

Observations from the Bridge

Industry Staffing News

For the Industrial and Consumer Goods Industry

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Why Would I Hire You?

Whenever I am interviewing candidates for a position, I have never been afraid to put them on the spot or test them. I don't believe in embarrassing them but being thorough with my questions will inevitably add a little bit of pressure to the situation.

When I was hiring someone to work in sales, I would sometimes ask them to sell me something right there and then, for example their mobile phone. Whatever feature they tried to pitch, I would say I didn't need it. Whatever angle they took, I would counter. The main reason was to test their resilience and tenacity, which is obviously essential in a sales role.

Sometimes, it is the simplest questions which candidates can struggle with. If I was to interview ten people and ask them the question: Why would I hire you? - I can guarantee that eight of the people won't give the answer I am looking for. They will give a detailed list of their strengths, but it won't answer the question I am posing.

What employers want to know is how you can add value to a role. Every single person in an organization should be able to quantify exactly how

Hot Topic - How to Ask and Answer the "Right" Questions in Job Interviews

In our previous newsletters, we provided several articles on how to prepare for the recruiting landscape in 2014, what challenges to keep in mind and how to take advantage of technological developments like Social Media to boost your hiring initiatives.

Today's newsletter takes it one step further in the actual hiring process. It provides you with two interesting articles on how to ask and answer questions appropriately in a job interview - as an interviewer or job applicant.

We wish you all the best for your next interview, either as the interviewer asking the "right" questions, or as a job seeker answering them in a highly effective manner.

Sincerely,

Joachim Woerner
Managing Director



The Undercover Interviewer:

"Do You Have Any Questions for Me?"

"Do you have any questions for me?" could be the biggest trap of the professional job interview. That is, when the interviewer turns the tables and offers to answer whatever questions may be on your mind. Don't be fooled. This is not the moment to relax or think that the interviewer is just being polite. In fact it is often the most important part of the interview. This is your chance to show how much homework you've done - or not - about the company. How much insight you have - or don't - about the position you're discussing. And whether or not you are accurately reading the dynamics of the interview.

Do not wait to be surprised when this question comes at you with five or seven minutes left in the interview. Get ready beforehand and use it as the opportunity to differentiate yourself from your competition.

The worst possible answer to this question is, "No, thanks, I think I have everything I need." If you do that the interviewer will write you off, then and there. as someone who isn't hungry, isn't curious about the organization or doesn't care about the interviewer him or herself. Rather, prepare a series of questions that link to your narrative as discussed in my previous

they add value. If this is a sales director, it would be how much revenue they bring in. If it's a PA, how much time can they save the CEO in a day? Everybody's contribution should be measurable and what you have to do in an interview is tell the interviewer what you will contribute. This is how you use your list of key skills and strengths - simply telling me what they are isn't good enough, as you're not matching them up to the needs of the job.

Bear in mind that the cost of an employee is not just their salary. There are running costs such as desks, chairs, phones and computers. There is National Insurance tax. The additional cost of a new hire can often be £15-20,000 on top of their salary. Therefore you need to be able to justify that cost.

Going back to the example of the sales director, if they can demonstrate to me that the income they will generate is three times more than what they are costing, that will definitely increase their chances of landing that job.

Of course there are many other factors that hiring managers take into account - for example is the candidate suited to the culture of the company? Do they have the ambition to want to constantly develop themselves?

But they will only start delving into this once they have established that you can make a difference to your role - and that's what you have to show them in the interview.

By: James Caan

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"Undercover Interviewer" post.

Some examples of good areas to probe and effective questions to ask when given the chance:

- **About the culture** - "How would you describe the kinds of people that thrive in the company and those that don't fit in? What does that say about the culture?" Or even more specific, "As I reflect on my two previous organizations, one culture was all about collaboration, teamwork, never using the word 'I' and the other was much more a star system, where it was all about standing out as an individual performer. How does this organization operate on that dimension?"
- **About the position** - "What would success look like in the position? If I were to be offered the job and a year from now we were reviewing how it's going, what would I have accomplished for you to say, 'What an amazing year you've had?'"
- **About the interviewer** - "Tell me a little bit about your story. How did you find your way into the company? What have you enjoyed most and what's been most frustrating?" It goes without saying (but it is worth repeating), people love to be asked about themselves. An even better way to ask this question is to have Googled the person you're meeting and framing a question about them with specifics about what they've done, where they went to school, what they may be known for.
- **About the company** - "In the most recent earnings call, the CFO said that the company is now projecting flat revenue for the year. Given that the market is growing double digits, shouldn't I be concerned about the strategy not working?" Or "Would it be an accurate interpretation to say that your two most recent acquisitions were made to attract talent or 'acquihires?'" If that is the case, why do you think it's been so difficult to attract the talent you need?" When asking about the company and strategy, assuming you've done your homework it's fine to be challenging - as long as you're not being insulting or personal about it.

As you can see, there are any number of questions to ask when you're given the opportunity in the last part of an interview. Your goal for the interview is for the interviewer to describe you, once you've left as being "very sharp and asking great questions." Asking great questions in an interview is among the most sure-fire ways to get the job.

By: James Citrin

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References

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