

## The 10 Best Interview Questions to Ask

By Alison Green | U.S.News & World Report LP – Wed, Apr 18, 2012 9:04 AM EDT

When your interviewer wraps up your job interview by asking if you have any questions, you might think that he or she is finished assessing you, but that's not quite the case. Interviewers draw conclusions about you based on the questions you ask--or don't ask. You don't want to give the impression that you're not very interested in the job, or that you're only concerned about the compensation. Instead, ask about the work, company, and team. Here are 10 great questions for your interviewer:

### ***1. What are the biggest challenges the person in this position will face?***

This question shows that you don't have blinders on in the excitement about a new job; you recognize that every job has difficult elements and that you're being thoughtful about what it will take to succeed in the position.

### ***2. Can you describe a typical day or week in the position?***

This question shows that you're thinking beyond the interview and that you're visualizing what it will be like to do the work itself. This is different from many candidates, who appear to be focused solely on getting the job offer without thinking about what will come after that.

### ***3. What would a successful first year in the position look like?***

Asking this shows that you're thinking in the same terms that a manager does--about what the position needs to contribute to the team or company to be worthwhile. You'll also sound like someone who isn't seeking to simply do the bare minimum, but rather to truly achieve in the role.

### ***4. How will the success of the person in this position be measured?***

This question is similar to the previous one, but it will also give you more insight into what the manager really values. You may discover that while the job description emphasizes skill A or responsibility B, the manager actually cares most about skill C or responsibility D.

### ***5. How long did the previous person in the role hold the position? What has turnover in the role generally been like?***

If no one has stayed in the position very long, it might be a red flag about a difficult manager, unrealistic expectations, or some other land mine.

**6. How would you describe the culture here? What type of people tend to really thrive, and what type don't do as well?**

If the culture is very formal and structured and you're happiest in a more relaxed environment, or if it's an aggressive, competitive environment and you are more low-key and reserved, this job might not be a comfortable fit for you. You'll spend a large portion of your waking life at your job, so it's crucial to make sure you know what you're signing up for.

**7. How would you describe your management style?**

Your boss will have an enormous impact on your quality of life at work. While you can't always trust managers to accurately self-assess, you'll at least get some insight into their style by what things they choose to emphasize in response to this question.

**8. Thinking back to the person who you've seen do this job best, what made their performance so outstanding?**

Most managers' ears will perk up at this question, because it signals that you care not just about being average or even good, but truly great. This is the question managers wish all their employees would ask.

**9. Are there any reservations you have about my fit for the position that I could try to address?**

This is a great way to give yourself the chance to tackle any doubts the interviewer might have about you, as well as for you to consider whether those doubts might be reasonable and point to a bad fit.

**10. What is your time line for getting back to candidates about the next steps?**

Always wrap up with this question, so that when you go home you know what to expect next. That way, you won't be sitting around wondering when you'll hear something.

*Alison Green writes the popular Ask a Manager blog, where she dispenses advice on career, job search, and management issues. She's also the author of Managing to Change the World: The Nonprofit Leader's Guide to Getting Results and former chief of staff of a successful nonprofit organization, where she oversaw day-to-day staff management, hiring, firing, and employee development.*