

THE PRODUCTIVE JOB INTERVIEW: STRATEGIC QUESTIONS THAT YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK

An *employment* interview is *not* a 'one-sided interrogation'. It is a two-way meeting; after all, your decision as to whether this position is a good move for you, is every bit as important as the hiring authority deciding if s/he is interested in hiring you. Furthermore, the quality of the questions, that **you** ask, will give the potential employer an inside view of your critical thinking skills. So let's ensure a **win-win for you**. 1)while you gain intel, critical to your decision-making process; ... 2)make sure that you leave them with a favorable impression of you!

So, to optimize the available circumstances at your next interview; try asking some intelligent questions of your own.
Here are seven *must-ask* questions and the rationale for why you should know the answers.

1 Why is this position vacant? Was the most recent incumbent promoted, transferred, fired, or did s/he leave the company for a different job?

What is the status of the most recent incumbent for this position? (If a new position: How has this job been performed in the past?)

Why This Is Important: You need to know about any problems or past history associated with this position. For instance, was your predecessor fired or promoted? Is this a temporary position or a brand new one? The answer will tell you about management's expectations and how the company is gearing to grow. *The information that you gain will also help you get a handle on whether or not this position is the right move for you at the present time.*

2. Why did you choose to work here? What is it that keeps you here?

Why This Is Important: Although you may like this company, you're an outsider. You need to find out what an insider has to say about working there. Who better to ask than your **interviewer**? This also forces the interviewer to step out of their official corporate role and answer personally as an employee and potential coworker.

3. What would be the first problem that the person you hire, has to tackle?

Why This Is Important: You need to be on the same page as your new **manager**, as well as be clear on what the initial expectations are and that you can deliver. You want to avoid allowing yourself to be misled about the job's requirements and end up overwhelmed and over your head after the first week on the job.

4. What can you tell me about the individual to whom I would directly report?

Why This Is Important: It doesn't matter how wonderful the company might be; your time will be spent working for a specific manager. You need to find out who this person is and what kind of manager s/he is — earlier rather than later, before

personality clashes develop. If you're an independent type accustomed to devising solutions on your own, for instance, you'll certainly be extremely irritated when you find you're being supervised by a **micromanager**.

5. What are the company's five-year sales and profit projections?

Why Should You Ask: You need to know about the future of the company you plan to spend several years of your life working for. It doesn't have to be this exact question. For example, you might want to ask about the company's future plans for new products and services or any planned market expansion. Of course, you've **done your own research**, but nothing can beat an insider's observations and insights. This also shows you've done your homework and are serious about this company.

6. What is the tempo of your hiring process?

Why This Is Important: For your own mental sanity, you need to know if the hiring decision isn't going to be made for quite a while. That way you won't start feeling '*down in the dumps*' if you haven't heard back from them for quite a while. Additionally, it lets you know how rapidly (or slowly) you want to respond with a post-interview thank you letter; as the closer it arrives to decision-making time, the more advantageous it can be for you. In practical matters knowing the speed of their hiring process enables you to shift your focus and efforts on to other opportunities. If this is March and the company doesn't plan on filling the job until Q3 and you really want to make a move much sooner, you can put this job on your back burner for now.

7. What's our next step?

Why This Is Important: This is your closing and the most important question to ask at the end of the interview. You need to know what happens after this point. Many books advise asking for the job now, but most people may feel too intimidated to bluntly do so. And with more candidates already scheduled for interviews, the company is not likely to make you an offer just yet. You may also need to do some additional research on the company, making it too early to ask for the job.

A good compromise: Take the initiative and set a plan for follow-up. You'll also be able to gauge the company's enthusiasm with the answer. Don't forget to ask for your interviewer's direct phone number and the best time to call.

What's My Take-Away?

As a savvy job seeker, the key to a productive interview is to find out as much about your potential employer as possible. Asking these seven questions will not only make you appear more committed as a candidate, but will also give you better insight into both the challenges and opportunities that this position may offer you.

Career Strategist Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of **CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC**. Revolutionizing careers since 1985, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in nearly two dozen books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the PROFESSIONAL ASSN. OF RÉSUMÉ WRITERS & CAREER COACHES. He has been helping clients successfully advance in, and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications ([National Certified Career Counselor](#), [Certified Professional Résumé Writer](#), [Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach](#), and [Certified Employment Interview Professional](#)), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

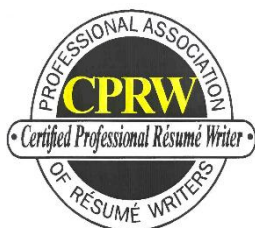
- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.

• Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a “Résumé Guru” by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

He has been spotlighted on WCBS television in “*Acing The Interview*” and has been named as the “*Professional of the Year 2024*” by the **PODCAST BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK**.



Berkowitz has been recognized as “... *one of the leading résumé writers in the U.S. today*” in Professional Résumés for Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators. Wendy Enelow, President of the Career Masters Institute has acknowledged Mark as “... *one of the most talented career counselors I have ever met.*”



You can contact him at **1+ (910) 833-5013** or cardevres1@gmail.com to find out how he can assist you in launching your career into a higher orbit.

*See how you can benefit from professional expertise
instead of suffering from your career mistakes.*