



Questions to Ask at a Job Fair

At a job fair, you have a brief window of time to impress each recruiter. One way to quickly stand out among the competition at a [job fair](#) is to ask the right questions.

By asking informed questions that subtly convey your skills and experience, you will increase your chances of impressing the recruiter and landing an interview. Here are a number of questions you might consider asking a recruiter at a job fair.

Questions to Demonstrate Your Interest in the Company

"What do you think about X?"

Before the job fair, [research a few companies](#) attending that fair that you would like to work for. Look at each company's website for information about some of the latest trends within the company, such as new hires, goals for the future, or recent achievements. Select one positive trend and mention it to the recruiter, asking his or her opinion on the development. Then offer your own (brief) opinion on how the trend might benefit the company. This will demonstrate to the recruiter that you are knowledgeable about the company and its successes.

"What is the typical five-year (or ten-year) trajectory for someone in X position?"

This question will demonstrate that you are interested in staying with the company for a long period of time. Recruiters typically like this; they do not want to hire people that will only stay for a year or two. You should be sure to emphasize your interest in the position for which you want to apply (otherwise you'll seem like you are unwilling to start at the bottom and work your way up), but this question shows that you are interested in staying with the company, and are looking for opportunities for advancement within the organization.

Questions to Demonstrate Your Qualifications

"What skills do you look for most in a candidate for X position?"

Research the company website and, if possible, look up the description of the position for which you want to apply. This will give you an idea of the skills and qualifications the employer is looking for in a candidate. If you see that you are a good fit for the job, you should ask the recruiter at the job fair this question. Then, pick one or two skills he mentions, and provide a quick example of how a past job or experience has given you that skill. Point out these experiences on your resume as well to reinforce your qualifications.

"What sort of education background do you look for in a candidate?"

Once again, look up the description of the job for which you want to apply (or look up employees' company bios) for an idea of the ideal education background of people with that job. If your education fits the company's needs, you can ask the recruiter this question, and then explain how you're a perfect fit. If you won any accolades as a student that relate to the skills of the job, you can mention these as well, and even point them out on your resume.

Questions to Learn More About the Company

"What is one of the biggest challenges of the job?"

The answer to this question will help you determine if your skill set and your personality are a good fit for the job. For example, if the recruiter says one challenge is the very competitive nature of the employees, and you're not a competitive person, you might not want to work at that company. However, this question also offers you a chance to once again demonstrate your own skills. If the recruiter mentions a challenge with which you have experience dealing, you can provide an example of a time when you thrived in a similar challenge.

"How would you describe the company culture?"

It is not easy to learn about a company's culture unless you have worked there for a while, so a recruiter is a great person to give you insight into this. If the culture does not sound like one in which you would thrive, you might want to think twice about applying for the position. However, if it sounds like the kind of atmosphere in which you'd like to work, say so. For example, if the recruiter says it is a very communal, supportive atmosphere, you might say that that is an environment in which you do your best work, and provide an example of such a time in your past work history.

"What do you like most about your job at X company?"

This question can give you a bit more insight into the company culture. If the recruiter struggles to answer the question,

it might be a sign that it is not an ideal place to work. The question will also allow you to connect with the recruiter on a more personal level, and might help you leave a stronger impression.

Questions with Which to Conclude

"May I contact you with further questions? Do you have a business card?"

These questions allow you to establish contact with someone at the company. Be sure to get the person's business card or contact information. Follow up with a thank you letter or email, reminding the person of who you are, where you met, and your qualifications. This will help you make a lasting impression.

Questions to Avoid

"How much will I be paid? How much vacation time will I get?"

You have not been offered the job yet, so do not act like you have been. Questions regarding pay and benefits are for after you've been offered a job; if you ask these questions at the job fair, you will come across as cocky (and as unmotivated, if all you appear to care about are money and vacation days). Also, do not ask any questions that draw attention to something negative on your resume - a gap in your employment history, being laid off or fired, or any criminal record. These things do not need to be addressed this early in the job search stage.

"So, what does your company do?"

Avoid asking questions that demonstrate that you have done no research on the company; do not ask any questions that could be easily found on their website. These questions imply that you do not have an interest in that particular company, and that you are not willing to put in the work to get to know their company.

Other Questions to Ask

- What entry-level positions are available in your company?
- Does your company offer any internships or training programs?
- I went online and filled out your application for the X position. What else might I do to demonstrate that I am a qualified candidate for an interview?
- How long is the application and interview process and what does it consist of?
- How would you describe a typical day at X position?
- How does the company measure performance for X position? What are the company's systems for feedback?
- What percentage of time is typically devoted to each of the responsibilities of this position?
- What is the balance between teamwork and individual work at X position?
- What training or education programs, if any, does the company offer employees?
- *(For a student)* What courses would best prepare me for your entry-level positions? Are there any student organizations or activities that would be beneficial in preparing for a position at your company?
- *(For a student)* My major is X. What positions at your company would be a strong fit for someone with my education background?