

Hand book on Soft Skills

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1. Soft Skills

Ability to express oneself clearly and confidently is a very important personality trait and this is given the highest importance during the evaluation process in recruitment. Many people fail miserably in this aspect even though they have very strong technical skills. Communication skills can be categorized into oral communication skills and written communication skills.

1.1. GOOD ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Oral communication is very important for any professional because during one's career, every professional has to talk to a number of people of varying backgrounds and technical knowledge. We have to talk to the customer (to whom we are developing the software) in English. The customer may not be a technical person, many times the customer has no knowledge of computers even. We also have to interact with team members to discuss the technical details during project execution. We have to talk to managers in 'management jargon'. Ability to talk to a variety of people requires good oral communication skills. B.C. Forbes said, "Speaking is essential to success in business and the whole of human activities". Conservative Party of Britain feels that the patients are put to lot of risk because of the poor English spoken by foreign doctors, especially Indians, who constitute 25% of the total medical practitioners of Britain.

This does not mean that you have to use high sounding words. In fact usage of high sounding words and GRE/TOEFL type of language will irritate the interviewer. Answer should be simple and easily understandable by one and all. For example, if somebody's answer for a question is 'Cogitative endeavors to promote celerity of ambulation not infrequently produce retardation of the desired propinquity to the goal', he may be thrown out of the interview room, even if the interview is for the post of a Professor of English!

It needs to be mentioned that nobody is born with good communication skills- we need practice to improve our communication abilities. Many times, inability to express oneself clearly arises mainly because of lack of preparation. Even for a small five-minute meeting, one has to prepare, depending on the agenda of the meeting. Good preparation keeping in view the type of audience would solve most of the problems that arise out of 'lack of communication skills'. Realize that often you will have to deal with a non-technical customer in English. Again, the client himself may be poor at English. In marketing the product itself speaks, catalogues speak, customers speak and advertisements speak. Even if the marketing man speaks, it will be very much routine type, same jokes, same riddles, same style and same concept. In R&D type of jobs it is not like that. Here, you've got an excellent idea or an interesting concept. How can you convince your boss or organization about the greatness and usefulness of it unless you are good at communication? How can you prepare a report on it and be successful? Especially in I. T., English is very essential. For example, Japan could excel in all fields of construction, automobile engineering and telecommunications but not in Information Technology, as they refused to accept English.

1.2. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Software developers, during the project execution, have to prepare a number of documents – requirement - specifications documents, design documents, test reports, user manuals etc. Ability to express oneself clearly calls for written communication skills. This ability comes only through practice.

Good handwriting may sometimes outrightly select you from a mob of students. Same

is the case with command of English language. But, then if you are good, you have to exhibit it before your interviewer and later your boss. If you hesitate or feel shy how can anyone know?

During interviews, especially during Campus recruitments, the companies generally ask to give some information in writing. Better be prepared to write without any grammatical and spelling mistakes in a professional manner. When you are asked to give references, mention the names of persons under whom you have either worked or received your education or who know you professionally. Students may give the names of placement officer, Head of the Department or a friend or senior working in a company in a decent position. See that the persons are professional. Don't give the names of your class-mates or relatives as references, Many people, while writing letters use what is called "Rubber Stamp" language, for all their personal and semiofficial letters. 'Acknowledging your recent letter dated so and so' or 'Please find enclosed herewith' *or* 'In response to your highly valuable inquiry' or 'In reply to your favor of even date ' Such usages are outdated and boring and hence are rejected in the first instance. Old fashioned words might reflect old fashioned thinking! Prepare answers thoroughly for the following commonly asked questions.

Keep the following in mind for better Written Communication skills:

1. Keep sentences short- maximum 15 to 20 words. Long sentences are hard to understand and slow to read.
2. Use simple, ordinary words. Avoid big words, fancy phrases, technical jargons and age old, worn-out, boring usages.
3. Keep paragraphs short - 3 or 4 sentences maximum.

1.3. TO BE ANSWERED IN WRITING DURING INTERVIEW:

Name, Date of Birth, Nationality, Address, email, Phone Number, Details of passport etc.

Details of last major illness/surgery/accident

Training undergone/Projects undertaken (Placement Project/Seminar etc. for students)

Computer proficiency (Platforms worked on, Operating systems used, Languages familiar with)

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Details of Education starting from SSC

Work experience

Strengths and weaknesses

Areas of improvement

Career Objectives

Expectations from the job

Preference for place of posting (India/abroad)

Details of Memberships of associations

Significant achievements and Distinguished honors and awards other interests (Cultural, sports, community work and hobbies) When did you first come to know about us and how? Anything you would like us to know about you more?

Anything you would like to suggest to our organization?

Any Three References (not related to you).

1.4. PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITIES AND LOGICAL THINKING

Most of the organizations conduct aptitude tests for screening the applications of job-seekers. Perhaps aptitude tests reveal the problem solving abilities of the individual, though it is a debatable issue. Organization of Thoughts is important, not answer.

Problem solving abilities are acquired while working on development projects. A software developer encounters problems of varying nature while executing a project. To think of various alternatives to solve the problem and decide which is the best solution are the abilities that come through experience.

The questions could be, What is the capacity of this hall? What. is the approximate volume of this room? What is your weight in Newtons or pounds? What could be the weight of this building? What is your volume in liters? What could be the weight of a city bus or Rajadhani express? .

Some of the famous questions asked by Microsoft interviewers during recruitment of software developers are: How much water flows in the Mississippi River? How many gas stations (petrol bunks) are there in your state? How many cars may be found in your city? The exact answer is not important, but the approach to solve the problem is important.

Often the problem is 100% new to you! It is a deadly puzzle! In aptitude tests, if there are no negative marks, answer all the questions under any circumstances. A FOOL may be defined as one who does not answer all the questions even though there are no negative marks for it!

1.5. GOOD FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

You should have a sound knowledge in atleast one or two specific fields rather than overall peripheral knowledge. Don't try to credit yourself with doubtful or unearned points while answering in an interview. Good fundamental knowledge and hard work are the keys to gain the ability of learning fast. It is not possible to join a school for learning every tool and technique, and hence, one has to also develop the habit of self- learning.

While studying, you need to be curious like a cat that can spot out the milk even if it is kept in a remote corner of the house. Also, for new things to learn, there must be a constant search like an ant that takes control of

sugar crystals wherever they fall within a short time. These are the keys of sound fundamental knowledge..

1.6. ADAPTABILITY AND ABILITY TO LEARN NEW TECHNOLOGIES FAST

You should have interest in upgrading knowledge as Software field is changing rapidly, so rapidly that skills acquired after months of hard work and training, become obsolete in another few months. One has to cultivate the habit of learning the required tools very fast. When one has to shift from one tool to another, one has to start using the new tool setting aside earlier tool's knowledge. "Learn, Unlearn and Relearn" is the slogan generally used by many organizations looking for this ability. Have the habit of referring to various Journals and Periodicals. Thus, one has to work out the strategies for learning. These can be:

- Self-learning.
- Continuing education and distance education programs, exemplified by correspondence courses during studies. A diploma or a Post-Graduate Diploma in 'Software Engineering' or 'Environmental Management' from an Institution like NIEE, Environmental protection Society can be or a great help to you. You're sure to have a thick edge over your fellow interviewee.
- Learning on the job.
- Learning from colleagues (peers) and friends by knowledge sharing.
- Thus, Be a Curious Listener and Learner, and develop thirst for knowledge.

* * *

2. HOW TO HANDLE INTERVIEWS

2.1. The interview letter/notification is in your hand: Congratulations! You know that you have overcome the first hurdle of any job search. In the selection process that you may have encountered so far, you would have submitted an application which no doubt measured up to the standards expected by your potential employer; you may also have appeared for a written examination that you have also cleared. So you know now that your approach so far has been correct and you have been found well prepared. At this point you must remind yourself that just as untidy or poorly prepared applications never stand a chance, neither do untidy or poorly prepared candidates.

The interview call means that:

- The employer is interested and believes that you have the right potential for the Position;
- There are other contenders and many of them are going to be unsuccessful and you don't want to be among them; and
- You need to seriously start your pre-interview planning, which would include working on your personal presentation and also researching the background information.

2.2. The Groundwork: In an interview you are selling, yourself, a process you began when you submitted your application form or Curriculum Vitae (CV). It is no longer a matter of just needing the right qualifications or experience, although these aspects will play their part, you now have to demonstrate that you also have the enthusiasm, motivation and commitment the interviewers are looking for. As a means of selection interviews are not without drawbacks but they invariably continue to be popular.

What to take with you for the interview: Even if these are not specifically requested, it is a good idea to take these with you: i) school certificates, ii) record of achievements after school, iii) examples of artwork or technical drawings, projects/published papers, where appropriate.

Take with you anything, which is relevant and supports your application. All this should be chronologically arranged in a file. Let the file be of sober hue and not garishly patterned/coloured.

2.3. Preparation: Apart from looking good at the interview you should also be able to show that you are interested not only in the job that is on offer but the firm/company which is offering it. Carry out research to find out about the structure and products and services of the organization; to find out where the job fits into the organizational set-up and to discover as much as possible about the job itself. Thorough background preparation will boost your confidence, it helps concentrate your mind on why you have applied for that particular job/position and it improves your chances of success.

In a standard interview you should be prepared to tackle questions from these area:

- i) Family – these help the interviewer to see you as a complete person;
- ii) School and college, substantiate with documents;
- iii) Hobbies and interests outside school or college – reveal motivational drives or attitude to work; other personality characteristics;
- iv) Work experience – such questions reveals motivational drives, enthusiasm towards training, attitude towards work and authority, ability to cope and flourish within the work organization;
- v) Goals for your responses you are expected to draw upon your values, interests and top skills.

2.4. Personal presentation: If there is a time when first impressions count, then it is undoubtedly when you go for an interview. Your interviewers see you before speaking to you and have already formed an impression before the interview starts. Don't appear with wildly styled hair, or unruly, uncombed hair, latest mirror lenses, bat-breath, garish makeup, dirty or ragged finger nails. Choose formal clothes that are neat, tidy, clean and well fitting. No, designer names or brand names are not important at all. Jeans, T-shirts are out. Let your shoes complement your outfit being both clean and well maintained. Make sure that you feel comfortable and confident in the outfit you have chosen – check out the fit before deciding. Always be practical – take a coat or raincoat and umbrella to keep you warm and dry or both. Jewellery should be kept to the minimum, no digital watches/mobile phone/pager that beep. Clean fabric handkerchief to cope with sneezes. Perfume after-shave to be as unobtrusive as possible and use a less perfumed deodorant.

As you enter: Walk forward confidently, body straight, head up. Smile and be prepared to shake hands briefly but positively if your interviewer offers to shake your, not otherwise. Sit straight, but in a relaxed comfortable position, keep your hands, relaxed, preferably in your lap, Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer as soon as you have settled.

2.5. Typical interview Questions: These are some frequently asked questions; you may be asked all, some or possibly only a few of them. Just go through these and prepare in writing the answers you would like to give.

What are your strengths?: Identify areas where you perform best, try to match these with the skills required for the job / professional programme (that you have applied

for).

What are your weaknesses?: Stick to minor factual problems which can be remedied by adding a positive rider to your answer. "I suppose I didn't try hard enough, but I intend to have a good try at it".

How would you describe yourself?: Concentrate on the description of the person being sought and try to put forward a picture of yourself to match as close to that as possible. But you need to be honest; make the most of your good points but don't make them unbelievable.

"Do you have plans for additional education:" Here the interviewer is trying to find out whether you see this line of work as part of a long-term commitment as opposed to stop-gap measure. If you do have plans for additional education, be specific about what you want to learn and how an employer could possibly benefit.

What were your favourite subjects and why? : This should be easy. Just make sure that you make your response relevant to the job that you applied for. Also, make some reference to the more broadly based skills that you have, such as problem-solving, communicating or writing effectively.

Why do you want to work for us? / Why do you want this Job?: Your answer must contain genuine, positive reasons backed up by supportive evidence. Your answer could be one of many such as:

- I enjoy meeting people.
- I think it might be interesting work.
- I like tackling a challenge.

On their own these statements lack credibility, their meaningfulness comes when you back them up with something substantial. Give some examples of challenges you have tackled recently.

Other questions that could be asked include.

- How do you get on with your school friends/teachers?
- What did you like the most/least about your periods of work experience?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- Who has been the greatest influence in your life and why?
- What do you think has been your greatest achievement?
- What is the greatest hurdle that you have crossed?

In answering questions on any of the above or related areas, remember to concentrate on the positive, if you have experienced difficulties then own up to them, show how

you have overcome them, learnt from them, ideally, take advantage of mock interviews to evaluate your preparation. In the absence of a formal mock interview, you can always ask friends or relatives to act as interviewers but this is very much the second-best option since they may feel silly or embarrassed. But you can compensate by developing your powers of self-observation. Consciously practise other ways of standing or speaking by reviewing through a mirror image and tape recorder. Being videoed under mock interview conditions is, of course, an unbeatable learning experience.

2.6. SOME DON'TS:

At an interview, do not put yourself in a position where you have to lie or say you don't know or blame someone else for a failure or shrug your shoulders. Even if this is true, don't say you came for 'the money'. Try not to put yourself in a bad light without saying something positive to compensate.

Always show: You have valid reasons for your answers. You are honest and open with your replies.

The exit – should be a stunningly good one. The way you leave is just as important as the way you enter.

Steps to an effective exit: gather together the items you brought with you ensure you have a tight grip on them.

- Stand up and straighten your clothes.
- Shake hands with your interviewers if this is expected.
- Thank the interviewers for their time.
- Smile
- Make your exit by – stopping at the door, turning, smiling and thanking again, leaving, closing the door quietly behind you.

Remember: A good interviewer will be looking for:

- Qualifications
- Experience
- Motivation
- Personality
- Additional or transferable skills

Your interviewer will also be looking for signs that you are interested, attentive, communicative, keen and most important of all, be able to show you have that 'something' extra. In the overall analysis of an interview, a good interviewer sums you up on several fronts at once by:

- Your answers to factual questions;

- How you answered these questions;
- How you responded to questions designed to encourage you to ‘sell yourself’:
- By your overall demeanour:
- Appearance, awareness, decisiveness, politeness, humor, openness and so on.

Just before: The night before and the day of the interview, close your eyes for a few minutes. Create a picture in your mind of the interview; picture yourself relaxed and confident, responding to questions and asking questions of your own. See yourself getting up to leave the interview and the interviewer saying exactly what you want to be said. Literally imagine the words you will hear from the interviewer. Believe me, it works! Make sure you have clear directions to the interview location-the bus-routes/suburban train links, etc. and / or landmarks-and plan to arrive a few minutes early. Use your extra time to assess the atmosphere, talk with a receptionist, check out the publications in the room or go through the day’s newspapers and pick up any background information you can.

I am sure that you can see that preparation is your best ally when handling a standard interview. You can always make things better for yourself by using anytime you have before the interview to do your homework for yourself and the employer’s needs. Even if you are doing a series of interviews on the same theme, prepare for each one as though it were the only one. Whichever way the interview ends, always try to leave a favourable impression behind.

2.7. How to use the interview Experience: As you leave the interview room, you could be experiencing all sorts of reactions, from exhilaration and excitement to the deepest despair or a sense of anti-climax. Make an effort not to waste the valuable time immediately after your experience. Try to use the experience as a source of learning to perform better in future.

2.8. Reasons for you to take stock of what happened as soon as possible after the interview:

- To help you to fix events, personalities and facts associated with this one firmly in your mind for more interviews.
- You will be able to come up with the reasons/areas that unexpectedly let you down and need working on or which you handled well and need remembering.
- To be certain that you have enough information to decide whether to accept the job if it were offered to you.
- If things went really badly, reviewing what happened helps you to work through your tension, and if done thoroughly and objectively, should provide positive pointers on how to handle the next interview differently and to better effect.

If you thought that to shine at interviews you just turn up in your best outfit, look immaculately groomed, smile, shake hands in a positive manner are enough, you now know better. It is true that initially, interviewers may be impressed by a good turnout,

hence your personal presentation as in clothes and appearance are important to make a positive first impression. But this is only part of the story. To raise your chances above the rest, you have to show you have that extra special something. The magic ingredient for this is thorough preparation.

3. COMMON JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

By rehearsing interview questions, you'll become more familiar with your own qualifications and will be well prepared to demonstrate how you can benefit an employer. *Some examples:*

*** "Tell me about yourself."**

Make a short, organized statement of your education and professional achievements and professional goals. Then, briefly describe your qualifications for the job and the contributions you could make to the organization

*** "Why do you want to work here?" or "What about our company interests you?"**

Few questions are more important than these, so it is important to answer them clearly and with enthusiasm. Show the interviewer your interest in the company. Share what you learned about the job, the company and the industry through your own research. Talk about how your professional skills will benefit the company. Unless you work in sales, your answer should never be simply: "money" The interviewer will wonder if you really care about the job.

*** "Why did you leave your last job?"**

The interviewer may want to know if you had any problems on your last job. If you did not have any problems, simply give a reason, such as: relocated away from job; company went out of business; laid off; temporary job; no possibility of advancement; wanted a job better suited to your skills

If you did have problems, be honest. Show that you can accept responsibility and learn from your mistakes You should explain any problems you had (or still have) with an employer, but don't describe that employer in negative terms Demonstrate that it was a learning experience that will not affect your future work

*** "What are your best skills?"**

If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values List them, then give examples where you have demonstrated these skills

*** "What is your major weakness?"**

Be positive; turn a weakness into a strength. For example, you might say: "I often worry too much over my work. Sometimes I work late to make sure the Job is done well"

*** "Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?"**

The ideal answer is one of flexibility However, be honest. Give examples describing how you have worked in both situations.

*** "What are your career goals?" or "What are your future plans?"**

The interviewer wants to know if your plans and the company's goals are compatible. Let him know that you are ambitious enough to plan ahead. Talk about your desire to learn more and improve your performance, and be specific as possible about how you will meet the goals you have set for yourself

*** "What are your hobbies?" and "Do you play any sports?"**

The interviewer may be looking for evidence of your job skills outside of your professional experience For example, hobbies such as chess or bridge demonstrate analytical skills Reading, music, and painting are creative hobbies Individual sports show determination and stamina, while group sport activities may indicate you are comfortable working as part of a team.

Also, the interviewer might simply be curious as to whether you have a life outside of work Employees who have creative or athletic outlets for their stress are often healthier, happier and more productive

*** "What salary are you expecting?"**

You probably don't want to answer this one directly. Instead, deflect the question back to the interviewer by saying something like: "I don't know. What are you planning on paying the best candidate?" Let the employer make the first offer.

However, it is still important to know what the current salary range is for the profession Find salary surveys at the library or on the Internet, and check the classifieds to see what comparable jobs in your area are paying This information can help you negotiate compensation once the employer makes an offer.

*** "What have I forgotten to ask?"**

Use this as a chance to summarize your good characteristics and attributes and how they may be used to benefit the organization. Convince the interviewer that you understand the job requirements and that you can succeed.

Here are some other job interview questions you might want to rehearse.

Your Qualifications

- ☐ What can you do for us that someone else can't do?
- ☐ What qualifications do you have that relate to the position?
- ☐ What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
- ☐ Give me an example from a previous job where you've shown initiative
- ☐ What have been your greatest accomplishments recently?
- ☐ What is important to you in a job?
- ☐ What motivates you in your work?
- ☐ What have you been doing since your last job?
- ☐ What qualities do you find important in a coworker?

Your Career Goals

- ☐ What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- ☐ How will you judge yourself successful? How will you achieve success?
- ☐ What type of position are you interested in?
- ☐ How will this job fit in your career plans?
- ☐ What do you expect from this job?
- ☐ Do you have a location preference?
- ☐ Can you travel?
- ☐ What hours can you work?

- ☐ When could you start?

Your Work Experience

- ☐ What have you learned from your past jobs?
- ☐ What were your biggest responsibilities?
- ☐ What specific skills acquired or used in previous jobs relate to this position?
- ☐ How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- ☐ What did you like most/least about your last job?
- ☐ Whom may we contact for references?

Your Education

- ☐ How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
- ☐ What were your favorite classes/activities at school?
- ☐ Why did you choose your major?
- ☐ Do you plan to continue your education?

4. Tips FOR Interview:

Here are some Tips/Guidelines that might help you prepare for a good interview: Arrive on time. Be punctual and attentive. Take your seat only when you are asked to take. Introduce yourself. Use positive vocal qualities and facial ex-pressions. Sit attentively to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm.

Bring along a watch, pen, and a pad of paper for taking notes. Don't keep a purse, key chain, loose papers etc, in your pockets, if you can, it may detract from your professional image. Always take a few extra copies of your resume! Don't keep your belongings like Files on the table. Keep them only on your lap until you're asked to use the table.

Verbal Communication Skills: Listen carefully to what is being asked and answer the question. Ask for clarification if you don't understand the question. Say 'Pardon me, Sir' or 'Excuse me, Sir'. Give clear, concise answers. Use proper grammar. Be specific, refer to concrete experiences. Don't ask about salary and benefits until the employer brings up the subject. Don't take any interview very casually. Don't talk to

the interviewer the way you talk to any of your friends.

OTHERS:

- Answer for a few very commonly asked questions like introduce yourself, family background, contribution to society etc. yourself, record them and hear them again and again to refine your skills.
- If you've a point to be conveyed, stay with the main point and ignore the unimportant ones. ~ Think about what an employer wants to know and prepare examples.
- Prepare a strategy for every interview; make sure you share the information that you feel is most appropriate and relevant. Be specific and keep to the point. Don't bring up extraneous matters.
- Ask appropriate and well thought-out questions. Don't expect an offer on the spot.
- Talk a bit, then pause. The pause indicates that now it is time for the other guy to talk.

Many times we come out of interviews, thinking they were perfect. And then we wait for the job offer, but it never happens. A few calls later you get the hint that the recruiter is not interested or is simply avoiding you, Or in larger organizations, you may get a regret letter. It's natural to feel disappointed, but at the same time, it's important to reflect on the interview, and analyze it again. Make it an opportunity to learn from your mistakes, Or understand that interviews are not one-way situations.

I went to a showroom to purchase a car. I found Maruti, Ford, Mercedes Benz, Toyota, Fiat, Ambassador, Santro and what not finally selected Maruti 800 and came out driving it. This deal does not mean that Mercedes Benz or Ford or Fiat are not good. They may be far better than Maruti, but were not selected by me. Gotit! You also may be like that for a few companies!

Attitude Problems: Sometimes, candidates may come across as arrogant and "know it all" h1 their approach, It may turn off the interviewer, and you must keep in mind that while they can afford to be self-centered, candidates cannot. Be a good listener - be courteous and curious with a pleasant face throughout while hearing. Sometimes the interviewer tries to explain about their company, their projects, their scholarly achievements etc. which may be very well known to you. Just listen to him courteously with a smile but never nod your head impatiently and never say 'I know it, Sir' 'I know, I know' or 'Ok..Ok..Ok..OK 'If you say so, it as bad as saying 'I know it all Sir, You are boring me, Please stop it Sir!' Similarly, don't criticize the previous company or the people you worked with. Badmouthing others makes you look ugly - body and spirit.

Do Research on Background: Know something about the job, company or industry prior to the interview, Visit the library or use the Internet to research the company, then talk with friends, seniors and other professionals about the opportunity before

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interview.

Not Having Questions to Ask: Asking questions shows your interest in the company and the job. Prepare a list of intelligent questions in advance. See that the questions have fewer words, say maximum 10 words.

4.1. Not Readily Knowing the Answers to Interviewer's Questions: Generally questions which you can answer easily only will be asked. Companies spend huge amounts on recruiting personnel and therefore' conduct interviews only to select, not to reject. Also they want you to be in a very relaxed mood so that you can express your thoughts and ideas freely. That is why, questions like, Introduce yourself, What about your family background, Who is your favourite cine hero etc. are first asked. If you can answer these standard questions well, you are a free man to give your answers confidently. Also, when a question is asked, give a pause, think and tell. Don't give an instantaneous answer even if you've a readymade answer. The interviewer wants to know how you think, how you formulate your responses and how you relate things. What will he do with the answer? Organization of thoughts is important, not the answer.

Too Much Humility: Candidates are sometimes reluctant to describe their accomplishments. Explaining how you reach difficult or impressive goals helps employers understand what you can do for them. So, reiterate your skills and convince the employers understand what you can do for them.

Handling Salary Issues: Candidates often ask about salary and benefits too early. If they believe and employer is interested, they may demand inappropriate amounts and spoil their opportunities. Candidates who ask for too little undervalue themselves or appear desperate. Use a little tact. Know when it's right to talk money. And avoid showing how much you want the job to the point of underselling yourself.

Lack of Career Direction: Job hunters who are not clear about their career goals reveal their lack of direction and their inability to contribute to the growth of the organization.

5. SUCCESS TIPS

25 Tips for successful Interviewing

The job interviewing stage of your job search is the most critical. You can make or break your chance of being hired in the short amount of time it takes to be interviewed. Anyone can learn to interview well, however, and most mistakes can be anticipated and corrected. Learn the following top 25 interviewing techniques to give you that winning edge.

1. Bring extra copies of your resume to the interview. Nothing shows less preparation and readiness than being asked for another copy of your resume

and not having one. Come prepared with extra copies of your resume. You may be asked to interview with more than one person and it demonstrates professionalism and preparedness to anticipate needing extra copies

2. Dress conservatively and professionally. You can establish your uniqueness through other ways, but what you wear to an interview can make a tremendous difference. It is better to overdress than under dress. You can, however, wear the same clothes to see different people.

3. Be aware of your body language. Try to look alert, energetic, and focused on the interviewer. Make eye contact. Non-verbally, this communicates that you are interested in the individual.

4. First/last impressions. The first and last five minutes of the interview are the most important to the interview. It is during this time that critical first and lasting impressions are made and the interviewer decides whether or not they like you. Communicate positive behaviors during the first five minutes and be sure you are remembered when you leave.

5. Fill out company applications completely- even if you have a resume. Even though you have brought a copy of your resume, many companies require a completed application. Your willingness to complete one, and your thoroughness in doing so, will convey a great deal about your professionalism and ability to follow through.

6. Remember that the purpose of every interview is to get an offer. You must sufficiently impress your interviewer both professionally and personally to be offered the job. At the end of the interview, make sure you know what the next step is and when the employer expects to make a decision.

7. Understand employers' needs. Present yourself as someone who can really add value to an organization. Show that you can fit into the work environment.

8. Be likeable. Be enthusiastic. People love to hire individuals who are easy to get along with and who are excited about their company. Be professional; yet demonstrate your interest and energy.

9. Make sure you have the right skills. Know your competition. How do you compare with your peers in education, experience, training, salary, and career progression? Mention the things you know how to do really well. They are the keys to your next job.

10. Display ability to work hard to pursue an organization's goals. Assume that most interviewers need to select someone who will fit into their organization well in terms of both productivity and personality. You must confirm that you are both a productive and personable individual by stressing your benefits for

the employer.

11. Market all of your strengths. It is important to market yourself, including your technical qualifications, general skills and experiences as well as personal traits. Recruiters care about two things - credentials and personality. Can you do the job based on past performance and will you fit in with the corporate culture? Talk about your positive personality traits and give examples of how you demonstrate each one on the job

12. Give definitive answers and specific results. Whenever you make a claim of your accomplishments, it will be more believable and better remembered if you cite specific examples and support for your claims. Tell the interviewer something about business situations where you actually used this skill and elaborate on the outcome. Be specific.

13. Don't be afraid to admit mistakes. Employers want to know what mistakes you have made and what is wrong with you. Don't be afraid to admit making mistakes in the past, but continuously stress your positive qualities as well, and how you have turned negatives into positive traits.

14. Relate stories or examples that heighten your past experience. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance. If you were successful at one company, odds are you can succeed at another. Be ready to sell your own features and benefits in the interview.

15. Know everything about your potential employer before the interview. Customize your answers as much as possible in terms of the needs of the employer. This requires that you complete research, before the interview, about the company, its customers, and the work you anticipate doing. Talk in the employer's language

16. Rehearse and practice interview questions before the interview. Prior to your interview, try to actually practice the types of questions and answers you may be asked. Even if you do not anticipate all of the questions, the process of thinking them through will help you feel less stressed and more prepared during the interview itself.

17. Know how to respond to tough questions. The majority of questions that you will be asked can be anticipated most of the time. There are always, however, those exceptional ones tailored to throw you off guard and to see how you perform under pressure. Your best strategy is to be prepared, stay calm, collect your thoughts, and respond as clearly as possible.

18. Translate your strengths into job-related language of accomplishments and benefits relevant to the needs of employers. While you no doubt have specific strengths and skills related to the position, stress the benefits you are likely to

provide to the employer. Whenever possible, give examples of your strengths that relate to the language and needs of the employer.

19. Identify your strengths and what you enjoy doing. Skills that you enjoy doing are the ones that are most likely to bring benefit to an employer. Prior to the interview, know what it is that you enjoy doing most, and what benefits that brings to you and your employer.

20. Know how you communicate verbally to others. Strong verbal communications skills are highly valued by most employers. They are signs of educated and competent individuals. Know how you communicate, and practice with others to determine if you are presenting yourself in the best possible light.

21. Don't arrive on time - arrive early! No matter how sympathetic your interviewer may be to the fact that there was an accident on the freeway, it is virtually impossible to overcome a negative first impression. Do whatever it takes to be on time, including allowing extra time for unexpected emergencies.

22. Treat everyone you meet as important to the interview. Make sure you are courteous to everyone you come in contact with, no matter who they are or what their position. The opinion of everyone can be important to the interview process.

23. Answer questions with complete sentences and with substance. Remember that your interviewer is trying to determine what substance you would bring to the company and the position. Avoid answering the questions asked with simple "yes" or "no" answers. Give complete answers that show what knowledge you have concerning the company and its requirements. Let the interviewer know who you are.

24. Reduce your nervousness by practicing stress reduction techniques. There are many stress-reducing techniques used by public speakers that can certainly aid you in your interview process. Practice some of the relaxation methods as you approach your interview, such as taking slow deep breaths to calm you down. The more you can relax, the more comfortable you will feel and the more confident you will appear.

25. Be sure to ask questions. Be prepared to ask several questions relevant to the job, employer, and the organization. These questions should be designed to elicit information to help you make a decision as well as demonstrate your interest, intelligence, and enthusiasm for the job.

6. How to Prepare for an Interview?

Here are some strategies or general rules that will help you about any question that

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comes your way. Prepare well for various frequently asked questions thoroughly and practice several times. The first few questions like: Introduce yourself, What about your family background, Your strengths and weaknesses, How you have overcome them, Your favorite subjects, Journals you refer, etc. etc. are generally the same for all. At the same time, you shouldn't go into an interview with a script of exactly what you are going to say or with so much rehearsal under your belt that you sound like an automation. What you need to take with you are tactics that are versatile enough to navigate any twist and turn the interview might take.

- Do answer the question, because not answering the question is a common and disastrous pitfall. Listen carefully to what is being asked, and answer that question.
- Be candid - but do so strategically. Remember that employers want to get to know you. If they feel they are getting cold responses, they will be turned off.
- Don't ever give a yes or no answer. Realize that every chance you have to respond to a question is a chance to convince the employer of your value. Whenever a question is asked, don't give away the answers immediately. Give a pause, think about it and then give your answer (even if you know the answer thoroughly, act as if you're thinking!). If you are not sure, you can always guess it. You can even tell them that you're guessing with your body language, but never bluff boldly, never argue.
- Do review your strengths before every interview, and adapt them as needed for each prospective employer.
- Say 'we', 'us' or 'Our' instead of 'I', 'me' or 'they'. Let your words show that you like your present job, your colleagues and the employers and their policies. You're opting this company for your betterment, not because you've problems with your present employer.
- Don't get hung up on the actual wording of a question. Focus instead on what qualities and ~" experiences are being sought.
- Don't be thrown by questions off the subject of the job. Asking about your thoughts on current events or about your hobbies can yield valuable information for the interviewer and add a human dimension to the interview.
- Be direct. Never be evasive or hesitant. If a question makes you uncomfortable, answer it directly while presenting yourself in the best possible manner.
- Be patient. No matter how tedious the interview may be, try to s cooperative.
- Do collect your thoughts before speaking, avoid unnecessarily quick responses.
- Don't ever be negative. Unless you are specifically asked about such subjects such as death, illness, accident or failure. Also don't speak ill of any person, place or thing.
- Be original. If you're like someone else, what do they need you for?

6.1. The Trickiest Questions: In some respects, no one interview question is any more or less difficult than the next. If you follow the above guidelines and go into an interview equipped with focus on your strengths, you should be able to handle any

question with aplomb.

- Tell me about yourself:

"Tell me about yourself" is a calculated way of finding out how you organize your thoughts, how you articulate them, and on which information you choose to focus. Hence, for "Tell me a story", you should respond in the same way as you would for "Tell me about yourself".

6.2. When planning how you will respond, consider the following strategies:

- Prepare sufficiently. This question requires much more preparation than any other because there is a danger of not knowing where to begin - or of knowing where to start but not knowing when to stop talking:
- Tell your story focusing on your strengths, experience and what you can contribute to the organization.
- Focus on professional topics more than personal ones. It is appropriate to mention a couple of brief facts about your personal achievements.
- Be concise. 'Don't elaborate on your childhood, details of your academic record etc.

6.3. Tell me about a time when you had a personality clash with a coworker or boss.

This question is mainly to ascertain your interpersonal skills. Don't complain about your boss or coworker unnecessarily. Personality clashes may be because of opinion differences. Inform how amicably they were solved by open discussion.

6.4. Why should we hire you instead of someone else?

Be aware of the employer's needs, to assess what you have to offer related to those needs and to give an example of how you have met similar needs in the past. The worst answer you can give to this question could be "You should hire me because I am a hard worker with excellent skills and experience". So what? Anyone can say that! Instead of concentrating on yourself as a person, Think of yourself only in relation to the prospective employer. Exactly what can you offer them?

You have to zero-in on the two or three qualifications the employer cares most about, and the one or two problems that need to be solved. Tell your potential to do something valuable for them in future. Then deliver a powerful punch of a reply, such as this: "Based on our discussion, it seems you need someone who has a strong background in database design, and I fit the bill."

6.5. Where do you see yourself 5/10/15 years from now?

You might say, "Well, of course, I can't say exactly where I want to be five years

from now, but I know that I will still be involved in telecommunications and will be continually learning and applying cutting-edge technologies. "In brief, I think I will be in my peak as a learner and just framing concrete future plans and bring a proper shape to my ideas and thoughts"!

6.6. Have you applied anywhere else?

A direct approach to this question is usually the best approach. It will also have the added benefit of getting the employer's competitive juices flowing when you sound like you are in demand. Be frank enough to mention the organizations for which you applied/appeared for interview. There is nothing wrong in letting the interviewer know that he has to compete with others for him!

"I am in the early stages of discussing opportunities at two other firms" is a handy euphemism for saying that you have placed preliminary calls to a human resources representative who told you that some opening might exist and that you should send in your resume and they will call you, may be, Of course, if you are not interviewing anywhere else because you are not in an active search, you can simply say so.

6.7. What is your salary expectation?

You probably know not to bring up the issue of salary in a first interview, and also not in subsequent interviews until an offer is made to you, Interviewers don't always live by the same rules, and you might find yourself asked point blank what salary you are expecting.

Avoid stating any precise amount, but don't avoid the question entirely. Say something like know that my salary needs are in line with typical compensation for (type of position) in an organization of this size. And, I am confident we will be able to come to an agreement on an appropriate compensation package, but I would rather not discuss specifics until I have a chance to know more about the position and until you know more about what I have to offer."

What do you think about (controversial topic)...?

Such questions are asked not because your opinions are very important, the interviewer would like to see how you can handle a controversial issue with a balanced and logical approach. Go ahead and give your opinion, but without hurting the sentiments of a group or culture.

If you want to play it safe, make sure that any opinions you express are likely to be shared by the interviewer. If you want to take the safest course of action express no opinion at all or one that is entirely neutral. If the interviewer asks. "What did you make of that mandate the Pope announced this morning?" Reply with something innocuous like "That was really something, wasn't it? I am interested in seeing how the world reacts". With this tactic, you deflect the query and put the dialogue ball back

into the interviewer's court. Subtly change the subject.

6.8. Just the Facts

While it is important to be prepared for specific questions, you shouldn't expect an interview to conform to a textbook-style format. You can't predict exactly which questions will be asked or how they will be worded, So arm yourself with versatile strategies rather than detailed scripts. For example, you may be asked about the biography of a great personality or the basics of yoga or difference between allopathy and Homeopathy, How to improve creative thinking or what is human scale? What is ISBN? What is boring pump? What is the power consumption of a computer? ,

7. Group Discussion

Nowadays, Group Discussion GD, is a popular selection tool in business schools and for entry-level positions incorporates. When number of applicants is more, GD as a selection elimination tool is very convenient.

Colleges like T. A Pal-Manipal, MDI Gurgaon, IIMs, Tata Institute of Social Sciences – Mumbai. LRI, IMT Ghaziabad, ICFAI Business school, IPE, Symbiosis-Pune, Bhartidasan Trichy, FMS-Delhi, S P Jain, Mumbai, Indore university, NMIMS-Mumbai, Goa Institute of management. Similarly, companies like L&T, HLL, Nestle, Cadbury's, Marico, Coke, ITC, ICICI, Wipro have also used GD for some of the entry level management selections.

But the ways and means of success in group discussion is somehow elusive. One has to actually sit in a GD in a very competitive environment to understand what it exactly is?

7.1. What is GD?

You may find yourself seated in a group of 5-15 participants. Generally a topic is given and the group is asked to discuss that topic. Each candidate is assessed on the basis of his/her performance during the Group Discussions. GD

What are they trying to judge? Basic skills like communication skill, analytical skills, assertiveness, confidence and inter personal skills are judged.

TIME LIMIT: There is no fixed time limit. Generally group discussions are conducted for a period of 10 to 45 minutes.

There are broadly two types of group discussions; one where the discussion is topic based or secondly, a case study may be given to the group. Here are some **do's** and **don'ts** of Group Discussions.

7.2. Some Do's

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Opening

Speaking first is a high-risk high-return strategy. It can make or mark your GD performance depending on how you handle it. In most GDs the opening speaker is the person who gets maximum uninterrupted airtime. The reason is simple – at the start most other participants in the GD are still trying to understand the basic issues in the topic or are too nervous to speak and are waiting for some one else to start. Therefore the evaluators get the best chance to observe the opening speaker. Now this is a double-edged sword. If the opening speaker talks sense naturally he will get credit because he opened and took the group in the right direction. If on the other hand the first speaker doesn't make too much sense while talking, he will attract the undivided attention of the evaluators to his shortcomings. He will be marked as a person who speaks without thinking merely for the sake of speaking. So remember: speak first only if you have something sensible to say. Otherwise keep quiet and let someone else start.

Body language is at play in its best form in a group discussion and evaluators can easily make out as to who is nervous etc. This is something you cannot correct in short time but if you leave practiced properly then the chances of displaying positive body language is more.

Eye contact quick movement of eyes is required if group size is more. Even then try to make eye contact by rotating your eyes. GD as a tool has got its own limitation as some people may have to shout to make themselves heard, specially if you have a soft voice. That's okay and desirable, as you have to make your point.

The group is given a chance to decide the topic think of a general topic on which people can speak. When the time is short then you should give points, which are beyond the obvious, and hence speaks of your knowledge base. Common tendency is for candidates to start with the most obvious points/quotes/definitions, which should be avoided.

Dealing with topics in case of sensitive topics like reservation or gender biased topics. It's best to keep a neutral stand. In other cases, you should try to take a stand and try to justify it, based on your knowledge and experience even if nobody is paying any attention to your points and you haven't got enough time just plough on as the evaluators may be listening to what you are saying since it's a competitive situation. Others may not pay any attention to you deliberately, however, if your points are good, generally you get the attention.

Mannerism is also important no matter how frustrated you are because of the group's behaviours maintain decorum.

If preparation time is given, you may use a pad and note down the important points you want to bring forward, in brief. You can also use this time to compose your thoughts and develop a line of thinking.

Since a GD is always in a formal setting, formal dress code is called for. Listening is as important as speaking in the group discussion. It is always recommended to start with some point beyond the obvious or analytical points as clichéd points will not motivate people to listen to you and in an ideal GD, the topic is discussed threadbare by the group in an intelligent and erudite manner.

Before going in for any GD, brush your general knowledge; the moment a topic is allotted to you, try to think of as many good points as you can about the topic. If it is allowed, list them down on paper; never hesitate to be the first one to speak. But avoid giving any comment on how GD should be conducted. Many GD participants often complain that they did not get a chance to speak. The fact of the matter is that in no GD do you get a chance to speak. You have to make your chances. If you are not a very assertive person, the road ahead will be tough and you have to change your attitude in those fifteen minutes and if you desperately want to get through the GD, you will be able to!!

Try to give short, to the point examples. The moment you get a chance to speak, grab it; otherwise, you may interject somebody at the right moment and speak. It pays to think laterally.

The quality of what you say is more important than quantity. Try to think of the various arguments of yours and others' as parts of a jigsaw puzzle or as building blocks of a larger argument for or against the topic.

You must not agree with another participant in the group merely for the sake of achieving consensus. If you disagree, say so. Give the justification first and the stand later. If you were to state your stand first, chances are that the others in the group who disagree with your stand will interrupt to contradict you before you can elaborate on the reasons why you have taken that stand.

Accept joint responsibilities and take decision as a group. You must demonstrate the fact that you are capable and inclined to work as part of a team.

most of the time, evaluators may be just circling you or they may be seated on the same table quietly observing you. If they are sitting on the same table, then eye contact may be made with them; otherwise, just talk to the group. Clarifications if any should be sought in the beginning of GD from the evaluators.

Summarize: When you are asked to summarize, use points from all the participants. It should prove you are a good listener. While summarizing, you should not only repeat your opinion but give a proper summary of what actually happened.

7.3. Some Don'ts

Changing your opinion on the topic in between the discussion is not recommended as it shows your limited knowledge base. If you can't stick to your opinion for 15

minutes, it puts a question mark on your decision-making ability.

Deviating from the topic: Taking an unconventional stand on the topic without proper support arguments.

One to one argument should be avoided with the other participants. If by chance you get involved in one to one argument, very diplomatically try to get out of it direct sentences like "let's not get into an argument". Aggressive gestures and an unnecessary show of organizing the GD should be avoided. Remember natural leaders impress others through their knowledge and expressive power rather than trying to dominate others.

Never disagree with anybody in a blunt manner. Never lose the spirit during the GD, try to put up an intelligent fight till the last second.

Sub-groupings: form a part of 2-3 people and then start discussing among yourselves; breaking up the topic should be avoided; all the points should be spoken to the group.

7.4. Case study

You may be given a printed case study and some time to read the case and then discuss it. There may be questions or it may be an open ended case. Case studies normally pertain to standard business situations and may have lot of statistics. Thus the evaluator attempts to examine the comprehension and analysis power of the applicants apart from other skills.

Last few seconds: If you feel that you haven't got enough chance to speak, then make every effort to speak some sensible points before the battle is over. Actually it's a very tense battle for a very short time in which pressure to perform is high. There are no general rules for a group discussion so a lot of flexibility is required to win this battle.

7.5. The Key for success:

- a) Practice in simulated GD's and improve on your weak area, preparing yourself for all situations.
- b) Reading, preferably a wide range of topics.
- c) Mental preparation: understand your style in a group and how you come across as a speaker then be mentally prepared to use every second during the group discussion.

8. Manners and Mannerisms

Often we are unaware of our mannerisms. Some cannot be identified easily while some are reasonable and acceptable, but some mannerisms irritate others and reflect

badly on our personality. Some of such manner- isms/bad habits are:

1. Making noise while walking, drinking or eating or yawning or sleeping or brushing and mouth- washing. Unkept hair shows an unruly head. Chappals show your feet, the lowliest parts of your body. Loose shirt and loose dresses are always unruly. A buffoonish walking style with over bending does not represent humility or obedience but shows lack of confidence. Indecent mannerisms irritate one and all and make you a 'buffoon'. A serious face with no smile on it reminds nothing but a dead body.

2. Say 'Hi' with a pleasant smile even to the unknown, the US way. If you're going to do it tomorrow, why not today in your own country with your own countrymen?

3. Don't make noise with the spoon. Avoid discussions while eating. Don't open your mouth to talk while chewing pan. Keep your plate neat while dining. (Some people eat so badly that others do not feel like staying there. Your dining plate should not appear like a war-field!) Using shirt or *dhoti* or sari instead of a handkerchief. Coughing and sneezing in the open without using a handkerchief.

4. Entering someone's office or house without seeking permission. Even if the doors are open, one must knock the door before getting in. While entering as well as while leaving the room, walk straight, stand straight and sit straight. Also, don't look here and there while entering as well as leaving the room. Over bending represents over-humility, a weakness. It shows lack of confidence.

5. Not giving a firm handshake or scratching other's hand during the handshake. (For, a friendly hand- shake, you should always present an energetic lively hand, never a dead hanging hand.) While giving a handshake, look into his/her eyes, not at others.

6. Instead of looking into the eyes with a pleasant smile some people look at others or talk to others. (You can do it only if you've a squint. Otherwise, always look into the eyes pleasantly while talking.)

7. Offering water, fruits, books or any article with a left hand or receiving. with a left hand.

8. Maintain good postures while sitting, standing, walking and even sleeping. It also keeps one's mind and body active, bold and confident. Moving legs like a simple pendulum while sitting and playing with hair while listening, are very common bad features.

9. Raising eyebrows while asking or enquiring something or Closing eyes frequently in awkward manner.

10. Many people describe their personal problems in detail irrespective of the context, like 'yesterday I had four big vomitings and five bloody motions'. During the lunch or dinner also he won't hesitate in not changing his filthy topic 'I don't take spicy food today as I'm suffering from vomitings and dysentery. I am getting vomiting sensation even on seeing these curries and this sambar'.

11. Not listening with curiosity and courtesy. While listening some people appear bored and express their restlessness, by Cleaning their eyes, Scratching legs and head alternatively, Cleaning ears with a pen or Forcing one corner of a handkerchief deep into the nose and then applying torsion, Cleaning spectacles with his own shirt or that of the speaker if he is his intimate friend or Humming songs loudly or Yawning with funny sounds or Talking on an entirely different topic or Asking about cricket score etc. Many managers have the habit of talking or listening to their juniors, guests and clients while shuffling and arranging papers, look for some document on the table or talk to secretary on phone- all simultaneously. This can be highly dangerous for the manager as well as the organization. The first step of success is listening. As called by Shakespeare, let us not suffer from "The disease of not listening".

12. Many people have the habit of touching the body while speaking-keeping the hands on the back or patting the shoulders with a gentle hug or swatting the hips or gently touching the chin or ears etc. These are not bad habits but many people dislike such things even with close friends. For example, I myself had the habit of keeping the hands on the shoulders while walking till I was seriously warned by one of my very close friends, who said, "Can't you speak without touching Last week another guy did the same thing, and I slapped him left and right". I don't find fault with my friend, but, better be careful, especially with new friends and some conservative people. In many developed countries, if a boy and a girl move very closely, nobody bothers, but, if two men are very close, it may be considered obscene and vulgar!

13. Table Manners: Don't make noise while eating or drinking. Keep your dining table, as well as your dining plate neat and clean. Don't waste items at all, don't waste even a bit of an item. Don't touch food items with naked hand. Don't transfer food items, from your plate to others in the party, however close he/she may be to you. Tea, water or drinks- avoid placing them directly in the hand. If possible, keep them on the table or in the tray itself. Not that we're encouraging untouchability, but, due to the fact that during the hand to hand transaction there is every possibility of spilling over on the dress:

Before leaving the place of sitting or standing, say 'Excuse me'. Follow

queue system in Buffet. If you're eating non-vegetarian items, keep distance from the vegetarian section. Don't ask for things not available like salad, ice-cream, pan, hot water for throat gargling, finger bowls, new napkins etc. Be happy with what is available. Don't give free advises like "It would have been better if you had ~ provided with " or "If I were the organizer, I would have ", unless there is a separate suggestion box available.

14. Don't be too Specific:

Don't be too specific and too rigid in your dealings with your friends and colleagues. 'Please come in yellow Punjabi dress, free hair and a red rose when you come to the park tomorrow'. Some boys are too specific like that.. Give her a chance to come in her own style that suits her the most. What you need is that she should present herself with a calm and open mind. I know a friend who asked his wife to wear a black bra for the first night! Such demands often look silly and degrade your personality.

* * *

9. ARE YOU TO GIVE SEMINAR? HAVE SOME TIPS

(Extracted from paper "Advice to Beginning physics speakers"

by James C. Garland)

8.1. INTRODUCTION:

Once you finally graduate, you will undoubtedly find yourself standing behind a podium. Remember, whenever you make an oral presentation, you are also presenting yourself.

If you ramble incoherently, avoid eye contact, flash illegible transparencies on a screen, and seem nervous and confused, then your colleagues are not only going to be irritated at having their time wasted, they are also going to question your ability to do your job.

However, if you present your ideas clearly and persuasively, with self-assurance and skill, you will come across as a reasonable orderly person who has respect for the audience and a clear, insightful mind.

With this thought in mind, here are a few guidelines to point you in the right direction.

8.2. TIPS

1. Presentation:

The most common error is to play only to the experts, the rationale being that the experts' opinions matter the most and that everyone else in the audience will at least leave thinking you're a clever person.

Wrong, If you make your talk so technical that only a few can understand it, your audience will resent you not only for wasting their time but also for violating the implicit contract that a speaker has with the audience to always be clear and understandable.

2. Introduction of the topic:

Experienced speakers generally devote the first half or two-thirds of a presentation to a careful introduction of the topic and save the highly technical material for the last few minutes. In this way, the beginners can understand a significant part of the presentation, and the experts will learn some of the fine points.

Most importantly, everyone will end up respecting the speaker as an authority on the subject who is also attuned to the audience and respectful of the varied needs of those in it.

3. Summarizing:

Summarize at the very end the key points they should remember. That way, if they have dozed through part of the talk or just failed to understand it, they would at least walk out of the room at the end with the major ideas reverberating in their heads.

4. Time Limits:

Never, ever, speak past your allotted time. To do so is extremely egotistical, and even if your audience is courteous enough to let you continue, they will not forgive your rudeness. But in, say, 10 minutes, how can you possibly convey the significance of the work that you sweated over for the past several months or years.

However, you'll almost always give a more lively and interesting talk if you narrow rather than widen the scope of your remarks.

For very short talks, your greatest challenge will be to weed out relentlessly any extraneous subject matter.

What you must never do is attempt to squeeze your talk into the permitted time slot by speaking rapidly, flashing through your slides and frantically scribbling on the blackboard.

5. Equations & Mathematics:

It is not difficult to integrate equations into your talk if you keep in mind a few simple precautions. First, make absolutely certain that the equations are necessary, and if they're not, toss them out.

Audiences are especially scornful of speakers who load their presentations with equations because of a misguided belief that the mathematics along will highlight their work with a more scientific or rigorous flavour.

Remember, audiences will happily assume that you can solve equations, so forget the algebra and focus on the assumptions that led to the equation, the technique that you used to solve it and a careful explanation of the relevance of the solution of your topic.

For example, as you're writing out $E=mc^2$ on the blackboard, you should say something like, "And so now we see that the energy E is equal to the mass of the object multiplied by the square of the speed of light."

6. Transparencies:

Experienced speakers often have strong opinions about the optimal number of transparencies for a talk-typically of 3 to 6 for a 10-minute presentation. 10 to 15 for a half-hour talk are used.

You needn't write out full sentences on your transparencies (although you should certainly speak in full sentences).

The general rule is that the transparency text should be concise enough to be self-explanatory, but no more than that.

7. Awareness of the Hall, facilities: Learn where the light switch, focus control and pointer are located before your talk. Also give some thought to where you'll often be blocking the view of part of the audience if you stand beside the projector. If that's the case, stand next to the screen and use a pointer.

Make sure you've got a table to set your transparencies and notes on, because you won't present a very dignified image if you're down on your hands and knees shuffling

through your papers in the dark.

8. Rehearse: Unless you're an unusually gifted speaker, you'll need to rehearse your talk in front of your classmates, colleagues, spouse or friends.

It is recommended that you avoid writing out your talk and then reading or reciting it.

Although speakers in nonscientific fields often read their papers, reading prepared papers is considered bad form in scientific and technical circles, where a more extemporaneous presentation is preferred.

While you practice, try to be attuned to any nervous mannerisms. Avoid wringing your hands, pacing back and

forth, fidgeting with your microphone trap or jangling the keys in your pocket.

9. In Panic Situations:

If you're really panicked, try taking a few deep breaths, gripping the sides of the podium with both hands and distributing your weight equally on both feet.

10. Dress:

Nevertheless, other people do form an impression of you based in part on your appearance, and so the advice is at least to consider what statement your clothing is making. At the very minimum, you should avoid looking like you just dragged yourself out of bed or staggered out of the hotel bar (even if true).

For men, this means that you shouldn't wear cutoffs and running shoes if most of your male colleagues are wearing sports coats and ties.

For women the same general rule applies: Don't look like a slob, but don't dress to the nines, either. Most career counselors suggest not overdoing the Jewellery, staying away from frilly blouses and dresses.

Avoid tight or otherwise revealing clothing and very high heels. Your best bet is a tailored, comfortable dress, skirt/saree and blouse, or suit.

11. Eye Contact:

When you finally present your talk, be sure not to ignore the people watching you. Don't stare like a zombie into the space above their heads, and don't focus intently on your transparencies or the floor or your shoes or a spot on the wall.

Experienced speakers pick out several friendly faces and establish eye contact with them, turning first from one person to another and making sure that no section of the

room is ignored.

12. Audibility:

No matter how well you have prepared your remarks, your talk will be a disaster if your audience can't hear you.

13. Questions & Answers:

At the end of your talk, you'll generally be asked to respond to questions from the floor. Inexperienced speakers often dread this moment. Actually, its not difficult to escape from the question session with your dignity intact, provided you never fail to be solicitous and respectful of your questioner and you avoid getting into public arguments.

Let your questioner finish the question. Some speakers get so excited and nervous that they interrupt the questioner in mid-sentence to blurt out an answer to the question they think is being asked. This habit is very irritating to the audience.

Be prepared to rephrase the question. If the room is large or the questioner has a weak voice, you should always repeat the question for the benefit of the audience. It also is important to rephrase the question in brief and clearly if, as frequently happens, the questioner is confused or disorganized.

Keep your answers short. Stick to the point and don't use the answer as an opportunity to digress to a related subject.

Confess your ignorance. If you should be thrown a curveball, don't respond defensively or with irritation. It's far better to say, "I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with that paper" or "I haven't considered that point yet".

Deflect hostile questions. One day you may encounter an angry or aggressive questioner. Although the experience is distressing, there's really no need to panic. Never agree with your questioner Instead, simply say something like "I'm sorry, but it appears we have a difference of opinion. This probably isn't the proper forum for a debate, but I'll be happy to discuss the matter with you in private".

14. Humor:

Now a final bit of advice, everyone knows that a good joke or two can liven up a presentation. However, unless you're naturally funny person avoid canned humor.

