

## **For Interview Success Start by Asking the Right Questions**

Often the greatest interview anxiety focuses on trying to anticipate all the correct answers to interview questions. Equally important, however, are the questions YOU ask the interviewer. If job interviews are getting you no closer to an offer, maybe you are not asking the right questions.

There are three types of questions that help jobseekers gain interview advantage:

- Questions to uncover the interviewer's top hiring motives
- Questions to illustrate the candidate's interest and intelligence
- Questions to uncover the interviewer's unspoken concerns

### **1. Questions to uncover the interviewer's top hiring motives**

You'll answer the interviewer's questions better once you know his/her particular hiring concerns. Here are examples of questions that will help you “get inside the head” of the interviewer:

- What do you see as the toughest challenge of this position?
- What qualities do you see as most important for this position?
- Why have others failed in this position?

Once you've asked any or all of the above questions, listen very closely. The first thing the interviewer says reveals his/her truest feelings. Use this information as insight for answering his/her questions to you. After all, what is an interview but a sales presentation? Any salesperson will tell you that you cannot sell until you know what the buyer wants.

### **2. Questions that illustrate your interest and intelligence**

Did you know that an intelligent question can impress an interviewer even more than a snap answer?

The best types of questions to showcase your intelligence and interest come out of your research of the company and industry. You may want to ask questions concerning:

- Strategy for reaching a specific niche market
- The company's long-range goals
- Territorial expansion plans

Granted, some information may be deemed confidential. If you begin your inquiry with, “Can you tell me...” you give the interviewer an out if he/she cannot speak on the subject. Either way, you get the opportunity to impress the interviewer with your intelligent curiosity about corporate goals and plans.

Remember, pre-interview research is the key to forming insightful questions. Never try to “wing your way” through an interview without finding out facts ahead of time. Some good sources for research include:

- Online searches using search engines such as Google or Yahoo
- Public library reference materials
- Company website
- Press releases

If you've been out-performed in interviews lately, try this strategy and see if you don't get called back for second interviews more often.

### 3. Questions to uncover the interviewer's unspoken concerns

As you sense your interview winding down, don't forget to find out what issues or concerns the interviewer has concerning you as a good candidate fit. Don't make the assumption that the interviewer will volunteer his/her concern. Nine times out of ten they won't. If you don't ask, the interviewer won't tell you his negative perceptions of you. The most straightforward way to find out is just to ask:

- “What concerns do you have that prevent you from asking me back for the second interview?”
- “What concerns ... that prevent you from offering me the position?”

Once you've asked this question, be still and listen closely to how the interviewer responds. Pay attention to body language as well. If the interviewer says “I have no concerns,” while averting his eyes, or touching his face, it's a sure sign the interviewer DOES have concerns but is reluctant to state them. If so, a little gentle prying is in order as long as you don't make the interviewer too uncomfortable.

Once the interviewer has stated his concerns, use the opportunity to answer with one of your previously thought out success stories that illustrate your ability to meet or exceed his expectations.

If you've done your pre-interview homework and conducted a little role-play practice, using these three types of questions in your next interview will help you reach your career objective faster. Here's hoping you get a chance very soon to try out all three of these types of questions in an interview.

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