

# Interview Tips

Dec 11, 2021

# Policies for Today's Session

- **Will share slides with you**
  - Please try to take notes to add many details to the slides
  - Taking notes makes your brain active
- **Take it seriously and concentrate**
  - I took the time to collect those info and make the slides – I hope you take it seriously as well
- **Think and participate proactively**
  - Listen carefully and write down your questions
  - There'll be a Q&A session later where some of your questions will be answered

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# Interview and Hiring Needs

- **Let's say there is an opening**
  - Hiring needs: can refer to Job Description if available
- **Interviews are aimed at collecting info about hiring needs**
  - Everything happened during the interview process is related to hiring needs
  - Technical Interview: to see whether you have the fundamental background / ability for this role
  - Behavior Interview: to see if you have great “soft skills” and whether colleagues like you

# Important General Tips

- An interview is an **interactive** conversation
  - Make sure you understand what the interview is talking about. If not, **don't be afraid to ask**. Never pretend to understand sth you don't really understand.
    - “Sorry I'm not sure I understand this correctly. Do you mean XXX?”
    - “Could you please elaborate on [sth you don't understand]?”
    - “Could you give me an example of [sth you don't understand]?”
  - Make sure the interviewer understand what you are talking about; **always pause to check with the interviewer politely** to make sure he/she is following you.
    - “I think the key point here is definitely XXX. If you are interested, please let me know, and we can go into more details.” (This could also help you to guide the conversation towards the things you prepared and are familiar with)
    - “I think we covered many things just now. I'll pause here, and happy to answer any questions you have before moving on”

# Important General Tips

- Be familiar/proficient/hands-on with **the very basic things**. Otherwise, you'll leave the interviewer with a bad impression
  - “This person cannot even write a Python/C++ for loop proficiently in the interview. How can I hire him to be my quant?”
  - “I cannot understand very well about what the person is talking about. How can I work with him on a day-to-day basis?”
  - “This person cannot explain to me what Brownian Motion and Gamma is. How can hire him to be my option pricing quant?”

# Important General Tips

- Be honest about what you know and understand
  - Don't pretend to know something you don't know
  - Don't pretend to understand something you don't understand
  - If asked about something you haven't learned
    - "Sorry I haven't learned about [some topic]? But I'll try my best if you really want me to answer this."
  - If asked some questions to which you don't know the solutions
    - "To be honest, I don't know the answer now. But I'll try my best to show you my thought process and solve it."
    - "I don't have many thoughts on my side. Could you please give me some hints?"
    - "Actually, I'm not sure about the solution. Is it related to [your guess / something you know]?"
  - Note: The interview is trying to see how you approach the problem instead of just giving out the correct answer. If you don't really know or if you are not sure, just try to tell him/her what you know. This will help!

# Important General Tips

- Speak different languages to audience with different backgrounds
  - Audience with a technical background (e.g., financial math major)
  - Audience from a non-technical background (e.g., history major)
  - Different levels of audience
    - Analyst/associate: can explain in very details
    - MD/Partner: high-level, short, concise, to-the-point

# Interview Type

- **Technical Interview**
  - (explicitly) to assess your math/coding skills
  - (implicitly) to assess your communication skills
- **Behavior Interview**
  - to assess your interest / communication skills / collaboration skills / personality / cultural fit / skills dealing with different scenarios

# Technical Interview Tips

- **Technical Interview**
  - Resume Questions
  - Math / Coding Questions
- **Resume Questions**
  - e.g., walk me through your resume
    - Tips: proficient / familiar, short & concise
  - e.g., a question for a given experience / project
    - Tips: (top-down approach) start with a high-level summary, and check go into details anytime if the interviewer is interested
    - Tips: (be fully prepared) what / how / why / result / analysis / limitations / future improvements
- **Math / Coding Questions**
  - e.g., a probability question / LeetCode problem
    - Fully understand – info / explanation / example
    - Show the interviewer how you approach the problem
    - Ask for hints when you don't have any clue

# Behavior Interview Tips

- **Behavior Interview**

- Every question is aimed at collection some info about the fit between your background, the team, and the hiring needs
- Question: "What are you interested in / passionate about?"  
• Info: to see whether your interest is aligned with what the team is doing
- Question: "How do you see yourself in 2 / 5 / 10 years?"  
• Info: to see whether your interest is aligned with what the team is doing
- Question: "What kind of working environment do you like?"  
• Info: to see whether the environment you like to work in is aligned with what the team has
- Question: "Tell me about your biggest failure?"  
• Info: to see how you deal with difficulties / failures, how to solve problems.
- Question: "What will you do if you don't agree with your teammates on a specific project?"  
• Info: to see your communication / collaboration abilities.
- To be added.
- You can find many more on the internet.

## Example Interview Feedback Format

- Selected Role
- Interview Type
- Interviewed Areas & Area to Further Investigate
- Questions Asked & Interviewee Answers
- Candidate Evaluation (strengths, weaknesses)
- Character Assessment (Ratings & Details)
- Hiring Recommendation (Hire / No Hire)