**SUMMARY**

When you’re starting a new job, it’s very important to ask questions. Unfortunately, many new hires fear that doing this makes them seem uninformed, however, in many cases - the opposite is true. This guide will provide you with tips on how to ask questions effectively.

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- Appear Proactive
- Make a Buddy
- Decide what to ask
- To ask or not to ask?
- How often should you ask?
- Convey the right tone
- Capturing Answers

**DID YOU KNOW:** Managers are more likely to support new employees that seem more proactive about their own onboarding

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Here are some tips for appearing proactive:

- **Ask questions**
- **Seek out information**
- **Find opportunities to meet co-workers**

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Make a buddy and ask them!

- It’s no surprise that employees that feel connected to their coworkers, feel more comfortable asking questions. This is why many employers assign new hires with a “buddy” who will make themselves available for questions and help new hires navigate the workplace.
- For those of you who do not have a buddy, here are some ideas to help you master the art of asking questions.

### DECIDE WHAT TO ASK

**Quality questions are:**

1. **Relevant:**
   - Every question you ask should help you gather information, purposefully. Know which kind of information you need and ask your questions with this focus.

2. **Informative**
   - Unlike yes or no questions, open-ended questions invite the respondent to talk — enabling you to gather way more information.

3. **Planned**
   - Before speaking with your supervisor, outline some questions to help you cover your informational goals in an organized way.
Before you ask a question, you should:

**Be concise and to the point** by focusing your questions - ask one thing at a time. If you really want to know two different things, then ask two different questions.

Avoid confusing questions by **speaking your listener’s language**. Use clear words they will understand, and try rephrasing if they do not.

**DECIDE HOW OFTEN TO ASK – Quality vs. Quantity**

Depending on your supervisor’s workload or audience in general, **there is such a thing as too many questions**.

Avoid asking non-essential questions by doing your homework. This means looking up the answer or asking a less busy co-worker first.

After you have exhausted other informational sources, ask the question you still have with confidence!

Gather your questions and ask them collectively at your next meeting, rather than as one-offs.
FYI: Questions with a positive, rather than negative tone are generally more effective.

- ve ➔ likely to raise resistance (e.g., Do you really need it so soon?)
+ ve ➔ likely to gain acceptance or curiosity. (e.g., When would you like that by?)
Neutral/non-judgmental tone ➔ likely to elicit an unbiased opinion (e.g., How did you like it? Interesting, can you tell me more?)

Before asking certain questions, you may want to ask yourself:

- If I was asked this, would it raise resistance or curiosity?
- Is this something I am expected to know or not?

CAPTURING ANSWERS

**Listen** to the respondent’s full answer and **do not interrupt** before they finish speaking.

- Interrupting someone when they are answering your question makes them feel like they aren’t really being heard, which is ineffective for communication. Asking questions is a great way to practice listening, which is a critical skill in the workplace.

**Take notes** – doing this prevents you from asking the same question twice by leaving something you can refer to when your memory of the conversation fades. Note-taking also signals to the speaker that you are interested in what they have to say.

**TIP:** If you’re an interrupter, you may want to try counting to five before speaking, so you are less likely to cut the speaker off.
SAMPLE NEW HIRE QUESTIONS

What should I know about this workplace’s culture (dress code, etc?)

How will my performance be evaluated? Do you meet regularly with employees?

What kind of professional development opportunities are available to student employees? Will I be assigned a buddy?

As a supervisor, how would you describe your communication preference?

Are there any procedures I need to know about?

How flexible is the schedule? Can I work from home?

REFERENCES


