Training Manual on Interview Skills

By

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1. **INTERVIEW SKILLS**

1.1. **INTRODUCTION**

Every year, thousands of fresh graduates get frustrated searching for a job. Many graduates, while well versed in their own subjects, may not even get their first foot in the door when it comes to job hunting because of their lack of preparedness. Some graduates assume that appearing for an interview doesn’t require any preparation and underestimate its importance, consequently failing to make an impression on the employer.

The main objective of the Interview Skills module is to equip teach students, graduates and job seekers with knowledge and techniques to effectively tackle the interview process, and leave a positive impression with your prospective employer by reinforcing your strength, experience and appropriateness for the job in question.

What is an interview? An interview is a conversation with a purpose – for an employer to assess the candidate and for a job seeker to convince the employers. The interview enables the employer to learn about you, your personality, social skills and general abilities, potential and whether you will fit in the organization.

For you, the interview enables you to learn more about the organization, the position, and the people within the organization. Before you go to an interview, you need to prepare thoroughly. You can succeed in interview only if you have prepared!

1.1.1. **MODULE OVERVIEW**

The Interview Skills module aims at preparing you to apply for job and face interview. The module guides you about ways to highlight your achievements and contributions to prove your value added worth to prospective employers. First, you will learn about the principles of competency-based management and the challenges of selection. Then, you will focus on preparing for interview. You will examine the different stages of interview: the opening, the exchange of information, the closing, and the follow up. Finally you will look at ways to present yourself professionally through dress code and behavior.
1.1.2. **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the Interview Skills module, you will be able to:

- Anticipate interview questions according to job requirement.
- Practice interview skills either as an observer, an interviewer, or an interviewee.
- Use mock situations to develop awareness on interviewing techniques to prepare for future interviews.

1.1.3 **WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW? WHAT IS THE INTENT OF AN INTERVIEW?**

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. The interview enables the employer to learn about you, your personality, social skills, general abilities, potential, and whether you fit in the organization.

The resume and/or the covering letter submitted prior to the interview contain relevant facts and information about your education, experience and other achievements. The interviewer may seek to verify these during the interview. They want concrete examples of how and when you have used the skills listed in your resume.

The interview enables you to learn more about the organization, the position and the people within the organization. Before you go to an interview, you must prepare thoroughly. You can succeed in interview only if you have prepared well!

Remember that you have managed to appear in interview because:

- You choose a profession/job after considering factors such as your desires, strengths, and personal choices.
- You feel that the job is aligned with the career progression you envision.
- You managed to convince the employer that you have the right profile and skill set.

Once you are called in for an interview, there is no reason why you shouldn’t be selected if you have the right focus! The right focus includes keeping in mind all the information you have processed while choosing your career path and when
preparing your resume for a specific position. You have all the information you need. Now, let’s learn how to be fully prepared to get the job.

1.2. **BEING SUCCESSFUL IN INTERVIEW**

The interview is the only chance to present yourself to your potential employer. You have very limited time for them to get to know you, understand what you can do, and be convinced you are the most suitable candidate.

In order to be successful in interviews, you have to be prepared extensively. You have to understand the position and then make sure your profile corresponds to the requirements. After you gain solid understanding of the position, you need to be well prepared to answer the questions the interviewers are likely to ask you.

1.2.1. **THREE GOLDEN RULES**

The most effective way to prepare for the interview is to remember the ‘Three Golden Rules’.

- Know the organization
- Know yourself
- Know the job

Though these golden rules seems obvious and simple, many job seekers neglect to spend time preparing for the interview to understand about the organization, the job, and themselves.

1.2.2. **KNOW THE ORGANIZATION**

In internet age, there is no excuse for you not to gather information about the organization. Try researching as much as you can about the company, such as company web site and annual reports.

Read about their founders and company hierarchy. Try to find out whether their businesses have changed.
Try to understand why the company is expanding and its role and expectation of new position. When there is a new position, companies are usually looking for someone to fill very particular role in the company.

Read any relevant press clippings. Research the company’s competitors and their products. Such research allows you to assess whether they would be a good fit for you.

1.2.3. **KNOW THE JOB**

You must fully understand the job description of an advertised job. You need to develop awareness about details such as:

- Accountability Level
- Performance Expectations
- Skills Required
- Work Environment
- Team Structure
- Management Style
- Hierarchy

You must understand how the position you will fill contributes to the company’s activities as a whole. Pay attention to the position description in the job advertisement. Research the position to find information about related positions. You may even talk to someone working in a similar job. This knowledge will help you highlight your skills that relevant to the position. When you face the interview you must be fully aware of what you’d be getting into if you get hired.

1.2.4. **KNOW YOURSELF**

Your personal attributes are extremely critical. How do you work under pressure? What strategies do you use? What are your strengths? What type of management style do you prefer working with? What keeps you motivated? How do you know when you have been successful? How did you come to choose your course of study?
Knowing yourself will help you assess if you are fit for the job, prepare for your upcoming tasks and environment you will be asked to operate in.

Always remember these three simple rules.

- Know the organization
- Know yourself
- Know the job

Follow these rules and you will be able to approach your interviews with confidence. Try to always understand the objective and the employer’s perspective. Don’t assumes and always read rules and regulations, as well as instructions very carefully before answering.

1.3. PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Once you have gathered enough information about the company, the job, and how you fit, you need to prepare for the interview questions. In interview session, you must communicate your skills and experience to the employer.

Think: Why do certain people succeed in their interviews and others do not? There are two probable reasons for their failure

- Not applying to the right job.
- Not effectively communicating their value to a prospective employer.

To assess your value for the company, recruiter may ask you questions that aim at:

- Putting you at ease and assessing your general presentation
- Revealing if you have the required skills and experience
- Highlighting your values and how you work best

Let’s look at the different questions might be asked. Then you will focus on how to answer the questions.
1.3.1. **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Interviewers use different types of questions in an interview. Good interviewers will mostly use open questions during the interview. Open questions are phrased such that you are encouraged to elaborate in your answer at some length. If interviews were to ask you only yes/no questions, it would not provide you any opportunity to express your qualities.

**Example of open ended questions:**

- Tell us about your university study.
- What appeals to you about this position?

The purpose of these questions is to get you to talk, so use the opportunity well. While answering questions, you can assess the interviewer’s style and adapt to it.

Interview questions can be categorized as,

- Traditional
- Situational
- Behavior-Based

1.3.2. **TRADITIONAL QUESTION**

These questions are used to probe essential skills and experience required by the job. They are often used as a lead in to behavior-based questions that probe more in-depth each of your competencies.

**Example**

- What is the greatest value you bring to the organization?
- Do you work well with terms?
- What is your leadership and management style?
- Where do you want to be in five years?
1.3.3. **SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS**

These questions present hypothetical circumstances and provide you the opportunity to describe an ideal situation or how you would deal with a circumstance. Interviewers often use these questions to gain an insight into your thought process. These questions may be followed up by behavior-based questions to obtain concrete examples.

**Example**

- What type of person would you hire for this position?
- What would you do with an employee who is always late for work?
- Will you stop working if you get married?
- How would you ensure long-term success with our company within your first week?

1.3.4. **BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS**

Interviewers like to identify and determine job-related success factors such as technical skills, knowledge, behavior, performance, and motivation. These questions allow interviewers to determine if you have demonstrated strengths and abilities needed for the given position. There are many behavior-based sample questions you can use to prepare for your interviews.

**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job-Related Success Factor</th>
<th>Behavior-Based Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The interviewer wants to see if you are adaptable or flexible</td>
<td>Describe a situation in which you had to adjust to change over which you had no control.</td>
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<td>Describe the most demanding manager you have overworked for and tell me how you adapted to his/her style.</td>
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<td>Sometimes we have jobs or projects that change on the way. Tell me about when this happened to you and how you dealt with it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The interviewer wants to know if you are attentive to</td>
<td>Tell me about an instance when you found errors in your work. What caused them? What did you do about them?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell me about an instance when your company benefited</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
While working on projects, it’s essential to keep track of details while still managing the big picture. Tell me about a project where you did this effectively. How did you ensure that everything got done while you focused on the larger goal?

The interviewer wants to know if you are creative or innovative

In your last position, what good idea did you come up with that was implemented?

Tell me about the most creative work-related project you have completed.

Describe an innovative idea you developed that led to the success of a company initiative.

1.3.5. **ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Answering interview questions is the most critical part of the interview. If you lack consistency in your answers, it is likely that you will not be able to demonstrate that you are the best candidate for the job. Be prepared and focus on being consistent with your massage.

As part of your description/explanation to interview questions, use concrete examples. Quantify and illustrate each skill and experience in a well structured way. When you are communicating a given skill and experience, it is best to deliver you answers using the STAR method.

Interviewers will survey your successes as well as your “defeats/failure”. Do not hide a bad experience but highlight it as a good learning opportunity and show that you have analyzed the situation and learned from it.

Avoid trailing off at the end of answers. For example, “you know”, “sort off”, etc.

Sometimes, interviewers are determined to be provocative and use stress techniques. Try not to become flustered or angry. Respond to questions positively but do not meet their aggressiveness with aggressiveness on your part.
1.4. THE STAR METHOD

The STAR method takes into consideration the following:

S Situational
T Task
A Action
R Result

You must follow the STAR method for answering questions such as:

- What are your greatest strengths?
- What is your experience with [competency, skill, function]?
- Describe a time when there were competitive threats in your marketplace and you developed actions to complete.
- Tell me a time you were unable to accomplish your goals. Why were you unsuccessful? What could you have done differently?

Example:

**Interviewer:** Describe a critical situation you have been confronted with.

**Interviewee:** (Driver): I believe the most critical situation in my career was when I was requested to drive home the staff through the students’ riots that took place last month. I thought we could avoid the crowd by taking the back streets. But we realized that the students were running up the back streets to avoid the police, seeing we could go nowhere, we stopped and took shelter in a building. After a few hours, we decided to take another chance and managed to drop the staff home safely. Some students threw rocks and our widow chipped, but if we hadn’t taken the risk that time, we would have been stuck for another 10 hours as the situation worsened.

Based on this incident, I submit my recommendations for implementing a thorough security procedure. I am happy to inform that my recommendations were implemented.
Now, let’s examine how the interviewee used the STAR method to his advantage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Situation: Unsafe driving through the streets in the middle of violent student riots.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Task: Drive the staff home safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Action: Took back streets to avoid rioters, took shelter and waited for situation to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Results: Managed to ensure safety of the staff. Implemented a thorough security procedure.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.5. ACTIVITY: PREPARING ANSWERS USING THE STAR METHOD

1.5.1. ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE:

Upon completion of this activity, you will be able to:

Use the STAR method to illustrate experience through concrete examples during your interview.

1.5.2. ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the following questions by applying the STAR method.

**Question 1: Measuring Planning and Organization Abilities**

Give me a specific example of a project you planned. How did you organize and schedule your tasks? Tell me about your action plan.

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<td>R</td>
<td>Results:</td>
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**Question 2: Measuring Persistence/Tenacity**

Describe a situation in which you were able to reach a goal because you refused to give up. How long did you persist?

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<td>R</td>
<td>Results:</td>
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Question 3: Measuring Interpersonal Skills

Describe a situation in which you wished you had acted differently. What did you do? What happened?

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<th>Situation:</th>
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<td>Action:</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Results:</td>
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Question 4: Measuring Attention to Detail

Give me an example of times when you knew things were not going well with a particular project, process, or activity. How did you know? What did you do to correct the problem?

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<th>Situation:</th>
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<td>T</td>
<td>Task:</td>
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<td>Action:</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Results:</td>
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Question 5: Measuring Problem Solving

We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a big problem. Give me an example of when you have done this.

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<th>S</th>
<th>Situation:</th>
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<td>T</td>
<td>Task:</td>
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1.6. **QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE STAR METHOD**

Some questions asked during the interview may not require a STAR method. Here are helpful tips to help you answer those effectively.

**i. What do you have to offer us?**
Answer in terms of the skills and personal qualities you have relevant to the job. You may refer to your academic qualification, relevant sections of university courses, experience in the workplace, leisure activities, or personal activities.

**ii. What has promoted you to apply for this position?**
Explain why you are interested in the organization.

If you have had a long-term interest in them, say so. If location is significant, you could mention this after talking about your interest in the firm. Focus on the qualities you will bring to them. You could mention that you see the position as offering challenge, a change to learn new things from the position. But be specific. Say which skills and abilities and what new things you are likely to be able to apply immediately!

**iii. What do you want from us?**
This is good time to talk about training or promotion opportunities and give idea of long-term career plans. There may be aspects of the organization’s work that really interest you, and you may wish to move into that area later on. The interviewer is probably trying to assess your ambitions.

**iv. Upon completing one year on the job, how would you measure your success?**
In your preparation for the interview, you would’ve developed a good understanding of the duties and personal attributes listed in the job description. Along with the goals and objectives of the organization, think about tangible results you might be able to achieve on the job that contribute to those goals and objectives. The interviewer is interested in how you go about planning and
assessing your own performance. Are there any practical ways you currently measure your success in part-time work or study, such as sales figures, grades, feedback from your supervisor?

v. **What appeals you about this job?**
This is similar to question 2 and 3, but you may want to focus more closely on the specific duties outlined in the job description or what your understanding of typical tasks for this job would be. Again, cover the kinds of skills, interests, or knowledge from previous study or work that you would bring to the position.

vi. **What are your long term plans?**
If you are flexible about your long-term plans say so; however, it pays to give a general picture of what interest you now, and how you see that developing. You should not commit yourself to a long term period with an employer if you do not honestly feel that you can do so. Interviewers can see straight through you. Avoid answering ‘I don’t know’ or shrugging your shoulders, since an employer is usually trying to assess how interested and motivated you are!

vii. **What do you see yourself doing in five years from now?**
Similar to question 6, your answer will give evidence of whether or not you have a vision and can plan ahead. Remember that fewer employers expect their employees to make a life-long commitment. You may want to express a desire to progress as rapidly as ability and opportunities allow within the organization, or what you would like to do on a broader scale.

viii. **How long do you expect to stay with us?**
Do not commit yourself to a specific time unless you are clear. Indicate you anticipate saying in the position, but would be interested in experiencing other opportunities within the organization as your abilities and interests change. After sharing your ideas, you can always turn this question back to the employer and ask how long they would expect you to stay with them.

ix. **Tell us about yourself.**
If this is asked at the begging of the interview, give a quick run down of your qualifications and experience, and then ask whether the interviewers would like you to expand. If the question is asked towards the end of the interview and you
have already talked a lot about yourself, then this is the opportunity for you to elaborate on any positive points and put across any massage you want to give them.

x. **Why should we appoint you?**
Answer in terms of the qualifications, skills, and interests that you have which are relevant to the position: summarize your suitability. Where a job description is available before the interview, make sure you have studied it thoroughly as part of your preparation for the interview. Your reply should be based on the required skills outlined in the job description. Do not compare yourself with other applicants even if you know some of them. If you are invited by the interviewers to compare yourself with other applicants, politely state that you are not in a position to judge others, and leave that side of the interviewing to them!

xi. **Have you applied for other jobs?**
Be HONEST. This question is often used during graduate recruitment. Your approach to job hunting indicates how you approach challenges. Employers are aware of the competitiveness of the job market. They would be most surprised if you indicated that you have not applied for other jobs and may question your initiatives and motivation. If you are not a fresh graduate, you may wish to approach this question more carefully. The interviewer may be looking to ascertain how focused and clearly defined your job objectives may be.

xii. **Aren't you overqualified for this position?**
This is leading question. If you have been called for an interview, it is unlikely the employer considers you greatly overqualified. Otherwise they could not justify the time spent interviewing you. State your willingness to start at the bottom and work your way up, your enthusiasm for the organization and your desire to develop a broader range of skills. Employers are more interested in what you can offer in the practical hands-on sense than in academic sense!

xiii. **What are your major strengths and weaknesses?**
Once again the employer is seeking to ascertain how mature you are and your awareness of yourself. If you have a job description, you may find it useful to focus on where you see your strengths and weaknesses in relation to the task listed.
Remember weaknesses can be turned into strengths. Talk about the strategies you use for dealing with that weakness, or its positive side. Example, taking time to make decisions may slow you down, but on the other hand you are not impulsive. Don’t bring up too many weaknesses – one or two are enough!

xiv. How much do you know about our organization?
Your answer will reveal the amount of homework you have done before the interview. Take the initiative to find out as much as you can about the organization and during the interview, emphasize what you know and how you completed your research.

xv. How much do you expect to be paid?
Where the salary range is unknown, it is very important to investigate comparable rates elsewhere before you attend the interview. Never discuss salary until the end of the interviewing procedure, when they have actually offered you the position.

If the question is asked before the offer, reply along the lines that until an offer is made, you feel any discussion is premature. You might also add that as a reputable organization, you expect that they will be paying a fair and competitive salary for the position. When an offer is made, talk about a range rather than a fixed figure. Since the employer created the position, they will already have some figure in mind. Find out what that is, use your salary research, and don’t undersell yourself. Don’t oversell yourself either. Usually up to 20% step up is acceptable.

xvi. Do you have any questions for us?
It is important that you do have questions for the following reasons: To make your own assessment of the job, you need to find out as much as possible about what the job is really like, or more information about the organization to show your serious interests in the position and preparation for the interview and to further outline achievements and skills not covered so far in the interview.

This is a good time to ask the employer what skills they consider to be the most critical for the position and whether they see a gap in skills you have to offer. This will give you an opportunity to identify skills and/or experiences which have not yet come up during the interview.
xvii. Why did you choose to major in?
Avoid the impression of aimlessness or uncertainty. It is fine to major in a subject because of your interests.
However, be willing to talk about this interest. Show evidence of knowledge, positive attitude towards study, and an understanding of skills and knowledge you have gained.

xviii. What do you do in your spare time?
Finding out about your other interests and leisure activities gives employers an opportunity to uncover skills and abilities which may not have been discussed. Other activities also give employers a chance to assess your enthusiasm, curiosity and quality of life.

xix. What are the most important considerations for you in choosing a job?
Answer in terms of job objectives, training, and experience available or future prospects. Do not answer in terms of pay or other indications of self interest rather than job interest.
Remember to remain flexible in the interview so that you hear and answer the actual questions that are asked rather than the ones you thought or hoped the interviewers would ask. After the interview is over, reflect upon any of the questions you were asked. Think about the ways in which you could improve your answers so that when such questions are asked in the future, you will be able to answer them more competently.
Keep in mind that answering interview questions with general responses is not making the most of your opportunity. Interviewers want to hear evidence of your abilities. By being factual in your approach you can reveal your skills without appearing to be a boastful. Illustrate your answers with concrete examples wherever possible. Graduates with no full-time work experience can use their participation in sports, voluntary committee work, and casual employment, or university studies to give evidence of initiative, administrative, research, or communication skills.
- Once you have done your preliminary research, and prepared for the interview questions, you will have to wait for the day of the interview. Here is a list of some things you should do before the day of the interview.
- Re-read the job description, list of duties, conditions of appointment, and your application.
- Reflect upon your strong points and particular massages you want to get across in the interview. You can draw up a checklist either within your head or write it down on paper to ensure that you do not forget any of these points during the interview.

1.6.1. **INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

**INTERVIEWEE SUPPORT SHEET**

In order to prepare for the interview, you will have to anticipate the questions that will be asked and think through your answers. Look back at your notes when preparing your resume and you will find most of the information you need. You just have to organize this information differently. You will have to demonstrate that you do have the required skills and experience for the position and convince the interviewer that you also have the right personal qualities.

Remember; never say “I’m a good team player”. Always illustrate with examples! Give proof!

You can also use the interview feedback sheet as a check list to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything.

To help you prepare we have prepared a few questions to guide you preparation.

i. Do you have the required qualifications? Yes No

ii. Are you the right fit for the company’s culture? Yes No

Give 2 arguments that will demonstrate that you are:

a. __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
iii. Are you the right candidate for the job? Answer the following questions.

iv. Why do you think you can be a good candidate for this job, in this company?

Give 2 arguments that will demonstrate that you are:

a. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

b. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

v. What values add will you bring to the company?

Give 2 arguments that will demonstrate that you are:

a. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

b. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

vi. How does this job fit in your overall career plan?

Give 2 arguments:

a. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
vii. Why are you interested in working for this company?

Give 2 arguments:

a. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

b. ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

vii. Prepare arguments to answer questions about your skills and abilities.

List down the main points you want to put forward during the interview and find examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required experience, skills or abilities</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Job: Job title, company and description</th>
<th>University projects: Title - Module</th>
<th>Situation/Task:</th>
<th>Action:</th>
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<td>Situation/Task:</td>
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1.7. STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW

Now, you will look at the structure of the interview and ways to respond to them. Then, you will examine a few guidelines focusing on the way you dress and behave during the different stages of the interview.

An interview typically follows three stages:

- Opening
- Information Exchange
- Conclusion

1.7.1. FIRST STAGE – OPENING

Usually, interviewers use the opening of the interview to set you at ease with open ended questions. The questions may not be relevant to the position. Interviewers make initial assessments based on your appearance, attitude, manner, tone of voice, etc. The first five minutes can set the stage for the rest of the interview.

1.7.2. SECOND STAGE – INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Interviewers try to find out more about your skills, qualities, and interests/motivation for the position, how you fit in with others in the organization etc. Remember they are seeking the most suitable applicant for the position. The most suitable applicant is not necessarily the best qualified academically. Academic achievement is only one criterion; other includes work experience, social skills, potential, and enthusiasm.

1.7.3. THIRD STAGE – CONCLUSION

At this stage the interview is drawn to a close. It is important for you to leave a final positive impression – this is just as important as the initial impression and once again include non-verbal as well as verbal massages that you give.

ACTIVITY – MOCK INTERVIEW

Instructions:

You will be the interviewer. You have very little time to interview the candidates and find out if they are fit for the job. You need to have an excellent understanding of the
job and prepare questions to ensure you gather necessary information about the candidates efficiently.

Ask as many open questions as possible. Avoid asking yes/no questions.

In order to prepare for the interview, you need to anticipate the questions as well as the answers. Look at the job advertisement and try to anticipate what the questions will be and which answers should be expected.

Also remember the 3 stages of the interview. The opening, the information exchange and the closing.

To help prepare here are few questions.

a. **What qualifications or certifications will be candidate need to have?**

b. **What qualities will the candidate have to have to fit the company culture?**

c. **Who can be the right candidate for the job? Answer the following questions.**
   i. **What qualities would a good candidate have?**
   ii. **What previous experience should the candidate have had?**
Prepare questions that will help you determine whether the candidate has the experience skills and abilities required.

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<th>Before the interview:</th>
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<th>In the second column</th>
<th>in the third column</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List the main expertise, skills and abilities required for the position</td>
<td>Write down possible questions</td>
<td>Write the key words on/about answers expected</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>After the interview:</th>
<th>Rate each question and insert your comments</th>
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<tr>
<th>Experience, skills or abilities required</th>
<th>Questions or assessment method</th>
<th>Expected Answer (key words)</th>
<th>Rating and comments</th>
<th>Example given</th>
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<td>Comments:</td>
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iii. OBSERVER SUPPORT SHEET

Instruction:

You will be an observer. But does not mean you just sit back and do nothing!

Active observation is a difficult task. In order to be a good observer and be a fair final judge for the recruitment session you will have to anticipate the expected questions, answer and performance of the interviewees. Look at the job advertisement and try to anticipate what the questions will be and which answers should be expected.

The main question is: What does a candidate need to say or demonstrate to be considered a success?

If you have defined your expectations to and parameters, you can rate if the candidates have failed to meet expectations, met or exceeded your expectations.

Here are few questions to help you prepare as an observer.

1. **What qualification or certification will the candidate need to have?**

2. **What qualities will the candidate need to fit the company culture?**

   A)

   B)

   C)
3. Who can be the right candidate for the job? Answer the following questions.

What qualities would a good candidate have?

Give arguments that will demonstrate that the candidate would be qualified.

A)

B)

C)

4. What previous experience should the candidate have had?

A)

B)

C)
Prepare arguments to possible answer to questions about experience skills and abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience, skills or abilities required</th>
<th>Experience that illustrate the required experience, skill or ability.</th>
<th>Possible questions</th>
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1.7.4. **PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL YOU**

i. **DRESS CODE**

Even though people say ‘do not judge the book by its cover,’ the first impression someone has of you will often be determined by the way you look. Dress code is very important.

How can you look professional?

**For Male:**

1. Suit / Formal Trousers – Color: Black / Dark Blue / Dark Gray
2. Shirt – Well ironed, Clean, White or Light Blue
3. Tie – Conservative but Powerful
4. Shoes – Well Polished Black Shoes with Black Socks
5. Personal Grooming – Use Deodorant / Perfume, Mouth Freshener and Comb
For Female:

1. Suit / ShalwarKameez / Sarees - Decent Color; Not very Flashy
2. Jewelries & Accessories – Fashionable; Not Heavy
3. Shoes – Matching
4. Personal Grooming – Use Deodorant / Perfume, Mouth Freshener and Business Hair-do

1.7.5. **ARRIVAL**

The way you arrive is extremely important.

- Get there early and allow yourself at least 5 to 10 minutes waiting time before the start of the interview. You can use this time to reflect and relax.
- Use the waiting time to read through the corporate brochures available at the lobby or observe the pace of the organization and get a feel of their corporate culture.
- If you realize you are going to be late, inform the employer. It can happen to anyone, especially if you are working professional. Employers can understand you being late; it is unacceptable not to inform them. Once you arrive, apologize briefly and avoid long-winded explanations.
- Greet the receptionist cordially. Remember receptionists are often asked for their initial impressions. They will not decide whether or not you get the position, but the initial impression you give them is just as important as the initial impression given to interviewers.
1.7.6. **BODY LANGUAGE**

Answering questions is not the only way to present who you are. The way you sit, the way you talk, the way you behave will influence how they judge you.

- First impressions are very important. Greet the interviewers in a friendly manner, preferably by name, using a firm handshake and smile.
- Because each interviewer will be individually assessing you, it is important to make eye contact with all panel members. Nobody likes to be ignored!
- Be alert and enthusiastic. Look pleased to be there!
- Sit comfortably! Watch your arms, hands and feet. If you are feeling nervous, you may tense up and your hands or feet may shake. Try to relax by breathing evenly. Be aware of any distracting mannerism you have such as gritting teeth, rubbing eyes, or nail biting. It is better to have your hands on your lap, and feet on the floor.
- Lean forward in chair rather than back; avoid slouching or sitting bolt upright. Occasionally the chair offered to you will be facing a strong light or a more comfortable position. This shows right from the start that you have initiative and such an action will generally be seen as a point in your favor.

1.7.7. **AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW**

If you sense an interview is finishing and that you are not clear about the following steps of the selection process, ask! Ensure that you know before you leave the interview what will happen next. This includes details of when the interviewers will be finishing the interviews, the time before a decision is made, and how all the applicants will be notified.

Additionally, establish who you should contact after the interview if there has been no news after reasonable time period. Confirm who to contact if you need to provide any additional information about yourself, or ask any further questions.
1.8. **ACTIVITY: CAT WALK AND HANDSHAKE**

**Instructions:**

Participants will walk up to the trainer in a professional manner and shake his hand. (For demo search internet to get information or ask an experienced person).

**Objective:**

Purpose of the activity is to learn the importance of good posture and how you posture and handshake can give a favorable impression.

1.9. **ACTIVITY: IDENTIFY YOUR 3 UNIQUE STRENGTHS**

**Instructions:**

Identify 3 unique strengths which you can apply to your job.

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<th>Strength 1:</th>
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<td>Strength 2:</td>
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<td>Strength 3:</td>
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</table>

1.10. **ACTIVITY: ARTICULATE YOUR 3 UNIQUE STRENGTHS**

**Instructions:**

Articulate your strengths in detail and identify how your strengths can help an organization.

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<tr>
<th>Strength 1:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength 2:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength 3:</td>
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</table>
1.11. OPENING INTRODUCTION WITH AN IMPACT

Self introduction is an integral part of an interview. The employer may have seen your resume and a cover letter, but that may only reflect some aspects of your communication skills. Introduction speech reflects your confidence, communication skills, and provides a chance to create a favorable first impression.

1.12. ACTIVITY: INTRODUCTION SPEECH

Instructions:

Students will prepare a 2 minutes introduction speech and present it before the trainer / teacher / experience person.

Objectives:

By the end of the activity the participants will have the ability to convey their knowledge, experience, and skills in a precise manner necessary for a successful interview.

If you feel there are additional points about yourself which you haven’t had the opportunity to express yet, now is the time to request the opportunity to make these.

Always smile and show a positive attitude regardless of how the interview went.

Do not be too hasty to say NO to any job but you can always write a short massage or email or letter to let them know that you will not taking the job. Preference will be made for the candidates who can start the earliest. So it is good to have an idea on when you can join.

BE HONEST!!! When closing the interview, make sure you summarize your strength for the position and ask them when they will make a decision. Express your interest in learning the results of the application.

1.13. POST INTERVIEW

Give yourself s break. Then assess how you performed at the interview for further reference. There are two aspects to this assessment:
• Think back objectively over the questions that were asked and your answers. Note any commitments you gave about the priorities you would implement if you were appointed to the position. Note any promises made by the interviewer to successful applicants; in case you are offered the job.

• Review your interview performance. Think about how you can improve next time. You may wish to discuss this aspect with family, friends, career advisor, or others. This can help improve your interview performance in future.

1.13.1. FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Once you are done with the interview, within two business days, you should write a “Thanks you note/letter” to each person who interviewed you. Essentially, each letter can follow the same format. Ensure there aren’t any errors (misspelling or typos) in your thank you letter. Do show appreciation for the employer/interviewer’s interest.

Don’t ever fail to send a thank you note – even if you are sure the job is not for you.

Example of thanks you note: http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_thankyou_fit.html

1.13.2. DO’S AND DON’TS FOR THE INTERVIEW FOLLOW – UP

Remember that your work is not done once you finish the interview, even the thank you letter is not the end. You can’t sit back and wait for the job offer, so consider these key rules and strategies to follow up your job interviews.

Use follow-up techniques to continue to show your enthusiasm and desire for the position, but don’t make it seem as through you are desperate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO’S</th>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask the end of the interview when the employer expects to make hiring decision.</td>
<td>• Place too much important on the job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obtain the correct titles and names of all the people who interviewed you. (Ideally, get their business card.)</td>
<td>• Burn any bridges if you do not get a job offer. Do try and turn the situation into a positive by bringing the interviewers into your network, possibly even asking them for referrals to other contacts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alert your references, if you have not done so already, that they may be getting a phone call from the employer.</td>
<td>• Stop job-hunting, even if you feel confident that you will get a job offer. Do not continue to interview and</td>
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<td>• Follow up with a telephone call to</td>
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the employer within a week (or sooner, if the employer had a shorter timetable) to ask about the position.

- Be patient. The hiring process often takes longer than the employer expects.
- Continue following up if the employer asks you to. Just don’t go overboard and annoy or bother the employer.

1.14. ACTIVITY: ANALYZE THANK YOU LETTERS

1.14.1. EXAMPLES OF A GOOD THANKS YOU LETTER

W-15, 18TH East Street
Phase 10, D.H.A
Karachi
(021) 1111111
E-mail: omerkhayyam@abc.com

Date: August 1st, 2010

Ms. Amina Haqqi
Director Human Resources
Pakbeats Magazine
House 101, Street 1234, F-6/1
Islamabad, 44000

Dear Ms. Haqqi:

I’d like to thanks you for the time you spent talking with me about the Marketing-Research Analyst position you have open at Pakbeats Magazine. I’m very excited about this position and convince that my qualifications and relevant marketing experience makes me not only eligible but an ideal candidate for this position.

As you know, my extensive research experience with various professors in the
Marketing Department here at XYZ University provided an excellent background for marketing-research work.

I look forward to hearing from you soon about the position, and I would like to express my appreciation for meeting with me.

Sincerely,

Omer Khayyam

1.14.2. EXAMPLES OF A BAD THANKS YOU LETTER

Saleem Shah
Capstone magazine
1111 military street..
KHI, 4400
Hey Saleem:

I hope you are in good health. Thanks 4 the opportunity for the interview. I think I have all the skills and experience necessary for the position I interviewed for. My vast experience will help your company achieve its goals.

I’ve worked with several companies in last 5 months but my previous supervisor’s didn’t get me and didn’t bother to fully utilize my potential. I think your company is cool and better for me and you can benefit by utilizing my amazing knowledge to achieve its goals.

I am looking forward to meet you and join your organization.

Your friend,

Saleem Kashif

1.15. ACTIVITY: EDIT THANK YOU LETTERS

Point out 10 errors and make your recommendations on how to improve the above thank you letter.
### 1.16. ACTIVITY: PREPARE A FOLLOW UP LETTER

**Instructions:**

Utilize the aforementioned information to write an effective thank you letter.

Job Interview is a difficult phase until it is not over, but once a person has passed through this phase the experience proves to be beneficial and helpful. Every interview may not end up in giving person a good job but it provides a person with good amount of knowledge for future plans.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Recommendations to improve the letter</th>
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Thank you for going through the manual.

In case of queries, please contact CDC, NUST.

Mrs. Atiya Zulfiqar

DD (CDC)

Career Development Centre (CDC), NUST

051-90851211