**Ahmad SohaibWasiq interview**

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[Speaker 2]

Hello Mr. Deepak, my name is Ahmad Suhaib Ghasek. I am a student at HSE, pursuing my Masters in International Business in the Asia-Pacific region program. I am here to conduct an interview from a project, so could you please tell me about yourself, about your background?

[Speaker 1]

Hello, my name is Deepak and I am also a student of Masters in International Business Management. I am from India and I have been also working here for a Russian company as a contract support executive. So yeah, whatever you need I am ready to help.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2]

So, it is great. So, how about your work? How is it?

What you do as your job description? What kind of responsibilities do you have?

[Speaker 1]

So, basically since I am from India, so company was looking some Indian to get their works done. So, I applied to a lot of companies and then I got the interview and I successfully cleared the interview. So, my work is basically like bridging a gap between my company and clients.

So, before having any equipment got sold, we have a lot of documents work and which need to go through thoroughly one by one. So, lot of paperwork, documents, then there are a lot of clouds, sometimes they get angry, but sometimes they don't get angry. So, I need to convince them, sometimes from their behalf I need to make understand something to the company.

So yeah, it is a bit challenging and take a lot of time and energy, but still I enjoy. So, it is a good work.

[Speaker 2]

So, do you love it?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I love it because every time I need to consult with new people and every time when I consult with new people and new company, it is a new experience. Because everyone has a different way of working, perspective, dealing the things. So, every time I find something challenging and new to work or explore to learn something.

So, I love it.

[Speaker 2]

So, great. What do you enjoy the most about your work?

[Speaker 1]

The most I enjoy about my work when I close the deal, when successfully, when I get the satisfaction. You know, after like months of work, when I am successfully able to complete everything, like all the paperwork, the ink part is the most satisfying for me. Okay, now I can close the file and I did something, I achieved something.

I managed to like meet the demands of lot of people to make them to come on the single ground to agree on something. So, then I feel like okay, I am doing something, I am achieving something.

[Speaker 2]

So, can you tell me about one day of your work, like how you start the day, what you do and how you finish the day?

[Speaker 1]

So, my day typically starts at 8 and it takes around one hour for me to get to the office. And then when I get to the office, I check my mails, if I have received some important mails first. Then I will check one by one and answer them in order to whatever documents are required.

If I need to schedule some meeting for tomorrow or something like this video meeting. And then I will go to my regular part of the work, like then I will check my clients in order. Like we have an order number, then I go to the check the details what I need to follow up.

Like if I need to tell them our certain rules and regulations, then I will try to contact them, call them and then I will try to mail them. Then I will go through all the documents, check them, recheck them so that when I send to them, there should be no error. Or else it will impact the reputation of the company.

So, I go through all these things. Then by the end of the day, then again I go through all the details I have received, like any email I have received. Then I go through and then I check and then it's like not very tough day for me.

Because my work is just limited to India, I know and so easy for me. So, it's not very hard, I enjoy.

[Speaker 2]

That is great. And how about your company? What kind of activities does your company do?

[Speaker 1]

So, my company is basically involved in manufacturing heat exchangers, which is a kind of like industrial equipment. So, they are doing really good. So, they have like a lot of clients in Russia like Techneft, Rosneft.

And they are constantly growing day by day. They have a lot of orders and they can't fulfill even orders right now on time because they have a lot of orders. So, they are doing good.

It's a small company, but growing very fast. People are also very good, kind, cooperative. So, yeah, it's very good.

[Speaker 2]

Great. How long are you working in this company?

[Speaker 1]

Okay, so I remember when I came to Russia in August. And since then I got to know about one website, hs.ru. So, I think in September I started applying and in October I was able to get the job. But then they asked me about my some documents like SNILS, INN.

So, it took around like two months to get these things done. So, I started to work in this company from like 15th of Jan, 2024. So, it's been more than one year and three months, yeah, of experience.

[Speaker 2]

It is great. It's great. And how would you evaluate your performance in this company?

Were you successful in your job or not in your own opinion?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, initially I was struggling a lot because it was a completely new experience. And that time I was feeling that I am not able to perform very good. But I think it was a new experience and natural process for everyone goes through this.

So, then my seniors and my colleagues, they helped me a lot in understanding the documents and all the things. So, slowly, slowly when I get used to like after six months, then I know everything about how the things work. So, after that I started to perform very well.

So, yeah, hopefully I am satisfied with my work. I can do much more, but I am satisfied and I am constantly learning something new.

[Speaker 2]

What motivates you about doing your job in a good way?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, good question. I think I take my work very seriously, whatever I do. For me, work ethics is very much important.

Even if no one is watching me, even if sometimes my manager, they are busy in their own Russian work so many times. And they don't have time to check my work. But still I feel that I need to do something.

I need to constantly show something, my worth to the company. So, work ethics, I can say that, which keeps me driving to do something better each and every day. To perform really well, to do something really worthy for the company.

And plus I get to learn with a lot of people new things. Like sometimes I am dealing with people like chief operating officer of some company. So, and from when I talk with them, I get to learn a lot of things, a lot of new things.

How to deal with the situation, how to deal with certain positions. So, it's a very new experience for me and I learn a lot. So, it keeps me driving.

[Speaker 2]

And what motivates you to be this much honest about your work? As you told, when no one is watching you, still you want to do your work in the best way. Is it about religion or is it about your own mindset?

What keeps you this much honest about your job?

[Speaker 1]

Good question. It's more about work ethics because they pay me and I think that if they are paying me.

[Speaker 2]

Yeah, but when no one is watching you, like you can not do your job very well still.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, it depends.

[Speaker 2]

No one is seeing you, but why you are this much honest that you tell that they pay me and I should also work good for them.

[Speaker 1]

I think if they pay me, my responsibility is also to do perform something. I feel very bad if I don't do anything. Then I have like in my conscience, my questions is there.

Lot of doubts are there that why I am getting paid if I am not doing something. Why someone should pay me if I am doing not something. If the money is all, everyone for money is important.

So, if they are paying me a considerable amount of money, I should also do something. So, I get very dissatisfied that if I don't do something and I feel like I feel not very good about myself. So, that's why I keep driving me to do something like you know to perform something.

[Speaker 2]

That is great. So, can you say any such moment when you feel particularly very successful or satisfied working at your place?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, once I remember when I came to the company, they had like very much difficulty dealing with an Indian client. And it was a big contract, very big contract. So, and they were not able to cope up with them.

But when I went there and told them let me handle this. So, I know how people in India react in certain situations, how is their work culture. So, I could easily go through them and they were really surprised to know that oh how easy it was.

So, I met them, I arranged the interview like sorry the meeting virtual business meeting everything. And it was so sweet and they were thanking me a lot. Thank you, thank you my manager and the above him the person.

So, yeah, that was one of the really pleasant experience for me to like. Oh, they hired me and they get something done very easily.

[Speaker 2]

That is great. So, did you have any training for your job? I mean when you entered the company during your probationary period, did they give you some training or like give you some information about the duties?

Or did they help you to learn your job duties? Or you it was your own like an intelligence to learn everything by yourself?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I was expecting some kind of like training or probationary. Yeah, I had probationary period but they did not train me for anything. I was expecting but they were so busy in their work and it's a small company.

So, everyone is so busy that I had no training. And I will also realize that if I had training at the beginning. So, what time I took by myself of making errors and learning it was so huge.

So, if someone could have guided me at the very front. So, I could have done everything much easier and in less time. But yeah, there was no such training.

Yeah, but still when I had some doubt there was someone to help me but I had to go to them and ask them. So, I went through a lot of mistakes on my own and then I started learning. Then I asked them, okay, how can I make this good?

How can I do this? Then they told me, okay, you can do like this, like this. So, it took me around like three, six months to get used to it.

And then, yeah, then now I know everything. Now hopefully I can when I leave this company to go somewhere I can train my new joining.

[Speaker 2]

And how you were feeling like as a foreigner when you joined a Russian company? Like a company that people all speaking Russian and you are the only guy who do employee who don't speak the language. How did you feel?

How was their like behavior with you? How do you evaluate the Russians behaviors with foreigners?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, initially it was very difficult for me to be in a land. You know, being a place in office where everyone is speaking Russian, some other language and you don't understand anything. So, they have someone to talk with but you can't talk.

You go there for eight hours and you are on your own and you have no one to speak with. They have some kind of chit-chats even in breakfast time or like lunch time. So, they can have some kind of like chit-chat, a small conversation to relax but I can't.

So, when some kind of discussions or meetings are going on I don't understand anything. So, it was a bit difficult in the beginning but I made up my mind that I have to be here. So, I just kept on ignoring it.

But in general people are very welcoming and good. Sometimes even my colleagues they speak Russian to me. They say something very good to me.

I don't understand them but still I can sense their warmth of words. Like they are saying something good to me. So, I just say thank you, thank you.

So, it's fine. It's a good experience. People are good.

[Speaker 2]

How is it when you compare Russia with India? Like how people behave with foreigners in India compared to Russia? Which one is good?

Which one you consider better than the other one?

[Speaker 1]

What do you think? I think every place has some good and some bad things. But people are good everywhere you go.

Everywhere people are bad. I have good experience in both the countries. In Russia I see people are much more reserved compared to my country.

I understand it's part of their culture. If also they go to India they may also think that why people are so friendly. Why everyone is so interested in other's life.

So, I understand something is also well defined or well understood from country's point of view. Culture's point of view. So, I understand that people in Russia are very reserved.

And they like to be reserved. So, yeah. And it takes time.

I also realize that it takes much time to break the ice. Like to have friendship. To gain the trust much more in Russia.

But people are very polite. They are very helpful, kind. So, no complaints for anyone.

They all are good in their own story.

[Speaker 2]

Okay. What exact things that you liked about Russian? What exact points that you didn't like about Russians?

Like in your experience here as a student and as an employee.

[Speaker 1]

I like that everything is so calm here. Everything is at peace. No chaos.

No chaotic streets. Everything is so soothing. Everything is at peace.

People are also very like, they don't talk much. At public places. Very, very, very calm.

And people are friendly. If you ask them, they will help you. They will tell you where the things are.

It's not that people are rude. Yeah. Only thing I will say, I don't dislike.

It's not about dislikeness. I think it's their way of culture. That they are very reserved.

And it takes much more time to make friends with them. You know. To gain trust with them.

It takes much more time. So, it's a bit difficult to get through it. Because I've been living here for quite a long time.

Still, I can't say that I have a lot of good friends. Russian good friends. Like, I'm not able to make.

[Speaker 2]

Yeah. And what do you suggest for Russians to behave with foreigners? Like, what kind of points do you suggest?

For example, if I share your interview with some Russians. As a foreigner, what kind of suggestions do you have for Russians? About their behaviors or about something that they should be aware of?

What should they do for foreigners that they didn't do for you?

[Speaker 1]

I think that foreigners, they should be a bit more open. Because they also need to understand they are coming from a different culture. So, something foreigners must do to adapt in Russian environment.

And something Russians must do to make foreigners comfortable. So, they need to get more open up. Give some time to them to open up.

And be friendly with them much more than the locals. Because we are from a different culture. So, we also need some time.

It shouldn't be like a culture shock. You know? Very fast, you come and you're like, oh, no one is talking to anyone.

And if they are talking also, they are very kind of reserved. Not opening up. In my opinion, they should give them space.

To open up.

[Speaker 2]

I see. Great answer. And also, can you share as an example, when you feel that your company is really satisfied with your work.

Or you are doing really well done.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, there are various such incidents. Recently also, I had one company from India. And it was a completely new kind of project for them.

From India. So, I went through it. And I successfully closed the deal.

So, yeah, they were very satisfied. And they were saying a lot of good things to me. So, there are many.

But yeah, recently I could remember this one. The company was pretty satisfied. Okay, I'm doing something.

[Speaker 2]

So, great. Now, let's move to questions about your studies here. And more about Russia than work.

And how about your studies here? What do you study? And how are your studies going on?

Do you like it or not?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I'm studying.

[Speaker 2]

As you told, you study international business. Can you give us more detail about it?

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, so we study what I do. I think I could also relate with my studies. Because in my study, we have a lot of cross-cultural communication things.

And I also deal with Russian and Indian parameters. So, I could many times feel that what I have studied or learned in my courses, I could utilize in my work. So, many times they teach us about cross-cultural relationship, managerial relationship.

So, I could realize and understand the potential. Yeah, not much. But yeah, still, I could utilize much more from my studies.

Because my study is completely related to my work. So, it's good. Studies are also very good.

We have students from all over the world. And we have chance to meet with them, know with them from different point of view. We have things expressed in our class.

So, it's a good experience to study this course with a lot of international students from all over the world. It's also a good opportunity to do networking. Like after 20-30 years or so, you can have friends from all over the world.

And you can get help from them or help them.

[Speaker 2]

How this course will help you to achieve your future goals?

[Speaker 1]

I think in a lot of ways, what I have studied in this course about a lot of digital transformation, innovation, cross-cultural relationship between Asia countries. So, I think in a lot of ways, I am not capable of understanding the global dynamics. So, it will help me and it is also helping me a lot.

So, it's a very good course crafted very carefully in keeping the demands of international business. So, yeah, I think it will help me a lot to become a better manager, good manager sometime in future.

[Speaker 2]

And how you were feeling when you first entered Russia as a foreigner? Was it easy for you to get used to this environment? Or was it looking hard for you because you came from a very friendly environment like India?

And as you told, in Russia, people talk very less without starting talking with them. They don't start any conversation with you and they don't trust you too much. They don't become friendly too much.

How did you feel? How did you manage to stay motivated and happy during your study period here?

[Speaker 1]

While I was coming from India, I knew that I will have a difficult time because countries are completely different. They are much more European. So, I knew that I will have a cultural shock.

So, I was mentally preparing myself before coming to Russia. So, when I came here, everything was different. First of all, language, you don't understand anything.

You are in a land where you don't understand anything. And people are talking and you need to buy something. You need to go through something.

You need to travel somewhere. So, yeah, it was a bit more difficult. But I had the strategy to observe everything.

So, I was observing how these people behave in a certain scenario. How do people behave everywhere, like in a supermarket, in a bus, or like everywhere. So, I observed them a lot, a lot, a lot, how these people behave.

And then I tried to copy them. Like how they work in a certain scenario, in a certain metro, how they behave. Like in metro, if you go, they go in line and they hold the door.

You see? Then it was a new thing for me. So, I also started doing the same.

So, I also started saying thank you, like spasiba, for everything. Being more polite, more generous. And I also tried to understand their mentality, point of view.

Like, they often have like a space while they are having a conversation, personal space. So, they know how to be in a limit when you are having a conversation. You can't ask so many personal things.

In India, I can ask anything from my friends. But in Russia, I realized that there is a barrier. You can't go beyond a limit.

Like you can't go into their personal stuff. So, I realized, I observed them. So, observe.

My opinion is like wherever you go, observe how they behave. And then try to replicate the things. It is much more easy.

[Speaker 2]

And did you experience any special cultural shocks that got your attention? Like, what was that?

[Speaker 1]

Special cultural shock? I would say no, there was nothing such. I couldn't understand.

They are pretty normal people. So, nothing as such. But yeah, sometimes I realized that lots of old people.

In my country, it is very rare that a lot of old people are going to the market. They are very old, like 70-80 years old. And they are walking with all the sticks.

And I feel very pity. At very first, when I saw, I was very disappointed. Because in my country, children take care of their grandparents.

And they don't let them go anywhere. So, I don't know. But in Russia, the system is different.

Maybe it is a part of culture. They live all together in a different location. And the old parents live alone.

So, it was very much disturbing for me. Even now, when I see them, I feel like I can take their carry bag and help them. To reach their home.

Because, you know, sometimes I go to the grocery stores. And I spend like 30 minutes. And I still see them walking on the floors.

They are stopping. And then again, they take one step. I feel very not good for them.

[Speaker 2]

I see, I see. Yes, I have also the same feeling like you. And how about your experience in this country?

Now, can you feel yourself comfortable here? And compare to the times you came for the first. Do you want to stay and live in this country?

Or not? Do you want to return back to India?

[Speaker 1]

Yes, from the time when I came here, now I am very much comfortable. Very much comfortable. I know everything.

I can easily survive. It's very easy for me. And I am very used to everything.

Especially St. Petersburg. I know a lot of places. Where to go, where to buy things, where to do marketing, shopping.

Everything is so easy for me. I know everything from my point of view. What I need.

So, it's very comfortable for me now. And I think it's not very expensive at the same time. To live in St. Petersburg. It's very easy. And whether I will leave or not, I don't know. I haven't decided yet.

But still I think that I will go back to India someday. Of course. But I don't know when.

But I haven't thought something. Maybe it's a good question for me also to evaluate. Whether I will stay or not.

But yeah, I can stay in good country. In this good country. It's very pleasant.

No problem at all. I am very used to this Russian environment. So, it's good.

[Speaker 2]

Great. So, do you want to marry a Russian lady? Or do you have any Russian girlfriend?

[Speaker 1]

No, I don't have any Russian girlfriend. And marriage, I don't know. That when it will take place.

I have never thought about it. And marriage, I think it can happen instantly. Like magic.

With anyone. The most important thing is not the person or origin. The most important thing in my opinion is that your vibes.

Your thoughts should match. You know. So, even if you are married someone like local or something like this.

But you don't have your thoughts match. Your cultures could be different. But you need to be on the same scale of thoughts.

Or else your life will become very much difficult. So, I don't know whether Russian, Indian or any other people. I don't know.

With whom my thought process will match. I will think about it.

[Speaker 2]

Tell me about your personality. Shortly. Like what kind of guy you are.

[Speaker 1]

I think I am struggling in my life. You know. We are all students.

We are going through a tough time. We are making ourselves. We are rebuilding ourselves.

So, we are just focusing much more on our personal life. To make ourselves more successful in our life. So, I am always trying to learn something new.

I am constantly trying to upscale my skills. So that I could become much more successful in my career. So, I constantly try.

Everyday I try to learn something new. Everyday I try to gain some good knowledge. Positive things in my life.

So that I can grow very fast. So that I can upscale my skills. Wherever I go.

I can easily get the job. I can get myself good job. Like good paying job.

So, I am constantly trying to upscale my skills. I feel sometimes I lost the track. But again I remind myself.

Like I am in a foreign country. I need to do something. I need to learn so many things.

That where I. Anywhere I go in the world. I could be hired very easily.

[Speaker 2]

Where you see yourself in the future 5 years?

[Speaker 1]

I see myself in future 5 years. I have started company. Very big company.

At a very high position. I think I have been gaining a lot of experiences. So, I think my experience will also get in count.

So, I think. Like maybe.

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