

The interview is certainly an opportunity for an employer to decide if you are the best candidate for the position. Do not forget, however, that it is also an opportunity for you to decide if the position and organization are good matches for you.

Questioning Prospective Employers

The questions you ask during an interview come from two sources:

- First, always prepare at least four or five questions before the interview and have them listed in your portfolio so you can access them during the interview.
- Second, as the interview progresses, note any unclear points which may be clarified when you ask other questions.

When should you ask your questions?

- As an interview draws to a close, employers typically ask, "*Do you have any questions?*" This inquiry opens the door of opportunity for you to gather more information about the employer.
- If an employer does not think to ask for your questions, you may want to politely ask permission at the conclusion of the interview.

When asking questions, be careful not to interrogate an interviewer with a lengthy list of questions. Basic information about the prospective employer should be obtained through researching both the employer and the position prior to your interview, not by asking questions during the interview.

The types of questions should be appropriate. Questions during the interview should pertain to specific details of the position, in-depth facts about the organization that could not be obtained through your employer research, and/or points needing clarification that arise from the interview.

Avoid the "What's in it for Me" Questions

- Questions regarding salary, benefits, or vacation should be avoided during an initial interview.
- The initial interview should focus on what you can provide to the employer as opposed to what the employer can do for you.
- Be prepared to negotiate your salary and benefit requirements during a subsequent interview, or after an offer has been extended. Remember that it is always the employer who raises the subject. However, if the interviewer introduces the issues of salary and benefits, do not avoid discussing them. See the Salary Negotiation Ready Reference for more information.