



## Questions To Ask Before Applying For A Job

There are many jobs competing for your attention, and you may feel it can be difficult to know which ones you should spend time applying for. This guide will outline some questions to ask yourself to assist you in determining whether to apply for a job or not. The second half of this guide will cover what information you can obtain through a careful read of the job posting and when it is recommended for you to review the job posting.

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### Am I Interested In This Job?

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Determine if this is a job opportunity that is truly exciting to you. Can you envision yourself doing all the requirements of this job for multiple days in a row without feeling like it is too easy or too hard.

- **Ask yourself:** Would I be excited to receive a call to interview for this job?
- **Ask yourself:** What is motivating me to apply for this job? If your answer is something like this will be so impressive to my friends and family you may want to reconsider submitting an application. If your answer is something like, “this opportunity excites me and I would be making a difference by working at this company”, consider that a good indication to move forward.

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### Do I Meet The Job Requirements?

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Review the job posting to determine if you have the skills and qualifications the employer is seeking **AND** verify you have an understanding of what the person in this role will be doing in their day to day work.

- **Make a list of the top skills and qualifications needed for the job:** Put a check by the ones you do have and an X by the ones you do not have. Aim for a 60% to 70% match of your skills and qualifications and with what the employer is seeking.
- **Put each of the bullet points under the responsibilities section in your own words:**  
Ex. Independently developing and socializing Engagement Marketing project briefs, collaborating cross-functionally to ensure alignment on projects; drafting key messages and layouts for digital and offline channels that integrate brand standards.  
Collaborating with multiple departments on project briefs and creating media communication that align with brand standards
  - After this, put a check by the tasks you would enjoy and an X by the tasks you would not enjoy. Use the number of checks and X’s to help determine if you want to apply for the job or not.

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## Does This Role Fit My Career Plans?

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It is recommended you are strategic with each job you apply for. Each job you accept should be moving you one step closer towards reaching your dream job.

- **Evaluate what new skills you will obtain in this job:** What skill gaps do you have that are holding you back from moving forwards with your career and how can the job you are looking at fill in those gaps.
- **Evaluate what experiences you are gaining from this job:** Ex. you are trying to work your way up to being a Program Manager. Try to accept a job in which you will gain experience managing projects.
- **Determine if the company provides professional development opportunities:** Sometimes a company may provide opportunities to attend classes or conferences that will add to your skill-set. They may also have the financial means to support obtaining certifications or credentials that will help you further your career.

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## Is The Company Culture A Match For What I Am Seeking?

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Each company has their own processes and procedures for how various situations are handled, how performance is measured, and how goals are reached. Each company will also have their own expectations for how their employees dress and relate to their colleagues and management. Read further for some ways you can evaluate company culture before accepting a job.

- **Conduct online research:** Visit the company website and their social media pages to see if there are videos outlining the company's mission and why people enjoy working there. Use websites like Glassdoor to find out what previous and current employees are saying about the company.
- **Utilize your network to see if anyone who knows you also knows someone who is or has worked at that company :** By speaking with someone who either has or is working at the company you will hear a first-hand account of the company culture and learn what the hiring and on-boarding processes are like.

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## Do The Benefits Offered Meet My Needs?

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Factors like the size of a company and their financial stability will determine the benefits package they are able to offer you. This is an important piece to assess before applying to a job and information can often be found on a company's website.

- **Analyze the benefits offered:** Does the company offer health, dental, and vision insurance? Do they offer a retirement plan and paid time off? Do they have a sick policy and maternity/paternity leave?
- **Look beyond the basic benefits:** Do they offer wellness programs or discounted gym memberships? Is work-life balance encouraged and does the company have policies that support this?

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## Information To Gather From The Job Posting

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It is important for you to spend some time reviewing the job posting before you decide to apply for a job because the information it contains will assist you in determining if it is a good fit for you or not. Read on to discover what you can learn in the different sections of a job posting.

- **Job Title:**
  - You can use this to gain an idea of the level of responsibility the person in this job will have and how much industry-specific knowledge you may need to have for the job. Ex. Marketing Manager or Claims Specialist II
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Try to see if there are tasks outlined that can be grouped together. Then, determine the tasks that cannot be grouped with anything. By grouping tasks together, you will get a sense of how much time you will be spending on specific parts of the job.
- **Decode the Buzzwords:**
  - There are common words and phrases used within job postings that can tell you a lot about how the company functions and what type of person they are looking to hire for this role. Here are some of the most common:
    - Self-starter/independent worker-** You get tasks done without needing hand-holding
    - Fast-paced-** You will have many demands to meet while working within tight deadlines
    - Flexible-** A willingness to take on work outside of your normal duties and/or ability to work outside of typical office hours to ensure work gets done
    - Team player-** You have an ability to work collaboratively with others

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## When To Read The Job Posting

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Having a strong knowledge of the job posting can contribute to your success throughout the application and interview process. You will use the information contained within it to tailor your application to the employer and be able to give a strong interview that shows how you meet the candidate profile outline in the posting. With that, here are the times to review this:

- **When you first see it:**
  - Review the posting to determine if the job excites you and if you meet the job requirements. If you do, identify what words and phrases are used multiple times and if any qualifications are listed as required.
- **While writing your resume and cover letter:**
  - You will want to tailor these documents to the job you are applying for; ensuring they highlight how you meet the skill-set and needs outlined in the job posting.
- **Before submitting the job application:**
  - Ensure you are following all the steps to submit your application correctly. Ex. as outlined in the job posting, are you submitting your resume and cover letter as a merged document?
- **Before an interview:**
  - The job posting will serve as your guide for what skills and qualifications you need to highlight during the interview process.