



VERSATILE - NEWS LETTER
ON
INTERVIEW PREPARATION
AND
GROUP DISCUSSION



Managing for Excellence

Versatile Business School, one of the top business schools in Chennai, is established with an objective to offer curriculum beyond academics. This objective is sustained year after year. We offer two year full-time MBA degree recognized by UGC and Ministry of HRD, Government of India. In addition to that our students undergo the prestigious Harvard Business School curriculum in the entire South India which is miles ahead of all other curricula worldwide.

We provide extensive industrial exposure to our students (versatilians) through industrial visits, guest lectures by industrial experts, video clippings, case studies etc. This exposure helps versatilians to take appropriate decisions at any given situation at ease. Versatilians are in demand in the market with attractive salary mainly because they are more focused to get substantial business and profits to their employers.

Learning is not good enough unless one practises the concepts learnt. Keeping this in mind and considering the vast expertise gained over a period of time in making the Versatilians adapt to the market conditions, we thought of bringing a fortnightly series of newsletters on 'Managing for Excellence' to the benefit of Business Administration and Commerce students.

Regular reading of these newsletters will make the reader to understand management concepts well. You can also browse this fortnight newsletter in our website www.versatilebschool.com

Whatever you are doing, no matter how well you are doing, it can be done better still. I'm sure that our newsletters will stand to this commitment.

Versatile Business School is in high spirits in releasing its first fortnightly newsletter on 'Interview Skills'. You will continue to receive interesting articles on management topics every fortnight at free of cost.

I wish you to begin the journey through the series of our newsletters on 'Managing Excellence' and land in better destinations as you progress.

With best regards,

Prof.S.RM.Sokkalingam

Chief Editor and Chairman

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Interview – Preparation

The easiest way to learn something is to break it down into parts.

Before the interview

- Do the homework.
- Research the company, ask people about the company and visit their website.
- Find out the product/service and key persons of the company.
- Write down the list of possible questions and prepare answers for them.
- Arrive fifteen minutes before your interview schedule.
- Always have extra copies of your resume.
- Dress for success - hair should be well groomed and combed.
- Men: Pleasing colour shirt and pant (not jeans or sportswear) with polished shoes. Suit is not always necessary.
- Women: Excess jewellery and make-up shall be avoided.

The interview (At the start)

- Inform the contact person/secretary/receptionist that you have reached and as per schedule.
- Look straight into the interviewer(s)'s eyes, shake hands firmly, introduce yourself, smile, be confident and wait until you are offered a seat.
- Be positive in your communication; try not to be too bold or too shy. Let the interviewer lead the interview.

The interview (Middle)

- Always face the interviewer with good posture / body language.
- Know your resume and portfolio well and be prepared to answer the questions.
- Express your willingness to learn.
- Be honest with all answers.
- Pay close attention to the interviewer's questions.
- Ask the interviewer to explain the question if you don't understand it.

The interview (End)

- Ask clarification/questions relating to your job profile.
- You may be offered a job immediately. In that case, you should ask about the expected roles, responsibilities, working hours and the associated benefits.
- Make sure that the interviewer knows the best possibilities to contact you for any additional information that he might require from you.
- Ask the interviewer how you would be informed in case selected.
- Thank the interviewer before leaving.

The follow-up

- Send the interviewer a thanks mail soon after the interview is over.
- Check with the company after a reasonable interval to know about their decision.

Frequently asked Questions in the Interview

1. Tell me about yourself?

This question or something similar usually will be asked initially at every interview. Your answer should be well-rehearsed, confidently delivered within 3 - 5 minutes.

You should also:

- ✓ focus on the areas most relevant to the job applied for
- ✓ state few impressive achievements
e.g. Achievements or contributions made in your life-time
- ✓ convey your interest for the job being offered
- ✓ avoid personal or information not connected to the interview
e.g. Siblings, un-related jobs, etc.

2. What are your key skills/strengths?

This is one of the important questions that will be asked and there is no excuse if you don't prepare your answer carefully. Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four proficiencies e.g. your ability to work in a team, strive hard to achieve a common goal, finishing the job within the given deadline etc. You must be ready with examples associated with the respective strengths.

3. What are your weaknesses?

The interviewer is trying to assess you for three things through this question:

1. Makes you to understand that you aren't perfect.
2. Looks for honesty and genuineness.

3. Would like to know how you would deal with your “weakness”. Does this mean you have to reveal your deepest or darkest flaw? Of course not!

Importantly you need to anticipate this question and must generate a firm idea of what you can say confidently. The key in responding to this question is to show that you are effectively managing the “weakness” and will not be a liability to your prospective organization. We suggest that you don’t even have to refer it as a “weakness”, rather refer to something that has “challenged” you in the past and how did you convert in to as strength. Come up with a short story to illustrate how you successfully manage this challenge so it isn’t an issue. e.g. “I like to make things happen quickly and get frustrated if sitting around discussing without action for a long time.

4. Where do you want to see yourself after five years from now?

Interviewer might ask this question to make sure that you are concerned with your career growth and future prospects as well make sure that the job you being recruited for are in line with the organization’s goal. Answer this question duly considering your expected career growth and your ambition in life.

Remember, this question is not about your long term goals – It’s only five years. Keep it down to earth and honest about what you really want to do in the next five years. First, assume the next 1-2 years are dedicated to understand the job and improvement thereon and think projections for the last three years.

Every organisation is interested in the personal growth of its employees and its own.

5. Why did you leave your last job?

Your answer should be positive and upbeat even if the circumstances were difficult. If you were made redundant, depersonalise it by talking about company restructuring rather than your individual perspective. Never criticise your previous employer no matter however it is tempting.

6. Why do you want this job?

Your answer should reinforce why you are such a good fit for the job and then convey your enthusiasm for the role e.g.

- Good match between your skills and the employer's requirements.
- Interested in the product/market/sector.

7. Tell me about a difficult scenario at work and how you dealt with it

You are being tested as to how better you can cope with under pressure by using your problem-solving and communication skills. The good examples that you can offer shall be how you:

- helped resolve or improve a difficult situation
- were resilient in adverse conditions
- showed emotional intelligence and cool-headedness

8. Tell me about an achievement of which you are proud of?

Choose work-related examples that show a tangible benefit to the business. Personal achievements should only be included if they are very impressive or prestigious. More experienced candidates looking for specific roles e.g. Sales Manager Jobs should focus on closely related areas e.g. driving an increase in sales or building a successful sales team etc.

9. What are your career goals?

You are being checked whether you are likely to accept the job and if so, for how long. Reassure the employer that how your role fits your career plan and your long term commitment to the company.

10. What are your salary expectations?

Salary negotiations are best handled by the employer at the job offer stage. So try to avoid it at interview stage if you can. If forced to indicate, give a realistic but wide salary range and say that you feel that salary won't be an issue if you decide to work together. As a fresher you can say that the salary can be negotiable.

11. What do you know about our organization?

You need to speak/say the following:

- ✓ Company structure, finances, products and services, key staff.
- ✓ Customers and its competitors.
- ✓ Market trends and challenges

Group Discussion - Preparation

Group Discussion is being extensively used along with personal interviews for the final selection of candidates. It is a technique used for screening candidates as well as testing their potential. It is also designed as a situation test wherein a sample of a candidate's group worthiness and ability to work in a team. It plays a main role in selecting the best among the best.

Features of GD

1. Group Discussion is a group activity carried out by participating individuals. It is an exchange of ideas among the individuals of a group on a specific topic.
2. It is used as a reliable testing device - mainly as a tool to assess all the candidates in a group at one go -in order to select the best in comparative perspective.
3. Group Discussion involves the participants of the same educational standard to discuss a topic of current interest.
4. It is also known as leaderless discussion. It means its aim is to find out the natural leadership level of the candidates.

Dos in a GD

1. The examiners usually look for a very positive personality with varied potential. During the progress of any group discussion, there will be conflicting views and as a result, heated arguments. The winner has to reveal his positive personality traits and leadership abilities to gain approval for his ideas.

2. The ability to speak is the foremost of all. If one does not speak eloquently and fluently, one cannot create any impact and make his presence strongly felt.
3. Conveying all information in well-balanced sentences in a manner that reflects a good grasp of the subject will indicate sharp and analytical mind. The delivery should be smooth and catching.
4. Important of all is the tone. It should reflect the humility of a very knowledgeable person. There will be interruptions and they should be borne with patience and a winning smile .It is the ability to hold the attention of group members which matters

Don'ts in a GD

1. Constantly objecting others and speaking pessimistically will block the smooth flow of discussion. A totally negative attitude prevents progress and people who are always complaining and always dissatisfied will not be liked.
 2. Equally unsuitable are those who insult and criticize others betraying jealousy or animosity. The aggressive attitude is usually disapproved.
 3. Another avoidable attitude is telling irrelevant stories and personal experiences. They are boastful while trying to appear not to be so.
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Next News Letter: “Body Language”



For any further information on interviewing skills or any other skill development training contact:

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