upGrad

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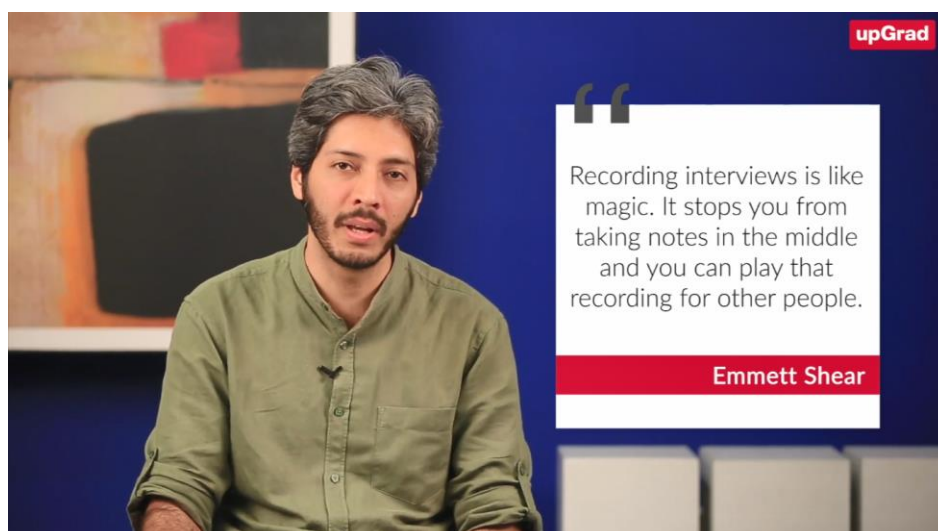
Hi. In the previous session, we discussed how to conduct surveys for user research. Let's now move on to another method of user research. In this session, we'll cover interviews. In surveys, you collect data from a large number of participants, but personal qualitative information about your users is hard to get.
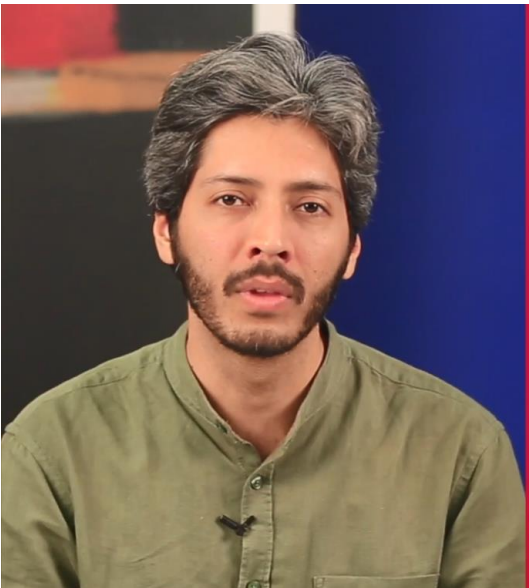
For example, what if you want to know about the minor details of your user's pain points and motivations? Survey questions cannot give you such information. So, what do you do? The answer is interviews. In this session, we'll look at the types of interviews, ways to conduct the interview, the do's and the don'ts to keep in mind, and the way to analyze the data collected through the interviews. So, let's get started.

> Recording interviews is like magic. It stops you from taking notes in the middle and you can play that recording for other people.

Emmett Shear

Emmett Shear said recording interviews is like magic. It stops you from taking notes in the middle and you can play that recording for other people. Emmett Shear who sold Twitch TV, a live online game streaming platform to Amazon for dollar 1 billion knows how important user interviews are.
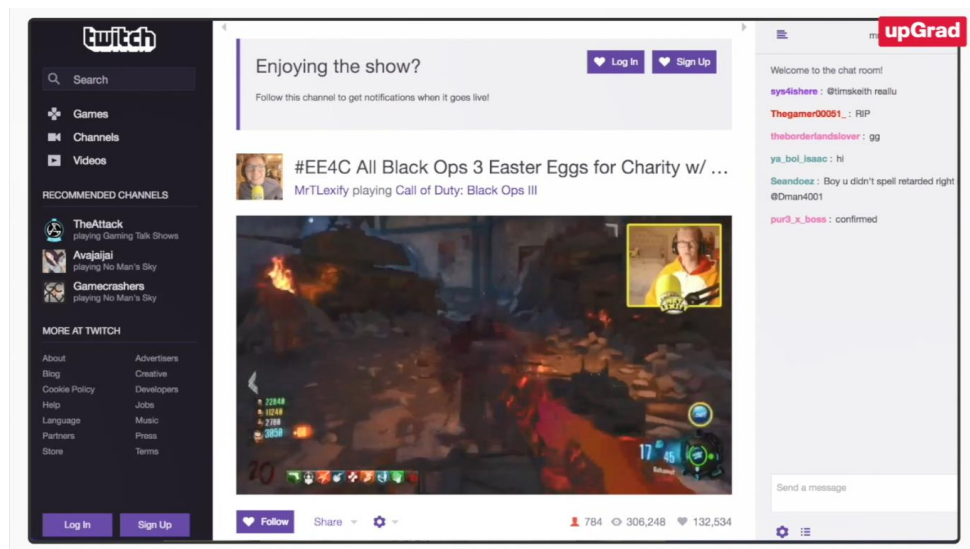
His first two startups failed, and he believed a major cause for that was that they never talked to users before launching. And hence, could never build a product user actually wanted. But while working on an idea for Twitch TV, they went and interviewed a lot of people, took the feedback, went ahead and improve the idea, thereby getting great traction on launch. This shows you how important interviews are to help get feedback on your product idea and see what works and what does not.
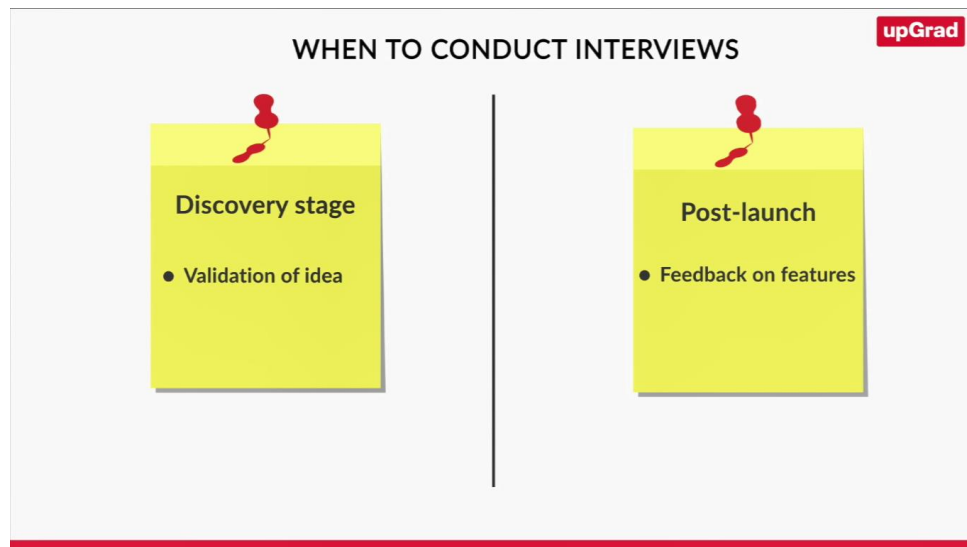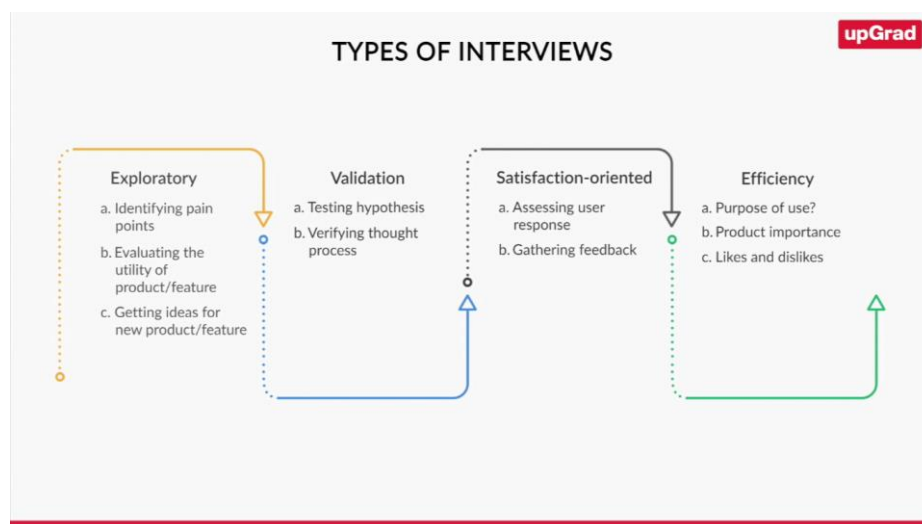

An interview is a technique to get qualitative information from current or potential users. It is an in depth and mostly one-on-one discussion and can cover user's background, occupation, motivation and pain points.

WHEN TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

Discovery stage
- Validation of idea

Post-launch
- Feedback on features

Now when do you conduct interviews? So, like surveys, interviews too can be conducted during the discovery phase or validating the idea. You can also conduct interviews for addition or removal of features, often existing product.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Exploratory
a. Identifying pain points
b. Evaluating the utility of product/feature
c. Getting ideas for new product/feature

Validation
a. Testing hypothesis
b. Verifying thought process

Satisfaction-oriented
a. Assessing user response
b. Gathering feedback

Efficiency
a. Purpose of use?
b. Product importance
c. Likes and dislikes

Now let's look at the different types of interviews. An exploratory interview is used to identify if there are any pain points and it helps in testing your idea to check if users require a particular product or feature. These are generally done to explore and find out about things that would help you come up with new ideas for a completely different product or add new features to existing products.

For example, if you ask a user about how they order food for home delivery, you will get to know about the pain points, and they would tell you about features they feel would make a great product. Then there is the validation interview.

Once you have theories or hypothesis, you can test it using validation interviews. These can be prone to biases. The product may not be introduced until the end to keep the interview objective. These help you to check if the thoughts

you have for the product are shared by your future users. You may feel that adding a new feature to your product would improve and users will adopt it easily. A validation interview would help you to check if your users feel the same.

The next one is a satisfaction-oriented interview. These help you to identify what products or features are good or not and to assess if users like the product. These are generally used to gather feedback and provide you with information about whether the pain points of users are sold or not.

The next one is efficiency interviews. These are done to improve the product. Why they use the product, and why it is important for the users? What they liked the most, and why? What they do not like or why? Usability interviews, it is a specialized form of an interview where it is more about observing. These interviews are generally done when you have the initial wireframes and prototypes ready and need feedback on them. We will cover these interviews later when you will be studying usability testing.
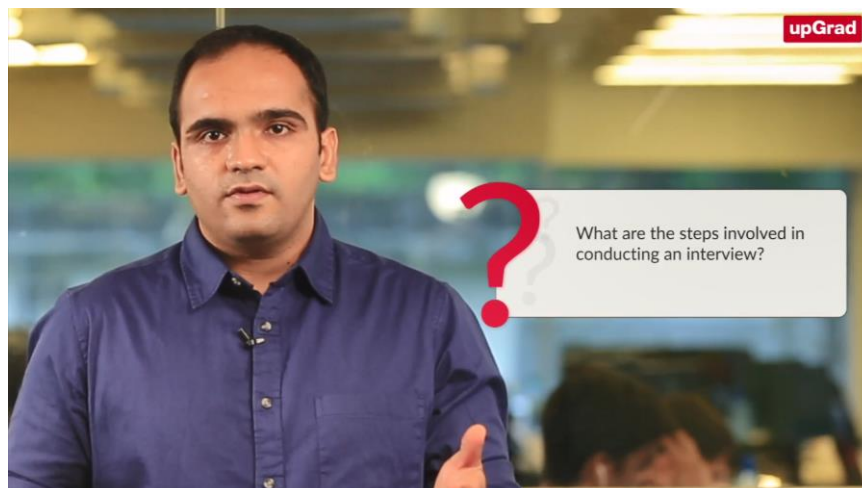
You know now that interviews are an important tool in a product management arsenal to get insights into your users. Now let's come into the process of conducting an interview, and many questions spring up. For example, what are the steps involved in conducting an interview and how many people should be included in the interview panel? These questions are important because you want significant insights from the interview process. You need to be cognizant of how to conduct it effectively.

So, how does one conduct an interview? How many people you should interview or what is a good sample? Whom should you interview? Let's try and answer all these questions by going through the steps which you should follow for conducting interviews. Like we saw in surveys, interviews too would follow the same steps.


First, you need to state the hypothesis which you want to test. Then you would define the objectives of the interview, which you want to achieve. After figuring out the objectives, you would identify your target audience and select a sample out of it. Next important step is to frame the right question to ask. You should then conduct interviews and gather data, which you can then analyze.

Given an example from Practo. We realized that to create a set of users, we first need to figure out what are the kinds of problems that people face. Now, most people who have grown up in a particular city have always gone to the same doctor. We have the concept of a family doctor in India. So, when you move to a new city, this disappears.
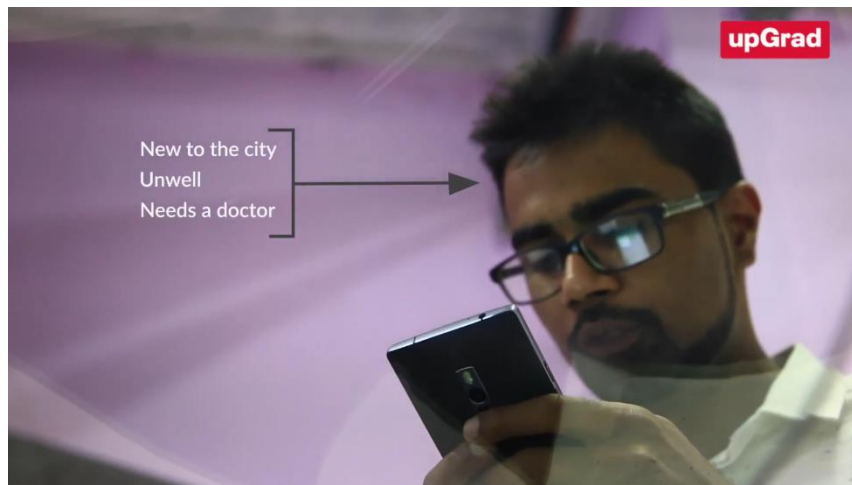
Now suppose you are an immigrant and you've moved from say Bombay to Bangalore; in Bangalore, you do not know the kind of doctors that exist. You do not know who the best doctors in your area are. You do not have friends and family to kind of point you towards the right set of doctors. Now, this was an important set for us. We realized that this kind of users could potentially be the type of users who would use the Practo platform, practo.com to search for doctors.

After having identified these users, we could then say that this is the set we need to interview. Luckily for us, Practo itself hires a lot of people who come from around the country, young people who have never lived in Bangalore before, and have moved from different parts of the country to Bangalore, and this helped us kind of sit with them and understand that if and when they do fall sick, or one of your friends fall sick, what is it that they do, what are the steps that they take in finding a doctor?
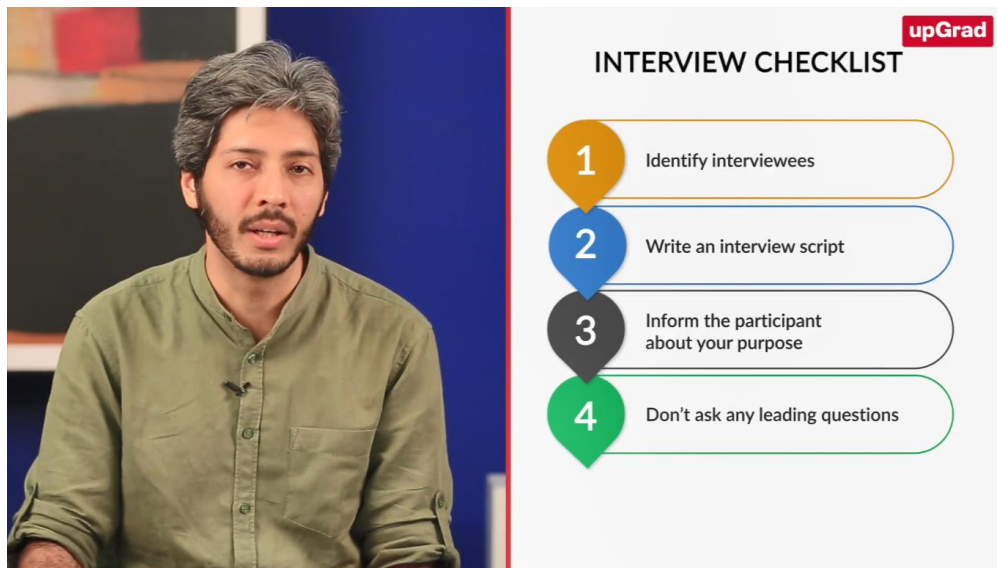
So, what do you do before the interviews? Identify the people you need to interview and keep in mind that it shouldn't be your friends or family or random people off the street. You should be careful about how you recruit people for your interviews. The quality of your interviews would be a better basis who you interview. If you want to understand the online payments space, you wouldn't interview someone who only uses cash for their transactions.
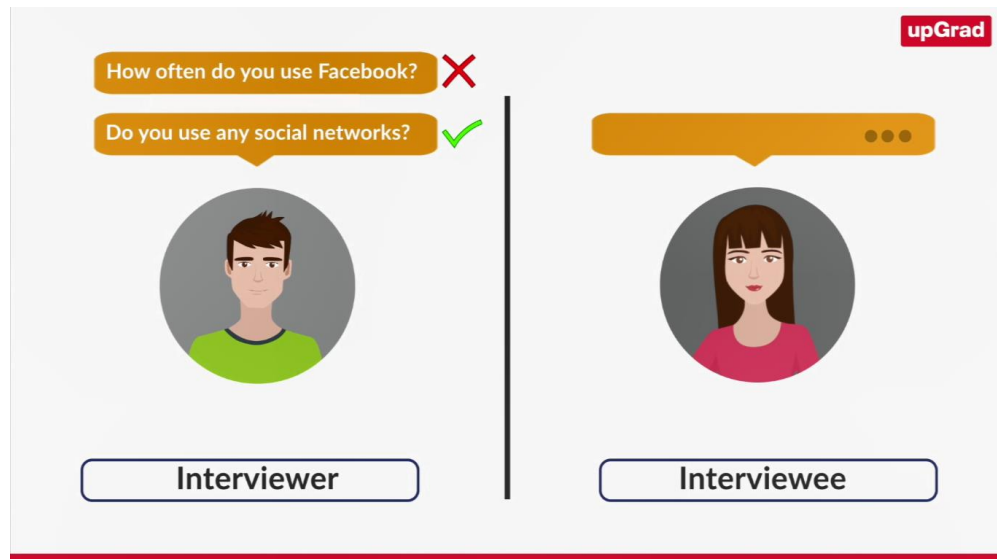
Choosing the right people will help you save time. Write a script with the interview questions you want to cover. A few things to keep in mind in form the person, why you're doing the interview and what you are trying to accomplish and that the results will be kept anonymous. Don't ask any leading questions rather than asking, how often do you use Facebook asks, do you use any social networks? This will give you opportunities to ask follow-up questions and uncover insights that you may have forgotten to ask about.

Asking leading questions is a big no when it comes to interviews. Let's look at one more example that highlights this point.

You don't want to ask you users, you know, leading questions. For example, at Bookmyshow when we did a secret society session where we got users on board, we made sure that, you know, we didn't ask questions that hey, were you able to find the short timing that in green, I mean, that's a very obvious question that you're actually giving him clues on where to find what to find or, Hey, were you able to see the car icon that is for seat? You can't say it that way. You just simply have to say that, hey, can you find the short time that's available? That's a better way to do it. To avoid, you know, avoid asking leading questions that give away clues on the actual result of the answer that you might be looking for.

The interview checklist doesn't end here. Here are a few more things you need to be mindful of. Use the script as a guide, not a Bible. It should help lead the conversation in the right direction. Make sure you cover all the topics you need to get details. Ideal interview duration would be less than an hour. People may have trouble staying focused longer, so pick the most important questions. Also, leave time between interviews. Give yourself some time buffer between interviews to allow for any overrun. This would give you time to finish up your notes and to have a bit of a break.

What do you keep in mind during the interview? Dress to the level of the interview. If you're doing a corporate interview, you can't wear shorts for the interview. Make the interviewee feel comfortable. Offer refreshments and have small talk to make the interviewee comfortable.

If your interviewee is at ease, the entire interview will run smoothly. Let's hear more on this from our industry expert.

Make sure that the users are feeling comfortable. How do you make them feel comfortable? So, what we did at book my show is that we made sure that they didn't feel they were in a different environment. So, it's not easy to reproduce the same environment, but definitely make them feel comfortable by, you know, offering them, you know, some, I guess some tea or coffee or letting them know that it's okay to make a mistake or it's okay to give poor feedback and just telling them that they can be really honest by just being themselves, you've got to do it at a people level or people's skill by telling them that, hey, it's okay to kind of give us whatever feedback you want. It's not, they shouldn't feel intimidated by, you know, saying that, hey, if I give wrong feedback, is it really going to Impact, you know what I'm saying?

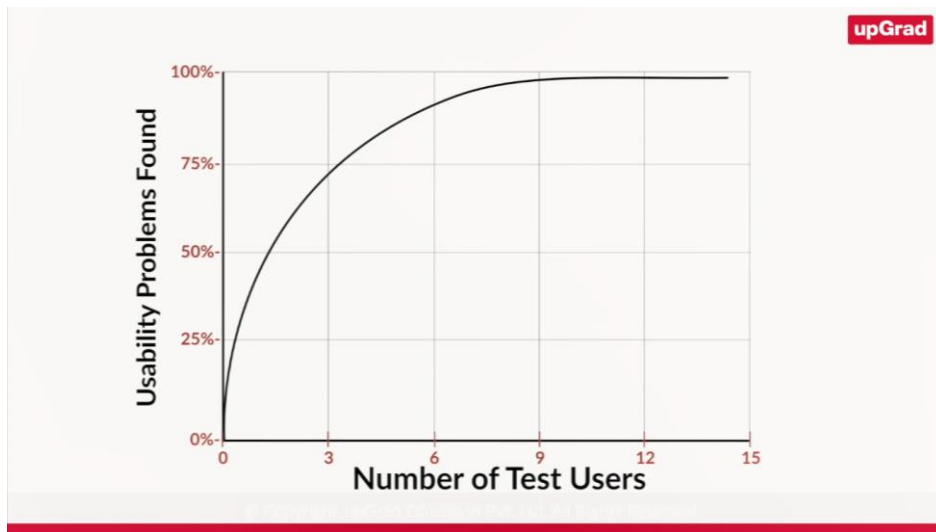There are a few more things you need to keep in mind. Let's take a look.

Keep it on track. Interviews can go off track. It is good if it is insightful, else try and stick to the topic. Try not to bury your head in your notes. Maintain eye contact while taking notes. So, what should be the ideal sample size for interviews?

As per a study done by Jacob Nielsen, it is said that one should need to conduct the interview with at least 15 users to discover all the usability problems. With the first few users, typically six, the amount of new data is high. As you interview more users, law of diminishing returns will kick in and the amount of new learnings will reduce.

There's so much we've already discussed about interviews and there is so much more to come. In the previous video, you've got a theoretical idea about the steps involved in conducting an interview, but how does that translate in the real world? Let's take a look at an example where our subject matter expert conducts a mock interview with an interviewee.
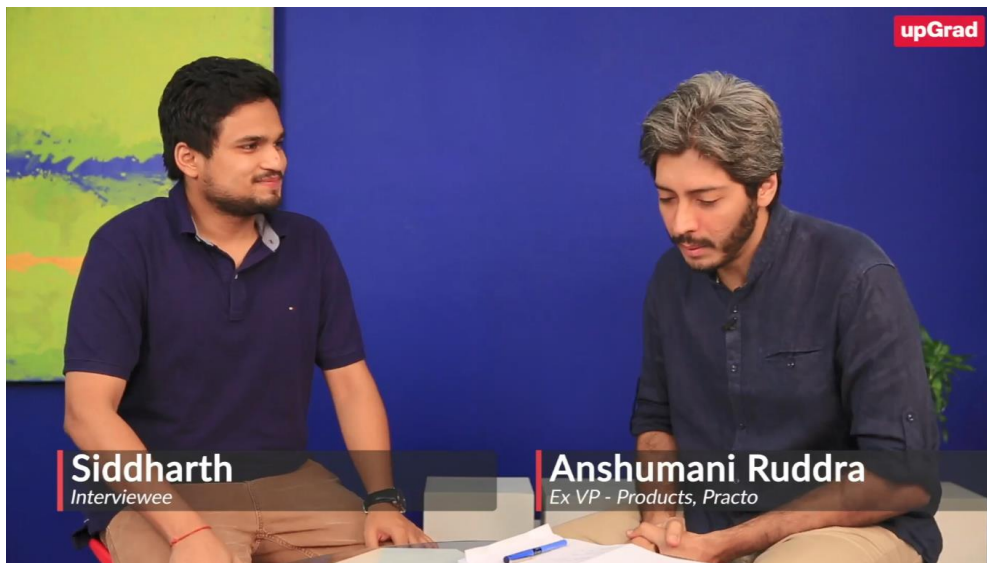
Interviewer: Sidharth welcome and thanks for doing this interview.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Sidharth, so there are couple of things that I want you to be aware of. We will be recording this interview and I'll also be taking notes while the interview is going on. So, I hope that's fine with you.
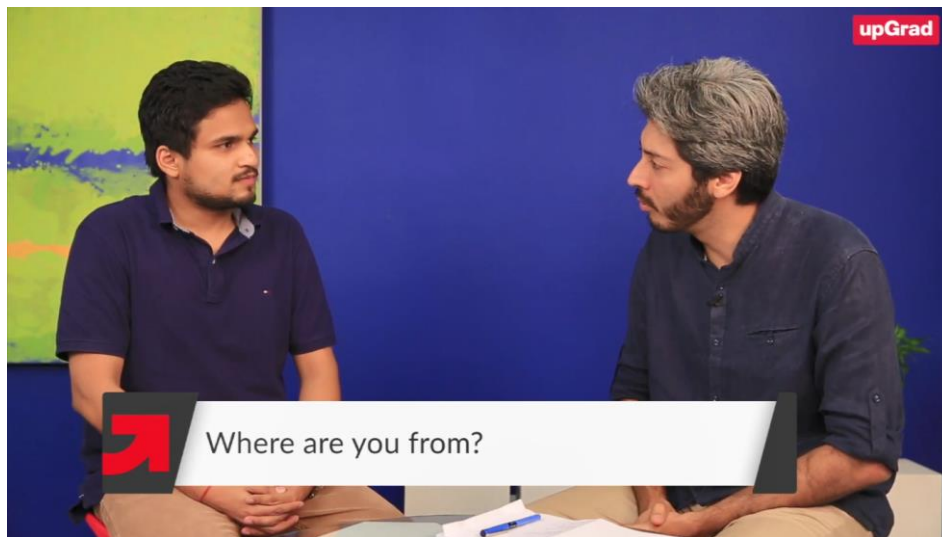
Interviewee: Yeah, okay.

Interviewer: Sidharth, so you're 26.

Interviewee: Yeah, right.

Interviewer: You have an MBA. You're in a sales function.

Interviewee: Right.

Where are you from?

Interviewer: Are you originally from Bombay or have you lived in Bombay?

Interviewee: I have been traveled to Bombay. But I live in Delhi.

Interviewer: So, you grew up in Delhi.

Interviewee: I am grew up in Delhi and different places. I was in a boarding school.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. And how long have you been in Bombay?

Interviewee: It's been two months as of now.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you're fairly new in Bombay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you live with friends or do you live with family?

Interviewee: I live with a batch-mate of mine.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. So, both of you are sharing an accommodation.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. What do you guys do for food typically?

Interviewee: So, generally, now we have arranged a full-time cook but other than generally, we try to order food from online, from minimum offers, so I don't have that luxury to have some food from home.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And because I come early in office, so my breakfast and lunch is definitely from, you know, ordering somewhere. And then I am always back home.

What are your cook's timings?

Interviewer: So, what time does the cook come at your place?

Interviewee: He comes home at six o'clock in the evening.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Anyways, in morning, he cannot turn up until 7 O'clock.

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: So, I need to be out at Nine and then, you know, then the breakfast happens here in office and then the lunch as well.


Why were you insistent on getting a cook?

Interviewer: Excellent. Why were you so insistent on getting a cook?

Interviewee: Because the outside food is very monotonous, you know, like you have just at a particular location, you have just few options. I mean, there are only five places which are good enough to have food from. And then if we're having had that for 10, 15 days, you're just bored with it. I mean, you can just have it every time, you can't just have it.

Interviewer: Having said that, you're still stuck having outside food for breakfast, there's no option.

Interviewee: Yeah. There's no option right now.
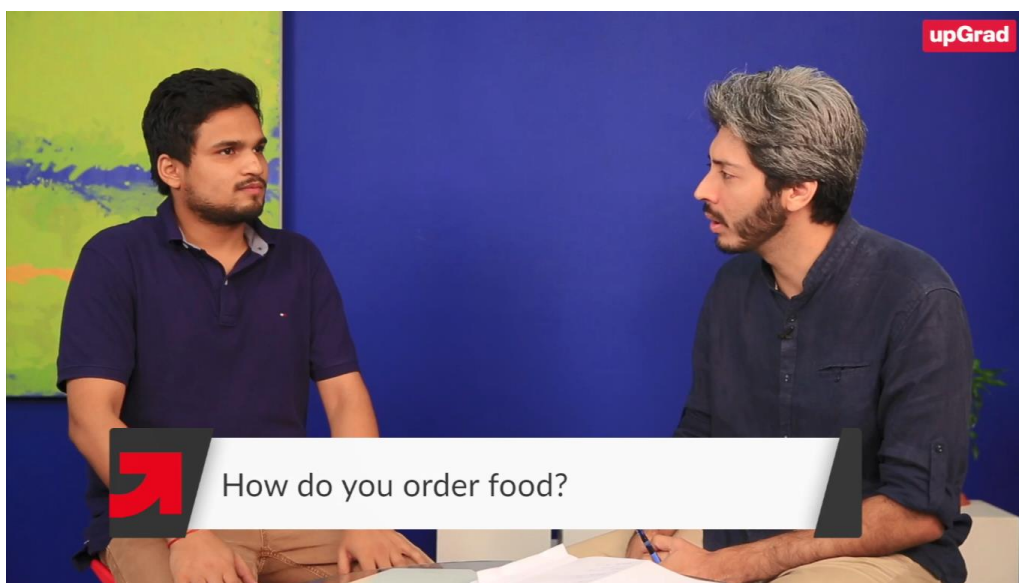
Interviewer: So, when you do order from outside for breakfast and lunch, how do you typically order? Like what are your go to places? Do you order online?

Interviewee: It's online always, through an app or somewhere.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, these popular one's, Swiggy, Zomato, Foodpanda.

Do you order from fixed places?

Interviewer: Okay, do you end up ordering from the same places again and again?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's most favorable times and yeah, because once that taste comes, you do not want to risk with your food and much, right. So, if there's something you'd like, so there are four or five things that you know you can eat well and these are the good places that have, so repeat between those four things, or those four places that Okay, you at-least trust them, you know, the food we get.

What are your food choices?

Interviewer: Got it. How varied are your choices of food? So, what I want to understand is, I'm guessing that the cook at home is cooking Indian food typically.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: But for your breakfast and lunch, are you ordering Indian food or it's a mix of western and Indian food.

Interviewee: So, it's basically a mix of it, if I hadn't eaten in the morning, I would have been eating say, Paratha or Poha or something like that. But it's like, the best choices are Omelette and Tea or coffee. Because you don't get so much of Variety in breakfast.

Interviewer: So, given a choice, would you prefer Indian food?

Interviewee: Of course, I would.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay.

Interviewee: So, there are a couple of things which are interesting is, one, you've said that you would prefer home cooked food. The other is of course that you also prefer Indian food. Suppose you could get home cooked food, but not from a cook coming to your house. So, let me explain that. What if somebody in your neighborhood, you know, who have a large family who cook for their entire family.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Who cook food, but they can also supply that food to you. Would that be something that would be appealing to you.

Interviewee: Yeah, that would be great. But I don't want to change that person again and again. Okay. I just want him to be the same family that I'm eating at least, because that is the taste, home food is that you have the taste of spices and everything, right. And then you cannot change with the spices and all that stuff too much.

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: So, if it's one house that's giving me, you know, home food. I would love to go with it.

Interviewer: You don't feel that you could potentially, say, if you had for one month, if your morning breakfast whether it's Paratha or Poha, but it'll be fairly fixed menu, right, coming in for about a month. Do you feel that that could get a little boring?

Interviewee: That would for sure. I mean yeah. I mean you need to have a variety of food. That's what food is.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So, what is more important? So, you've mentioned two things. One is that it's home cooked food, but you also want it to be consistent. Right? Between the two things, which would you rate higher? For example, if I could supply your food from three different kitchens.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: From three different people who are cooking food at home. And of course, the tastes would vary, you know, the kind of things that they're cooking would vary, would that work for you or would you still care more about consistency?

Interviewee: I would care about consistency, but you know, at least one place which can have the varieties as well.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you would ideally like food to be delivered from the same face, from the same kitchen, but you would want more variety?

Interviewee: Yeah, because they have their own style, which I may, you know, taste that may adopted.

Interviewer: So, how would you try out, like for example, I mean, when we are growing up, you would gone internet friends, houses and things like that. Some of them, some of their moms would have been great cooks, some not so much.

Interviewee: Right.

In how many trials will you make a decision?
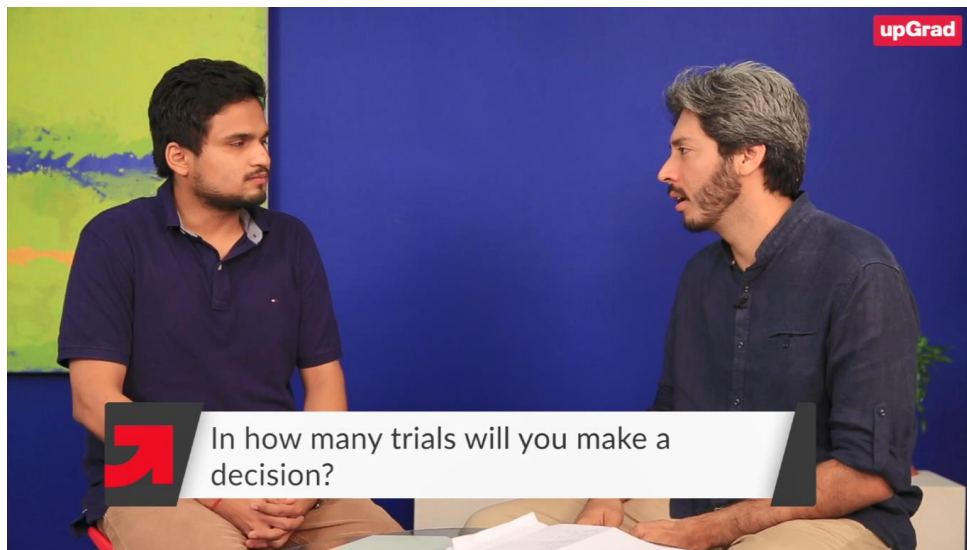
Interviewer: Right. What would, what is the kind of frequency with which you eat, that'll help you make this decision? As in, how many meals would you have to have from somebody's kitchen for you to be able to say, you know, I like their food more than...

Interviewee: I think it's all like, you fall in love with foods. So, it could be first time as well. Or it could be, you know, like maximum 2, you cannot just go to 3.

Interviewer: Got it.

Interviewee: You cannot risk yourself if you are not having good experience with two times, you will never order the third meal.

Interviewer: Excellent. Great Sidharth. Great talking to you. Thank you so much for the insights. So, I hope you had a good.

Interviewee: Thanks, Anshumani.

So, that was a very interesting interview with one of our interview candidates Siddharth. The purpose of doing these interviews is not to jump to conclusions too fast. You would typically want to interview at least 10 to 15 candidates and then you would start seeing certain patterns emerge.

From this particular interview, what you would see is that this is a user who doesn't necessarily prefer outside food but prefers home cooked meals. But he's also very particular about the consistency of that food, which means that he's not okay with getting home cooked food from five different sources. What he wants is one particular source of food. And that's why he's also kept a cook at home for his dinner. But he would prefer getting his breakfast and lunch from perhaps another home cooked source.

The other interesting points that he made was about, how many tries would it take for him to figure out who the right supplier is. And he said between one meal or two. And he made a very interesting point, which perhaps is a pattern we would, which would emerge that people make their choices about food really, really fast. Within a try or two, they're able to figure out if somebody is a good cook or not.

So, these are some very interesting insights that we've gleaned from this candidate. And as we speak to more people and collect this data, we should see if certain patterns start emerging. Now, if we were to do a food tech startup, and we are trying to build out a network of chefs who cook food at home and supply to people who prefer eating home cooked food, we might have to figure out what happens if the person wants to order from the same chef again and again. That's a potential where the supply and demand is a little skewed. So, yeah. This is the way you would perhaps go about doing, conducting user interviews and gleaning some specific insights from them.

Romil Desai
Presenter, *upGrad*

In the previous lecture, you got a detailed overview of how to conduct an interview including what to do before an interview, things to give in mind and the ideal sample. Now let's come to the core of any good interview, the questions you ask. There are certain do's and don'ts you need to keep in mind in order to frame the right set of question. So, let's dive right in.
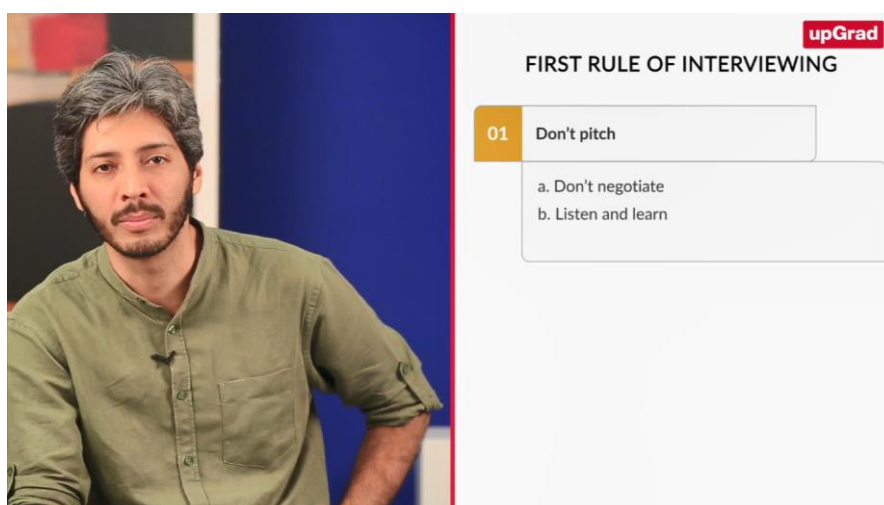
First rule does not talk about your product or feature. Don't pitch, don't negotiate. At times, PMs tend to stress about what their customers or users are going to think about their product or feature, and hence, subconsciously just start looking for hints that validate their internal feelings and hypothesis. They like to hear that their idea about the product

or feature is good. Instead of stressing and worrying about the perfect way to pitch the product, the idea should be to listen and learn from the customers.
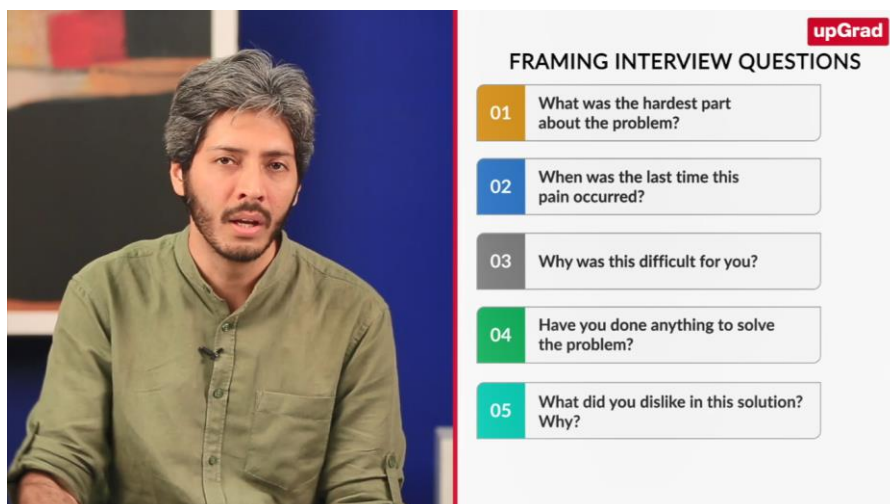
Second rule do not talk about the future. Avoid asking hypothetical questions such as if we build a product that did X, would you use it. Or how much would you pay for a product that did Y. Answers to these questions will almost always be misleading because customers in interviews want to be polite and can give you a false sense of validation.

So, how do you frame the right set of questions for an interview? There are questions that can form the basis for the interview to start with, which will help you learn about your customer's problems and how critical or worthy they are for solving.

These questions are, what's the hardest part about the particular problem? Can you tell me about the last time that this pain point happened? Why was this a difficult problem for you? What, if anything, have you done to solve the problem? Why or what you disliked when you tried the solutions? The trickiest part about this is figuring out how to

talk about the problem. You don't want to be so specific that you tell them about the problem you want to solve, and hence, lead the interview.
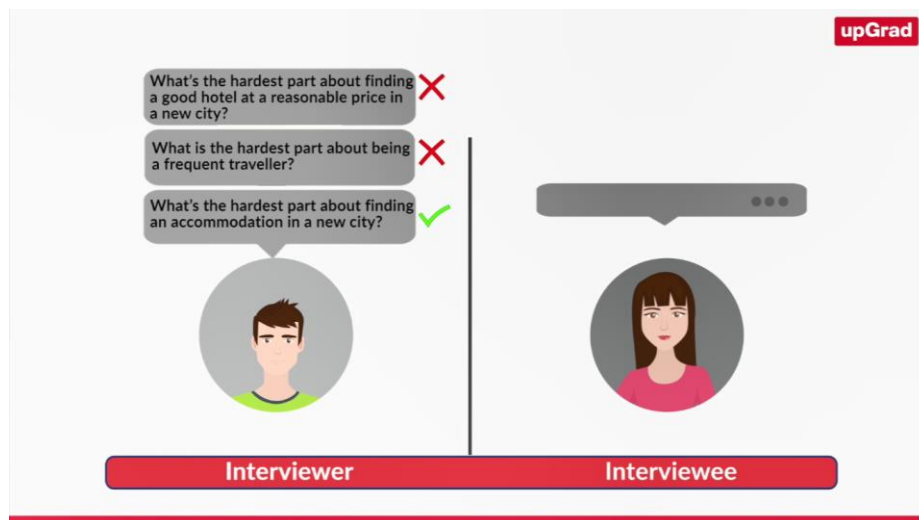
For example, imagine if you want to build a website or an app for travelers who look for nice hotels at a reasonable price. So, don't ask what's the hardest part about finding a good hotel at a reasonable price in a new city? This question is a very leading question and it narrows the discussion on price, which may or may not be the biggest problem for travelers in finding a nice hotel. But you also don't want to be so broad that they have a range of problems and you have no interest in solving those problems.

So, you also won't ask, what is the hardest part about being a frequent traveler? You want to ask about a significant problem contextually in a situation that occurs frequently enough or a situation that is painful enough so that it needs a solution. So, in this case, maybe the better question will be, what's the hardest part about finding an accommodation in a new city?

The second of the five questions are intended to understand more about the current customer journey and allows us to deep dive their experience when the last time they faced the problem. You learned more about a story, then you will learn from a yes or no question.

The third question helps us understand why the customer faces the particular problem. Customers don't buy the what, they buy the why. You can use this answer to craft, how to communicate your solution to your customer.

The fourth question will tell us how big the problem is for your customers. If your customers aren't looking for a solution, this may not be a big enough problem for you to solve. You should try to solve a problem so pressing, customers are already actively searching for solutions, or will do so the moment the offering is made to them.

Answer to the fifth question allows you to build something that solves our customer's problems in a way that's better than the other alternatives that are already available. This is your unique proposition to the customers. The vow factor for this can be developed from issues customers tolerate but would love better options for.

This is just a starter list of basic questions. You can add many more questions to learn more about your customers. Some other questions you can consider asking are, how often do you experience this problem? How much are you spending to solve this problem right now? Did I miss any major themes?
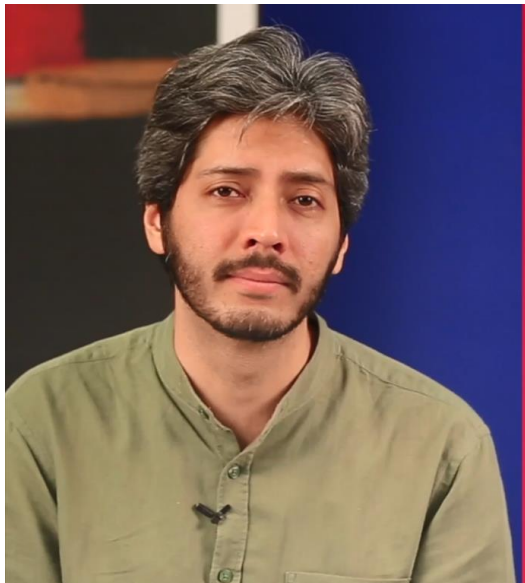

In my experience, the key things while conducting user interviews are that you should always look for facts and not opinions. Keep digging deeper. Your first few questions can be open-ended, but you want to narrow down and ask very specific questions. Figure out the inefficiencies in the system, the true problems that the users have faced in the past.

After reading a specific user's answer, you should be able to imagine this person. A couple of sample questions that we have asked at Practum, when was the last time you or someone from your family visited the doctor? And this is a multiple-choice question, so the options could be last six months, within the last six months to one year, or more than a year ago. Another typical question could be, how did you find out about this doctor? The options are, he's a family doctor, I asked my friends and family, or C, I searched online. Did you call to make an appointment or directly landed up? And again, the options are, I directly landed up, or I booked an appointment online.

Asking the right questions can help you maximize output from your interview. Let's hear more on this from an industry expert.

Anish Tripathi
Ex AVP - Product Design, BookMyShow

Another tip is to maximize output from these sessions. The only way to maximize output from these sessions is to get everything in anything that's on a user's mind around the entire action that you're trying to get. You don't just want to get one emotion or one expression of the user. For example, a user might say that, Hey, you know, I didn't really like, you know, the seat layout, because I just didn't like it. I think that's not enough output that you want to get from that session.

The maximum output to get from that session is to be like, okay, you didn't like the seat layout because so and so. Okay, because of this, maybe it is coming from these four reasons. Then you ask them those further questions. So, I think asking questions on top of questions that lead you to kind of, you know, help them kind of articulate on what their thought process was, is extremely important.

Romil Desai
Presenter, upGrad

After you conducted interviews for a particular product, you will have gathered responses from each of the individual participants. So, what do you do with these responses? How do you turn this data into something meaningful? Let's have a look.


A lot of small pieces of information are collected while conducting interviews which you will use to derive insights and opportunities and validate or invalidate any hypothesis. Outputs could be posted notes, recordings or written notes.
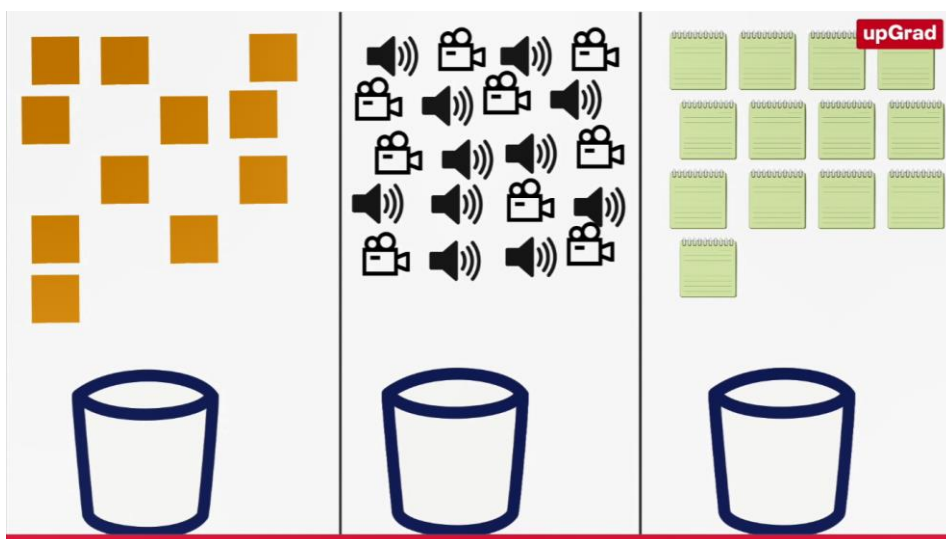
For example, you could take a bunch of posted notes, and you'll realize that a certain pattern is emerging. A lot of notes are talking about similar things. You will start putting these notes in one bucket. And over time as you analyze all the interviews that you've conducted and all the posted notes that you've created based on listening to these interviews, you will start seeing broad buckets emerge and these buckets are what will give you deep insights.

Going through your notes could take a long time. Few things that you can do to speed up the process. One mind mapping. Mind mapping is an excellent way of cutting through the data collected and identifying themes and trends from your research.
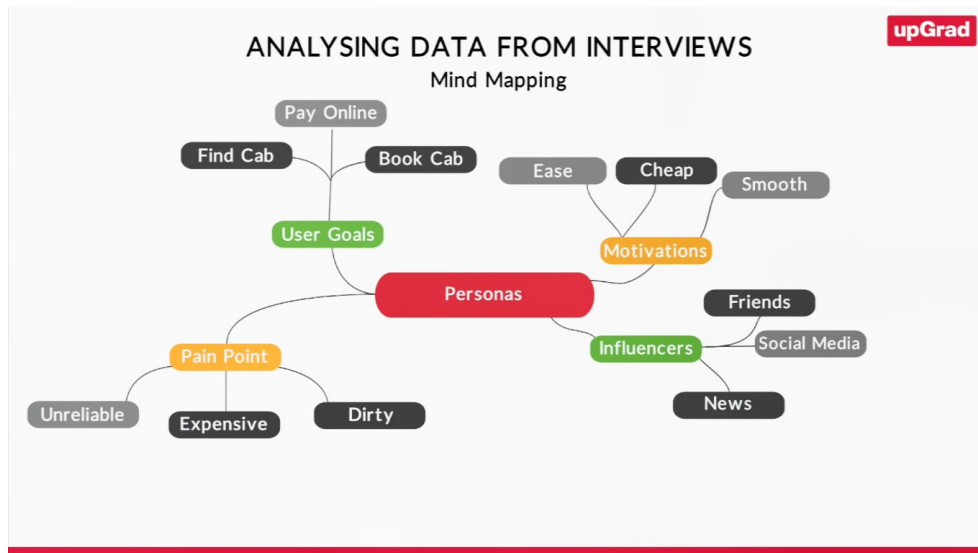
If your goal is to create personas from your research, then look at the top-level sections you need to fill in to find such motivations or pain points. Use these as a starting point in your mind map and begin to pull out some of the findings and jot them down. Particularly powerful when presenting back to clients or getting the rest of the project team to understand what you found out can be quotes that sum up a particular point. These are like gold dust. So, listen out for them in your interviews.

While analyzing the data collected through interviews, you should go through the various emotional reactions of the interviewee and draw actionable insights from them. Let's hear more on this from our industry expert.

So, what you look out for in the user's answer is the true emotion of the reactions that they have. And when you don't give them time to think, when you give them time to think, they are actually going to come up with answers that you know, you want them to give. So, for example, if a user had an Aha moment and, you know, they did that naturally, I think that's what you really need to look out for in their answers.

Another tip on how to gain actionable insights, you would gain actionable insights, is only when, you know, when the user actually makes a mistake or, you know, again, has a Aha moment. So, you've got to look out for very, very sort of, you know, delightful moments or very upsetting moments.

We've come to the end of an exhaustive session on interviews and I'm sure it has been very, very informative. Let's recap. We began with the definition of interviews. Our one-on-one discussion between you and your user to get in depth qualitative information on the user's background, occupation, motivation and pain points.
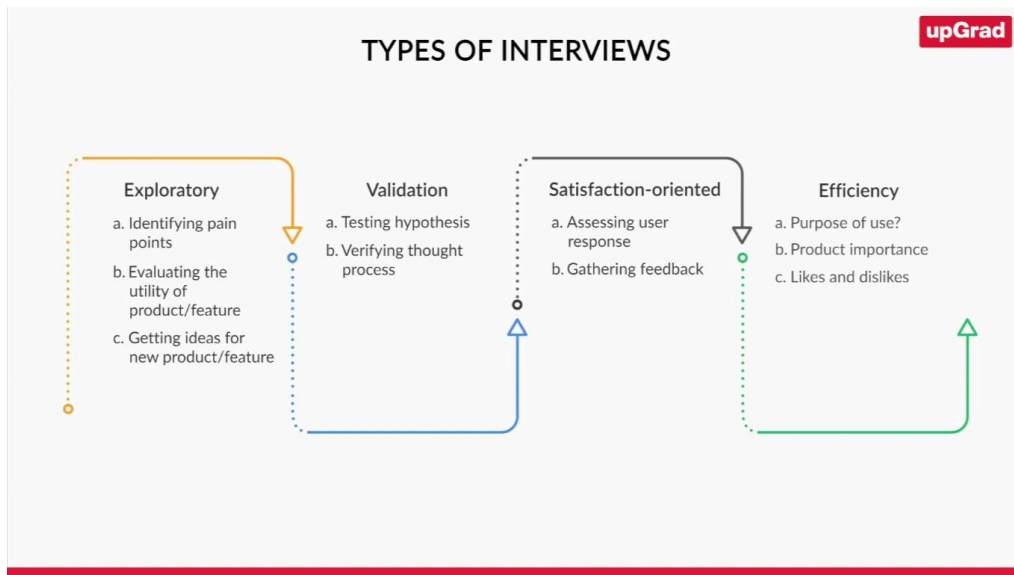
Interviews are classified as exploratory, validations satisfaction oriented, efficiency and usability interview, and the approach varies depending on the type of interview. Then you've got an overview of the step by step process of conducting an interview. You find the objective, identify your target audience and select the sample, frame the question, interview your sample and collect data for analysis.
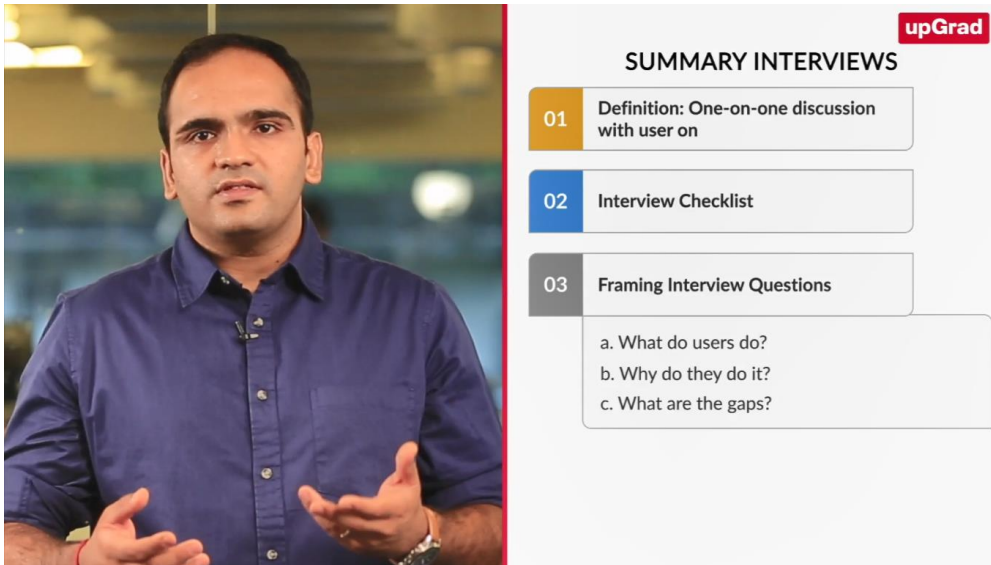

There are certain things you need to do before and during the interview. Choose the most appropriate people to interview but look beyond your friends and family. Make a script for how you want the interviews to progress and include all the questions you want to ask, but don't stick too closely to the script. You can deviate from it if you need to cover additional topics in the interview.

But lastly, try and stay on track. Make the participant feel comfortable in, fond them about your purpose for conducting the interview and never ask them leading questions. Wrap up the interview within an hour.
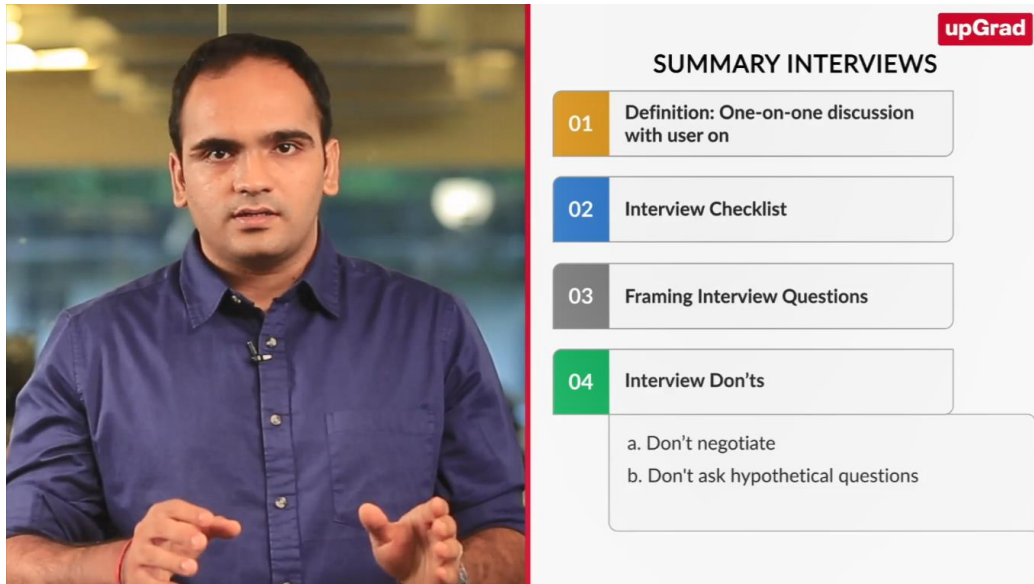
Next, you also learned how to frame the right questions for an interview. Ask the users about their pain points, how these pain points create a problem in their lives, how they users deal with these problems and so on. Start with open ended questions and progressed to more specific ones. The objective is to gather what they do, why they do what they do, and what is missing with regards to their context.

Do not collect opinions on how things should be and keep two major don'ts in mind. One, do not negotiate with the participant. And two, don't talk about the future. Discuss only what the user's present experiences with regards to your product.

And lastly, we ended the session by learning how to analyze the data gathered through interviews. Start by sorting through your notes and identifying any patterns or theme that emerges. In this way, you can categorize the data into

broad buckets. Conversely, you can create a mind map as a starting point to pull out motivations, pain points, and other findings from your notes.

Last but not the least, record quotes from your participants as these will help you and your team and clients get a clear understanding of your data and that's all you need to know about interviews. In the next session, we'll take up another matter way of research, use your Feedback. See you then.