

## **Chapter 16**

# **INTERVIEW SKILLS**

### ***Chapter Outline***

**16.1 Meaning and purpose**

**16.2 Art of interviewing and types of interviews**

**16.3 General interviewing strategies/ Essential features**

**16.4 Interview Styles**

**16.5 Guidelines for the Interviewee**

**16.6 Guidelines for the Interviewer**

## **16.1 MEANING AND PURPOSE**

An interview means a face to face interaction between the interviewer and the candidate/candidates so as to obtain desired information from him/them. It can also be defined as a way of exchanging meanings between individuals by using a common set of symbols. Interviews generally need a preparation. Job interviews seem frightening, even if the individual is well prepared. Interviews have a definite structure. Clear communication should take place during an interview. All interviews have a definite purpose familiar to the interviewer and the candidate/interviewee.

All the time in life, some interviews take place, at home, at workplace, at social gatherings and so on. Any conversation has some elements of an interview. Unknowingly, we develop interview skills. Our formal education also gives us some skills to face an interview. However, job interviews are very competitive and made for the fittest. Only the fittest survives competitive interviews especially when the Indian economy is in a downturn. Hence the added importance of training in interview skills. Interview is a two-way process, equally important to the interviewee (candidate) and the interviewer (recruiter). It is an opportunity to tell an employer what you have accomplished and how your accomplishment will help the employer.

## **16.2 ART OF INTERVIEWING AND TYPES OF INTERVIEWS**

The art of interviewing is not about getting a job; it's about getting the right job - making sure that you are as well suited for the job as the job and organization are for you.

Before going to the battlefield, a crystal clear understanding of the ground realities is imperative. The interviewee needs to be well acquainted with all types of interviews so that accordingly he/she can modify his/her strategy to come out of the interview as a winner.

**Informational Interview** - This is a key research and networking technique when you are exploring organizations potential positions, or even a new career path. These interviews are about getting information, not getting a job. They are about networking and making contacts. Typically, they are held with just one other person, rather than a group of people.

**Screening Interview:** This is used to determine the match between the skills and expertise of the candidate and the requirement of available position. This type of interview is often used to screen people out of consideration for the position, rather than to select the perfect candidate. One should avoid negative or superfluous information as it can be distracting and make it difficult to get beyond this interview. Sometimes you may have more than one screening interview, especially if the first interview was via phone, and if the position is particularly strategic or high-level.

**Media or Personality Interview:** This type of interview is conducted by Newspaper, Magazine, Radio and Television where their representative seeks views and details of celebrities and popular persons regarding their personal life or their opinion on particular subject. This is the interview where interviewee is somewhat free from the clutches of interviewer.

**Admission Interview:** This interview is conducted by good school to see the student's attitude and aptitude towards particular course. In this interview aspirants leaning, hobbies interest and over-all personality is considered pertain to the course he has applied. Some of the Institutions conduct parents interview to see and judge upbringing of the student.

**Selection or Job Interview** - This is the interview you will face if you have determined that an organization and job is right for you, and the organization representatives have determined that you are an excellent candidate. You will be one of a select few to go through this interview. You will typically be interviewing with the person who will be your manager, as well as others. Your goal, naturally, is to demonstrate via brief vignettes or success stories your accomplishments, and you are fit for the position. It is also an opportunity to express your personality and fit for the organizational or departmental culture.

### **Stress Interview/Psychological Interview**

This type of interview is typically used for jobs where high degree of stress will be encountered regularly. The interviewers sometimes rely upon rudeness, sarcasm, or outright

hostility to provoke a response. The basic objective is to assess how well an interviewee deals with unexpected and / or stressful situations and to evaluate how well an interviewee can work and communicate. The questions in stress interview is asked, are quite intrigue and can create emotional disturbance on the interviewee.

### **Some Questions you may be asked during a Stress Interview**

- Your grades are pretty good- why didn't you choose a better university?
- Why didn't you choose a proper degree?
- Why did you change course after your graduation?
- You say you expect Rs.15, 000 - do you really deserve that or is it just wishful thinking.. Most of the staff you'll be dealing with is men - how is a young girl like you going to cope with them?
- I'm not sure that you're up to doing this job
- Why are you wearing this horrible color shirt/ dress?
- You do not seem to have traveled much; I don't think you are fit for this job.
- Your communication skills are miserable, how will you convince the others?

**Promotion Interview:** Organizations time to time conduct promotion interview with the objective to move up desirous and deserving employees to the higher strata of the organization. It is entirely different from recruitment interview as the interviewee is quite familiar with the organization. He has to justify his candidature with support of his achievement and development during the particular course of period. The panel of interview board generally comprises the executive director of the organization. Sometimes it is done on the basis of the seniority of the candidate.

**Reprimand Interview:** Its literal meaning is to warn and express disapproval. It is conducted in the case of some blunder done by the employee to rebuke him or to express sharp dissatisfaction with his behavior. The objective of this interview is to correct the ways of

employee and mention that organization is taking notice of his behavior. This is appropriate in case of long absence of any of the employee without giving reason, insubordination, inter-personal problem, poor-performance and other ill-conduct. The ultimate motive of this type of interview is to correct the attitude and performance of the employee and send a message to all the employees.

**Exit Interview:** This type of interview is conducted at the time when employee is retiring or resigning from the job. The objective of this kind of interview is to get the right feedback. This way company get the idea of the reason of leaving the organization and get the clear idea about its flaws too. Those employee especially who are resigning they are asked to give suggestion also to the organization. This is one of the good strategies to retain the employee and maintain the bond between employee and employer. Though, all the companies don't conduct it. There is specific format of the exit interview as it is generally conducted in written format. This format include: Personal Details of Employee

- Service and Experience
- Reasons for leaving the job
- Comments on work atmosphere, policies and practices.
- Suggestions for improvement.

**Mock Interview:** This is imaginary interview, conducted by educational Institutions to prepare their student's for real interview. Basically the students who are not aware or having fear of placement interview get an idea to face interview. After conducting the interview they release results too. Generally all the candidates get feedback from the expert on their level of performance. The procedure and atmosphere is created to match up it with real interview.

### 16.3 GENERAL INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES/ ESSENTIAL FEATURES

**Keep in mind what the interview means to the employer.** As the interviewers are taking time away from their busy regular schedule. The applicant should reach on time, express his appreciation for their consideration, and keep the conversation to the point.

**Focus on the needs of the interviewer.** As an applicant you should focus on solving their problems; they are not here to address your issues. This is not the time to talk about the salary you want, the flex time you need, or your eventual goals. Instead, focus on the organization's goals, vision, and how you can help the organization succeed.

**Be truthful.** Neither undersells nor oversells you. Both are dishonest. Your goal is to find the perfect fit for where you will most successful.

**Express interest in the organization.** Make sure you have researched the organization well in advance, and have intelligent questions prepared about the organization and the areas in which they work.

**This is neither a test nor a jury.** View the interviewers as friends with whom you are discussing something of interest to all of you. Do not be either defensive or submissive. Remember, you are offering as much to the organization as they are offering you.

**Your "homework assignment"** Before and after the interview deliberate upon the top two or three criteria the successful candidate needs to have to get selected for the job. Be sure to include this in your follow-up and thank you letter.

### 16.4 INTERVIEW STYLES:

**Traditional** - These interview style use broad, open-ended questions such as "Tell me about yourself", "Why do you want to work for this organization?" etc. Success in this interview is based more on your ability to communicate and answer effectively rather than on the content of your answers, or even your skill set. The goal here is primarily to establish rapport with the employer.

**Action or Audition** – This interview places the job applicant in a real world situation to determine how he/she would actually perform on the job.

**Group** - When all applicants are interviewed simultaneously, competing for the same position it is known as group interview. In this format, all candidates appear to be equally qualified, but the employer wants to get a sense of your leadership potential and style, as well

as your personality. To perform well in this setting, observe the interviewer carefully and try to determine what he or she is after. Treat all participants with respect, but try to take the lead without seeming bossy or argumentative. Don't enter into any power battles, which will make you seem uncooperative and immature.

**Stress** - This is a deliberate attempt to test how you handle yourself under difficult or even unpleasant situations, used to determine if you "have the mettle" to join the company or organization. You may be kept waiting, or be greeted by long silences during the interview. The interviewers might be sarcastic or argumentative. These are all attempts to make you lose your cool. Remain calm and patient. Keep in mind that it's a game, rather than personal.

**Behavioral** - These days, many employers are recognizing the drawbacks of a traditional interview, so behavioral interviews are continuing to gain popularity. A behavioral interview is based on the premise that past behavior is the best indicator of future performance. A behavioral interview will seek to probe your answers carefully, getting deeper into the story than you might expect.

You will recognize a behavioral interview when you hear questions beginning with: "Give me a specific example of a time when you...", "Describe a situation when you...", "Tell me about a..."

When answering these questions, describe the situation, discuss the actions you took, describe outcomes from your actions, and explain what you learned from the ordeal. Be specific and detailed in your responses. Expect several follow up questions during this type of interview. Preparation is essential for these interviews. Prepare several narratives about situations in which you excelled, had significant impact, or else had a negative experience from which you learned important lessons.

Finally, if you are not selected for the job, send a follow-up letter or call, thanking them for their consideration and bringing them into your network.



### 16.5 GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE



1. The interviewee should be dressed formally, and not casually. Have a pleasing appearance as the candidate's personality is a significant part of the communication.
2. Always carry an extra CV, a notepad to write on, a pen, and all essential things required in an interview.
3. Practice, practice and practice in advance. Prepare and rehearse for the unexpected also.
4. Research a lot about the organization for which you are being interviewed.
5. As soon as the interview gets over, pen down the name of the interviewer, your strengths and weaknesses, answers to questions raised by you during the interview and the feedback of the interviewer.
6. Be punctual. Try reaching before time for the job interview.



7. Do not indulge in a fight or argument with the interviewer.
8. Answer the questions specifically, truly and undoubtedly.
9. Be courteous and sophisticated during an interview.
10. Just “be yourself”. Do not boast about yourself. The interviewer is smart enough to judge the candidate’s intelligence and aptness for the job.
11. Do not make negative statements or comments about your past employer.
12. Your body language should be positive during the interview, i.e., maintain an eye-to-eye contact with the interviewer, sit in well balanced and confident posture, do not lean on the table, do not yawn, smile when appropriate, etc.

## **16.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWER**

1. The interviewer should be an active listener. He should not interrupt unnecessarily.
2. The interviewer should be considerate enough. Even if the interviewer does not agree with the interviewee, he must respect the latter’s feelings.
3. The interviewer should be friendly and understanding. He should begin the interview in a friendly manner, some friendly conversation and then show concern in family background, hobbies, etc. This will make the interviewee more relaxed and comfortable.
4. The interviewer should restrain to the time allotted. He shouldn’t indulge in arguments unnecessarily. He should try to be precise.
5. The interviewer must be thoroughly prepared for the questions that are likely to be asked. He should be a good planner.
6. The interviewer must focus attention on the interviewee. He should use positive gestures when conducting the interview.
7. Encourage/invite questions from the interviewee. Ensure that the interviewee clarifies the question he has. When selected a candidate should not feel he was not told about a certain aspect of the job.
8. Avoid distraction in the interview area. Ensure that there is no or minimal distraction where the interview is being conducted. A phone ringing all the time in the background can distract the interviewer and interviewee.
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# **JOB INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:**\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:**\_\_\_\_\_

All applicants are expected to have an appropriate cover letter and resume. Interviewer: Please place an X in the appropriate box and make comments that would be helpful for the interviewee in improving their interviewing skills.

<b>APPEARANCE</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Superior</b>
Dress					
Grooming					
Body Language					
Eye Contact					

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Superior</b>
Assertive					
Achievement-oriented					
Cooperative					
Responsible					
Outgoing					
Open					
Dedicated					
Poise					
Maturity					
Professional					
Verbal/Persuasive					
Ability to learn					

<b>GOALS/PERCEPTION OF SELF</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Superior</b>
Realistic appraisal of self					
Reason for interest in field					
Realistic career goals					