview.

1. WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES THAT WILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IMMEDIATELY IN THIS POSITION?: A title alone tells you nothing. The job description won't reveal much either, except whether or not you're capable of doing what's required functionally on a daily basis.

For the same reason that you put your accomplishments on your resume – and not just the job description – here, too, you want to get a sense of the individuality of this job in this company.

Was everything left running smoothly? Is it pretty much picking up and continuing daily functions as normal? Or is there damage control that needs to be done? If so, is there a time line for the repair, and is it an achievable one considering your capabilities? Is it realistic regardless of who holds the position?

If you don't have any information already, this will begin to clue you in about both the supervisor and the previous employee. If you have been provided with some detail already, then the answer should track with what you've already learned.

2. HOW LONG WAS THE PREVIOUS PERSON HERE? WHY DID THEY LEAVE? Generally, in answering the first part, the interviewer will answer the second part as well. But if they don't, then ask it. And if that person was there an oddly short time, you also want to know how long the previous person before that was there.

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See where I'm going with this? If the job is in disarray, and the last two people were there a short period of time and were fired, you don't need to ask any of the other questions here.

Exit gracefully and then run! Because before long, you, too, will be terminated for not achieving whatever it is they want done – regardless of if the stated time frame sounded realistic or not.

3. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE. HOW DO YOU BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR EMPLOYEES?: Is he a micro manager? Is he an information hound that needs to be kept informed of everything? Does he leave people alone to do what he hired them for and simply keep on top of what's going on? Does he help you if you have trouble? Do any mentoring? Or is he a berating, derogatory, jerk?

Obviously he's not going to come right out and tell you he's a micro manager! Instead he might say, "I like to keep a very close watch on what's going on in my department," or "I visit with each member of my department on a daily basis to make sure they're staying on track," or something similar.

You'll find that the person will be fairly straight forward in sharing their management style with you. What you want to pay attention to is how they word it.

4. WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE TEND TO EXCEL HERE?: Workaholics? Ones who are self-motivated and manage themselves well? People who work well in teams or committees? Employees who keep their supervisor informed of "where they are with things" on a daily basis?

This tells you something about the pervasive culture in the company or department. Generally speaking, companies – or departments – tend to be made up of similar types of people that are in harmony with the company culture and philosophy.

An entrepreneurial person won't function well in a committee environment. While sales personalities can vary greatly, the top achievers are goal driven and motivated to achieve, rather than complacent.

People who are accustomed to thinking for themselves will find themselves chafing in a company that has a more dictatorial style, while those who perform better when they're told what to do will find themselves adrift in a company that requires its employees to think for themselves.

5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE? WHY DO YOU STAY?: The answer to this question will give you an indication as to the feeling or health of the department or company. The way in which he answers the question will also give you additional insight into your potential boss, his management style, and what type of people excel in the department or company.

These are informational questions, not challenges. Be genuinely interested in the answer, because you're gaining valuable information that has to do with your future. When you leave the interview and process it within yourself, you'll be matching what you learned with what you are looking for.

Pay attention to the interviewer's body language and facial expressions. Is he relaxed? Does he fill in some of the spaces? Does he speak to you – or AT you? Does he answer the question briefly and then

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quickly fire off another one?

These, too, are valuable cues, and after the interview, you'll need to piece them together with the verbal information you received.

Your perfect job might land in your lap by grace and good fortune. But more likely, you'll need to look for it. It's there – but to recognize it, you'll need to know what it doesn't look like, as well as what it does.

Judi Perkins has been a contingency and retained search consultant for 25 years, with a short stint in the temporary and local permanent placement market. She has owned her own firm and been hired repeatedly by numerous clients. Find The Perfect Job

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Crazy Interview Questions

By Joel Vance

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If you want to get that amazing new job, you are first going to have to learn the answers to common job interview questions. The majority of the interview questions that you have thrown at you will be typical interview fare, but a company may decide to throw you a curve ball in the form of a crazy job interview question. This is starting to happen more and more, it is becoming quite a trend actually, so you need to take some time to learn what these interview questions might be so that you can answer them quickly and in a manner that leads to you getting the job.

There is a method to an employer's madness when they use an 'out of the ordinary' job interview question – and that's to get you thinking fast. In most cases the employer is testing you to see if you can think on your feet or if you are creative enough to work well in this job position. If the interviewer doesn't think you have what it takes because of your answers to the job interview questions, then you will not get the position.

Before you go into any job interview try to keep an open mind. Prep your imagination a bit to get it flowing freely just in case you get some of these crazy job interview questions asked of you. You can't afford to freeze up during an interview; because if you do, it is all over. So go in prepared, or at least as prepared as you can be.

Here are a few of the strange and yet rather common job interview questions that you may run across:

Q) If you were an animal what kind of animal would you choose to be?

Choose an animal that is efficient at everything that it does and one that is often very busy.

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Q) What kind of fruit would you be?

You should choose a fruit that tastes good in a fruit salad along with many other fruits. This can be used to show that you are a team player who works well with others all of the time.

Q) What would be the very first thing that you would do if you won the lottery?

This is a gauge of your priorities. Whatever you do don't say you would quit your job.

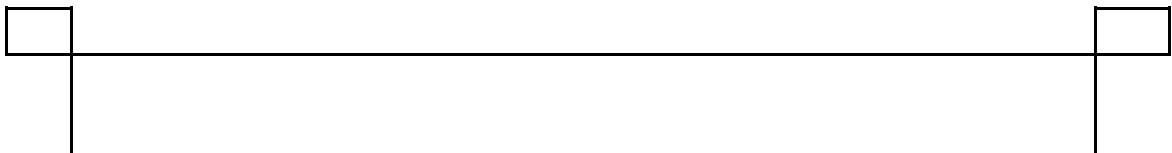
Think about the answers to these sorts of job interview questions before you go into the interview. This way even if these particular interview questions don't get asked you will still have an idea of the types of answers that you should be giving.

Joel Vance is a Human Resources 17-year HR expert who's taught at 4 major universities around the country and currently has a best selling book on interview questions at

<http://www.theperfectinterview.com/go/tpiarticle023.php>



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