


work **careers**

Career experts reveal surprising job interview dos and don'ts

It's one of the most hated things you can ever be asked by a potential boss. But here's how to nail it by "turning the tables" on them.



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There's a common interview question almost guaranteed to make jobseekers break into a sweat — but the key to nailing it could be by putting your future boss on the spot.

In a recent *Business Insider* article, Wharton psychologist Adam Grant said that tough question — usually worded along the lines of "how would you improve this company?" — is best answered by "turning the tables" on your potential boss.

The way to do that is by asking, "If you could change one thing about this organisation, what would it be?" once it's your turn to ask a question.

"By giving the interviewer a chance to really think about something novel, you signal that you're curious, and that you might also bring some creativity to the table," he said.

He said another impressive question would be, "If you could have any job in this workplace, what would you choose?"

But according to people management specialist Karen Gately, director and founder of human resources firm Corporate Dojo, asking an employer what they would change can either be brilliant or a giant red flag, depending on the context.

“I think the intention of a question around, ‘What change would you bring?’ is to test if a candidate is listening and understanding what the job is and whether or not it’s the right job for them, and if you can speak with confidence then that can be an incredibly important part of winning trust,” she told news.com.au.

“If a candidate turned around and asked what I would change, I would react by thinking, ‘I’m not here to tell you the answers, mate.’”



Don't get caught out by this common but tricky question. Picture: iStock Source:istock

“The interview is a two-way process and if you’re asked what questions you have for the interviewer, you’re not being tested — they’re genuinely asking what you want to understand. “So if I asked what observations you had on the job and you turned around and asked what I saw, I’d think you were sidestepping to avoid the question and I’d start to seriously wonder if you were capable.”

Ms Gately said while many candidates often baulked when asked for any questions of their own, it was important to prepare well and take it as an opportunity to prove you’re curious and interested.

“If you say something like, ‘I’d like to understand what you see as key issues and priorities’, it sounds like you’re genuinely curious and want to understand my perspective as someone who is already there,” she explained.

“Another question that shows maturity is, ‘What aspects of the culture are successful and what would you like to change?’, because it shows you’re testing to see if it’s the right environment to suit you.”



Karen Gately said it was important to ask questions of your own to prove your curiosity. Picture: Supplied Source: Supplied

She also revealed the worst question she had ever been asked, which was a “dead giveaway” the person wasn’t right for the job.

“I had a candidate who had applied for a job who I called and their first question was, ‘Can you remind me what job you’re talking about?’ That was a dead giveaway that they hadn’t been applying for jobs with the intention of finding the right match, and it was not impressive,” Ms Gately said.

“I also don’t think the very first interview is the right format to ask what you’re going to be paid.

“Before the interview, asking for the likely salary range is appropriate, but if the first question out of your mouth is, ‘What’s the money?’, the employer will be thinking, ‘Do they just want a job, or do they actually want *this* job?’”

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