

Go for a mock exercise before the real talk at the job table

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Campus So what if you are not a mountaineer. Or a keen hiker. You still cannot treat your interview like a careless morning trot along a jogger's path. Your jaw-jaw at the interview table is nothing less than a cautious climb up a mountain trail--which begins around your early childhood and meanders through the years at the academia before reaching a new summit in your career.

And as you retrace your steps down memory lane make sure that you post flags at important landmarks of your life and career, so that you can pop them before the interview panel scoops them out of you. You don't want to be at the receiving end, do you?

Face the panel, but don't fall off 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

1. 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.

2. 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 fulfil 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."

As compared to strengths, the area of weaknesses is difficult to handle. Put across your weakness in such a way that it at least seems to be a positive virtue to the interviewer. Describe a weakness or area for development that you have worked on and have now overcome.

3. Questions you should be prepared for

Tell us about yourself.

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to join our company?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

How have you improved the nature of your job in the past years of your working? Why should we hire you?

What contributions to profits have you made in your present or former company? Why are you looking for a change?

Answers to some difficult questions :

Tell me about yourself ?

Start from your education and give a brief coverage of previous experiences. Emphasise more on your recent experience explaining your job profile.

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What do you think of your boss?

Put across a positive image, but don't exaggerate.

Why should we hire you? Or why are you interested in this job?

Sum up your work experiences with your abilities and emphasise your strongest qualities and achievements. Let your interviewer know that you will prove to be an asset to the company.

How much money do you want?

Indicate your present salary and emphasise that the opportunity is the most important consideration.

Do you prefer to work in a group?

Be honest and give examples how you've worked by yourself and also with others. Prove your flexibility.

4. Questions to Ask

At the end of the interview, most interviewers generally ask if you have any questions. Therefore, you should be prepared beforehand with 2-3 technical and 2-3 non-technical questions and commit them to your memory before the interview.

Do not ask queries related to your salary, vacation, bonuses, or other benefits. This information should be discussed at the time of getting your joining letter. Here we are giving few sample questions that you can ask at the time of your interview.

Sample Questions

Could you tell me the growth plans and goals for the company?

What skills are important to be successful in this position?

Why did you join this company? (optional)

What's the criteria 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?

5. Do your homework

Before going for an interview, find out as much information on the company (go to JobsAhead Company Q and A) as possible. 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.

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