



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (KAS – 301)



UNIT – 4 TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TOPIC : JOB INTERVIEW

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INTERVIEW

- It is an interaction between two or more persons for a specific purpose, in which the interviewer asks the interviewee specific questions in order to assess his/her suitability for recruitment, admission, or promotion.
- It is a systematized method of contact with a person to know his/her views and is regarded as the most important method of data collection.

- According to **Scott and others**, “an interview is a purposeful exchange of ideas, the answering of questions and communication between two or more persons”.
- According to **Gary Dessler**, “An interview is a procedure designed to obtain information from a person’s oral response to oral inquiries.”
- According to **Thill and Bovee**, “An interview is any planned conversation with a specific purpose involving two or more people”.
- According to **Dr. S. M. Amunuzzaman**, “Interview is a very systematic method by which a person enters deeply into the life of even a stranger and can bring out needed information and data for the research purpose.”

1. OBJECTIVES OF INTERVIEWS

1. Verifies the information obtained through application form and tests.
2. Helps obtain additional information from the applicant otherwise not available.
3. Gives the candidate necessary facts and information about the job and the organisation.
4. Helps establish mutual understanding between the company and the candidate and build the company's image.

2. TYPES OF INTERVIEW

2.1 Individual Interview :

A “personal interview” this is the most common type of interview and is usually held face to face at the company’s offices. The approximate length of the interview in order to prepare; they range from 30 to 90 minutes. Shorter interviews will mean delivering concise answers that are to the point. Longer interviews allow you more time to go into detail and support your answers with examples.

2.2 Stress Interview :

This method of interview is rare and involves the interviewer baiting you to see your response. The aim is to highlight your weaknesses and see how you react under pressure. Tactics can vary from constant interruptions and odd silences to provoking and challenging interrogation-type questions used to push you to your limits. It is worth asking yourself do you want to work for an organisation that is willing to go this far even before an offer is put on the table?

2.3 Task Oriented or Testing Interview:

These interviews are structured in a way that allows you to demonstrate your creative and analytical abilities in problem solving through varied tasks or exercises. It may include a short test to evaluate your technical knowledge and skills. Other tasks can be delivering a presentation to a group to determine your communication skills. Relaxing is key!

2.4 Small Group or Committee Interview :

These interviews mean meeting a panel of decision makers at once. This can be daunting and intimidating if you are not well prepared in advance. More than one interviewer means efficiency and an opportunity for different opinions of the same answer. Try to build a rapport with each member of the panel and be sure to make eye contact with everyone not just the person asking the question. It is also worth trying to find out the names and roles of those on the panel.

2.5 Behavioral-Based Interview :

It is also known as Critical Behavioral Interviewing (CBI), the theory is that past performance in a similar situation is the best predictor of future performance. This method of interview probes much deeper than the usual interviewing techniques. Have specific examples ready that highlight your attributes in core areas such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication, creativity, flexibility and organisational skills. Be structured in your answers and explain your examples in terms of the situation, the task, the action you took, and the outcome achieved.

2.6. The Second or On-Site Interview :

The second interview means you have been successful on the first occasion and they would like to know more. These interviews can be longer, some lasting half or a full-day. They often mean meeting three to five people which can include Human Resources, the line manager, office staff and the head of department. Be 'on the ball' and show enthusiasm! Try to find out as much as possible about the agenda for the day as this will go some way to making you feel less anxious about the whole process. This is usually the last stage before an offer of employment is made

2.7. Screening or Telephone Interview:

Phone interviews are proving to be a more cost effective way to screen candidates. Slots range from 10 to 30 minutes. Prepare for it as if it is an open book exam. Make sure you have your CV, the job description, list of references and prepared answers noted in front of you. A large part of communication is visual and as they can't see your body language, it critical to have positive and sharp answers delivered with enthusiasm. Don't forget to ask what the next step will be.

2.8. Videoconferencing interview :

- With hiring becoming increasingly global, many companies especially multinationals conduct videoconferencing interviews to select candidates for jobs. Generally when hiring for senior positions from countries across the world, companies may use this mode of interviewing. Nevertheless, it can be used for recruiting within the same country as well. If the interviewers inform the candidates about the videoconferencing facility they have arranged in the candidates' institute or campus, they can use such facility.

3. Stages of Interview

- **Appraisal of résumé** :Some companies may shortlist candidates on the basis of projects they have completed, specific courses they have done, internships they have taken up, etc.
- **Tests** :Companies conduct aptitude tests (written/online) comprising sections such as technical, quantitative, verbal, reasoning, psychometric, etc.
- **Group discussions**: Most recruiters use this as the second stage after the aptitude tests. Some companies may conduct group activities as well to assess the candidates' personality, leadership skills, knowledge, communication skills, etc.
- **Presentations**: A few companies may ask the candidates to present themselves in two or three minutes in order to shortlist.
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- **Face-to-face interview** :This may be the final round of an interview. Many companies these days give the candidate a short or long case containing a hypothetical problem in the business/ industrial context, ask the candidate to present the case, and suggest a few alternative solutions in a limited time.
- **Videoconferencing interview** :This could be a technical-cum-HR interview.
- **Negotiations** :This stage comes after the candidate has been selected. The company makes a job offer out to the candidate after discussing the candidate's expectations about salary and other benefits.
- **Medical test**: Once the job offer is confirmed, the candidates may be asked to go for a medical examination. This is done by the companies that offer the benefit of medical claims. Since the amount that can be claimed is substantial, the company ensures that the candidate is suffering from a major ailment. This is also done to ensure that the candidate is not suffering from any condition that would prohibit him/her from performing the duties required of him/her.

4. Skills and attributes most employers look for

- **Technical skills:** The candidate's subject knowledge suitable for the post he/she has applied for. For example, for a 'programmer-analyst trainee' the company may look for the candidate's ability to plan, develop, test, and document computer programs, and apply knowledge of computer techniques and systems. Interview Situation 4 in the CD demonstrates the importance of in-depth subject knowledge.
- **Analytical skills:** The candidate's ability to examine and assess a situation, look at it from different perspectives, improve upon, and streamline it. For example, there may be a complex process that one may be asked to analyze critically.
- **Career objective:** The candidate's goals and aspirations—what the candidate wants to pursue in his/her life and whether he/she is clear about it, whether the candidate's background and aptitude matches his/her career objectives.

- **Mental agility:** The candidate's ability to quickly grasp things/mental alertness. Communication skills: The candidate's skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Interpersonal skills: The candidate's skills to build relationships with colleagues, seniors, and subordinates, and ability to move with team members.
- **Flexibility/adaptability:** The candidate's multi tasking skills or ability to adapt himself/herself to the changing situations or environment and handle multiple concurrent projects. The candidate's ability to adapt himself/herself to culturally diverse work environment.
- **Management/leadership skills:** The candidate's ability to plan, organize, motivate, inspire, manage, and lead the colleagues to achieve the organizational goal.
- **Creativity:** The candidate's out-of-the-box thinking and ability to innovate. For example, if others suggest imposing fine for an employee for violating a rule and you suggest appointing him as the guardian of rules, and justify your solution, you are creative.

- **Positive/can-do attitude:** The candidate's positive way of looking at things and people. For example, if one thinks of and projects good aspects of one's college/organization/parents/employers/job, one has a positive attitude.
- **Social skills:** The demeanour in public or with strangers/employers or how a person conducts himself/herself with others—the way one meets and greets others, stands, sits or moves in front of others, shakes hands, reacts to opinions, eats or drinks, etc.
- **Honesty and integrity:** The candidate's candidness and trustworthiness
Determination/steadfastness: The candidate's ability to accomplish the given assignment despite several odds. Professionalism: The candidate's maturity and fairness in handling business activities
- **Inclination for learning:** The candidate's willingness to learn with an open mind

5. Preparing for interviews

- The key to success in an interview is not one's experience, grades, extracurricular activities, but one's attitude.
- To rise above others with better experience, grades, or skills, a highly positive work attitude is needed.
- The way most employers differentiate among candidates at the entry level is by the candidates' attitude towards work.
- They look for those who have the 'can-do' attitude and are sincerely willing to put forth their very best effort.

5.1 Preparation of résumé

- A résumé is a written record of a candidate's education, and past and present occupation, prepared when applying for a job.
- This document enables the employer to judge the candidate's potential fit for the post.
- The résumé should be modified as per the requirements of the job and the organization.

5.2 Personal attributes

- One needs to analyse one's own hard and soft skills, strengths, weaknesses, attitude, likes, and dislikes.
- At least two unique strengths and weaknesses must be distinguished. For example, if you think of your hard work and commitment as your strengths, many candidates may have this. On the other hand, your passion for a particular job, your strong foothold in certain areas of study and research, etc., may differ from others.
- Likewise, being very sensitive or short tempered may be a weakness common with many candidates, whereas taking many responsibilities at one time and struggling with the same need not necessarily be.
- Hence, analyse yourself carefully and note down your important strengths and weaknesses. Think whether you look at things in a positive perspective or negative perspective.
- If you have a negative attitude, try to change yourself. Knowing yourself or introspecting your qualities and skills is a very important step in the preparation of your job interviews.

5.3 Mock interview

- A mock interview is more than just a chance to work out the interview jitters.
- It is an opportunity to practise interviewing technique and answers live.
- It is also a chance to hear constructive feedback from someone who can guide towards improving the style and presentation during the real interview.
- Just one mock interview may bring about a marked improvement in the interview skills. Ideally, the mock session should be videotaped, and thereby one can have two opinions—the mock interviewer's and one's own.
- Go through at least one mock interview. For maximum effectiveness, review your answers and then go through a second mock interview.
- This will give you confidence in your first real interview.

5.4 Knowing the prospective employer

You need to know the company that you wish to apply/ have applied for. You can collect information about the following factors:

- Age of the company
- Competitors within the industry— both national and international
- Reputation/where it stands in the industry
- Divisions and subsidiaries
- Size of organization
- Provision for career growth
- Mission, culture, and values
- Services or products
- Growth pattern
- Locations/length of time there
- Sales/assets/earnings
- Ongoing projects

You can collect the information through the company website, annual report, CD-ROMs, brochures, columns/articles in newspapers and magazines, personal contacts, if any, in the company, etc. The depth of information that is collected beforehand is far greater than that provided in the pre-placement talks or at the interview.

5.5 Awareness of job description

- you need to acquire a clear idea about the subject knowledge and skills that the job demands and also the knowledge of the type of activities you will be required to do.
- Such exercise will enable you to match the requirements with what you have in hand. If necessary, you can seek clarification from the person concerned at the company. You need to quickly go through the contents of basic courses done in the college.
- The job description generally gives an idea about which subjects you need to refresh in mind.
- Interviewers generally ask very basic questions (e.g., What is an array? What is the difference between RAM and ROM?). Knowing your main subjects well before an interview gives you immense confidence, which in turn leads to a better performance.
- Examples corroborating skills Besides testing the technical skills, the interviewers may also assess the candidate's team skills, decision-making ability, leadership skills, problem-solving skills, etc. Hence, pick up at least four or five such examples that show the above-mentioned qualities. Then prepare the narration of these examples using the STAR (situation, task, action, and result) approach. The STAR approach provides the outline for the answers. Preparing examples saves time and makes one feel more confident while answering behavioural questions. The STAR approach has been explained in the Students' Resource.

5.6 Appropriate dressing :

Campus fashions and work fashions are two different worlds. You should be doing the talking, and not your clothes. Select conservative, good-quality clothes. They should be neat, clean, and ironed. Make sure your shoes are conservative, clean, and polished. Arrange all your documents systematically in a neat folder and carry it with you.

5.7 Questioning the employer Interviewers expect you to come in with a working knowledge of the company as well as with a list of questions. When you have really done your homework you may not be able to think of any questions because you already have the company's history. Still, make up some questions ahead of time to ask during the interview. They can be based on the job that you are applying for or your prospects in that job.

5.8 Memorizing your résumé Imagine the embarrassment if your interviewer asks you to elaborate on the project which you have done during your course of study, and you fumble. For every item on your résumé, try to have a paragraph's worth of information in addition to what is already said; even better, try to think of a way in which each item illustrates one of your particular strengths or weaknesses. If you are too nervous to remember everything, it is all right to hold a copy of your résumé in your hand to jog your memory.

5.9 Punctuality :The waiting room is your initial face-to-face connection point with your potential employer. Always arrive at least ten to fifteen minutes early. This will give you the time necessary to do a quick mental review before the actual interview. Have a glass of water to avoid the 'cotton mouth' syndrome. Check in with the secretary or administrator. Ask how long the interview is scheduled for, so that you have an idea of how much time you will have.

5.10 Relaxing the nerves By the time the interview day comes closer, you should be set. Get a good night's sleep, eat well, and take a relaxing walk beforehand. And remember, it is just a job interview. If you do not get it, it is not the end of the world—take it as something better being