

Personal Interview

[Seminar on “How to prepare for a Personal Interview – HR”. Presented by – Pramod Kumar Deshpandey, MCA, National Institute of Technology, Warangal. pramod_recw@yahoo.co.in]

Imagine that you all are at T&P section of our college. Everyone there is excited. Not just you but all who don't belong to the student cadre too. Everyone's eyes are on you, with a question in their mind “How many of you will come off with flying colors?” You are listening with the utmost concentration you ever had put in before in the Pre – Placement Talk. It's the company we all dream about to get into with highest pay scale. There are no bars on percentage or backlog. It's searching for candidates with real talent in them. Everyone is eligible to sit in the campus “written test”. You will be the happiest person if you get selected into the company. Not only that you will get the world wide recognition, respect and dignity, your social status will rise, so to say you will be no more the same person you were before if you get selected in this company. Can you guess which company it is? OK! Let me tell. It is Microsoft Corporation.

I know what you are thinking. Some of you might laugh at this idea. Microsoft and me it's impossible. Why are you kidding with us? I am not eligible to get into that company.

Yes, my point was that. We all have something in common. There is a very thin line which restricts us to move up to the very heights and the place we feel deserves for us. The only thing which matters is our attitude.

Today, I will talk about:

- Attitude
- General instructions
- Self confidence and how to show it
- Body language
- Seating arrangement in an Interview and its effect
- Group Discussion
- Common Questions
- Common mistakes
- Technical preparation
- Questions to the Panel
- Virtual Interview

1. Attitude

Attitude is what you think of yourself. Probably you know; it plays a major role in shaping your own future. If you want to be happy, prosperous, get the respect of the society, earn wealth, live in a very happy surrounding, it all depends on how you think of yourself. If you believe “you can”, then only you can achieve all these things. And that is what we call it - attitude. Unknowingly it also affects your social circle. People want to be with the people who are self-dependent, who are confident, who believe in themselves, who believe that they can prosper, who believe whose life will be happy in future. To say it all in a single word people want to be with people who have a positive mental attitude. If you won't believe this, start testing it with yourself at your very close

friend. Every time you meet your friend tell something negative about yourself, how you feel bad about yourself, how you see your future is going to be a flop, speak discouraging yourself. At first instant, being a good friend of yours, he will try to correct you, after some persistent efforts when he feels all his efforts are going in vein, he will avoid himself from you. If your attitude can do so much to yourself, you should now bound to believe that whatever positive you speak about yourself is going to influence you and also the people around. People will find your company more encouraging. When you find gaining confidence of others, it in turn boosts you to do even more and expect more. So never think "I can't do", however difficult it may be. Try and try and try... there is nothing like impossible on this earth to a man. If something is not happening as we wished, or we are unable to get our desired result, that doesn't mean such an act is not possible, it's just we have not identified the skills with in us necessary to solve the problem intelligently. It's your lack of understanding to solve the problem which can be solved with determination, a persistent zeal, commonsense to apply your knowledge and a belief with positive mental attitude. So never underestimate yourself. Be always ready to face the challenge.

2. General Instruction: Making a Good Impression on Job Interviews

Here's what you should keep in mind the day of the interview and immediately afterward. The most important part of any HR interview is to know "yourself". What are your strengths and weaknesses. Remember, people form their 90% of the opinions and impressions about you in the first 90% of the meet. Do not underplay your achievements. We generally give less credit even for our good work. We become too modest. If someone praises us we instead say as if we have not done anything and things just moved by them. Be self-confident instead of self-effacing.

- Believe that you are good enough.
- Highlight your experiences and skills and knowledge. (I made a mistake by not writing about my website which I want to develop further so that it could become a complete website catering to the needs of students preparing for campus placements. Had I said about the website, I could have got more chance to explain about my future plans too?)
- Never say "I have never done that" or "That wasn't there in our syllabus" or "That was not taught to us" instead accept the fact that "you don't know that thing" and say "I can learn that" or "I will learn that" That is what I mean by "Speak the positive language". Having a "can do" attitude is some times more important than actual experience. (To give a small example when you go to grocery shop and ask for jaggery, the shopkeeper will say instead "we have sugar sir, would you like to take it. Our sugar is very sweet.")
- Try not to be every thing in an interview. It is ok to say "I don't know" two three times. The most commonly asked question during an interview is, "what could you contribute to this organization?" the usual answer given is "what ever you need". Tell the things you are good at and how can contribute through that.
- Get your credentials right. Though the interviewer won't look at your certificates, it's good to have them with you.
- Give due attention to both the obvious areas like your dress sense as well as to not so obvious aspects like the way you talk to people or for the matter you sit, stand or walk. All these aspects tell a lot about the confidence level and delivering ability.
- Feel good about your dress. Confirm yourself that you are dressed as you wanted to be. Make sure that your hair is tidy, shoes are polished, knot of your tie is straight, and if you wear glasses, make sure that the lenses are clean. (In the interview I felt uncomfortable with my tie. I didn't have a tie, and my MTech friend Dhiraj arranged one for me. Naturally, as you can expect, the tie was not as fit as I wanted. So the whole day I kept hiding the tie behind my file so that others won't observe it much. Had I wore a good tie I would have felt even more confident on that day. To speak frankly, my tie lessened my confidence by 10% on that day. I kept waiting for the time when I can remove my tie out.

- And you know! What I did first after coming out of the interview room. I just removed the tie. Don't make such mistakes)
- It is always advisable to smile whenever possible as it communicates friendliness. Remember to maintain eye contact with your interviewer and use hand gestures sparingly. (My friend Sayta pointed out that I move my hands too frequently while explaining something, so I kept this in my mind, which kept reminding me whenever I lifted my hands out to explaining. But at the same time the body language section says that when you show your palms and move your hands open it shows your frankness. So it's you who has to judge how to present yourself to the panel so that you will look the most reliable and confident person.)

Before the Interview

- Be on time. Being on time (or early) is usually interpreted by the interviewer as evidence of your commitment, dependability, and professionalism.
- Be positive and try to make others feel comfortable. Show openness by leaning into a greeting with a firm handshake and smile. Don't make negative comments about current or former employers (classmates). It is generally a good idea to let the interviewer to extend his hand first than you extend yours. Some persons don't like giving handshakes and if you do it first, you are forcing the interviewer to do something which he doesn't like. So he becomes defensive.
- Relax. Think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation. And remember, the interviewer is just as nervous about making a good impression on you. (Consider a case: your father's friend has come to your home. He is a very dignified and a very reputed but a very close family friend. He has done his PhD in Oxford University and now head of a very reputed organization. You know him very well and he has always been nice to talk to you. He is asking you some questions on your career, your future plans and your goals. You naturally feel at ease as you are in your home and the person asking you the questions is known to you. You won't feel tense; moreover you will feel excited to say what you think openly, frankly and of course with a bit pride (which I call as self – respect). Why can't you perform the same way in the interview? The interviewer is no good than your father's friend. Why should you feel tense? You might be facing the interview for the first time. Ok! But will your worry and botheration make any contribution to your performance? Certainly not. The next time you attend an interview remind this. Speak to the interviewer as you speak to your father's friend.)

3. Self-Confidence: How to show?

During the Interview

- Confidence speaks. You reflect your confidence by many things; your posture i.e. the way you stand; the way you sit, and the way you speak. You show your confidence by the way you shake your hands.
- Show self-confidence. Make eye contact with the interviewer and answer his questions in a clear voice. Work to establish a rapport with the interviewer.
- Remember to listen. Communication is a two-way street. If you are talking too much, you will probably miss cues concerning what the interviewer feels is important.
- Reflect before answering a difficult question. If you are unsure how to answer a question, you might reply with another question. For example, if the interviewer asks you what salary you expect, try answering by saying "May I know how much you are planning to pay your best candidate?"

- Show you want the job. Display your initiative by talking about what functions you could perform that would benefit the organization, and by giving specific details of how you have helped past employers (classmates). You might also ask about specific details of the job position, such as functions, responsibilities, who you would work with, and who you would report to.
- Listen carefully. If you feel the question is unclear, ask politely for clarification.
- Pause before answering to consider all facts that may substantiate your response.
- Always offer positive information.
- Get directly to the point. Ask if listener would like you to go into great detail before you do.
- Discuss only the facts needed to respond to the question.
- Do not open yourself to areas of questioning that could pose difficulties for you.
- Be truthful, but do not offer unsolicited information. (Such as saying your negative points in the question “Tell us about yourself”)
- Focus and re-focus attention on your successes.

4. Body Language

[How to shake hand ‘like a man’, how to stand, sit, hand movements and steeple, putting pen into mouth, etc.]

Avoid negative body language. An interviewer wants to see how well you react under pressure. Avoid these signs of nervousness and tension:

- Frequently touching your mouth
- Faking a cough to think about the answer to a question
- Gnawing on your lip
- Tight or forced smiles
- Swinging your foot or leg
- Folding or crossing your arms
- Slouching
- Avoiding eye contact
- Picking at invisible bits of lint
- Covering your mouth by your hands while speaking
- Putting pen into mouth

5. Seating arrangement: its effect on you

For a detailed study on how the seating arrangements affect your state of mind I would recommend you to study the book Body Language by Allan Pease. [Dining table, big boss, round table and the rectangle table examples, etc.]

6. Group Discussion

This is such a wide subject of discussion that I would like to take a separate class if you feel the need. However to give a brief idea, here are some points:

- Be the first person to speak. This shows your leadership qualities and team management skills. Be the initiator because all others will be looking for someone to start so that they can say what they want. Gain the advantage being the first person to speak in the group

and attracting the attention of all other candidates and the panel too. But before you speak confirm yourself that you really have some point to put else it will prove a disqualification to you. You should have something worth attracting the attention of all there. If you feel you don't have such point better remain silent and speak after getting enough knowledge about the topic under discussion.

- While putting your points look at everybody there moving your focus from person to person. Don't look at just one person. You are speaking to a group and not a single person, right!
- If you feel someone is not able to put his point correctly, and think that his point is being misinterpreted in a wrong way by some of the participants get it right and re say the whole thing in a different way on behalf of the participant.
- Don't dominate others or criticize others on their mistakes or misunderstanding. Don't argue too much with a candidate.
- Don't take too much of time. Give others too some time to speak and put their views.
- Take a note of the allotted time. This shows your responsible ness and leadership qualities.

7. Common Questions

It is a very common mistake to consider that we should not prepare for the interview questions and we have to answer them spontaneously. Also we don't give much importance to the HR – Questions as we don't know which of them will be asked. Of course you are correct that you will not know what the panel can ask but there are some questions which you should prepare in advance.

1. Tell us about yourself (Describe yourself, Introduce yourself)
 - Keep your answer to one or two minutes; don't ramble. Have the flow in your mind. What you should speak in the next sentence. Don't stutter. Be confident while saying. And remember don't say any of your negative qualities. Your aim is to sell yourself to the company. And for that you need to be as much positive as you can. You can speak about your goals, skills and background.
 - An often asked opening question. Perhaps the most frequently asked question across interviews. Your opening statement needs to be a summary of your goals, overall professional capabilities, achievements, background (educational and family), strengths, professional objectives and anything about your personality that is relevant and interesting. This question represents an opportunity to lead the interviewer in the direction you want him to go e.g., your specialty or whatever else you may wish to highlight.
 - Your intention should be to try to subtly convince the interviewers that you are a good candidate, you have proved that in the past, and have a personality that fits the requirement. Remember that the first impression you create will go a long way in the ultimate selection. Keep in mind, most candidates who are asked this question just blurt out their schooling, college, marks and qualifications. All this is already there in the CV. Why tell the interviewer something he already knows?
 - A final word on approaching this question; once you have said what you have to say - shut up. Don't drone on for the sake of speaking for you just might say something foolish. Sometimes interviewers don't interrupt in order to give the candidate the impression that he has not spoken enough. This is just a stress inducing tactic. Don't fall for it, if you feel you have spoken enough. In case the pause gets too awkward for you just add something like, "Is there something specific that you wish to know about me?"

- Make a short, organized statement of your education and professional achievements and professional goals. Then, briefly describe your qualifications for the job and the contributions you could make to the organization.
2. What else do you think I should know about you?
 - Keep some other points which you feel are not much important to tell. If you are asked to say more about yourself, put these into action.
 3. Tell us about your family.
 4. What are your positive points? (What are your strengths?)
 - Present at least three points which are really you. Have something about the words you chose to explain. When I said my positive points are my confidence and optimism, they asked me to define the terms confidence and optimism.
 - Relate them to the interviewing company and job opening.
 5. What are your negative points? (What are your major weaknesses?)
 - Don't say you have none.
 - Turn a negative into a positive answer: "I am sometimes intent on completing an assignment and get too deeply involved when we are late."
 - Don't be overly negative about your weaknesses; it's always safe to identify a lack of a skill or experience as a shortcoming rather than a personal characteristic.
 - Be positive; turn a weakness into strength. For example, you might say: "I often worry too much over my work. Sometimes I work late to make sure the job is done well."
 6. How can you overcome your negative qualities?
 - You should have an answer to this question. It is as important to know the solution for one problem as to identify it.
 7. What are your hobbies? (Some questions related to your hobby, do you play any sports?)
 - Don't make a mistake by not having at least the basic information about your hobby. And if you have none, say that you don't have any hobbies, I like to read. Don't say just for the sake of the interviewer else you will get into trap.
 - If you say that your hobby is to play football (soccer), you should know how many players exist in each team and know what is meant by red card, yellow card, the time of play etc. You can say that your hobby is to read news paper. Then prepare for questions like; which news paper do you read? What was the main heading in today's newspaper? Some questions on politics, current hot topics, etc.
 - The interviewer may be looking for evidence of your job skills outside of your professional experience. For example, hobbies such as chess or bridge demonstrate analytical skills. Reading, music, and painting are creative hobbies. Individual sports show determination and stamina, while group sport activities may indicate you are comfortable working as part of a team.
 - Also, the interviewer might simply be curious as to whether you have a life outside of work. Employees who have creative or athletic outlets for their stress are often healthier, happier and more productive.
 8. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended?
 - Smart interviewers probe a candidate's personality through these seemingly chit-chat questions. Treat these questions very seriously.
 - Talk about books, sports or films to represent balance in your life. If possible state the net take out. (To balance my life if I say that I play cricket or TT that would be foolish. Because I never play games. So I have some other technique to handle these kinds of questions. But I don't feel you will have any problem in answering to this. You are good players right!)
 9. Do you have any aim in your life? (What is your objective? What is your mission statement? What are your career goals? Or what are your future plans?)

- This is what your long term goal in your life. If you have no specific goal, say that you would like to be best in what ever field you take up. But having a mission for your life will be the most advantageous answer.
 - The interviewer wants to know if your plans and the company's goals are compatible. Let him know that you are ambitious enough to plan ahead. Talk about your desire to learn more and improve your performance, and be specific as possible about how you will meet the goals you have set for yourself.
10. Why is there a gap in your studies? (If there is)
- Give a meaningful explanation. Say how productively you utilized this period.
11. Why did you choose software field? (Very old question)
12. Why should we hire you?
- While answering these questions, focus on your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills. Clearly communicate how the company can benefit from these areas.
13. Why you want to join our organization? (Why do you want to work here? or What about our company interests you?)
- Tell them how you first came to know about the company and how you got impressed the first time. Say that since then it was your dream to get into the company. But while saying so prepare for some other questions about the company.
 - Few questions are more important than these, so it is important to answer them clearly and with enthusiasm. Show the interviewer your interest in the company. Share what you learned about the job, the company and the industry through your own research. Talk about how your professional skills will benefit the company. Unless you work in sales, your answer should never be simply: "money." The interviewer will wonder if you really care about the job.
14. What can you do for us? (What do you have to offer us?)
- As an interviewee do not talk about what you want; first talk about the company needs.
 - Say "you wish the part of the project" or "you would like to solve a company problem" (The pre-placement talk will help you answering these types of questions. I too benefited from the PPT. Though I came late to the PPT by 7 minutes, I listened carefully the rest of the talk. And carefully noted the point of "Satyam navigation" which was a company established by a person like us. And keeping that in my view I said "I want to establish a company" However before you take a decision to say such important things, you could answer the flow of other questions which could arise by your statements. You should be able to handle any such consequences.)
 - Answer in terms of the skills and personal qualities you have relevant to the job. You may refer to your academic qualifications, relevant sections of university courses, experience in the workplace, leisure activities or personal qualities.
15. Where do you visualize yourself after 5 or 10 year from now?
16. Questions about your rank and any extra – curricular activities.
17. How long would you stay with us?
- Simply say "as long as we both feel I am contributing, achieving, growing I could continue with the organization."
18. What you know about our company?
- You should know about the company's products, size, image, management style, people, history, philosophy. (A person got selected into a Chennai based company SQUARE-D, by answering why the name of the company is chosen like that)
 - While talking about the company, project an informed interest. Ask several open-ended questions about the company's course and goals.
19. Do you have any questions for us?
- Don't ask too many questions.

20. How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?
 - Be careful; the market value of the job may be the key answer.
 - Say, "My understanding is that a job like the one you are describing may be in the range of Rupees. X to XX.
21. Assuming we make you an offer, what do you see as your future here?
22. What are your short- and long-range goals and how do you expect to achieve them?
23. What does success mean to you? How do you measure it?
24. What motivates you?
25. Do you plan to further your education? If so, to what extent?
26. What have you done to improve yourself during the past year?
27. If you could relive the last 15 years, what changes would you make?
28. Tell me about your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment?
29. Tell me about the best and worst bosses you've ever had.
30. What constructive criticism have you received from employers?
31. Everybody has pet peeves. What are yours?
32. Why did you leave your last job?
 - The interviewer may want to know if you had any problems on your last job. If you did not have any problems, simply give a reason, such as: relocated away from job; company went out of business; lay off; temporary job; no possibility of advancement; wanted a job better suited to your skills.
 - If you did have problems, be honest. Show that you can accept responsibility and learn from your mistakes. You should explain any problems you had (or still have) with an employer, but don't describe that employer in negative terms. Demonstrate that it was a learning experience that will not affect your future work.
33. What are your best skills?
 - If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values. List them, and then give examples where you have demonstrated these skills.
34. Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?
 - The ideal answer is one of flexibility. However, be honest. Give examples describing how you have worked in both situations.
35. Have I forgotten to ask?
 - Use this as a chance to summarize your good characteristics and attributes and how they may be used to benefit the organization. Convince the interviewer that you understand the job requirements and that you can succeed.

Common Interview Questions asked by skilled and well prepared interviewers always have a purpose regardless of how irrelevant to the position they may seem. It is important to realize that the purpose of many questions is to test out whether you have the specific qualities and skills required for the position. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer to such questions; rather interviewers are seeking evidence of such qualities as your motivation, energy, attitudes, initiative or maturity.

An example of a seemingly irrelevant question could be "Tell me how you would go about buying a car?" In this situation the interviewer is not concerned so much about what car dealer you would go to or the order in which you would go about doing this, but rather about the sort of approach you would use. Do you plan? Do you give up easily? Do you seek assistance from other people? How do you budget your time and money?

36. What has prompted you to apply for this position?
 - Explain why you are interested in the organization. If you have had a long-term interest in them, say so. If location is significant, you could mention this after talking about your interest in the firm. Try not to focus on what you will get from the organization, but the qualities you will bring to them. You could mention that

you see the position as offering challenge, a chance to learn new things and to enhance and develop skills and abilities necessary for the position.

37. What do you want from us?
- This is a good time to talk about training or promotion opportunities giving some idea of long-term career plans. There may be aspects of the organization's work that really interest you, and you may wish to move into another area of that organization later on. The interviewer is probably trying to assess your enthusiasm and ambition.
38. At the end of the first year, if you got this job, how would you measure your success?
- In your preparation for the interview you would have developed a good understanding of the duties and personal attributes listed in the job description, as well as finding out about the goals and objectives of the organization. Think about tangible results you might be able to achieve on the job that contribute to those goals and objectives.
39. Picture yourself 3 to 4 years down the line.
- I will have ability to take up new challenges in upcoming technologies. I will be leading a team of developers. I will be the best resource the company could have and help in designing best quality products and help achieving good customer satisfaction.
40. You are in a project with your seniors in your team. How will you mingle with them?
- Basically software industry is about people and communication between them. It's good to have seniors in the team, so that learning time is pretty fast. This is an ideal opportunity for me to learn, and sharpen my technical skills. I will consult my seniors for any problem that I have. I will seek their suggestions and make the product or code work better. Consulting with seniors constantly helps in developing an efficient product. Schedule frequent meetings with them, check the problems which they faced, how to avoid those problems, how to implement some design technologies, how efficiently we can modify the code to make it work better. It's really a dream come true for me in my project. It's a much better situation that having all people of the same kind of experience.
41. What can you do to our company if you are selected?
- Try to suggest, implement best solutions possible within the stipulated time. Contribute to increase customer satisfaction.... customer satisfaction is the mantra of software industry. Once I gain enough experience I will help juniors in developing their technical and soft skills.
43. Tell us about the companies which you know till today.
- This question is basically just to know how much you are aware of the current software industry. Just tell few points which you know about a few companies. I am giving you info for some of the companies.
 - TCS - One of the India's largest software exporters. 6th largest growing consultancy company in the world. (From the web site tcs.com). Focuses on state of the art digital technologies product design and development.
 - WIPRO - One of another India's biggest software exporters. (Go thru the web site wipro.com once. You will get few more points. This company is into systems programming, application programming.
 - Infosys - India's first company to be listed in NASDAQ. This company is mostly into application software services.
 - Microsoft - World's most popular windows OS provider. A big giant in IT industry. Had a big role in desktops and bringing computers home. 80% of the computers used in the industry are that of Microsoft.
 - Apple - Another OS developing company. Successfully released MAC OS X recently. This is the company with the logo 'Think different'.
 - Sun Microsystems- This is the company that made internet so popular. Inventor of java programming, a platform independent stuff.

- Oracle - Developers of most popular data base oracle. Intel- Manufacturers of Intel micro processors. A world leader in the processor industry.
44. How will you contact your senior employees if you need help?
- This is basically just to test you how you mingle with seniors. Senior employees are the best people to guide us and help us out when we are struck with problems. I will consult them check whether they are free or not. If they are free, I will tell them what the problem is etc.... if I am trying to learn a new language or new technology I will ask them the best way to start with... check with them what are the kind of problems that we get... how to solve those problem... what are the different ways we can solve a problem... references for a particular information...
45. What is your reaction if a good project is given to few of your juniors?
- I won't feel bad about it. Projects and allocation depends on particular requirement at those times. I will work hard and if I come to know that my skill set doesn't match with requirement for that project, I will try to update my skill set, learn the new technologies.
46. Why did you come from education side to this side?
- Most of the job requirements are now in IT industry and as I realized it soon, and I wanted a qualification in IT and found MCA is the best thing to do. Having done this course for 3 years and now I am confident that I can take up any challenging task assigned to me.
48. What contributions to profits have you made in your present or former company? Why are you looking for a change?
49. What do you think of your boss?
- Put across a positive image, but don't exaggerate.

Here are some other job interview questions you might want to rehearse.

Your Qualifications

- What can you do for us that someone else can't do?
- What qualifications do you have that relate to the position?
- What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
- Give me an example from a previous job where you've shown initiative.
- What have been your greatest accomplishments recently?
- What is important to you in a job?
- What have you been doing since your last job?
- What qualities do you find important in a coworker?

Your Career Goals

- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How will you judge yourself successful? How will you achieve success?
- What type of position are you interested in?
- How will this job fit in your career plans?
- What do you expect from this job?
- Do you have a location preference?
- Can you travel?
- What hours can you work?
- When could you start?

Your Work Experience

- What have you learned from your past jobs?
- What were your biggest responsibilities?
- What specific skills acquired or used in previous jobs relate to this position?
- How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- What did you like most/least about your last job?
- Whom may we contact for references?

Your Education

- How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
- What were your favorite classes/activities at school?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Do you plan to continue your education?

8. Common Job Interview Mistakes

Five common “dressing up” mistakes

1. Wearing brown shoes with black, blue or grey trousers.
2. Going to an interview with sleeves rolled up
3. Wearing a tie with a check shirt is a strict “NO”
4. Going overboard with your favorite cologne
5. Wearing prominent jewellery

Want to know what *not* to do at the job interview? Learn from the mistakes of others.

1. Arrive late for the interview.
2. Indicate you are late because the directions you were given were not good.
3. Look disheveled and inappropriately dressed.
4. Slouch in your seat.
5. Don't maintain good eye-contact with the interviewer.
6. Does your company research at the interview by asking, "*What do you guys do here?*"
7. Don't make a connection between your skills and the needs of the employer.
8. Brag about how great you are, but neglect to cite evidence of your accomplishments.
9. Respond in an unfocused, disorganized, and rambling manner.
10. Remain low-key and display no enthusiasm for the job.
11. Answer most questions with simple "yes" and "no" answers.
12. Appear desperate for a job--any job.
13. Call the interviewer by his or her first name, or use the wrong name.
14. Give memorized responses, forgetting parts in the process.
15. Badmouth your current or former employer.
16. Ask "How am I doing? Are you going to hire me?"
17. Blurt out, "I need to make at least \$35,000. I hope this job pays at least that much," near the beginning of the interview.
18. When asked "*Do you have any questions?*" reply "*No.*"

9. Technical preparation

Technical preparation too is very important. You should have sound knowledge of the subject you are saying as your areas of interests. Chose C++, JAVA, OS, CN, DBMS and you can have plenty of questions. All these areas require the concepts no coding at all. When you say C you may be asked to write some algorithms or programs. If you are not good at programming, better don't say C as your area of interest. The interviewer may also ask SQL in the DBMS portion and it will be advantageous if you can write queries. Have good knowledge of your projects. What the project is about, how you implemented it. You should be able to answer how you designed the database tables, front-end, ER diagrams, DFD, etc. You should also prepare some topics in SE such as project life cycles, different project development models, CASE tools, testing methods etc.

10. Questions to the Panel: Questions you may ask

When it is your turn, ask the questions you have prepared in advance. These should cover any information about the company and job position you could not find in your own research.

Do not ask questions that raise red flags. Ask, "Is relocation a requirement?", and the interviewer may assume that you do not want to relocate at all. Too many questions about vacation may cause the interviewer to think you are more interested in taking time off than helping the company. Make sure the interviewer understands why you are asking these questions.

Remember that an interview is a two-way conversation. For you, the interview has two purposes: One, to sell yourself, and two, to evaluate the position. After asking questions, the interviewer usually invites you to ask questions. By asking informed questions, such as the following, you not only gain knowledge about the potential employer, but you also make a good impression:

- What is the size of the division, sales volume, and earnings?
- Does the company plan to expand?
- What are the significant trends in the industry?
- Are any acquisitions, divestitures, or proxy fights on the horizon?
- Who is the owner, chief executive, or president?
- What is his or her character and how does this influence the organization?
- How does the organization rank within its field?
- What is the public image of the company?
- What is the reputation of the department to which I am applying?
- What are the greatest problems of this department and company?
- What are the greatest strengths of this department and company?
- What would you expect me to accomplish in this job?
- What responsibilities have the highest priority?
- How much time should be devoted to each area of responsibility?
- How might these responsibilities and priorities change?
- What qualifications are you looking for in the person who fills this job?
- If this position is offered to me, why should I accept it?
- What are the initial projects for which I would be responsible?
- What are some examples of the achievements of others who have been in this position?
- How much travel is involved?
- Why isn't this job being filled from within?

- What is the history of this position?
- How many people have held this job in the last five years? Where are they now?
- How soon do you expect to make a decision?
- If I am offered the position, how soon will you need my response?
- Could you tell me the growth plans and goals for the company?
- What skills are important to be successful in this position?
- What's the criterion your company uses for performance appraisal?
- With whom will I be interacting most frequently and what are their responsibilities and the nature of our interaction?
- What is the time frame for making a decision at this position?
- What made the previous persons in this position successful/unsuccessful?

11. Go for a mock exercise: Virtual Interview

Face the panel, but don't fall of the chair in a headlong rush-and-skid attempt to tell your story. Take one step at a time. If you place your foot on slippery ground, you could be ejecting out on a free fall.

So prepare, fortify your thoughts, re-jig your memory, and script and design your story (without frills and falsity). Without the right preparation and storyboard, you could be a loser at the interview. Here are a few preparation tips that books on interviews sometimes overlook.

Before the interview:

Chronological outline of career and education divide your life into "segments" defining your university, first job, second job. For each stage, jot down:

The reason for opting certain course or profession; your job responsibilities in your previous/current job; Reason of leaving your earlier/current job. You should be clear in your mind where you want to be in the short and long term and ask yourself the reason why you would be appropriate for the job you are being interviewed for and how it will give shape to your future course.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

You should keep a regular check on your strengths and weaknesses. Write down three (3) technical and three (3) non-technical personal strengths. Most importantly, show examples of your skills. This proves more effective than simply talking about them. So if you're asked about a general skill, provide a specific example to help you fulfill the interviewer's expectations. It isn't enough to say you've got "excellent leadership skills". Instead, try saying:

"I think I have excellent leadership skills which I have acquired through a combination of effective communication, delegation and personal interaction. This has helped my team achieve its goals."

Do your homework:

Before going for an interview, find out as much information on the company. The best sources are the public library, the Internet (you can check out the company's site), and can even call the

company and get the required information. The information gives you a one-up in the interview besides proving your content company or position.

Clearing the interview isn't necessarily a solitary attempt. Seek assistance from individuals who are in the profession and whose counsel you value most. Be confident in your approach and attitude; let the panel feel it through your demeanour, body language and dressing.

Getting prepared for your interview is the best way to dig deep and know yourself. You will be surprised that it would breed a new familiarity become more familiar with your own qualifications that will make you present yourself better. All the best and get ready to give a treat.

Now that you know what to expect in an interview, ask yourself what it is the recruiters are looking for? Here is a short list of things that will help you prepare for your next interview.

Skills to perform the job:

It is important to emphasize the skills which you feel the employer is seeking and to give specific examples of how you developed them.

Work Experience:

Be able to articulate the importance of past job experiences in terms of the job for which you are interviewing.

Verbal communication skills:

This includes the ability to listen effectively, verbalize thoughts clearly, and express you confidently.

General personality:

For many employers, how your personality fits in with the rest of the company is as important as your skills to perform the job!

Personal appearance:

A neat, attractive appearance is critical for a good first impression.

Grades:

Many employers use grades as a way to evaluate candidates. Make sure you can explain marked deficiencies.

Goals/Motivation:

Keep in mind that employers will assess your ability to articulate your short-term and long-term goals.

Attributes in a job:

- Job is challenging.
- Chances and freedom to try new things within the stipulated time.
- Good amount of learning curve in every assignment.
- Doesn't become routine very soon.

- Good work environment.
- Good amount of work-personal life balance.

Leader ship qualities:

- Make the team committed to a common goal.
- Communicate the decisions so that they are completely understood to every one.
- Providing model behavior to the team
- Making objectives, roles, responsibilities clear to every one.
- Encourage open and honest discussions.
- Leader is trusted and respected.
- Encourage participation from the team
- Motivating the team to a common objective.
- Make the team aware of organizations mission
- Recognizing and developing future potential in the team members.

Mock interviews are very helpful. But all our efforts to make it happen; succeed brilliantly at making the final decision as to when should we conduct such a test. And when the day comes we generally find some excuse and try to avoid it. Yes, we have the interest but we still don't want to participate in such activity. There are many reasons, which I don't want to discuss here. But still there is another kind of mock interview for which you don't require anyone to participate. I call this as Virtual Interview. And I benefited much by this. This is my own invention.

Virtual Interview is to use your unlimited power of imagination, the power of your brain. Get to some place where no one will disturb you. Close your eyes. Think yourself as appearing an interview. You are just been called into. Imagine yourself as dressed in the formals. Feel the color of your dress, tie and shoe. Imagine the place where you're seated and the environment. How the students are moving here and there looking busy. Create an atmosphere of the interview in your mind. When you really do this, you will feel the same experience of being at an interview. Now imagine yourself being seated in the hot seat and the panel consisting of there persons well dressed. Feel the color of the room, tables, chairs and the curtains. And start from the first place, as if you entered the room, greeted the panel good morning and in turn the member of the panel got up to give you a hand shake. Feel the firmness of your hand while giving hand shake. Imagine yourself saying "thank you" while taking your seat. Now start asking questions to yourself as if the member in the panel is asking you, try to pose all the above questions and answer them intelligently as you would have answered in the interview. Ask yourself some technical questions too. Think as if they have asked you to write a small program and you are explaining it on a paper. And at last after imagining everything just as it is in the real interview take leave from them thanking the panel. Imagine how tense free you are now and how much satisfied you are.

And don't stop there, extend your imagination to a bit further. Imagine yourself waiting for your results. You are very excited and of course confident about your success. Imagine the T&P officer announcing the names of finally selected candidates, and you being one among them. Feel the joy or happiness that you will get in such a situation. Imagine your friends congratulating you. You are surrounded by a number of people. Feel the confidence which your new achievement has brought in.

And at last imagine yourself giving treat at Ratna on your success, and please don't forget us to give the treat on your success at least in your imagination. All the best for your excellent career.

Acknowledgements:

I extend my heartiest thanks Mr. Rakesh Singh Bisht, my best friend and colleague for providing me half of the information and material for this seminar. Mail id: raj_iko2000@rediffmail.com