

Questions You Can Ask (Close the Deal)

An interview is a two way process. You are assessing whether the organisation fits your goals and conforms to your values and needs as well as them assessing your 'fit'.

Generally an interviewer will ask for questions towards the end of the conversation, but if they do not, be prepared to raise questions at appropriate intervals.

The purpose of asking questions is to:

- Demonstrate genuine interest in the company and the job
- Gain information to help you to evaluate the job against your own criteria
- Enable you to bring out those parts of your skills and experience that are potentially relevant to the position
- Demonstrate your confidence and behaviour in meetings. If you restrict yourself only to answering questions, you lose a prime opportunity to prove yourself in action
- Make the interview more interesting for both parties, and thus provide an opportunity for good 'chemistry' to develop

There are a number of questions you could ask at interview, but you must choose them carefully, taking into account the culture and sensitivities of the organisation and they fall broadly into the following categories – the organisation, the job, and performance and reward. Additionally, there are some questions you can ask about next steps etc.

THE ORGANISATION

Questions about the health of the business should be handled with care. For example:

- "From my research on the organisation I see that your half-year figures and the last two full financial years have been on target. Do you see this continuing?"
- "What are the resources (budget, staff, equipment) available to me to do this job?" "What plans have you for...?"
- "How would you describe the culture of the organisation or management style?"

THE JOB

- "What are the main responsibilities/accountabilities of the job?"
- "What would you consider are the immediate key priorities in the post?"
- "Where does this job fit into the overall structure and how does it impact on the other departments?"
- "How do you see this job changing/expanding in the future?"

PERFORMANCE AND REWARD

Don't ask direct questions about salary, holiday entitlements, etc. too early. It is usually best to leave this for the interviewer to offer this information.

- “What are you looking for in a candidate? What capabilities do you think are most important?”
- “How is success/effectiveness measured and rewarded?”
- “What are the prospects for development, training and advancement?”
- “How are individuals supported in training and development?”

COMPLETING THE INTERVIEW

- “What reservations or gaps do you see in my application?”
- “How do you see my skills and experience fitting in with your organisation?”
- “What happens next/when will you be making a decision?”