

# Job Interviews: How You Can Benefit By Asking Questions

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What really separates candidates?

It is not what you think.

## What sets candidates apart

Of course, you need a great resume and you have to have presence. You have to have your shoes shined, show up on time and answer all the questions correctly.

But you know what really makes a great candidate stand out from the others?

**It is the questions that they ask.**

The questions that show:

- they have the confidence to ask the questions
- they thought it through
- they think strategically

## QUICK STORY

I had an entry level medical sales candidate last week call me right before she had her phone interview. She said, "Hey, I want to ask you a couple questions, do you mind? I want you to tell me, without worrying about hurting my feelings, what are my weaknesses and what do you perceive are my strengths?"

I've never had a candidate ask me that!

Most candidates think they already know what I think, but we don't really understand how anyone perceives us without first asking questions to find out.

## The kinds of questions candidates should ask

Questions like:

- Tell me a little bit about what you are looking for in your candidate or new hire, tell me about the last one you hired, or why is the position open?
- What was it that you think held the other person back from being

- successful?
- What are the tasks in this job that are really going to define success for this person?
  - What are the next steps?
  - When will I hear from you?
  - Do you have any reason why you would not consider moving me forward during the (hiring) process?
  - Are there any other folks who will be interviewing me later?
  - Will it be a panel interview?
  - In the typical day, how many hours do you work on the road?
  - How does the travel program work?
  - With your clients, what do you think is the #1 obstacle to success?
  - What do you see in the field with sales representatives that stops them from being successful?
  - Which product line of yours is your lead line? (i.e. the one that everyone should buy)
  - Which product line should they probably not buy?
  - What do you like about working here?
  - Among the other candidates, how do I rank?
  - Are there any questions that you have for me?
  - Do you see how my experience at XYZ (past company) translates well into this position?
  - Do you agree with me that a Bachelor's degree in Biology is not necessary for this position, that it seems like it's a sales process that really requires someone that can understand the product well enough, but can also understand the customer and their business process?

**What it takes to ask a question is:**

- Confidence
- Thinking it through
- Being strategic

## BACK TO THE STORY

I will tell you, that gal that asked me those questions, she set herself apart. I was impressed! And that does make a difference about my confidence in supporting her candidacy.

So when a manager called me and said that he was not quite sure if he was going to move forward with her, I insisted because I felt strongly about her. Since she had enough guts to ask me those questions when I interviewed her, she convinced me that she could probably do the job well.

She will probably ask the customers questions like:

- When can I expect you to order?
- When would you like the product to arrive?
- Is there any reason why we can't move forward with this deal?
- How many pieces do you want to buy?
- Is there someone else I need to speak to?
- What is the purchasing process?

**Get the point: QUESTIONS!**

I'll see you at the top!

Peggy