

## 10 Power Questions to Distinguish Yourself During a Job Interview

Andrew Sobel, coauthor of  
[\*Power Questions: Build Relationships, Win New Business, and Influence Others\*](#)

If you talk to recruiters and executives who are actively hiring, they will tell you that there are three types of questions they get: None, bad ones, and—very rarely—memorable ones. And the candidates who ask the memorable ones are often the ones they make offers to. “You’d be surprised,” a recruiter for a fast-growing technology company told me, “how many job candidates have absolutely no questions for me at all, or, they ask dumb or boring questions like ‘so what do *you* do?’”

You want a recruiter or executive who interviews you to tell a colleague afterwards, “I had a great conversation with that candidate. He had really thought a lot about our business.” That’s what gets you the callback. And good questions are the way you create a thought-provoking, value-added conversation.

First, avoid these types of questions in a job interview:

- *Informational questions.* Don’t take up a manager’s time asking “How much vacation will I get?” Get the basic information you need *before* you go in for an interview.
- *Closed-ended questions.* If someone can give a “yes” or “no” answer, it diminishes your prospects for having a good conversation.
- *“Me” questions.* An executive is interested in how you will add value to *her organization* and whether or not you’re a good fit. Skip questions like “I skydive every Saturday—so will I ever be asked to work weekends?”

Here are the kinds of questions you *should* be asking in a job interview:

1. *Credibility-building questions:* “As I think back to my experience in managing large sales forces, I’ve found there are typically three barriers to breakthrough sales performance: Coordination of the sales function with marketing and manufacturing; customer selection; and product quality. I’m curious, what would you say are the main factors that have been responsible for your own lack of sales growth?”
2. *“Why?” questions:* “Why did you close down your parts businesses rather than try to find a buyer for it?” or “Why did you decide to move from a functional to a product-based organization structure?”
3. *Personal understanding questions:* “I understand you joined the organization five years ago. With all the growth you’ve had, how do you find the experience of working here now compared to when you started?”
4. *Passion questions:* What do you love most about working here?
5. *Value-added advice questions:* “Have you considered creating an online platform for your top account executives from around the world to share success stories and

collaborate around key client opportunities? We implemented such a concept a year ago and it's been very successful.”

6. *Future-oriented questions*: “You’ve achieved large increases in productivity over the last three years. Where do you believe future operational improvements will come from?”
7. *Aspiration questions*: “As you look ahead to the next couple of years, what are the potential growth areas that people are most excited about in the company?”
8. *Organizational culture questions*: “What are the most common reasons why new hires don’t work out here?”
9. *Decision-making questions*: If were to arrive at two final candidates with equal experience and skills, how would you choose one over the other?
10. *Company strengths-and-weaknesses questions*: “Why do people come to work for you rather than a competitor? And then, “why do you think they stay?”

If you want to be noticed by recruiters, don’t talk more—ask better questions.

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