



How to prepare your questions for an SME interview

- **Play Jeopardy:** The best way to start is by knowing where you're going. If you know you've got a lot of space to fill, make sure you follow-up about details,
- **Take the scenic route:** It's always a smart idea to jot down a few
- **Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know:** We're often tempted to get into a conversation with someone and blow off the things we aren't sure about, trusting the context to help us through the tricky parts. But slow down! Ask if you don't understand. Often, the explanations will offer more help than we think.
- **When in doubt, ask why and how:** These are the two questions that'll offer the most details in any conversation, plus they get at the explanations of motivations and functionality that'll offer the most insight, regardless of whether you're interviewing someone for a new role, talking with an SME for a piece of content or learning about a member's experience at a recent event.
- **Be careful with yes and no questions:** Use yes and no questions when you want to force someone into a choice, but remember that if you want to elicit a response about how they feel, you'll need to ask about they feel.
- **Listen, listen, listen:** To ask the best follow-up questions, you have to listen for the throwaway comments and off-kilter remarks. No list of prepared questions can predict exactly what someone will say, so lean on your intuition.
- **Record your interviews:** No one likes listening to themselves speak, but you'll learn more about the questions you should be asking by listening back to a conversation and hearing what you didn't follow up on. Even doing this a few times will offer clarity.

