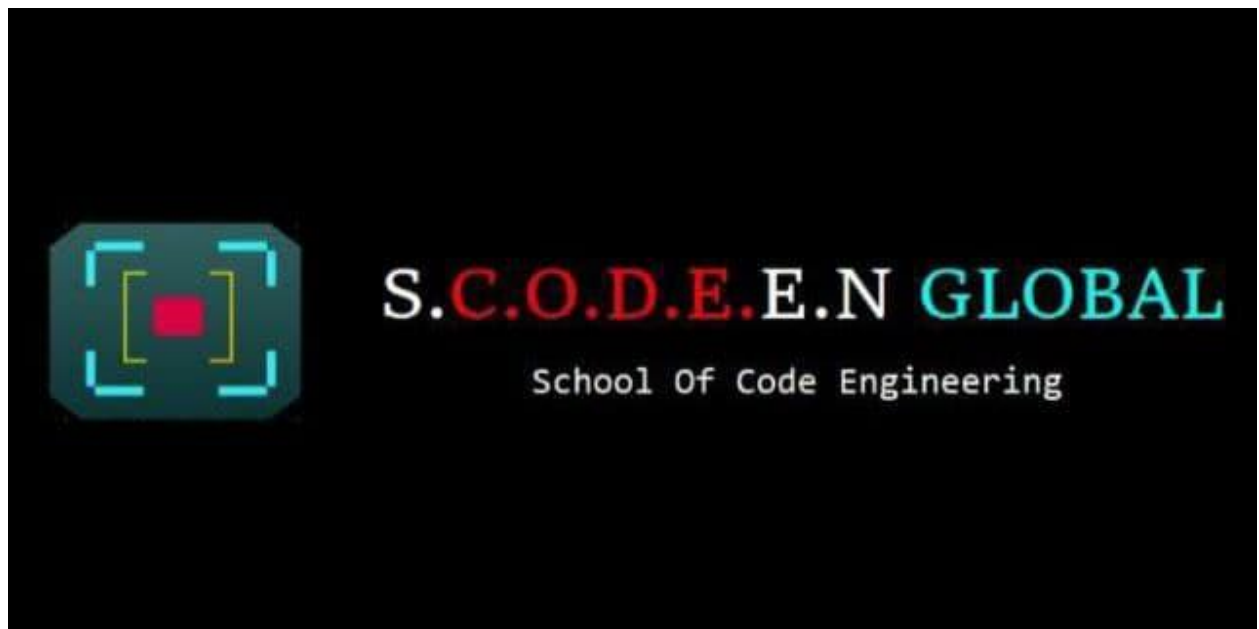


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PERSONAL INTERVIEW



Once you have sent in an application letter and a resume, you will most likely be called face to face interaction with your prospective employer. This is the next stage in the selection process. These interactions can be of two types. The first is a personal interview where you would be asked questions about your experience and knowledge about the field for which you are applying. The other type is a group discussion where three or more candidates are put in a group and are asked to discuss certain topics.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

An interview is a formal meeting where one or more persons ask a candidate several questions. The purpose is to find out whether the

candidate is suitable for a job or a seat in an educational institution. In an interview you could either have a one-on-one session or be interviewed by a panel of people.

Preparing for an Interview:



Preparing well for an interview helps you face the panel of experts with confidence. Remember the following points when you are preparing for an interview:

- Brush up on the subject or the area related to the interview and update yourself on recent developments.
- Prepare answers to some general questions you think the interviewers will ask. Some of these could be:



- *Tell us a little about yourself*
- *Why do you want to be with us?*
- *Could you tell us why you want to change your job?*
- *What are your strengths and weaknesses? (Be cautious)*
- *Would you be willing to travel?*
- *How do you expect to contribute to the field/institutions?*
- *Why should we hire you?*
- *Why did you leave your last job?*
- *Explain a challenge and how you overcame it.*
- *How would your last supervisor describe you?*

- Neatly arrange in a folder the papers and certificates that you may be asked to produce. Check the interview call letter sent to you to see if there is anything you have missed.



- Wear something formal and comfortable for the occasion.



- Something you should not wear for the interview.





- Plan to reach the place of the interview a little early as this gives you time to familiarise yourself with your surroundings and to relax.
- Think positive, pleasant thoughts and try to regulate your breathing to remain calm.

Interview Etiquette:

- Wait for your name to be announced, and knock or seek permission before you enter.



- Greet the people in the room formally, but in a pleasant manner.



- Do not sit down until you are asked to. Besides, seat with proper gestures.



- Look at the interviewers, however, do not stare.



- Remember not to interrupt the interviewer and allow them time to finish speaking before you respond.
- Listen carefully to the interviewers' questions and comments, and speak clearly and at a moderate pace to avoid having to repeat yourself.
- In case you do not hear the questions you are asked, or if you do not understand, you could politely ask for to be repeated or explained.

For example:

- ✓ I'm sorry, but could you repeat the question, please.
- ✓ I'm afraid I'm not sure what you mean. Are you asking me if I...? / Could you clarify the questions, please.
- Do not feel embarrassed to say that you do not know the answer to a question. Use expressions such as
 - I'm afraid I don't know...
 - I'm afraid I don't know...
 - I'm sorry, but I'm not really certain...
- Express your opinions politely, not aggressively, using expressions such as
 - ✓ I think...
 - ✓ I believe...
 - ✓ In my opinion...

- Do not get into arguments or speak negatively or criticize formerteachers, colleagues or employers.
- Do not boast or unnecessarily display your knowledge, skills and experience, but if asked, state your achievements simply and honestly.
- Wait for the interviewer to invite you to ask questions in case you have queries. If this does not happen, wait until you sense that the interviewers are done before asking them politely if they could clarify something for you, Examples of the questions you may want to ask the interviewer are:
 - *could you tell me whether the position involves travelling, please.
 - *could I know when I can expect to hear from you, please

➤ **Have smart questions for the interviewers**

Employers prefer to hire applicants who come with questions. They are interested in finding out about your seriousness in working with their company. Following are some of the questions you can ask your interviewers:

- Can I know some of the daily responsibilities of this position?
- What qualities would you expect in someone successful in thisrole?
- How do you measure performance for this position? How often?
- What departments does your team interact with regularly?
- What do these departments use to collaborate?
- How does this process work?

- What challenges are you currently facing in this role?
- wait for the interviewer to tell you that the interview has ended before you get up from your chair. Thank all the people in the room before walking out of the door and closing it softly behind you.
- In case the interview is conducted over the telephone, most of the points above will still be relevant. In addition, be careful about regulating your voice, avoiding long silences and butting in before the interviewer has finished speaking. In fact, if the person at the other end of the line interrupts you, do not drown his or her voice by raising yours, but let the person speak. You can then continue with 'As I was saying...; etc.
- You can prepare for interviews by holding mock interviews in your class or among your friends. Here are some model interviews for you to look at. You can enact these model interviews as well, taking turns playing the role of interviewer and interviewee.

Last-minute tips to prepare for an interview:

Being prepared for an interview can show the interviewer that you have put in the efforts and are genuinely interested in the job. If you are short on time, these tips can help you prepare for an interview:

- **Review the job description.** Re-read the job description to identify the qualities and skills that the recruiter wants the ideal candidate to have. Select some keywords from the job description and use them during the interview.
- **Re-read your resume and cover letter.** Make sure you are clear about everything on your resume and cover letter so that you can explain to the recruiter when asked. Be prepared with supporting stories for each experience or skill like '*What is the biggest takeaway from your previous job?*' and other similar questions.
- **Research the company.** Make sure you know about the key people in the company, its history, the company's products and services, and visit their social media profiles and blog to get deeper information. It can show the recruiter that you have taken the time to do thorough research.
- **Research the industry.** Learn about the major players in the industry and identify the company's competitors. Familiarise yourself with the current trends and practices that the company could benefit from and suggest them during the interview.
- **Prepare answers to common questions.** Create a list of the most common questions like '*tell me about yourself*' and prepare answers for them. Prepare answers to the most

common questions that are asked for the job that you are applying for.

- **Dress professionally.** Except for telephonic interviews, your attire can play a crucial role during all other types of interviews. Pick an outfit that is smart, professional and comfortable, and make sure your shoes are polished and your outfit is crease-free.
- **Prepare your folder.** Carry your resume and certificates in a good looking professional folder, and also carry a small notebook and a pen that fits into the folder. It can show the recruiter that you have good organisational skills and are prepared.



Sample Dialogue:
(Interview for a Job)

Candidate: May I come in, please, ma'am?

Manager: Yes, please come in. Good

morning. **Candidate:** Good morning,

ma'am. Good morning sir. **Assistant**

Manager: Please sit down.

Candidate: Thank you, sir.

Manager: Could you begin by telling us something about yourself?

Candidate: Ma'am, I am Amitav Ghosh. I belong to west Bengal, but I grew up in Nanded, where my father worked until he retired. I'm married, and I have a baby daughter, who is a year old.

Assistant Manager: I assume you speak both Bengali and Marathi. Am I right?

Candidate: Yes, sir, absolutely. Also speak Hindi.

Manager: Why do you want to join our company?

Candidate: You're one of the leading publishers of law books in the country. With my background and work experience, I hope to be able to contribute to the company and also find here the opportunity to grow further.

Manager: Actually, the vacancy we have is for Lucknow. Would you

be open to the idea of being based there?

Candidate: Yes, Ma'am. I'm willing to relocate from Mumbai to any part of the country.

Assistant Manager: Could you tell us what kind of salary you expect, please.

Candidate: I'm earning 50,000 net in my present job. Sir, I think anything a little over that should be alright.

Manager: Well, thank you, Mr Amitav Ghosh. We'll get back to you in a week's time.

Candidate: Sure, thank you ma'am!



Two things remain irretrievable: time
and a first impression.

— Cynthia Ozick —

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