**Tell Me About Yourself/ Talk Me Through Your CV**

Hi, I am Shilpa. I am originally from India, I’ve been living in Dublin for about 1 year. I completed my bachelors degree in Computer Science and Engineering in 2015. I was awarded a First Class Honours for this. After I finished my degree, I began working as a Java Developer for Spectrum SoftTech Solutions in India. I worked there for around 6 months. I began searching for a course in Dublin and began studying Information Systems with Computing at Dublin Business School. Currently, I am finishing my thesis and working part-time as a supervisor in Spar in Dublin.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking and I am also a classical dancer.

**A Time When You Went Above And Beyond At Work?**

When I had to choose a thesis topic for my masters programme, I originally chose a topic which was a popular choice among all students in my year. My professor asked me to choose something new and different from everyone else. So she told me to pick a topic related to data analytics, even though my masters specialises in information systems. The data analytics was a new area of study for me, so I found this as a challenge and I accepted that challenge. I began to study what data analytics is, and what we can be achieved using data analytics. I read a lot of research papers and found it very interesting and so I decided to choose a new thesis topic related to data analytics.

**A Time When You Reached A Big Goal at Work and How Did you Reach It?**

When I was doing my masters degree, I had a subject in a programming language called C sharp. I am not familiar with C sharp and found the subject extremely difficult. So I had to learn about C sharp from scratch. I asked for help from my classmates, and they taught me how to develop a code using C sharp as per the requirements. I also carried out research on the internet about how to perform the coding, which I found very difficult. I went on to complete my project and my presentation. After one month, I got my result which was 98%. This was all time high record result for this particular subject in Dublin Business School, and I was delighted with achieving this goal.

**Describe a Situation Where You Saw A Problem and the Steps you Took to Fix It?**

When I began working in Spar, my supervisor was unfriendly and had a very dominant personality. What he taught me was insufficient in order for me to do my job. He didn’t give me the right information, so I didn’t have a good chance to learn from him. I started to look at other ways to learn this myself, and began to implicate what I observed from other staff members. After six months a new employee started work at the shop. It was my responsibility to train her. I wanted to give her better training than I received. I taught her many tasks including how to serve customers, how to replenish stock, and how to handle customer complaints. She found this really helpful, and within two months she became an expert, while it originally took me six months. I didn’t want any other staff members to have my experience. This is how I fixed that problem, and subsequently my manager made me responsible for training new staff members.

**A Time When you worked with an important customer or a difficult manager?**

In Spar, we have a regular customer who comes into our shop. She is quite unfriendly. When she asks me anything about a product, first I ask her questions to gather information such as what she’s looking for, what purpose, if she has a problem, and what type of brand she prefers. Based on her answers, I make recommendations to her. I inform her specifically about each product. For example if a particular product contains any allergens I would tell her before so that she wouldn’t take any risks. I am always friendly with her and smile. Now, she has become more friendly with me. Every time she comes into the shop, she always consults with me, we have a friendly chat, and I try to introduce her to our new products. Because we now have a good rapport, most of the time she buys what I recommend.

**How to you deal with a heavy workload? / How do you prioritise your work?**

First, I go through the requirements and identify what is needed. I write a checklist of all tasks. Then I assess how much time it takes to complete each task. I will then prioritise in order of importance. If the workload is manageable, I will begin to execute the tasks. However, if I identify that there are competing priorities, I will communicate this with my manager, and execute tasks in order of priority as directed by the manager.

**Tell me about a tough challenge you faced?**

After I completed my bachelors degree, there were no graduate programmes in India at the time in order for me to start my career. I searched for a high number of jobs, however there was a lot of competition. More than a thousand candidates would come for one interview. Each interview would consist of six or seven rounds. It would take three days to complete interviews for a single position. It was a tough process and also stressful. Most of the time I would make it into the last round. However the majority of the managers and HR staff were looking for boys rather than girls because they have to provide girls with more security. So they considered this as a loss of money for the company. Therefore it was a very tough challenge to compete. I decided to look for another place to move to from there where I would get a good chance to prove myself and begin my career. So I decided to begin my Masters Degree from a foreign country.

**What is your biggest work failure?**

Although I completed extensive interviewing which was unsuccessful in India, I don’t accept this as a failure. I am determined to secure a job and I keep working to find new ways to achieve this.

**Tell me about a time when you were not going to meet a deadline? What was the outcome?**

When I was working in Spectrum, I was working on a team project to create a website. There were 2 people allocated to this particular task. Four weeks prior to the deadline, I assessed the workload required for this, and realised that with only two people working on this, we were not going to meet the deadline. So I communicated this to my team in a weekly team meeting, and I highlighted the importance of this to my manager, stating that this task is a priority. My manager then delegated another person to this project as a resource, and the outcome was that we met the deadline.

**Example of a time where showed leadership skills, a time when you used good time management skills, or project management skills**

During my studies, one of my professors gave us a task. It was a team task. We had to present on a topic which was completely different to what we were learning. My friends elected me as team captain, so I divided the work among the team and delegated different tasks. I delegated one person to research resources, another person to do the presentation, and another prepare the slides. I was a helping hand in everything, and coordinated everything, and helped each and every person when they were stuck. We did really well in our presentation and completed it in a timely manner.

**Tell me a time when you influenced someone or convinced them to do something? / Conflict with someone**

When I was in Spectrum, we were working on a team project. Our team head assigned us with different tasks. My task was to do the front end of the website. My colleague was doing the back end. I got a chance to view his coding and I noticed some mistakes in his work. I tried to communicate this to him that there were some mistakes. I highlighted the impact to him, that if he continued with these mistakes, it would become a very big bug and hard to rectify in the end. He disagreed with me, and wanted to continue with the mistakes included. I knew that if I allowed this, it would be a big mistake and loss for our project. So I decided to show him our old project with a similar mistake. I showed him and tried to convince him to correct the mistakes. He then understood, agreed to rectify the problem, and thanked me for notifying him. We always remained friendly and professional throughout this.

**Have you ever had to question the opinion or go against someone in higher authority?**

Yes, when I was working in Spectrum, my trainer told me some incorrect information which I noticed was a mistake. I was a little bit confused at first, and I checked it against some previously completed work. I told him that there was a mistake, and I showed him this by comparing against the previously completed work. He agreed to re check the mistake, and he understood that what he had done was incorrect. He appreciated this, and thanked me.

**Tell me about a situation where you needed information from a co-worker who is slow to respond?**

When I was searching for my thesis topic, I needed some information regarding previous research papers. I found a research paper that was similar to mine completed by a researcher. I had some queries and wanted to know more about how he had gone about this. The only contact details I could find for him was an e-mail address. I tried to contact him through the e-mail, however I didn’t receive any response, so I decided to contact the website where his research paper was posted. They were quite friendly, and provided me with a new active e-mail address. I tried to e-mail him on this and he started responding and gave me his office phone number for any future queries.

**A time when you were working with a large number of customers, it can be tricky to deliver excellent service to them all. How did you prioritise customer needs?**

In Spar, sometimes it can be very busy and you might need to spend a long time with one customer who has a lot of questions. However, there are other customers who also need to be served at the same time. In this case, I ask my colleagues to assist the other customers while I am occupied with one.

**That’s not very good, spending all of your time with one customer**

Each day, the staff and I divide up work into areas, so we each monitor different areas of the store. If this customer is in my area, the other staff members will cover the other areas, so there will be a continuous flow of service to all customers. And vice versa, I will help cover areas if my colleagues are occupied.

**Tell me about a time when you felt a lot of pressure?**

I recently took on the role of supervisor in Spar, which means I have a lot more responsibilities. During the snow, our store was the only store open in that region. So we were under a lot of pressure to serve a high number of customers and with only two staff members. It was difficult to maintain the needs of customers, and everyone was panicked about getting supplies. I tried to serve them all, and also manage the stock in the most fair way. I was also checking cctv to look out for people stealing our products. This was very hard. After a few days, my photo was in the newspaper to acknowledge our shop and hard work. In the days that followed, the customers expressed their appreciation to me, saying that I did a very good job.

**A Time When you Set a Goal for Yourself?**

I always set goals for myself to make it easier, to make sure I don’t forget anything, and to ensure I don’t waste time.

**Tell me about a time when you explained something complex to somebody?**

When I was giving training to a new shop assistant, he was slow to learn and found it difficult to understand what he needed to do. He was making some mistakes, and we had a loss as a result. So I started training him, and told him to stay calm. First, I showed him what he needs to do, and how to complete each task. I gave him very detailed, accurate, and clear instructions. His performance began to improve, and now he is doing very well.

**What motivates you?**

I am conscientious, and therefore I am a self motivated person. I am motivated by learning and experiencing new things. I always take pride in my work, whatever that is.

**If you see a co-worker doing something wrong, what will you do?**

First I will try to tell him, and communicate this to them in a polite way and tell them the right way to do the task. Then I will monitor their work to see if they have corrected this or not. If they are still making the mistake, I will inform manager to escalate this issue.

**Sales**

New ideas – offer free trial of a premium model, explain how it works in a video, video tutorials on how to use the software, even for beginners for an advanced model. It depends on the purpose of use, align it with this (personal, professional, or in the community)

1. Listen intently
2. Ask questions first, it shows your desire to help them comes before your need to sell them a product. This helps to build trust among customers
3. **3. Uncover needs – don’t presume them.** Just as no competent doctor prescribes treatment before thoroughly examining a patient, you should let your prospects tell you what they need instead of assuming that you already know. Should you make product or service recommendations without consulting them, they may question your competence and intentions. Remember – your prospects know themselves and their businesses best. Give them a chance to share that knowledge with you to benefit you both.
4. **4. Uncover the budget .** Once you and your prospects know how much they can spend, both of you can consider a buying decision more seriously. Assure prospects that you’ll do your best for them regardless of the size of their budget. When you’ve proven your honesty and reliability with a small order, your customers may reward you with more and bigger ones. If your prospect seems uncomfortable discussing money, ask for a ballpark figure, and work from there.
5. **5. Uncover the decision making process.**Presentations demand a lot of work and time, so make sure you present to those who can reward your effort with a sale. It may take longer to reach all of the decision makers, but trying to sell to non deciison makers simply wastes time – yours and theirs. Instead of presenting to the wrong people, spend your time building trust with gatekeepers who hold the key to the decision maker’s office and your next sale.
6. **6. Build rapport without going overboard.** Salespeople who try too hard to make friends of their prospects may be doing more harm than good. Most prospects want a salesperson who will be an informative industry resource, problem solver and reliable business partner – not a golfing buddy. Stick to impressing prospects with your honesty and expertise instead of your winning personality.
7. **7. Don’t answer unspoken objections.** When customers voice concerns, uncover the real issue by asking them why they raised that point. You never know just how much your prospects know about your product, so don’t volunteer information they may perceive as being negative.
8. **8. Customize the sale.** We all like to be treated like the special, unique individuals that we are, so tailor your selling style to suit each of your prospects. To keep them happy and comfortable, observe their personality and character closely, then conduct yourself accordingly. The more your customers feel like the center of your attention, the more likely they are to return for more of the VIP treatment.
9. **9. Go with the flow.** Few people really like to be sold, and fewer still enjoy being manipulated. Your desire to close a sale is secondary to your customers’ needs – make sure you can really help the prospects you target. When your product or service truly solves a problem, you shouldn’t have to manipulate the buyer into a purchase. The hard sell usually only raises the prospect’s defenses. Instead, take greater control of the sale by turning some of it over to the customer.
10. **10. Have a selling system.** Make sure you have a proven system that helps you generate prospects, set appointments, close sales and provide quality, consistent follow-up service. When problems arise, your system will simplify diagnosing and treating them.