

Turning the Table: Questions for Your Interviewer

(DES MOINES, Iowa – January 26, 2005) The fateful final question of all interviews may carry more weight than you would think. Upon hearing “Now, do you have any questions,” you are given a chance to show the quality of your character and interest in the company. No matter how well the interview went, passively responding to this question with a shake of the head and a polite smile will only communicate to the employer that you are not interested in inquiring about the job, the company, and your place within their organization. Your approach to this Question & Answer time will directly impact the interviewer’s assessment of you and the interview.

When thinking of questions the first things that probably come to mind regard your salary, hours, vacation, and benefits. It is not a good idea to ask these types of questions during this time. It would only express to the employer that you are more concerned about yourself than learning about the company. These kinds of questions are valid only when a job offer has been made.

When preparing for this part of the interview develop questions regarding the company or the organization. This will positively influence your interview by showing that you care more about the company and the job than just how much they will pay you. Good questions to ask are:

1. How would you describe your company culture?
2. What is the typical career path for someone in this position?
3. What is your company’s biggest challenge?
4. Where do you see this industry in the next five years?
5. Who is your competition and how do you compare?
6. How does your company measure success?
7. What skills are the most important for this position?
8. Describe your ideal employee.
9. Tell me about the people I’d be working with.

Not only will these questions indicate to the interviewer if you are right for the job, but their answers will indicate to you if the job is what you’re looking for. Just as you may not be a perfect fit for all companies, not all companies are a perfect fit for you. Just as you try to sell yourself to a company, a company should try to sell themselves to you. In this case you should ask questions like:

§Are there any plans for a corporate merger or outsourcing initiatives?

With mergers and outsourcing often come layoffs. Before accepting a position you may want to be aware of this. Many job seekers are under the impression that only unsuccessful companies downsize. That is not always true.

§Are promotions based on seniority or accomplishments?

Some companies still operate on seniority. No matter the accomplishments or lack of accomplishments they are offered advancing positions before a new hire is. You should know that if you put in 110% that you will receive what you are due.

§If you could change one thing about how this company functions, what would it be?

Not every company functions perfectly and you may want to be aware of where their weaknesses lie.

The interviewer will recognize questions that have been prepared after thoughtful consideration. Take the time to determine what is important to you and what you highly value in a company so you can ask appropriate and intelligent questions.

About the Author: Established in 1996, MEPatWORK is the leading full-service recruitment solutions provider in the HVAC, sheet metal, refrigeration, control, electrical, plumbing and piping industries. Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, this privately held company also has offices in Chicago and Pittsburgh and specializes in finding top talent for all levels of contracting, wholesale, and manufacturing.

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