



Questions to Ask When Interviewing Leaders

10 Great Questions and Answers

By having a list of questions already written down can help make for a successful meeting with leaders. You could have them written in a notebook/journal, saved in your phone, or learn them by heart. The purpose is to make sure you have questions ready so you can take advantage of the moment shared with leaders. Also, it is important that you take copious notes or ask if you can record the interview. Not only does it show you are prepared, but also makes you stand out from others as someone who is passionate about their development and growth.

1. What do you enjoy about your job?

Everybody loves to talk about themselves, and this question enables you to build up a sense of camaraderie with the leader. This question requires a personal response, so you could learn a lot from their answer. You'll get an insider's view of how they think, what they are passionate about, and you may even get to discover how the leader got their start as well as how they progressed.

2. Who do you look up to for inspiration or mentorship?

As a leader, it is important to maintain connections with role models and mentors. Regardless of a leader's success, these are the individuals they go to when they need advice themselves. Perhaps this question can encourage you to find mentors in your profession who have overcome trials you are currently facing. By learning from their experience, you can avoid potential pitfalls along the way. The leader's answer may even be surprising. You may follow the same role models. This can be a point of connection to start a rewarding, lasting relationship.

3. What is one decision you wish you didn't make?

Part of growth is learning from other people's mistakes. Even if you have done a SWOT analysis, there is always more to learn about your own abilities. You can save yourself time and resources by speaking with leaders who have made mistakes while encountering situations similar to your experience. It may also be helpful to inquire about the thought processes and the actions that led to said mistakes. This will allow you to learn from the wisdom of those who have experienced failures.

4. What are the most important attributes of successful leaders today?

Some people are natural leaders. They can bring people together behind their ideas and manage them to achieve a common goal. If you don't have this natural trait, you can still become an exceptional leader by studying the habits of successful leaders in your industry. This question can demonstrate the power of communication skills, empathy, vision, strategic thinking, and other desirable qualities in a leader. It can also show you the best combination of traits to enhance your leadership style and deliver top quality guidance for your growth and career.

5. What qualities are lacking among today's leaders?

Again, this is a powerful question that can reveal your own shortcomings as a leader. Being in a leadership position can create a feeling of invincibility, but it helps to check in with others to improve upon things you are not aware of. Chances are, asking this question will allow you to receive a response that helps you identify your own strengths and weaknesses.



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6. What are your current goals?

Leaders who excel generally have goals they are currently pursuing, even if they are already successful or hold a position of stature. When you ask this question, note the number of goals, the scope and how they plan to accomplish the goals. Compare your procedures and strategies to see how to improve your goal setting for optimal growth in your career. Additionally, knowing how to best prioritize goals can help you focus on the things that matter most for your career journey.

7. What one thing makes you most proud?

This response could reveal a side of the person you never knew existed. While people may respect leaders for their professional achievements, many of them do not see these accomplishments as the epitome of self-actualization. Things like family, their spouse, the ability to speak a language or an artistic skill may be the thing they are most proud of. Questions like these often help put life into perspective, as they reveal the things that are most important aside from business. If anything, they can help balance the way you view your time at and away from the office.

8. What's the most important risk you took and why?

Leaders sacrifice a lot to reach their position. When they answer this question, some risks may bring fond memories while others may elicit strong emotions of opportunities lost. Take away lessons on how to choose risks to avoid making the wrong decisions on your career journey. Allow yourself a moment to reassess your priorities and how you are approaching them.

9. How do you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

The most respected leaders know how to stay ahead in their industries. They continue to upgrade their skills, make new connections, improve their relationships, and take advantage of worthy opportunities. Some leaders retain these skills by reading books; others teach professionals like yourself and find better ways of solving old problems. Even if you already have a process for refreshing your skills, you can expose yourself to different ways to approach your position when you ask others questions regarding their own leadership practices.

10. What three books can you recommend on leadership?

Books are some of the best sources for gaining wisdom and knowledge from other leaders, as they can guide successful new processes and methods. This said, each leader often has their own recommendations, so ask the one you are interviewing for theirs.