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CERTIFICATE COURSE IN LIFE SKILLS

INTERVIEW TIPS

An interview is a conversation where questions are asked by one or more individuals known as interviewer(s) and answers are given by an individual, the interviewee. In a job interview it is a conversation with a purpose for an employer to assess the candidate and for a job seeker to convince the employer. Sometimes, information can be transferred in both directions.

Interviews usually take place face-to-face and in person. However, new communication technologies such as smart phones and video conferencing softwares have enabled conversations wherein both the interviewer and the interviewee are separated geographically.

Interviews generally involve spoken conversation between interviewer and the interviewee. In some cases a “conversation” can happen between two persons who type questions and answers back and forth.

Types of Interview:

Following are few examples of different types of job interviews:

- Telephonic Interview
- Face to Face Interview
- Video Conference Interview
- Selection Interview
- Behavioral Interview
- Group or Panel Interview

The Interview Procedure:

Usually, the candidate submits his/her detailed resume containing relevant facts and information about education, experience (if any), and other achievements prior to the interview. During the interview one has to present his/her resume to the potential employer in a very limited time in such a way so that the employer get to know the candidate, understand what he/she can do, and be convinced he/she is the most suitable candidate.

Do's and Don'ts:

Employers have two primary goals for the job interview. First, they want to determine if the candidate is qualified for the job and, second, they want to discover if the candidate would fit well into the organization. Following are some Do's and Don'ts before, during and after the interview process that can help the candidate to be successful in the job interview. Remember that employers view your actions in the whole hiring process as examples of your work. This is an opportunity to show them what a good worker you are.

A. Before the interview

- i) *Doing homework:* The first essential step in the interview process is preparation. Do research about the employer; visit their website to know about the details of the company (functions, staff, etc.), and note important points.
- ii) *Making a good first impression is important:* In a face-to-face interview, do a trial run if it is at an unfamiliar location and arrive a few minutes early for the interview. Carry your resume/CV and ensure you know the dates and its specifics so you can confidently talk through your CV and give examples. If it is video interview, test the video tool the day before the interview, on the day of the interview, and set up at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time. Ensure that the place is quiet and comfortable. As the face to face contact with the interviewer(s) is not possible, so the best alternative is to smile confidently and appear interested and engaged.
- iii) *Don't let any past rejections spoil the future ones:* It is quite taxing to find a new job. Make sure you approach every interview as a new opportunity and learn from past mistakes. If you have several interviews lined up, try to keep some space between them to ensure you are at your best.
- iv) *Don't assume it isn't an interview:* Be sure to treat everyone in the company with respect, from the people in the parking lot to the receptionist and the recruiting staff. If other candidates are present, introduce yourself and be polite. It may be used as an opportunity to assess your suitability for the potential role.

B. During the interview

- i) Stay relaxed and comfortable.
- ii) Greet everybody present in the interview board.
- iii) Keep your job search records organized and handy.
- iv) Refer to your resume as needed.
- v) Listen carefully and answer accordingly: It is important to listen attentively to the questions asked by the interviewer, and answer in a clear and direct manner using examples from the past experience to back it up. Direct your answer to the person who asked the question, but maintain eye contact with all the members in the panel.
- vi) Prepare smart, open ended questions to ask the interviewer: Before appearing for interview, prepare some relevant open ended questions to be asked to the interviewer. The questions will help the candidate illustrate his/her interest and motivation to succeed in the role and company. It will also determine if this really is the opportunity or business one wants to join as well as get noticed and separate from other candidates.
- vii) Highlighting the strengths and expertise: Communicating your experience and successes to the employer during interview will clearly highlight the strengths that are relevant to the role.
- viii) Never speak negative about former employers: It may give impression to the interviewer that the same will be expressed by the candidate for them if he/she will leave and may question the professionalism of the candidate. This may alert anyone interviewing the candidate.
- ix) Don't give incorrect information: Be truthful in answering all questions and explain and describe things that relate to the position on offer, and truly reflect one's past experience. If the probing is in an area that is not one's strength, he/she should be honest and let the interviewer know that the candidate is willing to learn or work on and how he/she can up skill in this area. The candidate may bring strengths in another area to the table.
- x) Never interrupt the interviewer: It is important to be a good listener as well as a good talker. It shows that you are respectful and have strong interpersonal skills. Avoid rushing to answer a question in case the interviewer hasn't finished speaking.

xi) Thank everyone and don't forget to carry your belongings before leaving the room quietly.

C. After the interview

- Reflect on your performance in the interview
- Send a thank you note (or email) immediately after the interview to demonstrate your understanding of the process, the rules of common courtesy, your commitment to complete a "project," and your ability to communicate.

Important Questions Generally Asked in a Job Interview:

There are basically two types of questions that are generally asked - Open Ended and Closed Ended Questions.

i. *Open-Ended Questions:* Open-ended questions require more than one word answers. The answers could come in the form of a list, a few sentences or something longer such as a speech, paragraph or essay. Few examples of Open Ended Questions are:

- How would you describe yourself?
- What accomplishments are you particularly proud of?
- What do you know about our company, industry and/or position?
- Why should we hire you?
- Where do you see yourself in two years?
- How do you deal with conflict?
- Give me an example of a time when your work was criticized in front of others. How did you respond? What did you learn from this situation?

ii. *Closed-ended questions:* These questions are those which can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no", or in "one or two words". Few examples of closed-ended questions:

- What is your best quality?
- Do you have many friends?
- Do you like reading?
- When is your birthday?

Common Errors:

Sometimes the candidate makes mistakes before and during interviews without realizing. Most of these are very common. It is necessary to devote time to prepare before the interview so that one can feel satisfied after the interview. Following are some of the most common errors made by candidates which may be avoided:

i) *Reaching late* – Always reach the place of interview at least 15 minutes early to avoid any unforeseen circumstances. Reaching late would also suggest poor time management skills, show disrespect to the company, and the position, and even the interviewer.

ii) *No dressing sense*- It is very essential to look professional and appropriately dressed while appearing for interview as per the position or a job.

iii) *Uninterested in appearance*- It is important to demonstrate interest in the company and the job through your behaviour. Therefore, show the interest in the job you are interviewing for and why you want the job by asking some intelligent questions.

iv) *Not bringing the resume*- Generally the interviewers have a copy of the resume of the candidate, still it is important to carry a copy for each member of the panel.

v) *Phone interfering during the interview*-The cell phone should be switched off during the interview. Pay full attention on the interview and the interviewers. Neither reply to calls nor text message during the interview. It gives a wrong message to the employer that getting the job is not your top priority.

- vi) *False resume*- You should never make the mistake of writing down false information in your resume. You will be able to discuss about yourself better if you are truthful about your resume, your degrees and your past experience during your interview.
- vii) *Lack of attention*: Pay full attention on interview. Always maintain eye contact, lean forward slightly when talking to your interviewer, and make an active effort to listen effectively. Focus your attention in the interview only.

Interview Questions for Assessing Your Strengths and Weaknesses:

Following are some of the strengths and weaknesses generally reported by the interviewees while answering above questions in interview process. The students may be asked to discuss these and learn.

“What are your strengths and weaknesses?”

i. Assessing the strengths: Make a list of your skills/strengths before any interview and categorize them into following three categories:

- Knowledge-based skills: Acquired from education and experience (e.g., computer skills, languages, degrees, training and technical ability).
- Transferable skills: Your portable skills that you take from job to job (e.g., communication and interpersonal skills, analytical problem solving and planning skills).
- Personal traits: Your unique qualities (e.g., dependable, flexible, friendly, hard working, expressive, punctual, trustworthy, creative, honest, respectful, etc.). You may add many more.

When you complete this list, choose three to five of those strengths that match what the employer is seeking in the job. Make sure you can give specific examples to demonstrate why you say that is your strength if probed further.

Scripting your answers (Example)

Write a positive statement you can say with confidence:

“My strength is my flexibility to handle change. As customer service manager at my last job, I was able to turn around a negative working environment and develop a very supportive team. As far as weaknesses, I feel that my management skills could be stronger, and I am constantly working to improve them.”

When confronted with this interview question, remember the interviewer is looking for a fit. She/he is forming a picture of you based on your answers. A single answer will probably not keep you from getting the job, unless, of course, it is something blatant. Put your energy into your strengths statement—what you have to offer. Then let the interviewer know that although you may not be perfect, you are working on any shortcomings you have. Job interviews are among the most challenging part of the job-search process; therefore, being prepared makes all the difference.

ii. Assessing the Weaknesses: Common weaknesses reported by the candidates

- Focus too much on the details
- Hard time letting go of a project
- Difficulty in saying “No”
- I get impatient when projects run beyond the deadline
- I could use more experience in a particular area
- I sometimes lack confidence
- I can have trouble asking for help
- It has been difficult for me to work with certain personalities
- It can be difficult for me to maintain a healthy work/life balance
- In the past I have been uncomfortable with ambiguity

Suggested Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thzOhKXRETw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCGkKhmJ2T4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg4mDThQ5aQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQgPnXS9yas>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHQbsHT_9dg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8emh3KK_Bg
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CetTjU155Y>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7a9inDMw90>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMQLA-TIAsk>

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4. <https://in.linkedin.com/jobs/creative-designer-jobs?position=1&pageNum=0>
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8. <https://learn.marsdd.com/article/open-ended-and-behaviour-based-interview-questionsexamples/>
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11. [www.job-hunt.org > ... > GuidetoSuccessfulInterviews](http://www.job-hunt.org/GuidetoSuccessfulInterviews)
12. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/job-simulation-preparation/>
13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUzCOQcp3xY> TipstonailaTelephonicinterviewDo'sandDon'tsofa...
14. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVnMXNW_grk JOBINTERVIEW|LearnEnglish Conversation-02(Season-05)|DailyEnglishConversations
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