

Answer: Do you have questions for me?

Investment Banking › Interview Preparation



After having gone through all the online tests, case studies, presentations and the whole investment banking application process, the last five or ten minutes of your interview will always end with "do you have any questions for me?".

While this part of the interview is not the most critical one, many applicants still manage to destroy their chances by asking the wrong questions, or not knowing what to ask.

Our base advice is to keep the questions fairly simple. While asking a very smart question will probably not be the key factor that will get you the job, asking an overly complex or inappropriate question will definitely hurt your chances of getting hired.

Therefore, do not try to be the most original or smartest applicant by asking overly engineered questions. Here is a selection of the most appropriate questions to ask:

- How is the department or the team structured?
- Do you have any further hiring plan at different levels of the team?
- How is the deal pipeline recently?
- If you see the interviewer or the bank has closed a deal recently, you can enquire about this deal: how complex was the deal? Was there a bidding war? etc.
- How much do you interact with other departments?
- How much do you interact with other international offices?
- Do you do many cross border transactions? IPOs? LBO? etc.
- What is the culture of the team / bank like?

We strongly suggest not to go beyond those categories to limit potential damage. Questions to not ask are as follows:

- Anything related to the following topics: money, compensation, bonuses, working hours, politics, religion, discrimination, scandals in the press, bad performance of the firm.
- Anything negative about something. For example, talking negatively about a previous employer or internship you did, anything negative about your school, a classmate, sports, other people's jobs (i.e. consulting is not interesting to me, or I don't want to work for a corporate), etc. Always mention the positives, never talk negatively about anything.
- Anything that could reflect negatively on the bank one way or another (example: "you haven't closed any deals

this year, what is your strategy going forward?", or "do you think Barclays overpaid for Lehman's acquisition?" when interviewing with Barclays!)

- If the bank went through a merger or an acquisition, be careful. The only question you can ask is "what was the impact of the merger with XX?". Do not make judgements of any sort such as "didn't the merger cause many people to leave?" or "did the merger impact the bank's performance?"

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