



CAREER WOMAN

# Interview questions you need to ask to set you apart and win the job

By *Karen Gately* on October 15, 2019



When a prospective employer asks in an interview “do you have any questions for me” typically they are continuing their assessment of you. While some might mentally ‘sit back’ and focus on what information you want to know, the vast majority are continuing to judge your suitability for the role and their business through the quality of questions you ask.

The extent to which you are truly interested in the job or organisation, and your understanding of the role or industry can all be reflected in what insights you ask the employer to share with you. Not having questions can make you appear unmotivated or unprepared. Put simply asking questions matters to the perceptions you create and is an opportunity that shouldn’t be missed.

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Among the most powerful questions you can ask include these:

### **What are the most important indicators of success in the role?**

People who take ownership and strive for success want to know where the goal posts are. Demonstrate personal accountability by exploring how the standard of your contribution will be measured.

Asking this question will also give you valuable insight to what matters most to the employer. Armed with this information you can then help them to see how your skills or experience will allow you to deliver on key priorities.

### **What is the typical career path for a person in this role?**

Having the desire to keep learning and build your career with the organisation is likely to be well received in most circumstances. Progressive employers are assessing your ability to do the job today as well as grow with the organisation over time.

Asking questions about career path options can indicate that you are open to exploring options and seizing opportunities that come along.

### **Who will the incumbent of this role need to have particularly strong relationships with? Why?**

The simple truth is to be successful in any job we need to work effectively with other people. While that may seem too obvious a point to bother making, don't fall into the all too common trap of focusing too much on yourself.

Demonstrate that you are committed to building strong relationships by exploring who need to be connected with and why those relationships are especially important.

### **What are the most common obstacles to success for someone in this role?**

The reality is every job gets difficult and even tedious at times. Demonstrate that you understand there are usually roadblocks that need to be removed in order for the job to be done well.

Asking this question can also demonstrate to the employer that you are up for a challenge and not simply looking for an easy ride.

## What are the organisations biggest priorities and how will this role make a difference to achieving those outcomes?

Most employers want to know that you care about more than just turning up and doing your job. When you ask about broader priorities you demonstrate that you are willing and able to care about more than just the task at hand.

Asking about strategic priorities also plants a seed in your prospective employer's mind, that you are someone who thinks beyond yourself and understands the broader context within which you operate.

## What types of people typically thrive in this organisation?

This question says a lot about the person asking it. Firstly, that you are looking to thrive, not simply survive. With 70% of the worlds working population sitting somewhere between somewhat to totally disengaged, employers are desperate to find people who want to be at their best and reach their potential.

Asking about the types of people who get ahead demonstrates understanding of the link between our character and the impact we can have in our role. The employers answer can tell you a great deal about the mindsets, values and behaviours they value most.

At the end of the day, most employers are looking to hire people who are actively engaged in their career and want to do well. The questions you ask provide them with one source of information about the type of person you are, what you think is important and how you are likely to go about doing your job if they hire you.

So, reflect on the questions above and any others you want answers to, before heading into an interview. While further questions may come up during the meeting, turn up prepared to make inquiries about topics that help the employer to see your interest in the job and understanding of the industry, role and challenges inherent in the opportunity.



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Karen Gately, founder of Corporate Dojo, is a leadership and people-management specialist. Karen works with leaders and HR teams to drive business results through the talent and energy of people. She is the author of *The People Manager's Toolkit: A Practical guide to getting the best from people* (Wiley) and *The Corporate Dojo: Driving extraordinary results through spirited people*. For more information visit [www.corporatedojo.com](http://www.corporatedojo.com) or contact [info@corporatedojo.com](mailto:info@corporatedojo.com)