

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES IN AN INTERVIEW



Summary: *There are a number of questions that can be asked during an interview with a candidate. Try asking these 10 questions.*

Everyone knows that hiring managers get a kick out of asking crazy questions during interviews to their candidates. There are a number of reasons to throw a weird question at a candidate, especially to see how they respond to things they don't know on the spot, but there are other questions that are more important to ask in order to determine the best candidates.

1. Tell me about a time when you made difficult goals for yourself. What did you do to achieve them?

This question is important if you want to find a candidate who is goal-oriented and results-driven, which is something every company should want in their employees. You will be entrusting this candidate to handle the goals you have for them so ensuring they are able to achieve them is important. Look for answering that imply they understand what difficult goals are and can put the necessary work into reaching their goals and keeping them.

2. Make a pitch to me as if I were buying your product or service.

This question is a challenging one. A candidate that can smoothly deliver a strong pitch is someone you want to seriously consider. This question also requires candidates to use the information they researched about the company to come up with an answer. A candidate that can't be bothered to research the company before applying and before an interview is not one you want to hire. This lack of effort is a direct representation of who they are as a worker. Remember to consider the quality of the pitch by the type of position they are applying for – expect more for someone applying for a sales job compared to someone applying for an administrative assistant role.

3. Tell me about the relationships you've had with co-workers.

Every team has a different dynamic. You need to determine if the candidate would work well with the team you already have, if they would be happy, productive, and liked by the team. The answer the candidate gives to this question will give you insight into how they interact with others and what kind of interactions they want from others. Obviously, a candidate that doesn't hesitate to bad-mouth their coworker or bosses is a red flag.

4. What project is the most significant career accomplishment for you?

This question is considered by some to be the most important question you can ask during an interview. Their answer will tell you about their prior success and their sense of ownership over those accomplishments. Look for answers that show they are confident in their work and professional choices while showing humility and acknowledging the efforts of others that helped.

5. What have you succeeded in professionally that is not an experience you want to repeat?

Everyone is bound to have something they were required to do during their career that they didn't enjoy, even if they were good at it. If they answer with some kind of menial job like delivering the mail to their floor, get them to elaborate more to see if they understand that every job is important to the business or if they consider themselves to be too good for such a job. If the candidate answers with a job that was really hard, find out why the job was hard. Was there a problem with how the project was planned or are they putting the blame on someone else for the experience turning out poorly? If the candidate indicates that the challenge was a team-related one, dig deeper to uncover what their role with the team was, etc.

6. Do you think it is better to perfect and late or good and on time?

Not everything can be perfect. In almost every instance, being on time is the most important factor. Projects could be worked on endlessly, continually fixing and changing things to make it perfect. There comes a point when a project is good enough. Companies do not want employees that cannot get a task done on time because they are so concerned with perfection. Concede that there may be times when perfect is critical so let the candidate explain themselves.

7. In five minutes, explain to me something that is complicated but you know well.

This question addresses several factors that you are looking for in a candidate. Their answer will use communication skills, knowledge, and creativity. They "something" they explain does not have to be work-related. They could describe how to cook a delicatessen or knit a layered scarf. You want to see clear instructions, passion, and knowledge in their answer.

8. What's your definition of hard work?

You want to figure out if the candidate has what it takes to be a hard worker and keep up with the team. They may be in a slower-paced company or role but are still capable and understanding of what it takes to work hard.

9. Tell me about a time you messed up.

This question is similar to the classic, "What are your weaknesses?" You want employees that are self-aware and takes ownership for their actions. This kind of candidate is also humble and mindful of others. A candidate that turns their mistake onto others or gives a lame example of a mistake is not someone you want working with your team.

What do you think is the most important to ask during an interview? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about other common questions during interviews, read these articles:

- [20 Most Common Interview Questions](#)
- [Easily Answer "Where Do You See Yourself In 5 Years?" in Your Next Interview](#)
- [How to Answer the Common Job Interview Question of "What is Your Greatest Weakness?"](#)

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