

# Job Interview Questions to be Aware of and How to Navigate Them



Interview techniques today are becoming more and more complex. It's very rare that hiring managers ask job applicants only the A, B, C questions anymore. Of course, there's still going to be the stock questions about your experience, challenges, and successes. However, the interviews of today are more complex and involved.

If you're finding yourself in a position where it's time for a career change or new opportunity, understanding the dynamics of the modern interview process, and how to handle them, is essential if you want to give yourself the best chance of advancing through the process. Below are some of the most common trick questions you'll face, and the best strategies for navigating them.

## Tell Me About Yourself

This is one of those open-ended questions you're bound to hear in almost every interview. And, there are million ways you can answer it. The reality is, you're probably not sure how to go about "telling someone about yourself."

On the surface, this question probably seems like a friendly invitation. Don't be fooled, however. The question is designed specifically to catch you off guard.

When someone asks you this question in a job interview, what they really want to know is what you can do for them. In other words, how can your skills and

experience be of benefit to the company?

The pitfall of most people when they answer this question is that they ramble on about all the neat things they've done and accomplished since birth. This is the worst thing you can do.

Instead, highlight some specific skills and real-life experiences that connect with the company and job you're applying for. The more you can show the interviewer how you can be of help and benefit, the better off you'll be.

## **What is Your Biggest Weakness?**

Even though this question also seems straightforward, it's anything but. When an interviewer asks you about your biggest weakness, what they really want to know is how self-aware you are..

While a job interview is a place where you're trying to present the best version of yourself, interviewers are keen to know about your ability to identify your shortcomings and your willingness to admit them. You can show your willingness to learn or adapt by expressing a willingness to work on those weaknesses to turn them into a strength. Sure, you want to appear confident in your job interview. However, the last thing you want to do is come across as arrogant.

## **Tell Me About Your Favorite Boss**

Everyone has bosses they've liked more than others throughout their careers. Yet again, this question seems pretty direct, and you might even be excited to answer it. However, before you go off rambling about the chill boss at your last job that let you skip out early on Fridays, take a moment to think a little deeper.

When you answer this question, you should highlight your favorite boss' professional strengths. Were they an expert communicator? Did they empower the people around them to do their jobs? What did you learn from them? These are the kinds of characteristics you want to talk about.

Your work isn't done though. The next question you're going to face is, "tell me about your least favorite boss."

Your immediate reaction to this question might be trash the boss that you just couldn't stand. This is absolutely the last thing you should do. Just like the previous question, you should stay away from personal attacks and highlight some things you thought that the boss you didn't care for, could have done better.

When you answer both of these questions, what you're really doing is telling your prospective employer what you will and won't tolerate in the workplace. You're providing critical insight into your ethics, values and work style, and your preference on how to be managed.

## **Here's Our Policy X... What do You Think About That?**

Here again, it's easy to jump straight in and offer your opinion. Think before you speak though. What makes this question so tricky, is that it's riddled with incomplete information.

The best strategy for answering this question is actually by asking questions in return. Before you give an answer, you want to have know as much information as you can. You might start by asking what led to the policy being structured the way it is? What problem is it designed to address?

The majority of people completely miss this question in job interviews. If you're able to ask questions and provide a reasoned answer based on the information you've compiled, the interviewer will see that you're level-headed and have the ability to think critically.

Job interviews are a nervous experience for everyone. No matter how many times you've been through them, you're still going to get butterflies in your stomach and have sweaty palms. If you remember to think of a job interview as a conversation, and keep your eyes and ears open for those trick questions that seem simple on the surface, you'll have a leg up on the competition. Responding thoughtfully and intelligibly just might be what makes all the difference.

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# Why a Recruiter Can Help You Find a Dream Job



At some point, you've probably been contacted by a recruiter. Maybe it's a frequent occurrence for people in your line of work. When recruiters come calling through email, LinkedIn, or over the phone, it's easy to brush them off. You figure, I really don't have time for yet another conversation with someone I don't even know.

But there comes a point when it's time for a change. You start doing some research, polish up your resume, and hit the job boards. The problem is, most of the jobs you find, you're overqualified for or have already been filled. Perhaps you even send out a few resumes thinking there's a high likelihood you're going to hear something back. Crickets. After a while, you start to panic a little.

This is where a recruiter can help. If you're still not convinced, keep reading to find out the top reasons why working with a reputable recruiter, can give you a leg up on the competition.

## Recruiters Help You Through the Process

Even though you think you've got the job hunting gig figured out, it's what professional recruiters do for a living. It's in their best interest to place the best candidates in front of hiring managers.

When you work with a recruiter, they'll be able to answer any and all questions you might have. Whether it's polishing your resume, or salary negotiation, they're in the job hunting and placement trenches on a daily basis. Have some anxieties about the job interview? No problem, a good recruiter will help you prepare.

# **Recruiters Have Huge Networks**

Even if you think your professional network is substantial, it's nothing compared to that of a professional recruiter. Think about it. They don't have a choice but to have a wide and vast network of people they work with.

This one is pretty simple. The larger the network of people you can be introduced to, the more opportunities you'll have of landing the right job.

# **Recruiters Are Specialized, Just Like You**

Your experience, knowledge and skill set in life sciences speaks for itself. The best recruiters are niched as well. As a result, they know what to look for in certain candidates for specific positions.

Because of the fact that they're "in the know," they can give details about positions you might be interested in that you couldn't glean from a simple job description.

When you work with a recruiter that's versed in your specialized skill set, you'll be able to narrow down the job search to quality positions that require your unique experience.

# **You're Never Forgotten**

We live in a day and age that operates on databases. You know those telemarketing calls you get on a daily basis? Guess what? You're part of the call list. Most folks take measures to limit the number of databases they're in because they're annoying.

When it comes to recruiting however, it actually works to your advantage. Let's say you're satisfied with your current job, but you want to keep your eyes open in case a better opportunity comes along. That's where recruiters give you an advantage. They know who you are and what you're capable of. Whenever an opportunity that requires your skills and experience comes along, a good recruiter knows where to find you.

Talk about having the hard work done for you!

# Recruiters Save You Time

The job search can be toilsome at best. On top of the demands you have at the office every day, allocating the time to diligently pursue new opportunities is difficult at best. Between searching job boards, chasing down less than promising leads, and customizing your resume and cover letter for each job you apply for, the hours add up.

Recruiters know what jobs you're after and which are available. Even though there's going to be some work required on your end, a quality recruiter will do most of the leg work for you.

At the end of the day, the job market is highly competitive. Hiring managers pour over numerous resumes and cover letters as they try to fill positions. Even if you jump off the page, you're not guaranteed a job or even an interview.

That's why working with a recruiter that knows you personally, and professionally, is so crucial. It's their job to find the perfect match for both employers and prospective job hunters, and they can give the hiring manager a little background on why they think you are a good match for the job that might not be apparent on your resume.

Ever apply for a job and never hear anything back? It happens a lot. But if you're working with a good recruiter, they will not only make sure the appropriate people see your resume, they will also provide you some feedback. Even if you don't get the job, they can give you some insights as to why you were not chosen, and possibly help you to do better in the next interview.

So, instead of toiling away on the Internet and looking at job boards, do yourself a favor. Do some research and find a recruiter that you can trust and knows your industry. Even if it takes a while, chances are you'll be glad you did in the end.

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# How-To Quit Your Job the Right Way



People are changing careers more often now, than ever before. It's said that the average American worker will change jobs four times before they retire. The model of working for the same company baby boomers are accustomed to still exists, but it's become less and less the norm.

Considering this trend, you're going to quit your job at least a time or two during your career. It's never a fun, or easy process but, it's inevitable for most. The key is going about it the right way. The last thing you want to do is leave a bad taste in anyone's mouth or, burn any bridges. We talked to the experts and they offered up their best advice which we've shared below.

## Tell Your Boss Before Anyone Else

This probably seems pretty obvious but it's amazing how often it doesn't happen. The reality is you probably have colleagues you trust and confide in. They're the people you vent to, go to for advice, and who lend you an ear when you need to talk.

If you're thinking about quitting your job, you might be tempted to tell someone you trust, who isn't your boss. You trust them not to say anything. This is hardly ever a good idea, however. What happens is, the person you tell will likely share the news with someone they trust. Before you know it, the office rumor mill starts to churn, and your boss finds out you're planning to resign from someone else.

The consequences can be far reaching. At the very least, you'll leave a poor

lasting impression for your lack of professional courtesy. The worst-case scenario is that your boss feels slighted. When the time comes for your new employer to check references, your old boss might give you a less than glowing reference.

Have the decency to tell your boss you're planning to resign before you tell anyone else. It's the professional thing to do and, you won't risk any bad feelings down the road.

## **Give Ample Notice**

One of the worst mistakes you can make when you're quitting your job is not giving enough notice. This can cause all sorts of problems for your employer and sends the message that your only concern is what's next for you.

If you plan on quitting your job, give plenty of notice. Even though the standard is two weeks, higher profile jobs might need more time.

Whatever you do, don't make your resignation too abrupt. It's only fair to your employer and your colleagues.

## **Come Up with a Transition Plan**

Giving ample notice of your resignation is only part of a sound exit strategy. The next step involves giving status updates on important projects and, presenting a plan of action to keep things moving along in your absence.

If you have the time, offer to help train your replacement.

Providing your employer with a transition plan is a win-win for everyone. First, your boss and colleagues will truly appreciate your concern for creating as few waves as possible. Secondly, you virtually assure yourself a positive reference when the time comes.

## **Write a Proper Resignation Letter**

Chances are you probably spent some considerable time writing a cover letter when you applied for your current job. The truth is, you should give just as much attention to your resignation letter.



This will be the last document that goes in your employee file so make it a good one. Writing a good letter of resignation shows your employer that you respect them and, have the professionalism to do things the right way.

The best resignation letters are brief, show genuine gratitude, provide a transition plan and are submitted well in advance of your final day.

Believe it or not, quitting your job the right way is a necessary skill in the modern workplace. You'll probably have to do it more than once. While it's never fun, and certainly not easy, it's something that can be done with grace and class. If you follow the steps outlined above, you'll not only ensure a smooth transition for your entire organization, you'll have a quality reference moving forward.

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## **How-To Make a Career Decision You Won't Regret**



Even though the modern job market is more competitive now than it's ever been, there's no shortage of resources to help you make the right career decision. Between coaches, training courses, online job boards, and advice from everyone in your professional and personal circle, logic would dictate that finding your dream job shouldn't be all that hard. Believe it or not, there's an argument to be made that it's actually quite the opposite. The information age has people so inundated with data and advice, and the opinions of others, that thinking for oneself becomes next to impossible. With all these fancy tools and resources, there are often lots of career paths to choose.

For this reason, it's easy to make important career decisions for the wrong reasons. It could be advice from a colleague. Maybe you even make a choice out of fear or desperation. Unfortunately, these choices that often lead to shoulda-woulda-coulda's down the road. That begs the question, how do you go about making career decisions you won't regret?

## **Expertise and Purpose**

A great place to start the process is identifying what you're good at and the impact you want to leave on the world. Sure, this sounds a little cliché. But, it's grounded in fact. When you get crystal clear on these factors, the decision-making process becomes pretty simple at its core. Does taking that promotion align with your values? Will staying in your current position allow you to perform at your best and grow? If you can't feel challenged and fulfilled, it's not the right fit.

## **Get Clear on What's Most Important to You**

In order to eliminate all the outside noise regarding your career choice, get clear on what's most important to you. Start by writing things down. What does your dream job look like? How will it fit with your dynamics at home? What goals do you want to accomplish? What does your plan look like to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? The vision you create should be one that gets you excited. If it scares you a little, all the better. Now you share it with others.

## **Support is Better than Advice**

When you start sharing your vision with other people, they're going to be quick to imply their wisdom. In most cases, that wisdom is anything but ill-intended. However, you need to make it clear that you're clear on the direction you're headed. Let them know that the best thing they can do is offer support with whatever decision you make and not impart their fears and biases.

Filter all the advice you hear. Just because it worked for one person in a specific situation, doesn't mean it's the best advice for you. Ask yourself if the advice you receive makes sense for you. If it doesn't, let it go in one ear and out the other.

# What's Popular isn't Always Right and What's Right isn't Always Popular

You got me. I stole that one from my fourth-grade teacher. But it's something that's stuck with me my whole life.

The urge to conform is all around you. There's a human need to be part of a group. It gets back to that whole safety in numbers thing. Whatever it takes, you have to do what's right for you. That takes confidence.

## Be Confident

Speaking of which... Whenever you're in the process of figuring out the next step, you're going to experience moments when your confidence is in crisis. It's important to remember that everyone has confidence issues. It isn't some elusive trait that some people have, and others don't.

You also have to realize building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. As silly as it might sound, positive affirmations do wonders for your confidence. Whether they're something you tell yourself or, notes you post on your bathroom mirror, self affirmations work to rewire your brain in a beneficial way. With a little practice, you can develop the unwavering confidence to make difficult choices.

Everyone says they want to live without regrets. Sadly, the number of people that actually do, is pretty small. When it comes to your career, you're going to face crossroads and difficult decisions. The last thing you want is to look back and say, "I wish I would've taken that chance when I had the opportunity." The good news is that important career decisions are your choice to make, not anyone else's. They're going to be uncomfortable. You're going to second guess yourself at some point. But, if you're clear about what you want and keep the noise from others at bay, you'll arrive at the right choice for you. With no regrets.

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# Signs It's Time to Say Goodbye to Your Boss



It's something almost everyone complains about at some point during their career. That boss they just can't stand. Whether you got off on the wrong foot, don't feel valued, or don't agree with the decisions being made, there comes a point when you've had just about all you can take. You go to work in a bad mood and come home discouraged. Eventually, enough is enough.

If you find yourself frustrated with your boss, look for the traits we talk about below. If any of them stand out, it's a clear sign something needs to change.

## Takes All the Credit

You know the type of person we're talking about. The one that takes all the credit for everyone else's work. It's like they're more concerned with making themselves look good than they are with recognizing the talented people they manage. If this type of behavior seems to be an ongoing theme, it's a red flag.

## Narcissistic

A boss that's narcissistic won't be hard to spot. They will single out what they perceive as weaker individuals, and exert their power over them. They're quick to take credit and spread blame to anyone but themselves. It doesn't take long for this type of behavior to ruin morale and toxify culture.

# Throws People Under the Bus

A good leader always has your back. They might be tough on you but they will have your back when your neck is on the line. Unfortunately, there are too many bosses out there that throw their employees under the bus. They might gossip about certain people and are always pointing their finger.

Management might even love these people as they're adept at playing both sides of the fence. They're often solely motivated by their own success and will do whatever it takes to ensure their future.

## Ignores You

On an effective team, everyone's ideas should be welcomed and considered. If you find your input continually suppressed, rejected or flat out ignored, it's a sure sign your boss doesn't see your value. They're either insecure and see you as a potential threat or, think they have all the answers.

You should feel valued in your job. If that's not the case, it needs to be addressed.

## Can't Handle Problems

Problems are going to arise in any organization. This is when a leader's true colors show. If your boss loses their cool when issues come up, it spreads fear throughout the whole team. Once everyone has seen enough angry episodes, they become afraid to do any little thing that might trigger abhorrent outbursts. Constantly feeling like you're walking on eggshells isn't how you should feel at work.

If your boss consistently exudes any of these behaviors and, nothing has been done to address them, it might be time to consider making a change. Before you pack your things and give your two weeks notice however, there are some things to consider.

## Get to Work

Not with the daily tasks of your current job. Rather, get to work making yourself visible in the market. Tell your friends and family that you're looking for a new

opportunity. Engage on LinkedIn. Catch up with former colleagues over lunch. Attend a professional conference. Get back in touch with recruiters you've worked with. Even though the tendency for most people is to hide in a corner when things aren't going well at work, being proactive is a much better way to go.

## **Come Up with Your Own Job Description**

Have you ever wondered what your dream job would look like? There's no better time than now to try and make it a reality. Go into detail. This exercise might be difficult, because most people know what they don't want. However, it's an important step to take. When you write these ideas down and share them, you narrow down the focus on what you truly desire in your next opportunity and communicate to everyone around you.

## **Hit the Ground Running**

Even if you're still at your current job, set aside time to start looking for new opportunities that you're excited about. Polish up your resume and send it out. Contact a recruiter. Now that you've armed yourself with a detailed picture of what you're looking for, you won't waste time applying for jobs that aren't fulfilling.

The reality is that you need a job. But, a job doesn't have to merely be a means to an end. There's no reason you should feel chained to a situation that's toxic or where you don't feel valued. If you find yourself in this position, take note of types of behavior from your superiors that might be the root of the problem. If there's no apparent way to make things better, be proactive and make the necessary choices for your career and your life.

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## **Searching for a New Job at the End**

# of the Year



The end of 2019 is coming rapidly to a close. You've probably already spent some time reflecting on everything that's transpired in the office, and away from it. Last week you were thankful for everything that's good in your life. Family, friends, a roof over your head, etc. While you're still thankful, you're beginning to look at where you're at and, where you want to go in the future. Maybe it's time for a new job or even a career change. The good news is that this is the best time of year to look for a new job if you're going to take the step. By no means do you have to quit your current job. But, what's wrong with keeping your eyes open for another opportunity? In this article, we discuss some important things to keep in mind during your job search at the end of the year.

## Know What You Want

Just like any time you're searching for a new job, it's important to be specific about what you're looking for. If you want to start a new job at the beginning of the year, you need to narrowly define your search ahead of time. In short, that work needs to be done in November and December.

It's easy to think that keeping all your options open is the best strategy. However, it's quite the opposite. When you make known exactly what you're looking for, you narrow the focus of recruiters, your network and family too. Instead of bombarding you with opportunities that sound like they might fit, they can be on the lookout for the types of jobs you're genuinely after.

One helpful strategy is to create a list of job titles, positions and companies you're most interested in. And, by all means, share it with the people you trust! After all, they want to help and see you succeed.

# Networking

There's no better time of year to grow your network than late in the year. Between company parties, holiday get-togethers with colleagues and friends, and people visiting from out of town, you're going to see a lot of faces in a narrow window of time.

Even though hiring practices slow down at the end of the year, that doesn't mean you should slow down your job search. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Hiring managers and recruiters often have lighter workloads. When that's the case, they're left with more time to schedule meetings and have conversations about your goals.

As is true with networking at any time, you should focus on building meaningful connections. Sure, it's okay to make it known that you're on the hunt for something new. However, there will be plenty of time to send in your resume and discuss nuts and bolts once the holidays have come and gone. The truth remains, people hire and work with people they like. So, make those first impressions count and build genuine connections.

## Take Posted Jobs Seriously

Whenever you see a job posted online, the question always becomes if it's worth your time. All too often, jobs are posted for reasons of compliance or, the position has already been filled. That's not usually the case late in the year, though. Again, November and December are usually slow for hiring. That means if a job is posted, there's a high likelihood it's legitimate and worth checking out.

It's easy to get lazy with your job search this time of year. After all, there are going to be fewer postings, and that can get discouraging. If you make it a habit to set a little time aside to look each day however, you're bound to come across something worth looking into eventually.

The holidays are filled with all sorts of distractions. There's planning events, preparing for a menagerie of visitors at Thanksgiving and Christmas, shopping for everyone, maybe even traveling yourself. This time of year is also one of reflection. It just might be the time the you decide to start looking for a new opportunity. If you're proactive about your search though, you just might find



yourself in an exciting new position at the beginning of the year while everybody else is only starting the process.

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# What's Holding You Back In Your Career



Maybe you're in a situation where you feel like you're just going through the motions. You show up, do your job, go home. Wash, rinse, repeat. The days and months all seem to blend together. It might not be that you're miserable, you're just not as excited about your job as you once were. You haven't seen a raise or promotion for quite a while. It's not that your jobs in jeopardy. You just seem to have hit a glass ceiling.

If any of this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Millions of people feel stuck in their jobs. But, guess what? Sometimes, the obstacles that are in your way are ones you put there. I know, that might sound a little harsh. There's good news though. If you're willing to take an honest look in the mirror, identifying some mitigating behaviors is easy.

## Explicit Goals

You have some goals in mind. You want to become a project leader or get into the next level of management? Great! Have you written these goals down? Better yet, have you formulated the steps to achieve them?

While long-term goals are wonderful, they require short-term goals to get there. Short-term goals need attention too. Think about what steps you need to take to achieve those long-term goals. Is it additional training, or more experience in a particular area? Setting these smaller steps as goals is something you can do now to get you closer to the long-term goals.

## **Handling Criticism**

If you ask any successful businessperson how they got to where they are, learning from past mistakes will be a significant part of their answer. Part of learning from mistakes is taking constructive criticism to heart. Think about the last time your boss came to you with a suggestion or new idea about how you could improve. How did you react? Did you welcome the feedback? Or did you get defensive and confrontational?

If you're able to put your ego aside, and learn from constructive feedback, you'll quickly set yourself on the path to future success.

## **Waiting for More Responsibility**

You know this one. It's how you got to where you currently are. We're talking about asking for more responsibility. If you now find yourself sitting back, waiting for the torch to be handed to you, you might be waiting for quite a while. Employers love people who are self-starters and go-getters. When you actively seek more responsibility, it shows that you're eager to learn and to get better. If you've become complacent, this one simple change could make all the difference and put you on your boss's radar for more responsibility or opportunities.

## **Seeking New Learning Opportunities**

In the age of technology, learning has never been so fast paced. What was cutting edge two months ago might be obsolete now. In other words, if you aren't constantly learning, you're falling behind. We aren't saying that you need to attend every new tech promo available. However, it's essential that you keep yourself abreast of the latest skills and industry trends if you want to move up.

# Networking

Networking is a buzz word, we know. But, it's one that isn't going away any time soon. Whether your job relies on it entirely, or you work by yourself, you're going to have to network at some point. The good news is that networking is something you can do all the time. If it's at an organized networking event, you should go. If it's a weekend round of golf with some strangers, same story.

In the end, it's a numbers game. The more people you know, the better. Even though the business world has become flatter thanks to the ability to communicate electronically, there is still no substitute for building relationships in person.

## Asking for Raises or Promotions

There's an old axiom that says, "the worst thing that happens when you ask, is that you end up in the same place." When was the last time you asked for a raise or promotion? You've taken on more work, more stress, more responsibility. But you're making the same amount of money as when you started.

What gives?

Even if you haven't taken on more responsibilities, you can ask what you would need to do to get that promotion or raise. At least then you will know what the expectations are and you can start working towards it.

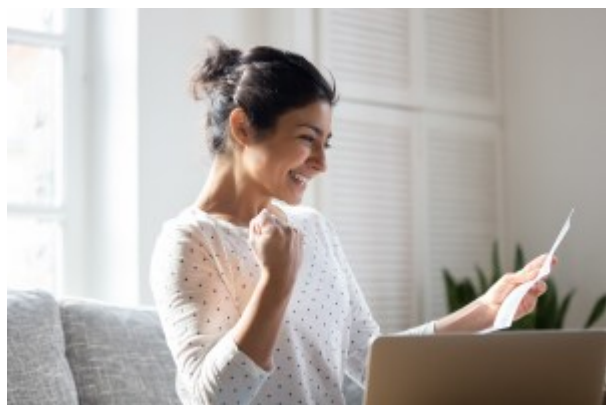
If you want to advance your career, you have to ask for more at some point. Yes, it's going to be uncomfortable. Yes, you're going to have thoughts and feelings that you're overstepping your bounds. That's ok. But, if you've proven yourself time and again, you owe it to yourself to ask that question. You might very well be surprised by the response you receive.

In an age where everything changes in the blink of an eye, it's only natural to seek comfort and stability. You can pay the bills, achieve some level of fulfillment and feel secure. After a while though, you become bored, maybe even apathetic. When it gets to that point, the onus is on you. If you want more - more money, more meaning, more success, ask yourself some of these questions. If you answer them honestly and take some small steps, you just might find what you've been

waiting for.

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# How to Reinvent Yourself in an Unforgiving Job Market



Maybe it's happened to you. If not, it's certainly happened to someone you know. You show up to work one day and find out that you're being let go. Maybe, it's just no longer a good fit. Maybe, your position is being replaced by technology. Perhaps, you were part of a corporate downsizing.

Whatever the reason, being let go is one of the worst feelings in the world. You feel lost, unwanted and want to go crawl in a hole. In your eyes, you're letting yourself and your family down. No one can blame you for feeling this way. But, you can't wallow in your own misery forever. As hard as it might be to recognize in the moment, it's not the end of the world. If you find yourself in this position and aren't sure how to proceed, read on.

## What People Say or Think Doesn't Matter

You're probably used to folks looking up to you. Now, you're wondering how you're going to pay the dues at the country club, or your child's private school next month. Or, how you're going to tell your friends you can't make that weekend couples trip to wine country. None of that matters. It's going to take some time to come to grips with your new reality. The bottom line is that what

other's think, do or say isn't a reflection on you as a person.

## **Starting from Scratch isn't a Bad Thing**

Even though it seems like you've hit rock bottom and there's no way out, it's quite the opposite. You're now free to do whatever you want. No boss to answer to, no teams to manage. You get to call your own shots.

This is a time for introspection. Ask yourself some big picture questions. What are your core values? What do you want out of your next job? Are the skills you currently possess still valuable? If not, what new skills are you willing to learn or refine? This is a time without your usual day-to-day distractions to really consider what you want to do and what makes you happy.

## **Purpose**

For years, you've woken up every day with a purpose. To make money. To make your organization better. To further your own skills. To meet the expectations of others.

All those things you once knew, are gone. That doesn't mean that having purpose is any less important, though. In fact, it's more important now than ever. The cool thing is that you now get to define it for yourself. Purpose is different for everyone. It might mean taking some time for yourself. Or, it might be jumping right back in the saddle and beginning the job search. Whatever path you choose, it's vital that you have a purpose each and every day.

## **Take Action**

Once you've taken some time to clear your head, it's time to make a game plan and put it into action. It isn't going to be easy. If you decide to change careers entirely, great. If it's time to look for something new in the same realm, all the better. Whatever your plan of action is, the key is to pursue it doggedly. There are going to be days and moments of frustration. You're going to feel like giving up. But, you have to remember what made you successful in the first place. It wasn't doubt, angst or giving in.

Once you've committed to a new path, stay with it. Your discipline and determination will win out in the end.

## Dealing with Rejection

If it was easy, everyone would be doing it. So the saying goes. Once in a while, you'll be in the right place at the right time and land firmly on your feet. More often than not though, you're going to face some rejection on your way to newfound success. How you deal with it is what makes all the difference. When you don't land that interview or job, it's easy to get down and start doubting yourself.

But maybe, there's another way to look at it. Instead of rejection being the end of the world, what if you looked at it as another opportunity to try something new? No question, it's easier said than done. If you're going to be successful, you're going to need a thick layer of skin and a positive attitude.

If you stay at it long enough, everything will work out.

It sucks. Just when you think you're on the path to success and longevity, your momentum is halted in its tracks. It seems like the end of the world, and it's impossible to see a path forward. Those thoughts are natural. The easy way out is to admit defeat and pack it in. If you want to be resilient however, there's nothing that stands in your way. Ultimately, you're the determinant of your success and happiness. If you choose the latter, and set about your circumstances in the right way, you'll find yourself back on top and happier than ever. After all, if you think back at setbacks you've had before, you may notice that the next step you took was better than where you were. And the next step you take will most likely be an improvement over where you just left. This is your chance to make the improvements.

If you are looking for a job in the [Life Sciences industries](#), contact me, Jeff King at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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# Questions Career Hungry Employees Ask Their Boss



When the workplace is more competitive than it ever has been, you have to work extra hard to set yourself apart. Sure, results speak for themselves. There's no question that high performers stand out for a reason. But what if you're a high performer but don't have a close relationship with your colleagues or boss? What if your priorities aren't fully aligned with those of your company? We all know that person in the office... The one that can sell, win over clients and exceed every KPI imaginable. That same person never seems to last in one place for very long. And there's a reason. There's the matter of how you go about achieving those results and learning along the way.

What's the best way to start? Your relationship with your boss. If you want to advance your career, consider the questions below that you should ask your boss.

## What do You Need Help With?

It doesn't happen enough. People reaching out to see how they can help. In fact, when it does happen, you're often so caught off guard you don't know how to respond. Guess what? When you ask your boss this question, they'll be taken aback because no one has ever asked them before.

In most cases when you ask this question, you're likely to end up with some tasks that your boss just doesn't enjoy doing. They might be menial in his or her eyes, but they're your responsibility now. And you should treat them as important as anything else you do.

This question and assumption of responsibility will show your boss that you're loyal, dedicated and eager to learn.

## **What are Your Main Objectives and Concerns?**

You probably notice a pattern with these first two questions – they're both boss-centric. It's a far cry from brown-nosing if you ask them in a genuine way. When you make yourself available and demonstrate a want to learn, you immediately build trust and loyalty.

The truth for most effective bosses is, they're always looking for their replacement. Some might communicate but, most just observe.

So, the only way for you to know if you're seriously being considered for mentorship is to ask. Ask what your boss' primary goals and objectives are. Once you have a solid understanding, it's your job to help them get there.

## **How do You Communicate**

It's easy for your boss to stress the importance of adapting to different communication styles. Guess what, though? He or she has their own preferred communication style in the office. This is their default way of getting tasks done. And, it's your job to figure it out.

When you ask your boss what their preferred method of communication is, you position yourself to solidify a relationship.

If you can solve this equation, you'll be way ahead of everyone else.

## **Who Do You Need to Cultivate Relationships With?**

Ask any CEO how they achieved their success, and their answer will always come down to relationships. True story, even in the age of technology. Remember that guy we talked about in the opening? He's always changing jobs because he



doesn't have the relationships to keep one for very long.

Take the time to learn how your boss got to where he or she is. Who did they look up to? Who did they seek out as mentors? Who did they avoid?

These are all important questions within a broader question. But, when someone you respect is willing to share a playbook to their success, you should listen.

The key is asking. You'll never know otherwise.

## **What Skills do I Need to Develop?**

You're hungry. You're determined to succeed. But, you're also raw. If you're asking your boss the questions above, he or she already knows this. That's only the start, though. You have to be coachable and humble.

The next step is taking the right steps to improve your current performance and set yourself up for future success.

Bring a notepad with you and jot everything down. At this point, you have an opportunity that most folks don't get. Time to make the most of it.

During your one-on-one, ask leading questions about your performance. Then listen. Ask more focused questions. And listen again.

Your time here is limited, so make it count.

Once you've gathered all the data and reviewed your notes, formulate a game plan and review it your boss. Then, put it into action.

There's no questioning that you have to perform to survive climbing the corporate ladder. At the end of the day, it does come down to results. No one is going to deny that. However, if your goal is to stay with the right company for you, it's imperative that you develop the skills and relationships necessary to do so. There's no better place to start than your boss or manager. Afterall, if they agree to become a mentor for you, they will want you to succeed as much as you do since their training will be a reflection on both of you. If you feel inspired to achieve their success or beyond, ask the right questions, listen, and execute.

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# Do You Really Need a Cover Letter?



Do you remember the last time you were looking for a new job? How time consuming it was? You had to fill out the application, customize your resume and write a cover letter. Even the initial steps of applying for a job can take hours. And when you're faced with a mountain of applications, it's easy to lose patience and cut a corner or two. That corner is usually a cover letter because it can take the longest. So, the question remains, are cover letters really that important?

The answer is yes. Even though they're time consuming and seem a bit silly, there are plenty of reasons why submitting them is important.

## Add Value to Your Application Package

A [good resume](#) fits on 1-3 pages, depending on your experience level. While good resumes include actionable words, give dates of employment and highlight your experience, they're not much more than a bullet-point list at the end of the day. When accompanied by a quality cover letter however, a hiring manager can get a keen glimpse into who you are as a person, intimate details about your experience and accomplishments and how you communicate.

# You Have the Opportunity to Stand Out

Cover letters give you the freedom to say what you want about yourself and your experience. By taking the time to customize them, you can match your skills with the job description. This goes a long way with [hiring managers](#) and if your cover letter is crafted specifically for the job, you're putting yourself well ahead of applicants.

## You Go the Extra Mile

Most people on the job market are concerned with applying for as many jobs as they can. They send out dozens of resumes and pray they get an interview somewhere. Applicants that take the time to write a customized cover letter however, become memorable because most people don't do it. Even if your qualifications aren't precisely what hiring managers are looking for, you'll stand out because you went the extra mile. That alone can be what gets you across the finish line.

## You Take Control

In the closing of your cover letter, let the employer know that you'll be calling back at a specific day and time to check in on how the process is going. Even though this might seem a little too forward and counterintuitive, it shows that you're not afraid to take initiative.

What's more, you leave ambiguity out of the equation. Instead of wondering when the employer will get back to you and where you stand, you'll get an answer one way or another. Worst case scenario is they tell you they've decided to go to another direction and you can get back to work applying for the next job.

## You Get to Show Off Your Writing Ability

One of the most critical qualities employers look for is communication. No one wants to hire a person who's a poor communicator. The good news is that writing an effective cover letter is an opportunity to show that you're a good writer and probably an excellent communicator too. Just make sure you proof read it for any

possible errors since that can undo the good work you did by creating your cover letter in the first place. If you can master this skill, you show that you're a great communicator before you even meet the hiring manager in person.

## You Can Explain Employment Gaps

Employment gaps are a major red flag in the eyes of hiring managers. Even if your resume jumps out, the first question an employer is going to ask is why you didn't work for an extended period of time. This is something you can, and should, address in your cover letter. Were you out for six months on maternity leave? Were you taking care of a sick family member? Did you just need time to consider a career change? Your cover letter is where you can give an explanation. If you don't, employers are going to frown on your time between jobs.

There's a new school of thought that says cover letters are a dinosaur. Most of them don't get read, they take too much time to write, the list goes on. While some of that might be true to an extent, you're best not to leave any stone left unturned. Even though the effort of writing a well-crafted cover letter seems arduous and adds time to the already tedious process of applying for jobs, it just might be the difference in landing an interview and getting the job, or not.

As a [recruiter in the life sciences industries](#), I can help candidates who are seeking jobs in the [pharmaceutical, biotech, or medical device fields](#) improve their cover letter for job applications. Contact me if you are looking for a career change in the life sciences industries or if you are looking for a quality and regulatory employee in the Bay Area. You can reach me at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.