


LEARNER'S NOTES | 2018 - 2019

# MOCK INTERVIEW

• TIPS TO  
CUSTOMIZE  
PREPARATION FOR  
PERSONAL  
INTERVIEW

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# MOCK INTERVIEW

## TIPS TO CUSTOMIZE PREPARATION FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEW



### INTRODUCTION

Interview skills are actions candidates take during job interviews that make them stand out. These actions can include proper interview behaviour, controlling nervousness etc. If you have good interview skills, you will probably receive more job offers than those without them. The best way to acquire interview skills is through practice. The extent to which a candidate

prepares for an interview determines the fate of the interview.

Here practice denotes the replication of the entire interview process before attending the interview. If you get used to the actual interview process, then factors like pressure, nervousness and failure will become extinct during the time of interview.

One such technique which helps in the preparation for interview is called the Mock Interview. Before getting the desired outcome from a mock interview process, one must know the procedures to do it.

Moving forward we will see the necessary preparations and tips which gives you an edge among other candidates.

### TIPS TO CUSTOMIZE PREPARATION FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEW

#### PRACTICE INTERVIEW-WHAT IS IT?

A mock interview, also known as a practice interview, is a simulation of an actual job interview.

It gives an aspiring candidate, a feel of how an interview will be structured and how the approach must be in getting the desired outcome. For that, one needs to focus more on preparation.

#### BENEFITS OF PREPARING FOR A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

The main aim of preparing for a personal interview is to know the reasons that are responsible for the rejection in an interview. Following are some of the benefits of preparing for a personal interview.



- **Help boost your confidence**



Be Confident. When you **learn** to **overcome** your anxiety, you tend to gain a little confidence. When you gain **confidence**, you could stand a chance not to forget the skills and experience you have obtained over the years. These mock interviews provide all of us a **wonderful opportunity** to ‘test drive’ our answers.

- **You could get constructive feedback**

Mock interviews help us **clarify responses** to certain questions and help us work on areas that we are prone to be weak in. In a real interview **it doesn't always happen that you are given feedback on your performance**, or in the journey through the interview..



- **Practice makes perfect**

One should **master the art** of taking advantage of a mock interview so as to make you near perfect when it comes to **holding yourself** together in an interview. Even if you think your skill sets are at a very high level still, you should think upon it as



characteristics that can all be improved when it comes to making a great impression on a prospective employer.

- **Nervousness**



Many of us feel nervous and upset just before a scheduled interview. With practice and mock ups, many have expressed that there has been a slight increase in their confidence.

- **Body Language**



Mock Interviews help you prepare well in terms of body language and professional **etiquette**. You will gain inputs on the way you greet in an interview and the way you depart from an interview. All this adds to the **positive points** that you collect through the journey of your interview.

- **General Knowledge**

When mock ups are performed, you automatically learn about **general knowledge and common interview questions**. Common interview questions would include – Give an introduction to yourself. **How have you disposed your leadership skills? Where do you see**

**yourself in the next five years? Summarize your resume.**

- **Familiarizing with the situation**

Familiarize Mock up aid in familiarizing yourself with the situation. That is, what is the intensity of your interview going to be? **Familiarity** with the **outside economy** in terms of understanding where you stand in the market that is based on your expertise.

- **Feedback implementation**

Once you have performed the mock up, next step is to **implement the feedback** you have received. Make sure you learn to accept the feedback in a **constructive manner** so as to nail your interviews in a better way.

Even the preparation process will have some procedures to be followed. So it is **essential to focus on what should be done in mock interview and what should not be done in a mock interview**. This aspect gives you the clear picture of how to carry yourself in real time.

### DO'S AND DON'T'S WHILE PREPARING

Take the preparation process seriously as you would feel for actual interview and follow these steps.

#### DO'S

- **Dress appropriately**



Wear **professional clothes** that you would wear to a real job interview. First impressions can have a huge impact so knowing what to wear to your interview will pay off.

- **Prepare like a real job interview**

This means bringing copies of your resume and preparing interview questions and answers.

- **Feel free to start over**

Now is the time to practice your answers, so if you stumble or make a mistake, gather yourself, and start over.

- **Take feedback constructively**

Learn from the feedback you receive so you can better prepared for your real job interview.

### **DON'T'S:**

The main aim of getting to know the DON'T'S is to find the hidden mistakes in our way of attending the actual interview. This helps to eradicate both sub conscious and conscious mistakes.



- Don't freak out if you make a mistake.
- Don't take constructive criticism personally.
- Don't try to perform on the spot. Prepare for the same.

Now that we know the do's and donts, the preparation for personal interview on a general basis is done. But **as a candidate you are weighed based on the specific answers to specific types of questions**. So the preparation part should also be in such a way that it combines various segments of interview, in order to get hold of those. Let us see the three main tips to face those specific questions.

## TIPS TO CUSTOMIZE RESPONSES

Employers expect you to know something about their companies, before you talk to them. Therefore you must know how to tackle such questions. This process of giving specific answers to specific questions in an interview is known as

### 1. Expected interview questions.

Following are some of the questions that one can expect in a personal interview. The responses to the question below must be in a customized manner.

- Why did you choose your degree?
- Why do you want to pursue a career in it?
- What did you enjoy most in your coursework and past experiences?
- What do you do better than others?
- What drives or inspires you?
- If you could have any job you wanted, what would that job look like?
- Describe your ideal company (i.e., the culture, management, environment, how they treat employees, their values, etc.)
- Describe your short term and long term goals

The responses to the above mentioned questions should be in a **customized manner**. Following are some of the company related questions

- What is the company's primary product or service and its history?
- What positions is the company hiring for?
- What is the relative standing of the company in the marketplace?

### 2. Knowing the differences between strength and skill

In the actual interview, most people mess it up between a skill and a strength. Therefore it is evident to know the words which are to be said to the former and to the latter.

### 3. SKILL:



|                          |                     |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Ability to Learn Quickly | Attention to Detail | Business Analysis   |
| Getting Results          | Good with Clients   | Influencing Others  |
| Managing Meetings        | Managing People     | Managing Priorities |
| Planning                 | Presenting          | Problem Solving     |
| Strategic Thinking       | Team Player         | Time Management     |

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Creative Thinking            | Directing   |
| Leadership                   | Listening   |
| Motivating Others to Succeed | Persuading  |
| Project                      | Simplifying |

Apart from above mentioned skills, it is evident to consider project management and communication as a skill.

#### 4. STRENGTHS:

|                   |                        |                 |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Articulate        | Assertive              | Committed       |
| Disciplined       | Effective Communicator | Efficient       |
| Good with Numbers | Handle Stress Well     | Innovative      |
| Patient           | People Oriented        | Persuasive      |
| Reliable          | Responsible            | Self-Controlled |
| Strong Work Ethic | Thoughtful             | Trustworthy     |

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|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Innovative      | Level Headed   |
| Persuasive      | Practical      |
| Self-Controlled | Self-Motivated |

## 5. Job Interview Research

Apart from the academic knowledge, a candidate must be aware of job oriented information that are asked in an interview. So it is important to research or practice the answers for the following questions.

- Who are the company's typical clients/customers?
- List specific details about the job for which you are being interviewed
- What is the company's mission statement? What are the company's values?
- What are emerging issues that may affect the industry or the company?

## 6. Approach to TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Interviews that start with this question give you a significant advantage. It allows you to tell the interviewer early on what you want them to know about you. Connect your experiences and strengths to the job, show your passion, and tell them why you're interested in the position.

The following things will explain what to include and what not to include while introducing yourself.

- Present  
Why you chose your degree.

- Past Experiences

Coursework, extra-curricular, jobs, clubs that are relevant to the position/your degree.

- Passion/Skills

What you liked most in your coursework and past experiences. What you're good at. What you like doing. What drives or inspires you.

Why you are interested in the position Two reasons the job is a good fit for you. Draw parallels between their culture and your goals.

### 7. Sample statements

There are certain statements which will get the attention of the interviewer. The following statements can be taken as a template, but must be adapted to the respective fields for which you will be attending interview.

- I am intrigued by psychology, strategy, creativity, and analysis and I have found that few other disciplines offer the same reach as Marketing.
- I am Chairman of the Philanthropy Committee of my fraternity/sorority and I organize events and write marketing copy for outreach efforts.
- My strong suit is written communications.
- I enjoy writing and I did well in all of my writing courses.
- I do my best writing when I am presenting creative ideas.
- You want someone who has a passion for marketing and strong communication skills. I am very driven by marketing and it's role in growing a business.
- I'm looking for an opportunity to write creative marketing programs for a consumer product company.
- Your innovative marketing practices seem to be a good fit for my creative talents.
- I'm looking forward to learning more about your company and the opportunity.

### 8. Question behind the Question strategy

It can be challenging to figure out just what the heck the interviewer is trying to learn from your answer. If you knew you might be more successful and perhaps land that second round or offer. Check out these clues to help you figure out the question behind the question and tips for how to answer.

The interviewer will ask the question to **cross check whether he can trust you or not**. So the answer must give an **assurance** to him that you are not dishonest. Look at

the image below to get an idea of how to get trust of an interviewer through your response.

| TRUSTING YOU  |
|---|
| What kind of person are you? Are you honest, responsible, dependable, trustworthy?  |
| <b>CONCERN:</b> The employer doesn't want to hire someone he/she can't depend on or trust.  |
| <b>KEY WORDS:</b> personal ethics, "who are you?"   |
| <b>RESPONSE:</b> Respond honestly. Make good eye contact. If you're genuine and your appearance, words, tone, and body language all match, you'll be trusted. |

The **biggest concern for an interviewer will be in not selecting a mismatch candidate**. Here mismatch refers not to the qualifications but to the **connection** of an employee that an **interviewer foresees from his company's point of view**. Refer the image below to know the keywords.

| FITTING IN  |
|---|
| Will your personality and work style mesh with the company's? Can you get along with others?  |
| <b>CONCERN:</b> The employer doesn't want to hire someone who will become unhappy and leave or who will threaten others.                  |
| <b>KEY WORDS:</b> relations, coworkers, teamwork  |
| <b>RESPONSE:</b> Describe positive interactions you have had with supervisors, coworkers, and peers. Get along well with the interviewer! |

The most important answer that an interviewer looks for, regarding the selection of the candidate is the skill set of the candidate with respect to the company's point of view. So the **answer must cover the technical aspects in detail** along with the company's requirements. Refer the image below to have an idea of focus areas in this regard.

| DOING THE JOB   |
|---|
| Are you technically competent? Do you have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to do the job well?   |
| <b>CONCERN:</b> The employer doesn't want to hire someone who is incompetent or unprepared.   |
| <b>KEY WORDS:</b> skills, abilities, strengths  |
| <b>RESPONSE:</b> Focus on your skills and how you can help the organization and employer immediately and in the future. Use examples from your past experiences that relate to the job at hand. |

The **tricky question** faced by most candidates is regarding **their longevity or period of existence in an organization**. The main reason being a company wants to train an employee who is ready to stay with them **at least** for a considerable period of time. Follow the image below to get an idea for approach regarding this.

| STICKING AROUND  |
|--|
| Will you stick around or will the employer need to go through this whole process again in six months?  |
| <b>CONCERN:</b> The employer doesn't want to invest time and money in someone who will soon quit.  |
| <b>KEY WORDS:</b> future, plans, goals   |
| <b>RESPONSE:</b> Say that you want to build a career at a company and plan to be there for the foreseeable future. If the job involves extensive training stick around long enough for the employer to recoup the investment in you. |

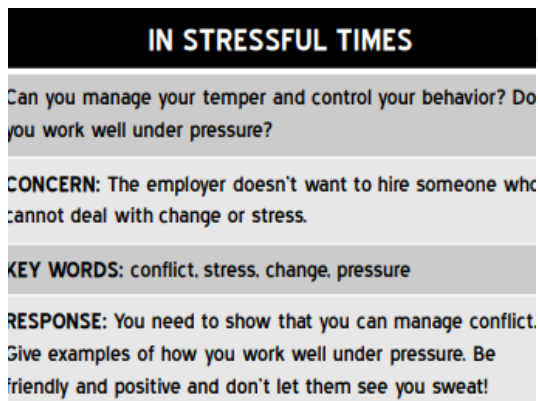
The amount of work that you are doing must be directly proportional to the amount you earn and also must benefit an organization. Therefore an **employee will check you by giving situational based questions**. Following image will give you an idea on what to say in this regard.

| READY TO WORK  |
|--|
| Are you a hard worker? Are you willing and eager to contribute?  |
| <b>CONCERN:</b> The employer doesn't want to hire anyone who's lazy, has a bad attitude or won't work hard.  |
| <b>KEY WORDS:</b> initiative, attitude, leadership, enthusiasm to learn  |
| <b>RESPONSE:</b> Show your enthusiasm and eagerness to work. Tell stories from past experiences about your good work ethic. Talk about how you motivate others to work hard. |

The employee who is **unable to handle stress** or an employee succumbing to



pressure will **not be encouraged in an organization**. Therefore questions will be asked to check whether an employee can handle work stress. Following image will help you to give a good response regarding the stress factor.



## HOW TO APPROACH QUESTIONS?

Before approaching any questions from the interviewer, it is important to know the category of questions that the interviewer asks. Following are the different categories of questions asked in interviews.

### 1. PAWS model

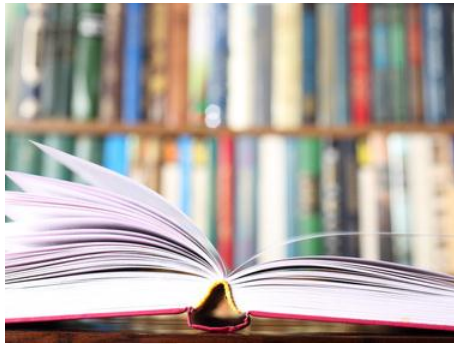
The PAWS model is a useful method for answering classic questions such as "Tell me about yourself." The answer should take approximately 90 seconds (the length of a typical attention span). When an employer asks this question, the employer is looking for those aspects of your life that are relevant to the job, such as how you became interested in the field, related experience, and courses taken.

The "PAWS" acronym stands for Profile, Academic, Work, and Skills. Include all or as many of the four (in any order) to reinforce your fit for the job. As with any interview response, limit your answer to a maximum of ninety seconds.

### 2. Answering classical questions(PAWS)

**Profile:** Mention how you became interested in this field and perhaps point out any relevant community involvement, extracurricular activities, memberships, and

personal interests that further demonstrate your commitment to the field.



**Academic:** Talk about your educational background (degrees/diplomas/certifications) and other related training and professional development initiatives/courses that you participated in

**Work:** Highlight paid or unpaid experience related to the job

**Skills:** Refer to specific technical skills that relate to the position or field (Ex. Programming C++, knowledge of GIS) and relevant transferable skills (time management, problem-solving skills).

### 3. STAR method

briefly describe the context and your role

the specific challenge, task or job that you faced

what you did, how and why you did it

what you achieved through your actions

STAR stands for Situation, Tasks, Action and Results.

#### Situation

Think of a situation similar to what the interviewer is asking you about that had a successful outcome. It doesn't necessarily have to be work related as long as it's relevant. Remember to include **who, what, where, when** and **how**.

### Task

Describe the task you were responsible for in that situation. **Keep it specific but concise**. Make sure to highlight **any specific challenges you faced**.

### Action

This is the part where you **describe exactly what you did**. How did you complete the task you were assigned? Remember to focus on what you did and highlight traits (qualities) that a hiring manager will find desirable (initiative, teamwork, leadership, dedication, etc.)

### Result

This is where you get to be introspective. Share what the **outcome of the situation was** and how you specifically **contributed to that outcome**. What did you accomplish? What did you learn? What were the results of your actions?

## 4. Approach to STAR process

While there are literally an unlimited amount of possible behavioral questions a hiring manager could ask you, there are several specific categories they all fall into:

- Teamwork
- Problem Solving/Planning
- Initiative/Leadership
- Interpersonal Skills/Conflict
- Pressure/Stress

Prior to going in for your interview, make sure you take a good hard look at the job you're applying for and use clues from that to prepare your S.T.A.R answers. By picking out what skills the company is specifically looking for or are required for the job, it will help you target your success stories.

## 5. Tips to use STAR Effectively

Following are some of the tips to use STAR method effectively.

- Be specific
- Be prepared
- Be quantitative
- Be concise
- Be honest

The responses to questions needs extreme amount of practice to get the expected results at the time of interview. Therefore focus on practicing the different responses for different questions.

### MAKE SURE YOU REVISE

- ✓ BENEFITS OF PRACTICE INTERVIEW
- ✓ DO'S AND DONT'S WHILE PRACTICING
- ✓ PAWS MODEL
- ✓ STAR METHOD



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