

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

A) GROUNDWORK BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- 1) A candidate has to do a lot of groundwork before the interview. The first point that needs special attention is the résumé, which is already with the interviewer. A candidate should remember that his résumé reveals his personality. In fact, the interview pattern may be determined by the contents of that résumé. So it should be meticulously re-read before the interview. Predictable questions from this résumé should also be thoroughly prepared.
- 2) While preparing for likely questions, one should be prepared to tackle questions that might have a negative tone. One needs to deal with the negative aspect without deviating from the truth or needlessly getting distracted. Frankness and transparency go a long way in creating a favourable impression about one's personality traits.
- 3) Anticipate questions that may be asked and prepare convincing answers. Before attending the interview, try to collect detailed information about the company— its products, markets, services, competition, current activities, etc. If you are well acquainted with these, it would be of help to you if you are asked a question such as, 'Do you have any questions?'
- 4) You may then show your interest by asking about the activities of the company by starting a discussion on these topics. This will show the interviewer that you have a keen analytical mind and have an interest in the company. The fact that you understand the company's technology, products and even customers far better than other candidates will make you appear the right fit for that particular job.

B) ABIDE BY THE DRESS CODE

- 1) After completing the groundwork, the next task of a candidate is to pay attention to the attire. To create a favourable first impression, never be careless about your attire. You must be dressed in a way befitting the occasion. Remember, your attire gives an indication of your personality to your interviewer.
- 2) Loud flamboyant colours or style must be avoided. An ordinary dress not properly ironed is a strict no-no. On the contrary, a well-attired person radiates his personality from the moment s/he approaches the interview board.
- 3) It should be the endeavour of the candidate to see that her/his attire is capable of creating a good impression.

Interview Preparation Techniques (Effective Technical Communication M Ashraf Rizvi - page 161 onwards)

A job interview is a formal, structured, and systematic interaction between the candidate and a group of people who want to hire him/her for a particular job position. He/she has to establish a relationship, impress the interviewer/interview panel and convince them that he/she is the best candidate for the job, for all of which he/she will get hardly more than thirty minutes. It sounds an impossible task but it is not if proper preparation is done in a planned and systematic way.

Planned preparation for the job interview will help the candidate:

- Σ Develop the needed confidence
- Σ Enter the job interview with information and understanding
- Σ Strongly support his/her candidature
- Σ Deal with interview anxiety effectively
- Σ Be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the interviewers
- Σ Know his/her strengths and weaknesses
- Σ Strike up a positive interaction with the interviewers
- Σ Know his/her job and the organisation that he/she wants to join
- Σ Adapt his background, knowledge, and skills to fit the job.

Thus, preparing for the job interview involves:

- Σ Analysing yourself
- Σ Identifying your skills
- Researching the organisation
- Σ Analysing the job position
- Σ Revising your subject knowledge and brushing up your general awareness
- Σ Developing the interview file.

1) Analyse Yourself

Self-analysis is the first step towards effective planning for a job interview.

- a) Analyse Your Background
- b) Identify Your Accomplishments

- c) Identify Your Achievements
- d) Identify Your Special Interests and Hobbies
- e) Analyse Your Career Goals

2) Analyse Your Skills

Every job has a set of functions and requires certain skills to perform it. The main purpose of a job interview is to find out whether the candidate possesses the skills and knowledge required to carry out the functions associated with the job. Thus, analysing skills is an integral part of preparation for an interview.

There are two types of skills that might be assessed during an interview, i.e., learned skills and intuitive skills. Learned skills are the ones that might have been taught or have been learned while intuitive skills are a part of one's personality. For example, we learn oral communication skills while we do not need to learn to be honest because honesty is innate.

TABLE 10.1 List of Learned and Intuitive Skills

Learned Skills	Intuitive Skills
Σ Computer programming	Σ Adaptability
Σ Data processing	Σ Analysis
Σ Marketing	Σ Assertiveness
Σ Driving	Σ Boldness
Σ Managing a product line	Σ Broad-mindedness
Σ Administration	Σ Courage
Σ Consulting	Σ Creativity
Σ Foreign languages	Σ Decision making
Σ Business writing	Σ Diplomacy
Σ Interpersonal skills	Σ Discretion
Σ Negotiation skills	Σ Efficiency
Σ Public relations	Σ Foresight
Σ Professional speaking	Σ Imagination
Σ Listening	Σ Initiative

3) Research the Organisation

Researching an organisation involves gathering basic information about the nature, operations, status, structure, growth rate, and activities of the organisation.

The candidate should have some basic information about the organisation, which may include:

- Σ Major areas of operation
- Σ Products/services of the organisation
- Σ Focus of the activities of the organisation
- Σ Growth rate
- Σ Hierarchical structure of the organisation
- Σ Work culture
- Σ The financial standing and turnover of the organisation
- Σ Corporate culture
- Σ Recent developments in the organisation
- New products, services, and projects
- Σ Factors making the organisation successful

4) Analyse the Job Applied

Job analysis will provide you broad information about the position.

You should have broad information about the position so that you can respond to the questions testing your suitability for the job. You should try to answer the following questions before you actually face the interview:

- Σ What does this job involve?
- Σ What are the responsibilities associated with this job?
- Σ What are the special duties?
- Σ How is this position different from similar positions at other organisations?
- Σ What are the challenges of this position?
- Σ What are the skills and abilities needed for this job?

- Σ What is the level of professional knowledge needed?
- Σ What are the areas of expertise/areas of specialisation or micro-specialisation related to the job?
- Σ What are the prospects?
- Σ What are the chances of career enhancement?

In order to research the job, you may use several available resources such as the internet, the library, the organisation's public relations office, people working in the organisation, particularly alumni of your institution.

5) Revise Your Subject Knowledge

A job interview is to assess the candidates' level of knowledge and technical expertise as it relates to the job at hand. Although a good grade is an indicator of one's command over the subject, many organisations focus on evaluating the subject competence of candidates.

Subject basics must be clear because the experts might test your grasp of the subject. They may ask you a few exploring questions to find out your level of understanding. It is important to be thoroughly prepared and if there is time, revise the last course and read up on the latest developments in the subject.

6) Develop the Interview File

Preparing for an interview demands a professional approach. Therefore, you should develop an interview file that may contain the following papers and documents:

1. Interview letter
2. Original degrees, certificates, and transcripts
3. Experience certificates
4. References and testimonials
5. Certificates of merit
6. Copies of your résumé

7. Your visiting cards

8. Other relevant papers that might be needed during the interview.

An index of all the papers and documents in the file makes for easy reference and location. You should also keep photocopies of essential papers like degrees and experience certificates, as you might be asked to submit these. Keeping everything ready in order will help in projecting yourself as an organised and systematic person.

References

Mitra, Barun K., Personality Development and Soft Skills, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016

Rizvi, M. Ashraf, *Effective Technical Communication* (Chennai: Tata McGraw-Hill Education, 2005).