

Getting Yourself Hired

Lesson 3: What Questions Do You Have For Me?

BY DALTON HOOPER

At some point during the job interview (usually near the end), the interviewer will ask, "Do you have any questions for me?". It is a precious gift. Never throw it away. Leveraged to their fullest, the questions you ask can carry more weight than the answers you have given up to that point.

Be prepared

Before you show up for your next interview, you will no doubt have spent some time preparing your answers to the questions you think will most likely be asked. That is a wise strategy. If the interviewer has also prepared wisely, the questions asked of you will have been purposely selected to reveal your suitability to the position for which you are being interviewed.

Like many interviewers, I long ago developed a standard set of questions to suit my purposes. I generally ask the same questions of each candidate, judging each answer in relation to their competition's answer to the same question.

Is there one question in my repertoire that I consider to be the most revealing?

Why, yes. There is. The question? "Do you have any questions for me?"

A defining moment

In a future lesson within this series, I will talk about the presence of "defining moments" in job interviews and how to manage and create them. For now, let's concentrate on the opportunity you are handed near the end of your interview which will allow you to create a defining moment.

I am frequently amazed at job candidates who have persevered through my interview session with them, only to turn down the precious

gift I offer them – to ask questions of me! Have you ever been asked by your interviewer if you had any questions for them, only to reply, "No. I think you've answered everything I wanted to know." If you take nothing else away from this article, learn this: **Never, ever pass up the opportunity to ask your interviewer some questions!**

Cracking the code

I am going to let you in on a fact so little-known that even most interviewers don't realize its existence: When you ask the interviewer a question, your primary purpose is not in learning his or her answer, but in having the interviewer hear the question(s) you have chosen to ask! As a hiring manager myself, I can tell you that regardless of how you have performed in the interview to this point, you can drastically improve or decrease your chances of being the successful candidate based on the questions you ask. If you choose to pass up this opportunity, you had better hope all of the competing candidates did also. Of course, even if you do ask your interviewer some questions, you can "blow it".

Here are some examples of poor questions choices:

- "Would I be working in a cubicle or an office?"
- "Do you have casual Fridays here?"
- "Is there a cafeteria in the building?"
- "What day is payday here?"

Consider instead, these examples:

- "What would be the greatest challenge for someone filling this position?"
- "Can you walk me through what a typical day would be like in this role?"

- "How does this position support your company's objectives?"
- "After spending this time with me, what would you consider to be my weak points and how would you recommend I improve on them?"

I especially like the last example. It not only instantly makes your interviewer become your mentor and advisor (and logically, your ally), but also gives you a read on how you fared in the interview – no more wondering. How useful is that!!

Can you see the obvious difference in the types of questions in the first list versus the second list? In the first list, the questions reveal your interest in what the potential job could do for you. In the second list, the questions indicate a desire on your part to be what the interviewer wants you to be. If you were the interviewer (i.e., the decision-maker), which set of questions would be most endearing to you? Exactly.

Your own repertoire

I mentioned earlier that I have a standard set of questions I use in nearly every interview. You should also develop a standard set of questions that you will use whenever an interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions for me?" Give your repertoire of questions a lot of thought. Rehearse them so you can ask them without pulling out a piece of paper to read them. You need to ask them as if they were a natural result of your keen interest in the position being discussed.

Good luck!



DALTON HOOPER
WORKS FOR WALT
DISNEY PARKS AND
RESORTS
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY.
UNTIL RECENTLY,
DALTON WAS THE
DOCUMENTATION
PROJECT MANAGER,

DIRECTING A TEAM OF TECHNICAL WRITERS.
HE CAN BE REACHED AT