

# Practicing for Interviews

## Do your homework

- Before going for an interview, find out as much information on the company as possible.
- The best sources are the public library, the Internet (you can check out the company's site).
- Be confident in your approach and attitude; let the panel feel it through your approach, body language and dressing.
- 

## The Basic Things

- Review your resume, and make sure that you can explain everything on it.
- Arrive at the interview half an hour early to give yourself an opportunity to collect your thoughts and relax.
- If you rush in at the last minute, an employer may have serious concerns about your ability to arrive on time for a normal day at work.
- Get a good night's sleep before your interview.
- You will think more effectively in the interview if you are rested.
- Also, yawning will not impress anyone.
- Eat something before the interview.
- If you are worried about your stomach growling, you will not be able to concentrate on the questions.
- Make sure that you are clean, neat, and well-groomed.
- Interviewers do notice your appearance, and first impressions are critical in an interview situation.
- Take a copy of your resume, mark sheets, certificates.
- Also take a pen and paper, as you may want to record some important information.
- Tuck in the shirt and do not roll up the sleeves.
- Never wear a short-sleeved shirt to an interview or any business purpose.
- Wearing a short-sleeved shirt will destroy your executive image.
- Ties. Optional. But if you do wear one, choose a conservative pattern.
- Belts. Belts should match your shoes. Those with smaller buckles with squared lines look more professional.
- Socks. Black socks are the best, followed by blue or gray, depending on your attire.
- Check your sock length too, -- no skin should show when you sit down or cross your legs.
- Shoes. Black or burgundy leather shoes with laces on them, because tassel loafers are very casual. Other suitable colors are brown, cordovan and navy.

### **Entrance and introduction**

- We seldom pay attention to the way we enter an interview room or how we introduce ourselves.
- A lot of people do not think it important to knock properly while entering the interview room. They assume that as an interview is taking place, the panel will be expecting them. This is a very major mistake.
- The best way to enter an interview is to knock, ask for permission to enter and then wait for a while before you actually sit down.
- Few interviewees know this but the interview panel needs a little quiet time to discuss the previous candidate before they get around to the next one.
- So your silence till you actually get seated would be very valuable.

### **Attitude and Response**

- This is a grey area for most interview candidates.
- Most interviewers like to give a lead to the candidate in the way they ask the question, so it's entirely up to you to note facial expressions and the tone of the words.

### **Do you show your certificates immediately to the interview panel?**

- Not till you are asked actually.
- You might already have sent in your resume.
- So you shouldn't try and offload all your achievements and skills onto the panel till a turn in the interview leads to such a situation.

### **Way of Answering**

- Pause a couple of seconds before you respond to each question, even if you know exactly what you want to say.
- Take this time to quickly plan your answer, this helps to avoid misunderstandings and produces much more concise answers.
- If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.
- This is expected and is preferable to providing an unsuitable answer.
- If you need time to collect your thoughts - take it. When people are nervous they tend either to "draw a blank" or to babble.
- It is better to think for a few moments and make sure that your answer is doing you justice and that there is a point to what you are saying.
- Always expand. Never answer a question with a "yes" or "no."

### **Establishing Rapport**

- This is a very important part of the interview because while establishing rapport, first impressions are made, and the tone of the interview is set.
- Some people suggest that the decision to hire is greatly influenced by the first five minutes of the interview.
- A good interviewer will introduce him/herself, and take the lead.
- Follow his or her lead - if they are chatty, be chatty; if they are formal, be formal.
- Some employers use what seems to be casual conversation to get to know you on a more personal level – this may be crucial to a hiring decision!

### **Tips**

- Smile and maintain eye contact. This is one way of communicating confidence, even if you don't feel it.
- Be aware of the interviewer's reactions. If he or she looks confused, ask if you can clarify anything.
- If the interviewer offers his or her hand, shake it firmly. If they don't, it is appropriate to offer yours.
- Wait until the interviewer sits or offers you a seat before sitting down.
- If the interviewer is making small talk, participate. Keep your answers short and positive.
- Exchange of Information
- It is your opportunity to let the interviewer know what you have to offer, and your chance to learn more about the organization.
- Be aware of what your body is saying. Avoid closed postures. Sit upright, but not stiffly.
- Try to find a comfortable position as that will make you feel more relaxed.
- Control your nervous habits. Don't swing your foot, talk with your hands (to an extreme), or fiddle with jewelers, buttons, pens, etc.
- Show that you are interested in the job by asking questions.
- Try not to appear bored or anxious. Don't look at your watch.

#### **1 Tell me about yourself.**

There is no structured answer for this question. But most people go into the common error that they start to repeat their Bio-data which is already in front of the interviewer. Here you should try to present a picture of yourself in terms of your personality, social and family background, and cultural orientation. Best thing is to prepare a write up and revise it before the interview. Start describing your family, parents, siblings etc. Describe your neighborhood or surrounding society. Talk about your primary, secondary and higher secondary school life highlighting friends, teachers one or two memorable incidents. Come to your college life. Make your present institute and campus life as interesting as possible. Talk about some of your important activities and achievements in college life.

#### **2 Please take me through your resume.**

Describe your resume/ bio-data. Try to highlight your achievements which may not be given in the hard copy of resume.

#### **3 Why did you choose this Engineering course?**

Give an honest answer. It may be engineering is a prestigious course/ engineering offers better employability / the particular course appeared very attractive to you during counseling. Best possible course and institute combination available according to your JEE/AIEEE rank. Feedback from seniors/ internet. Answers will vary according to course.

#### **4 Why did you select HIT?**

As per your rank at JEE, it matched best with you. You liked its reputation, profile, academic and general environment, feedback from seniors, relatives, friends, neighbours.

#### **5 Why did you choose this specialization?**

Give an honest answer. Consult with your teacher.

**6 Tell me something about your education and projects undertaken.**

Prepare a detailed write up of the projects you have done for this answer. Sum up the main points in a bullet pattern.

**7 Tell me something about your career objective.**

Basic objective of any individual is to be a successful professional. That you can explain in this way that for initial stages of your career (1-3 years) your aim is only to acquire professional knowledge, skill and attitude. You also aim to be a good team member and ethical professional. In the long run you may view yourself as a successful manager or academician or researcher depending on your aptitude.

**8 What do you want to be doing 5-10 years from now?**

**TRAPS:** One reason interviewers ask this question is to see if you're settling for this position, using it merely as a stopover until something better comes along. Or they could be trying to gauge your level of ambition.

- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Reassure your interviewer that you're looking to make a long-term commitment...that this position entails exactly what you're looking to do and what you do extremely well.
- As for your future, you believe that if you perform each job at hand with excellence, future opportunities will take care of themselves.
- Example: "I am definitely interested in making a long-term commitment to my next position. Judging by what you've told me about this position, it's exactly what I'm looking for and what I am very well qualified to do. In terms of my future career path, I'm confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitable open up for me. It's always been that way in my career, and I'm confident I'll have similar opportunities here."

**9 Give me three reasons why you want to work in our organization.**

Give them the real reason. That you are a fresh student looking for a job from campus and this organization is very reputed for fresh students who want to develop their professional skills.

- **TRAPS:** This question tests whether you've done any homework about the firm. If you haven't, you lose. If you have, you win big.
- This question is your opportunity to hit the ball out of the park, thanks to the in-depth research you should do before any interview.

Best sources for researching your target company: website, PPT, annual reports, the corporate newsletter, contacts you know at the company or its suppliers, advertisements, articles about the company in the trade press.

**10 Being an Electrical Engineer, how do you think you can help a software company like ours??**

- **TRAPS:** This is a common yet difficult question to answer.
- Do sufficient homework about
  - **If they do any EE related jobs**
  - **If you have any Alumni working there**
  - **PROBABLE ANSWER:**
- Example:
- "As I have understood during my short professional study course so far, any problem be it technical or personal, needs critical analysis before solution."
- "I am required to keep calm and think about all alternatives, pros and cons of possible solutions before attempting to address the problem"
- "During my UG EE course, which you will agree is highly mathematics intensive; I have

learnt how to tackle a problem in a methodical and logical way.”

- “How to mentally prepare a flow chart of actions to be taken towards solution of the problem.”
- “How to approach an unknown problem in a structured manner”
- “I believe in an industry like yours, or any other so to say, I will have to come across many such situations where my critical thinking abilities I can bring in to force”
- “In addition, as you can see from my results, I have always tried my best to perform in whatever job I have been assigned with.”
- “Thus I strongly believe that given any situation and job, I will be able to address it with the same sincerity and vigor that I have practiced during my UG study course.”

**If you have seen that the company is doing some projects related to EE then you can add**

“Also I have gone through your company profile and learnt that you have been actively involved in projects related to EE such as ....., where I can definitely prove my value towards your organization.”

#### **11 What skills do you have that relate to this position?**

"In addition to my technical skills in my subject area, I have very good communication and interpersonal skills that I have refined through my engineering course working with class mates and teachers." .... You can add more with examples and elaborations.

#### **12 Why should we appoint you?**

- **BEST ANSWER:**
- By now you can see how critical it is to apply the overall strategy of uncovering the employer’s needs before you answer questions.
- If you know the employer’s greatest needs and desires, this question will give you a big leg up over other candidates because you will give him better reasons for hiring you than anyone else is likely to...reasons tied directly to his needs.
- Whether your interviewer asks you this question explicitly or not, this is the most important question of your interview because he must answer this question favorably in his own mind before you will be hired.

So help him out! Walk through each of the position’s requirements as you understand them, and follow each with a reason why you meet that requirement so well.

“If I can satisfy all the criteria you have set for selection and if you find me suitable to be a proud member of the great team of yours you would appoint me. What I understand is that an organization such as yours always looks out for fresh minds that you can mold the way you want to meet your requirements most. I am a person with open mind and strong zeal for learning and fitting into any position and job description my work demands. With my eagerness in performing in a team and my ability to communicate cohesively with my fellow workers, I definitely believe you won’t regret if you hire me.”

#### **13 What new things will you bring to our organization?**

“I will bring some fresh blood to your organization. I will bring a soft mold of clay that you can build anything you wish to make. I will join your organization with an aspiration to learn. I will put my best effort to suit your need. In a company of your reputation almost all the employees are performers. I will learn from them and try to meet your expectations.”

#### **14 What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?**

“Executing all the duties and responsibilities assigned to me. Showing accountability for my job, team and organization. Following all the rules, regulations and norms laid down by the organization. These are the only things that are required to be a successful employee.”

### 15 What personal goals do you have and how are you going about achieving them?

- **TRAPS:** Not having any...or having only vague generalities, not highly specific goals.
- Many executives in a position to hire you are strong believers in goal-setting. (It's one of the reasons they've achieved so much). They like to hire in kind.
- If you're vague about your career and personal goals, it could be a big turnoff to many people you will encounter in your job search.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Be ready to discuss your goals for each major area of your life: career, personal development and learning, family, physical (health), community service and (if your interviewer is clearly a religious person) you could briefly and generally allude to your spiritual goals (showing you are a well-rounded individual with your values in the right order).
- Be prepared to describe each goal in terms of specific milestones you wish to accomplish along the way, time periods you're allotting for accomplishment, why the goal is important to you, and the specific steps you're taking to bring it about. But do these concisely, as you never want to talk more than two minutes straight before letting your interviewer back into the conversation.

"Developing professional knowledge, skills and appropriate attitude would be my first priority. I would also put effort to play my role of an effective team member. I would try to acquire ethical practices and contribute towards organizational goals. Fundamentally I want to be a model employee, a responsible family man and an ideal citizen."

### 16 What are your strengths?

Analytical power, cognitive ability (if you know what it really means), ability to work in a team, persuasion of any matter until you are satisfied about the quality. (do not say common words like sincerity, honesty etc.). Prepare examples of each of these from your past life.

- It isn't enough to say "**I've got excellent leadership skills**"
- Instead, try saying:
- "I think I have excellent leaderships skills which I have acquired through a combination of effective communication, delegation and personal interaction. This has helped my team achieve its goals."

#### Most desirable traits that all employers love to see:

- A proven track record as an achiever...especially if your achievements match up with the employer's greatest wants and needs.
- Honesty...integrity...a decent human being.
- Good fit with corporate culture...someone to feel comfortable with...a team player who meshes well with interviewer's team.
- Likeability...positive attitude...sense of humor.
- Good communication skills.
- Dedication...willingness to walk the extra mile to achieve excellence.
- Definiteness of purpose...clear goals.
- Enthusiasm...high level of motivation.
- Confident...healthy...a leader.

### 17 What are your weaknesses?

Become upset about faults and mistakes, Get tensed before any serious project and remain at that stage till it is completed.

- **PASSABLE ANSWER:** Disguise a strength as a weakness.



- Example: “I sometimes push my people too hard. I like to work with a sense of urgency and everyone is not always on the same wavelength.”
- Drawback: This strategy is better than admitting a flaw, but it's so widely used, it is transparent to any experienced interviewer.
- **BEST ANSWER:** Assure the interviewer that you can think of nothing that would stand in the way of your performing in this position with excellence.
- Then, quickly review your strongest qualifications.
- Example: “Nobody's perfect, but based on what you've told me about this position, I believe I'd make an outstanding match.

“I know that when you hire people, you look for two things most of all. Do they have the qualifications to do the job well, and the motivation to do it well? Everything in my background shows I have both the qualifications and a strong desire to achieve excellence in whatever I take on. So I can say in all honesty that I see nothing that would cause you even a small concern about my ability or my strong desire to perform this job with excellence.”

#### 18 What do you worry about?

- **TRAPS:** Admit to worrying and you could sound like a loser. Saying you never worry doesn't sound credible.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Redefine the word ‘worry’ so that it does not reflect negatively on you.

Example: “I wouldn't call it worry, but I am a strongly goal-oriented person. So I keep turning over in my mind anything that seems to be keeping me from achieving those goals, until I find a solution. That's part of my tenacity, I suppose.”

#### 19 How do you define success...and how do you measure up to your own definition?

- **TRAPS:** Seems like an obvious enough question. Yet many executives, unprepared for it, fumble the ball.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Give a well-accepted definition of success that leads right into your own stellar collection of achievements.
- Example: “The best definition I've come across is that success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal.”

“As to how I would measure up to that definition, I would consider myself both successful and fortunate...”(Then summarize your career goals and how your achievements have indeed represented a progressive path toward realization of your goals.)

#### 20 Are you willing to travel/ relocate? Or Do you have a geographical preference?

Do not give your answer in “yes” or “no” mode. Tell them that if your job demands travel (even extensive) or relocation you are ready to do that.

#### 21 What is your single most important achievement?

That you have proved yourself to be responsible, dependable and sincere person to your teachers and parents. Answer may vary from person to person. But you must prepare answer to this question beforehand.

#### 22 How do you handle tension/ stress?

You enjoy tension. If you are tensed you work better and you make lesser number of mistakes. However, you do not get stressed till the work is over. Once you complete your work you relieve your stress by playing games, reading books, or listening to music.

#### 23 Tell me about something you did - or failed to do - that you now feel a little ashamed of.

- **TRAPS:** Some interviewers ask this question on the chance you admit to something, but if not, at least they'll see how you think on your feet.
- Some unprepared candidates, flustered by this question, unburden themselves of guilt from their personal life or career, perhaps expressing regrets regarding a parent, spouse, child, etc. All such answers can be disastrous.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- As with faults and weaknesses, never confess a regret.
- But don't seem as if you're stonewalling either.
- **Best strategy:** Say you harbor no regrets, then add a principle or habit you practice regularly for healthy human relations.
- **Example:**
- Pause for reflection, as if the question never occurred to you.
- Then say, "You know, I really can't think of anything."
- (Pause again, then add): "I would add that as a general management principle, I've found that the best way to avoid regrets is to avoid causing them in the first place.
- I practice one habit that helps me a great deal in this regard. At the end of each day, I mentally review the day's events and conversations to take a second look at the people and developments I'm involved with and do a double check of what they're likely to be feeling.

Sometimes I'll see things that do need more follow-up, whether a pat on the back, or maybe a five minute chat in someone's office to make sure we're clear on things...whatever."

#### 24 Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?

"At this level, money is the least important thing to me in comparison to a job. I want to get a job that will help me to develop professional knowledge, skills and appropriate attitude. I want a job that will help me to be an effective team player and teach me the ethical practices. I believe that money is the obvious outcome if I can perform. Hence it is not in my priority list."

#### 25 What are your outside interests?

- **TRAPS:** You want to be a well-rounded, not a drone. But your potential employer would be even more turned off if he suspects that your heavy extracurricular load will interfere with your commitment to your work duties.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Try to gauge how this company's culture would look upon your favorite outside activities and be guided accordingly.
- You can also use this question to shatter any stereotypes that could limit your chances. If you're young, mention an activity that connotes wisdom and institutional trust, such as serving on the board of a popular charity.
- But above all, remember that your employer is hiring you for what you can do for him, not your family, yourself or outside organizations, no matter how admirable those activities may be.

#### 26 Give me an example of your creativity (analytical skill...managing ability, etc.)

- **TRAPS:** The worst offense here is simply being unprepared. Your hesitation may seem as if you're having a hard time remembering the last time you were creative, analytical, etc.
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Remember from Question 2 that you should commit to memory a list of your greatest and most recent achievements, ever ready on the tip of your tongue.
- If you have such a list, it's easy to present any of your achievements in light of the quality



the interviewer is asking about. For example, the smashing success you orchestrated at last year's Tech Fest could be used as an example of creativity, or analytical ability, or your ability to manage.

**27 Who has inspired you in your life and why?**

- **TRAPS:** The two traps here are unpreparedness and irrelevance. If you grope for an answer, it seems you've never been inspired. If you ramble about your high school basketball coach, you've wasted an opportunity to present qualities of great value to the company.
- Have a few heroes in mind, from your mental "Board of Directors" - Leaders in your industry, from history or anyone else who has been your mentor. Be prepared to give examples of how their words, actions or teachings have helped inspire your achievements. As always, prepare an answer which highlights qualities that would be highly valuable in the position you are seeking.

**28 What is the last book you read and how did it affect you?**

- **BEST ANSWER:**
- Unless you're up for a position in academia or as book critic for The New York Times, you're not expected to be a literary lion. But it wouldn't hurt to have read a handful of the most recent and influential books in your profession and on management. Consider it part of the work of your job search to read up on a few of these leading books. But make sure they are quality books that reflect favorably upon you, nothing that could even remotely be considered superficial. Finally, add a recently published bestselling work of fiction by a world-class author and you'll pass this question with flying colors.

**Additional Questions**

**1 What would your references say about you?**

Your references would be your teachers at this stage. You can ask some teachers of your department what they would say. However, mention that you are attentive, eager to learn new things and is a team player.

**2 Do you make mistakes?**

**Give them true answer.**

Obviously you make mistakes. However, you learn from mistakes so that they are not repeated.

**3 Will you share your mistakes with others?**

**Give them true answer**

Yes. If the mistakes are not shared they can be repeated by you or by others. Sharing reduces the chance and ways to avoid the mistakes can be explored.

**4 What makes you mad?**

I always take objective view of any action/behaviour/ incident. Anger is an irrational reaction. I never get mad.

**5 Tell me about a recent incident that really annoyed you.**

Why you would be annoyed. Annoyance is a kind of serious weakness. You view incidents objectively and approach it analytically for the best possible outcome.

**6 What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?**

"If an accomplishment of mine can make certain positive impact on others' life I put my best effort. I do not know the limit, however more is the challenge greater is my effort to overcome it."

**7 Which two or three of your accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?**

Give some instances where your accomplishment will do certain benefits for other people.

**8 What subjects did you like most/ least? Why?**

Prepare a subject from higher semester discussing with teacher.

**9 What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?**

Teambuilding, cooperation, sharing resources.

**10 In what kind of working environment are you most comfortable?**

I like the kind of working environment that encourages performance.

**11 Which two or three things are most important to you in your job?**

Duties, responsibilities, accountability.

**12 How will you settle a job related dispute between two individuals working with you?**

I will work my best so that such disputes never occur. In a performing team such disputes are unwanted. However, in case of a dispute I will identify the nature of the dispute. Analyse its effect on team performance and take decision which gives maximum benefit to the team.

**13 What do you find difficult in work /life / relationships?**

Being a responsible person is never easy. As afresh aspirant I do not have experience of professional life. However, I balance my study/ college life, family and relationships assigning priorities and importance of the events. Every incidence can be measured depending on its impact and degree of responsibilities associated. If you can rank the incidences it is not difficult to balance everything.

**14 Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and his subordinates.**

Such relationship should be based upon mutual trust, cooperation, and sharing of common goals.

**15 If you won \$10 million lottery, would you still work?**

- **TRAPS:** Your totally honest response might be, "Hell, no, are you serious?" That might be so, but any answer which shows you as fleeing work if given the chance could make you seem lazy. On the other hand, if you answer, "Oh, I'd want to keep doing exactly what I am doing, only doing it for your firm," you could easily inspire your interviewer to silently mutter to himself, "Yeah, sure. Gimme a break."
- **BEST ANSWER:**
- This type of question is aimed at getting at your bedrock attitude about work and how you feel about what you do. Your best answer will focus on your positive feelings.
- Example: "After I floated down from cloud nine, I think I would still hold my basic belief that achievement and purposeful work are essential to a happy, productive life. After all, if money alone bought happiness, then all rich people would be all happy, and that's not true.
- "I love the work I do, and I think I'd always want to be involved in my career in some fashion. Winning the lottery would make it more fun because it would mean having more flexibility, more options...who knows?"
- "Of course, since I can't count on winning, I'd just as soon create my own destiny by sticking with what's worked for me, meaning good old reliable hard work and a desire to achieve. I think those qualities have built many more fortunes than all the lotteries put together."

### **Closing the Interview**

- When the interviewer is done gathering the information that is needed, he or she will ask if you have anything to add, or if you have any questions.
- This is your opportunity to mentally review your inventory of skills and make sure that you have communicated everything that you wanted to.
- If any of your questions have not been addressed during the course of the interview, now is the time to ask them.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.
- If the interviewer offers his/her hand, shake it firmly. Otherwise, it is fine to offer yours first.

### **If the interviewer asks “Is there anything that you want to ask?”**

*Never say that there is nothing you want to ask or like simply “No sir”... It shows your lack of interest in the job.*

### **What you can ask the interviewer**

- Do not ask queries related to your salary, vacation, bonuses, or other benefits.
- This information should be discussed at the time of getting your joining letter.
  - Could you tell me the growth plans and goals for the company?
  - What skills are important to be successful in this position?
  - What's the criteria your company uses for performance appraisal?
  - With whom will I be interacting most frequently and what are their responsibilities and the nature of our interaction?
  - What are the most significant factors affecting your business today? How have changes in technology most affected your business today?
  - How has your business/industry been affected by the recession?
  - How has your company grown or changed in the last couple of years?
  - What future direction do you see the company taking?
  - Where is the greatest demand for your services or product?
  - How do you differ from your competitors?
  - How much responsibility will I be given in this position?
  - Can you tell me more about the training program?
  - How much travel is normally expected?
  - Will I work independently or as part of a team?