

Top questions you should ask during an interview to raise eyebrows

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Job interviews are laced with questions that give the interviewer the opportunity to get to know A) if you will be an asset to the company and B) if you will fit into the company culture. As a prospective hire, use the interview as an opportunity for YOU to ask questions that will not only show how your character aligns with the company mission but, shows the interview team that you care about their long-term strategy and are already thinking of how you will align with it to ease the pain that keeps them up at night.

Talent Acquisition specialists have as many as 80 or more resumes for each position and may not know enough about a specific role to understand your transferable skills. They must streamline the interview process of find top talent to forward to hiring managers and look for reasons to eliminate as many borderline candidates as possible. Mix speaking and listening 50/50. Your main goal is to put down all the red flags. Seek to interview with the actual hiring manager as often as possible.

Red flags that interviewers use to eliminate candidates

1. Doesn't have the skills.
2. Lacks experience.
3. Can't adapt.
4. Less preferred.
5. No finesse. Flat personality. Not a leader.
6. Arrogant
7. Won't stay long and will continue to look for another job.
8. Won't fit in.
9. Too passive. Won't motivate.
10. Not a strategic thinker or problem solver.
11. No executive presence.
12. Will discredit me as the hiring manager.
13. Will undermine me as the hiring manager.

Top questions you ask on the interview

Pick the ones that make the most sense to you but ALWAYS include the last one.

1. Could you describe the type of employee who fits well with the organization?
2. How are the goals set for the department?

3. How long was the last person in this role and where are they now?
4. What is your biggest challenge as a leader in your position? What keeps you up at night? (This will give you their pain that you want to help solve. Offer ways that you can ease that pain.) “My goal is to work without a lot of oversight so you can go back to the work you need to do.” Be the low maintenance problem solver. Offer details of what you would do to help. Be specific!
5. What can I do in this role to make your job (or the hiring manager’s job) easier?
6. What is most important to you when considering a new member to your team?
7. How would you describe the culture here? What is the company’s management style?
8. What characterizes the most successful people in this company?
9. What significant changes has this company gone through in the last three years? What is the organization’s plan for the next three years?
10. What are the company’s strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
11. If I were in this position, what’s the most important thing I could accomplish within my first 90 days? (This is your opportunity to delineate your plan for the first 30-60 and 90 days. Be sure to be prepared to share this even if they do not ask. They will be impressed that you did your research.
12. In my research I have learned that your company values are _____. They dovetail with my personal values. (Give examples.)
13. Describe your team in three words.
14. What is your team doing that makes this open role exciting?
15. Where do you see the person in this position in three years?
16. What types of personalities mesh well with the team?
17. What are your team’s strengths? What are the opportunities or gaps within your team?
18. How long have your employees worked for the company?
- 19. (ALWAYS end with this question.) What stands out that would keep me from being the top candidate for this position? (This shows you have grit. This is where you hope they will state any concerns they have about you such as not having been employed in a while. You likely know what the concerns are so come prepared with an answer.)**

Mary Lee Gannon, ACC, CAE is an executive coach and corporate CEO who helps busy leaders get off the treadmill to nowhere to be more effective, earn more, be more calm and enjoy connected relationships with the people who matter while it still matters. Watch her FREE Master Class training on Three Things to Transform Your Life and Career Right Now at www.MaryLeeGannon.com.