

Great First Interview Questions

Because the job interview is a sales call it should be planned, practiced, and conducted as a sales call. One of the most critical factors in making a sale is doing a needs analysis. A needs analysis is when you ask questions to find out precisely what the customer wants so as to best position those features and benefits of your product (yourself) that satisfy the customer's needs. You must diagnose before you prescribe. Interviewers like candidates who ask thoughtful questions. They like candidates who are truly interested in the company. Asking questions—and listening to the answers—is a point of difference. Most if not all of the other candidates will be talking about themselves. Interviewers will believe you are really smart if you ask these smart questions.

Note: You may know the answers to many of these questions based on your homework. If the interviewer's response is wrong, don't correct him. If the interviewer's response surprises you or offends you or is off base, don't react. Make a note. If you don't understand an answer, ask for further explanation.

1. Why is your company successful?
2. What must your company do to stay successful?
3. How does your company make money?
4. What are your strategies to get and keep customers?
5. What is the vision for this company in three years?
6. What does it take to succeed here?
7. Why have other people failed here?

8. What were the reasons you went to work here?
9. Are your competitors ABC, Inc., and XYZ, Inc.?
10. What differentiates your products and company from the competitors?
11. Why are (the target job position, e.g., salespeople or scientists or accountants) important to your company?
12. How important are (target job position:_) to the company?
13. What are your expectations for the job?
14. What important (job position task:_) is not being done well today?
15. What are you looking for?
16. What kind of training is available?
17. What is your hiring process?
18. Who else is involved in the decision to hire?
19. What are the concerns about this position?
20. What will it take for someone like myself to get accepted by your company?
21. Is there any question I should be asking that I'm not asking?

A good question is one that when answered teaches both the questioner and the responder something. A good question signals to the customer, the hirer, good things about you.