



Swami Vivekananda
Contributor Personality Program



An Adani Group Initiative

UNIT 15:

Interview Skills



for students and faculty of
Gujarat Technological University

by

i-become University
Services

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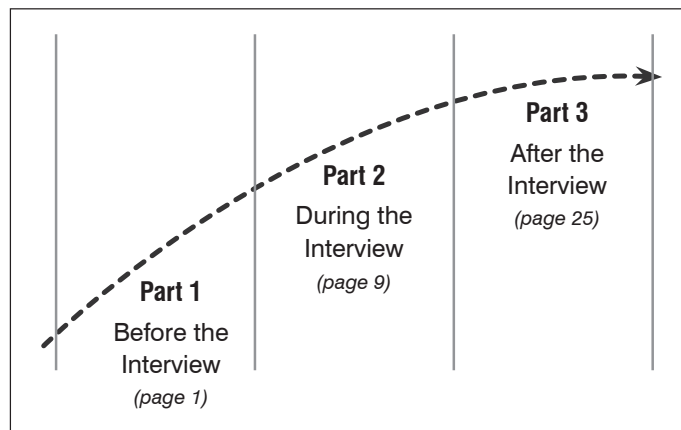
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UNIT 15:

Interview Skills

Explore how to give a “Contributor” Interview.

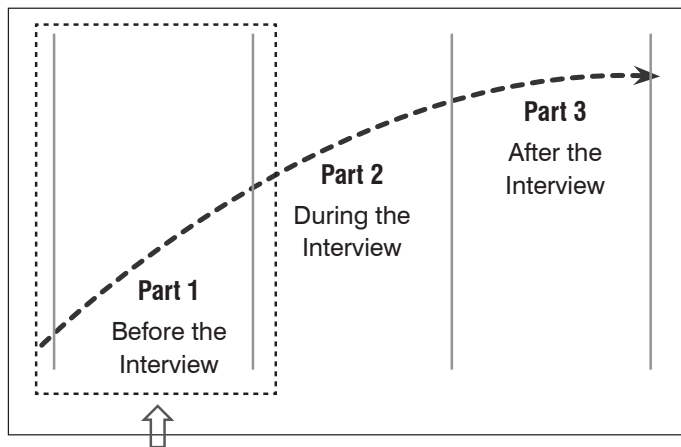
Here you will also learn about common interview questions and how to develop answers, typical challenges faced in interviews beyond the questions (such as body language, grooming, presentation), and most importantly, learn the importance of trust building and creating confidence in the interview.



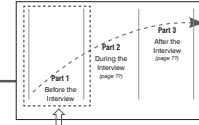
PART 1:

Before the Interview

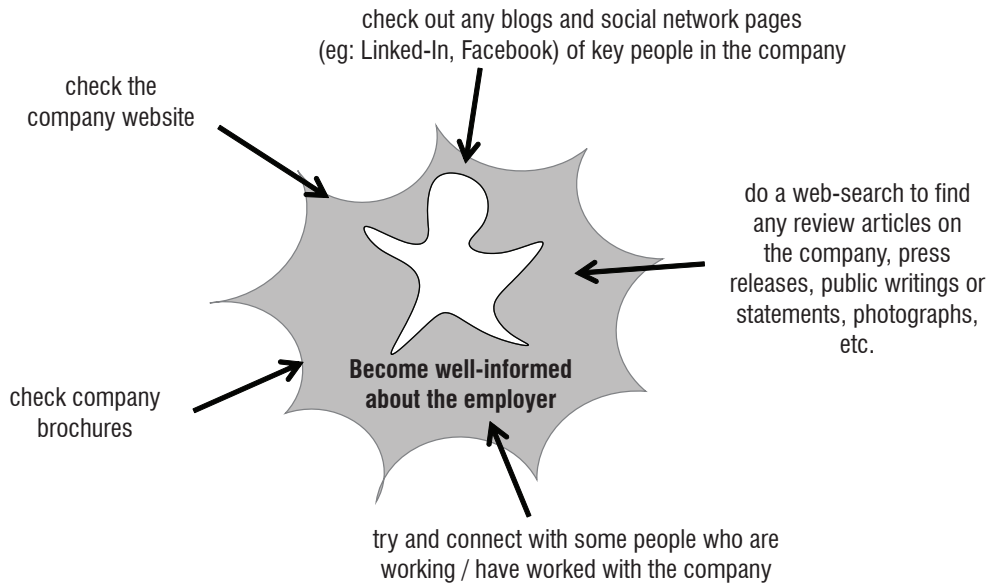
Learn what to prepare for before entering an interview



15.1 The Contributor is well-informed about the employer



Do some background research to get to know your potential employer, before going in for any interview with them.



CHECKLIST: What to learn about the company

- What is their area of work? What are their current initiatives? What products and services do they offer?
- Who are the key people in the organization? What is their background?
- Who are their business associates (such as collaborators, partners, clients, etc.)?
- What are their business locations (where is the head quarters, where do they have offices / factories / etc.)?
- What are their stated values and mission? What are the ideas they propagate?
- Are there any public achievements or controversies associated with the company?
- How old is the organization? How have they grown in that period? Is there any information on its history?
- Do they have a strong training system?

- *Being well informed demonstrates your interest in the organization and your keenness for the job. It also shows that you prepare well for a new engagement/assignment and don't just treat it lightly.*
- *Moreover, this will also help you to ask intelligent questions about the company during the course of the interview.*
- *Learning more about the company will help you to assess and make a more informed final job decision. Remember, they are assessing you as much as you should be assessing them. The first few years of your career are critical foundation years where lots of learning will take place. Choose your employer well.*

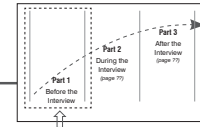
PROJECT 1:

STEP 1: Identify a Company you are interested in applying for / have applied to.

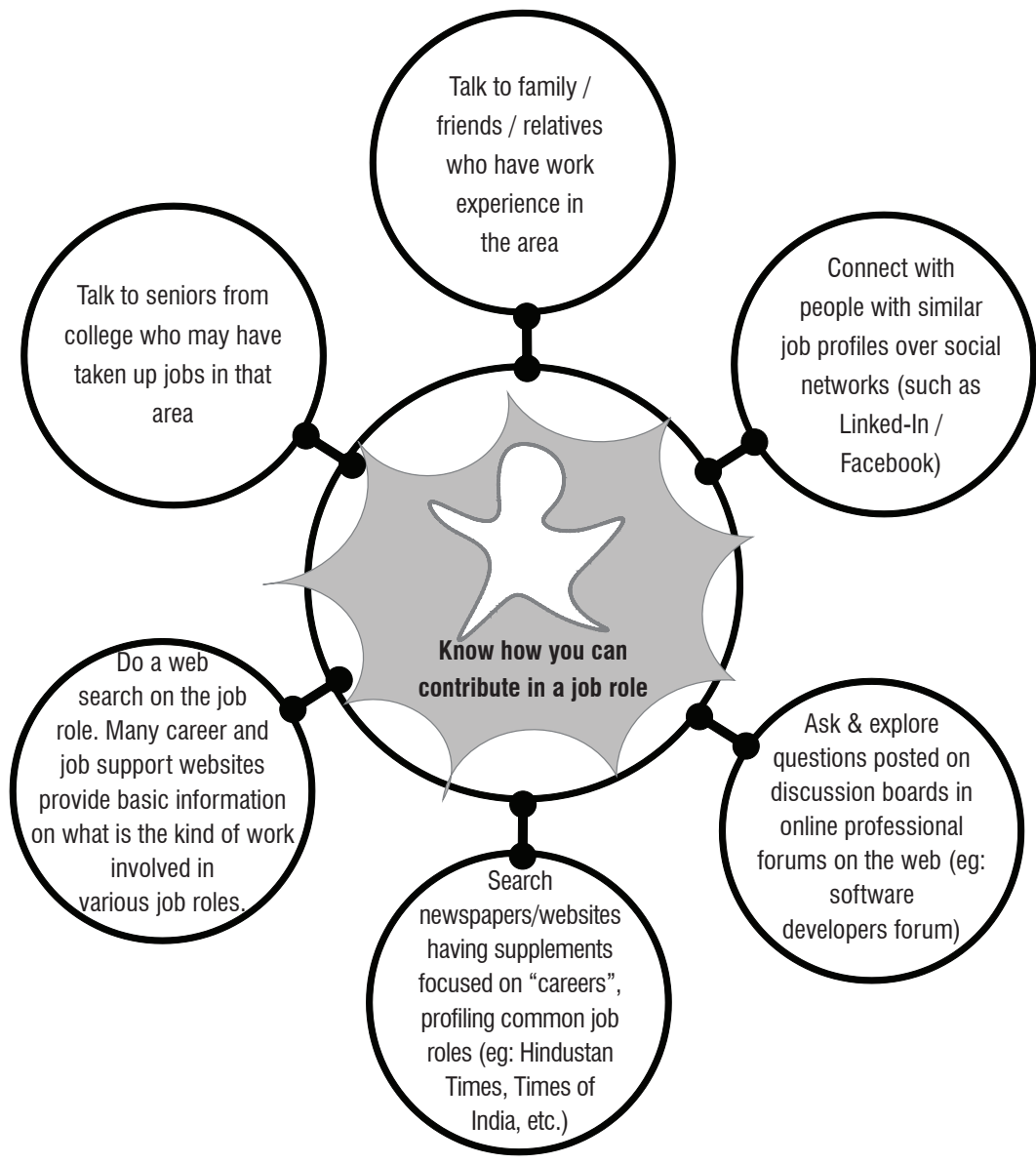
STEP 2: Do a background research on that Company, using the checklist given on page 2, as a guideline.

STEP3: Present to the class.

15.2 The Contributor understands how he / she can contribute in a job role



If the job profile is well-known / common, then before the interview, proactively find out what is the kind of work involved in the job role.



CHECKLIST: Questions that will help you find out about the job role

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What is a typical day at work like? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What are the challenging parts of the assignment where one can differentiate oneself? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What are some of the important projects that you have done? What aspects were you responsible for? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is there a lot of problem-solving needed? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What kind of special skills and capabilities are needed for success in this job role? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Are there opportunities to learn and grow? If yes, what kind? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What kind of outputs are expected? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is there any recognition given for special contributions? If yes, what kind? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What is the typical working style (eg: desk job / on the phone / on the field / in teams / etc.)? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is there a lot of travel? |

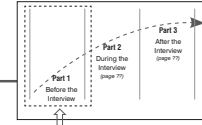
PROJECT 2:

STEP 1: Choose a typical job role that people in your campus usually get into (maybe through campus placements).

STEP 2: – Do research using sources given on page 4.
– What people are expected to do in this job role. (Use the checklist given above as a guideline).

STEP 3: Based on this, prepare a job profile on how one can contribute in the role. Present to the class.

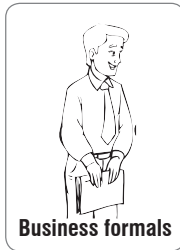
15.3 The Contributor ensures that the first impression is good



Every profession has its own standards of dressing. Before the interview, understand what is the expected attire, so that you can go appropriately dressed.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 1: Mark out below which of the following ways of dressing are appropriate for a person going for an interview of a -

- Software Developer's job
- Bank Executive's job
- Fashion Model's job



CHEKLIST: Safe dress-code for an interview

WOMEN'S ATTIRE

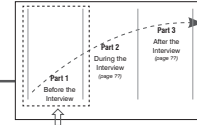
- Formal Indian wear (sober colored salwar/ churidhar kameez with dupatta OR Sari. No flashy prints or embroidery) OR Solid color, conservative western suit with coordinated blouse
- Moderate shoes
- Limited jewellery
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- No / light make-up & perfume
- Manicured nails
- Portfolio or briefcase for documents

MEN'S ATTIRE

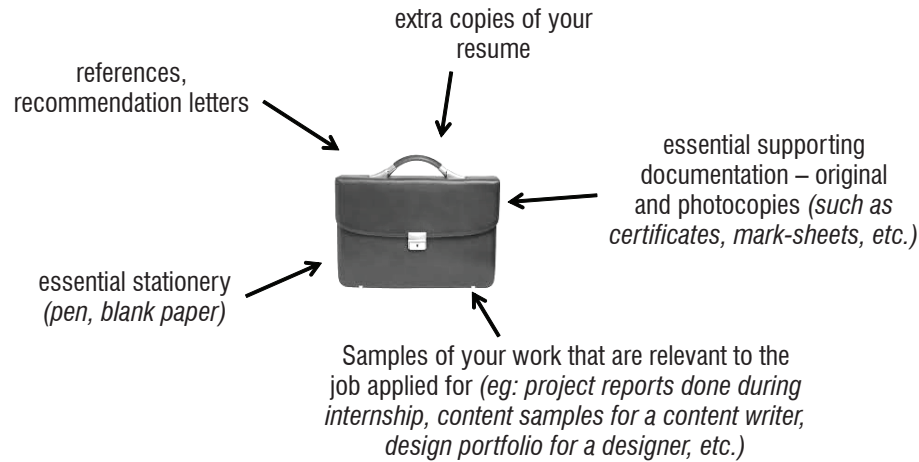
- Solid color, conservative trousers
- White / light colored long sleeve shirt
- Sober looking tie
- Dark socks, formal shoes
- Avoid fashion accessories / jewellery
- Neatly shaven, neat hairstyle
- Avoid strong smelling aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase for documents

Professional dressing on your part shows respect for your interviewer

15.4 The Contributor's portfolio



Prepare a professional looking portfolio or folder to carry into the interview. Ensure you have in it all that you may need to show the interviewer.



PRACTICE EXERCISE 2: Discuss in groups to add to the list of items given below, on “what works” and “what doesn’t work”. Present to the class.

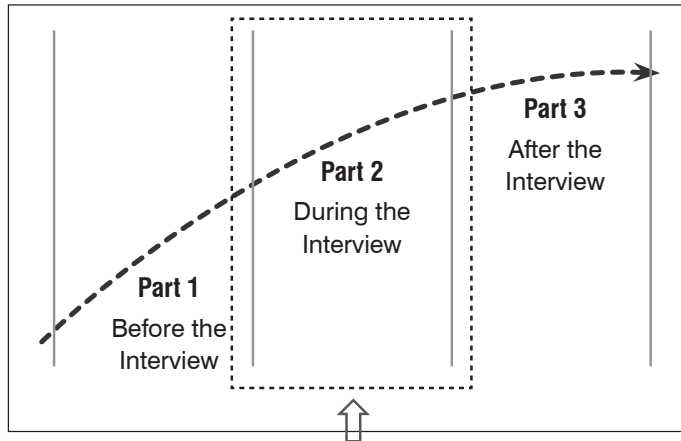
What to carry with you when going for an interview

What doesn't work	What works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Carrying all kinds of documents that are unnecessary and irrelevant (eg: a certificate of first prize won in junior school), making it hard and messy for you to find and take out documents asked for by an interviewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Carrying a few really powerful certificates and documents that make you stand out. In case you have missed carrying something the interviewer asks for, you can say that you will give it the next day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certificates which you have received from dubious or unknown sources. (eg: a handwritten letter from a local NGO saying you did volunteer work there). – False certificates or letters (eg: letter saying you have worked in a place where you never did). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In cases where you have dubious looking certificates, come prepared to back up your claims with references of people / contact details / background information – because the employer is likely to ask for it, to investigate the genuineness of the case. Don't fabricate. – Companies these days engage professional agencies for doing background verification checks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Serious gaps in your mark-sheets (eg: 10th Std mark-sheet is missing, first and second year college mark-sheets are missing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete proof of your academic record.

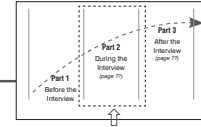
PART 2:

At the Interview

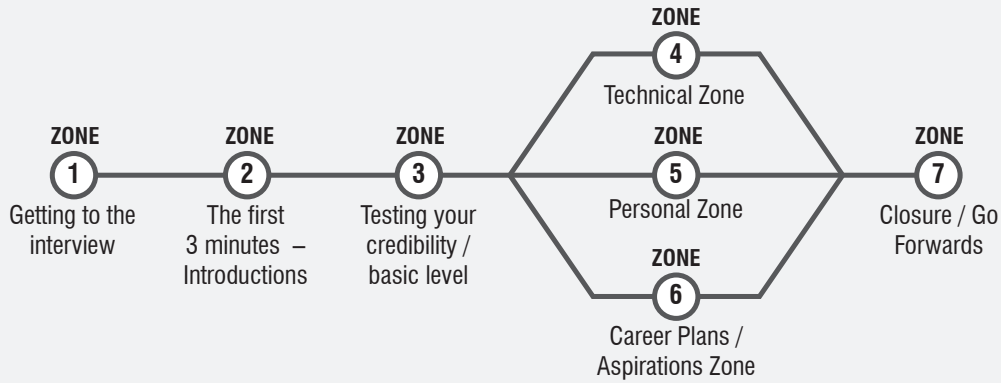
Learn how to conduct yourself in an interview. Prepare yourself for the typical questions asked in each of the 7 zones of an interview.



15.5 The 7 zones of an interview



Be prepared for all 7 Zones of an Interview



PRACTICE EXERCISE 3: For each zone, discuss in small groups and write down–

- “Why is this zone of the interview process important? What will the interviewer assess of me, based on this?”
- Present to the class.

Zone ①: Getting to the interview

Zone ②: The first 3 minutes – Introductions

Zone ③: Testing your credibility / Basic level

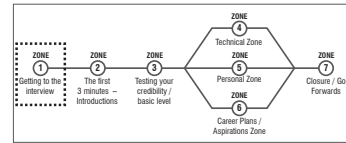
Zone ④: Technical Zone

Zone ⑤: Personal Zone

Zone ⑥: Career Plans / Aspirations Zone

Zone ⑦: Closure / Go Forwards`

Zone ① : Getting to the interview



Being on time

- Find out about the location in advance so that precious time is not lost in searching for the venue.
- Keep enough time for registration at the company security desk (this could take time due to elaborate company procedures or crowd).

In case of delays / rescheduling

- In case you need to reschedule the interview due to unavoidable reasons, inform the company and / or placement agency as early as possible.
- In case you are getting delayed on the way to the interview, call and inform the company.



Keep the company informed

- In case you have taken up another job appointment, and have decided not to pursue this job – call up and inform the company.
- It is unprofessional to “not turn up” and keep the interviewers waiting. This can negatively affect your reputation in the job market.

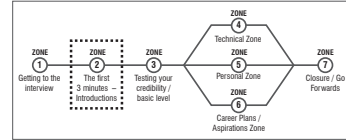
PRACTICE EXERCISE 4: Discuss each of the following questions in small groups. Share examples of similar experiences in context of any previous meeting or appointment. Write these down.

Q1. What are the consequences if you reach in a rush, just on time, and you get called in for the interview immediately – where you have not had time to cool off and gather your thoughts?

Q2. What if you are not there when they announce your turn? What if you turn up late?

Q3. What if you don't show up and the interviewers are kept waiting?

Zone ② : The first 3 minutes – Introductions



Walk in confidently. Show your **proactive attitude** by introducing yourself to the secretary or person available to receive you. Explain your reason for coming.

Greet and shake hands with the interviewer(s) when you meet them and introduce yourself.
Thank them for the opportunity to meet.



Be cheerful and maintain **eye contact** throughout / during your interview.

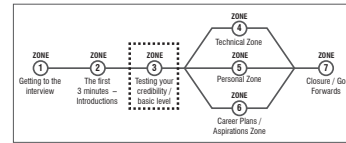
Sit forward and upright in your chair (don't slouch) and rest your hands on your lap or on the table. Your body language should communicate your **alertness**.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 5: Imagine that you are the interviewer. What would you think of the person you are interviewing if –

Q1. The person you are interviewing “shows attitude or acts over smart” in the way he/she interacts with you?

Q2. He/she is restless with nervous gestures (such as playing with his/her hair or buttons, or tapping the table top, or shaking legs under the table)?

Q3. He/she is “casual” in his/her manner (such as sitting with legs crossed or stretched out casually, sitting with one arm resting on the back of the chair, slouching low in the chair, chewing gum, etc.)?



Zone ③ : Testing your Credibility / Basic level

Typical Questions asked

Be prepared for the typical questions that may be asked

Questions on your **educational background** and academic achievements

Questions about your **projects or work experience** (if any). Eg:

- What was the project / work team?
- What was your role as a team member? What were you responsible for?
- What were the goals of the project?
- What were the outputs delivered?
- Was it considered as a success by others?
- Any acknowledgements received?
- What personal successes did you see in it?
- What were your key learnings?

The Contributor's Communication Goal:
Personal Credibility

Explanations for **gaps in education** (if any).

Eg: Why did you take a break for a year after your 12th, before entering college? (You may have done this to prepare for competitive entrance examinations.)

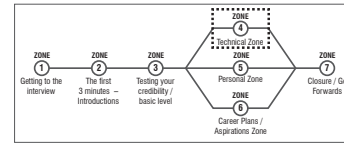
Questions about **other activities** you have been involved in. Any **other achievements**.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 6 : Think about how you can answer the above questions. Put down a few points for yourself.

CHECKLIST: How to be prepared

- Carry proofs of your academic performance (*mark-lists, certificates, etc.*)
- Even in case of gaps, be transparent and honest. Most employers respect transparency. (*Don't fabricate records. Being found out (even later) could not only cost you the current job, but will also black-list you in the job market. Employers are likely to investigate your credentials with past employers and institutions you have been in.*)
- Keep ready samples of project / work outputs (if any), to show in case asked.
- Take permission and inform beforehand, the people you are giving as references. Keep their details ready in case asked (*contact details of people you have worked with – boss / seniors / team leaders / mentors / team members*).
- Be ready with explanation / proofs of special acknowledgements or awards you mention.
- Identify a few activities and achievements from your past, that are powerful demonstrations of your capability to contribute in this job. Focus on talking about these only.

Zone ④ : Technical Zone



Typical Questions asked

Be prepared for the typical questions that may be asked

Questions on your **knowledge of the subject**, as relevant to the domain you are expected to work in.

Questions on your level of **competence in essential skills** for the job (eg: writing skills).

Questions on your familiarity with various **tools necessary for the job** (eg: software tools, technical instruments for engineers, etc.).

The Contributor's
Communication Goal:
Technical Competence

Questions on your **thinking abilities** necessary for the job (eg: problem solving, critical thinking, etc.)

PRACTICE EXERCISE 7 : Think about how you can answer the above questions. Put down a few points for yourself.

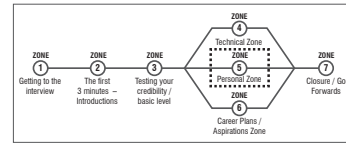
[A] CHECKLIST: How to be prepared

- What is the subject knowledge you will be expected to have for doing this job well? Have you studied this well?
- What special skills will you need for the job? Have you practiced enough?
- What tools will you need for the job you are applying for (eg: specific software packages)? Are you familiar with these tools?
- What is the kind of work you would be expected to do in this job? What thinking abilities will you need for this? Have you consciously developed these abilities ?
- Practice solving practical cases or problems. This is how employers usually test thinking abilities. In such questions, finding the final 'right' answer is less important than demonstrating the way you go about thinking through the various issues involved.

[B] CHECKLIST: Keep in mind when answering

- Don't be in a hurry in answering questions immediately. Ask for time to think, think through carefully, and answer clearly, explaining your thinking behind it.
- Don't try to bluff your way through this. If you do not know an answer, it is best to say so, and point out where you might find the information, or how you would go about finding a solution if you had to solve a similar problem.
- Don't lie or exaggerate the truth. You may be asked to prove it right then and there. Eg: a person applying for a copywriter's job in an advertising agency may be asked to do a 'copy test'.

Zone 5 : Personal Zone



Typical Questions asked
Be prepared for the typical questions that may be asked

Tell me **about yourself**

Tell me about a time when you were confronted with a crisis

What would you do if you wanted to stand for college elections and found that your close friend is competing against you?

Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision you knew would make you unpopular

Describe a time when you were under pressure and missed a deadline

What are your **key strengths and weaknesses?**

The Contributor's Communication Goal:
I am capable of learning and growing with experience

Give an example of one of your **weaknesses** and where it hindered you in making a decision

Describe an experience when you had to do several things at the same time, and thus find a balance

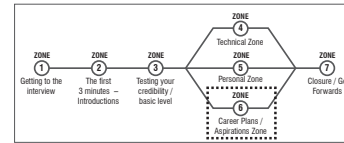
Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a teammate or a fellow-student. What did you do? What else could you have done?

Share an experience from your life where you were greatly disappointed. How did you handle/cope with the disappointment?

PRACTICE EXERCISE 8: Think about how you can answer the above questions. Put down a few points for yourself.

CHECKLIST: Keep in mind when answering

- In answer to “tell me about yourself”, talk only of relevant facts in your current life situation and specific experiences that demonstrate that you are a strong candidate for the job at hand. Don’t give long drawn life stories!
- This is where the interviewer will find out more about your family and social background, constraints that you might have (eg: inability to stay late at work due to family pressure). If asked, it is best to mention any such constraints upfront without hiding facts.
- Project qualities and strengths that are valued in the workplace - such as enthusiasm in any work, self-motivation, flexibility, eagerness to learn, willingness to work, and a positive attitude. However, for the employer to believe you, it is also important to prove these by giving specific examples or experiences from your college and personal life that demonstrate these qualities in you.
- When talking about a weakness, mention what you are doing to overcome that weakness.
- Your qualities and strengths should come across in the way you conduct yourself at the interview.



Zone ⑥ : Career Plans / Aspirations Zone

Typical Questions asked

Be prepared for the typical questions that may be asked

Questions about your interest in the organization in specific and the industry in general. What is **your interest in this area?**

How has your college experience **prepared you** for your career in this field?

What are your **short-term and long-term goals?** Do you have plans for further education?

The Contributor's Communication Goal:
I seek to grow and contribute

Why do you want to work for this company? **Why should I hire you?**

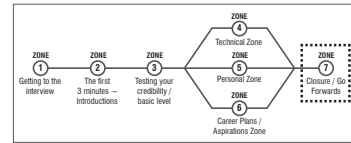
What do you want to **achieve in life**, by the end of your career? How is this job going to help you achieve this?

PRACTICE EXERCISE 9: Think about how you can answer the above questions. Put down a few points for yourself.

CHECKLIST: Keep in mind when answering

- Reflect and think about what your long-term career aspirations are, and how this job is aligned to your long-term goals. Discuss this with someone you trust (seniors / teachers / parents) to get some clarity before you go for an interview.
- Understand the area / field of work in this job. Think about how you might be able to learn and develop yourself professionally through this job.
- Be honest when answering questions in this area – most interviewers will be able to make out if you have not thought deeply about something and are talking superficially. If you are not clear about your career goals etc. it is best to say so; however, mention your thinking in this area. It is more important to communicate that you have thought about these matters, than to show that you know all the answers already.

Zone 7 : Closure / Go Forwards



Prepare to answer “Do you have **any questions** to ask of us? “

This seems like a harmless, polite gesture but there is a lot the interviewer will gather about you depending on what you ask – this is the last impression the interviewer gets about you.

Leave with a **firm handshake**

Thank the interviewer for his/her time

If they offer to contact you, politely **ask when you should expect their call**

The Contributor's Communication Goal:
I am interested in the job offer

Reiterate **your interest** in the position and company

As a **follow-up** of to your interview, you could email a ‘thank you’ note to your interviewer, noting your interest in the position.

Clarify if **any other documents** or information are needed from you. Ensure you send these to them immediately (within the next few days).

PRACTICE EXERCISE 10: Imagine that you are the interviewer. What would you think of the person you are interviewing, if on asking “do you have any questions to ask of us” –

Q1. He / she is afraid to ask anything?

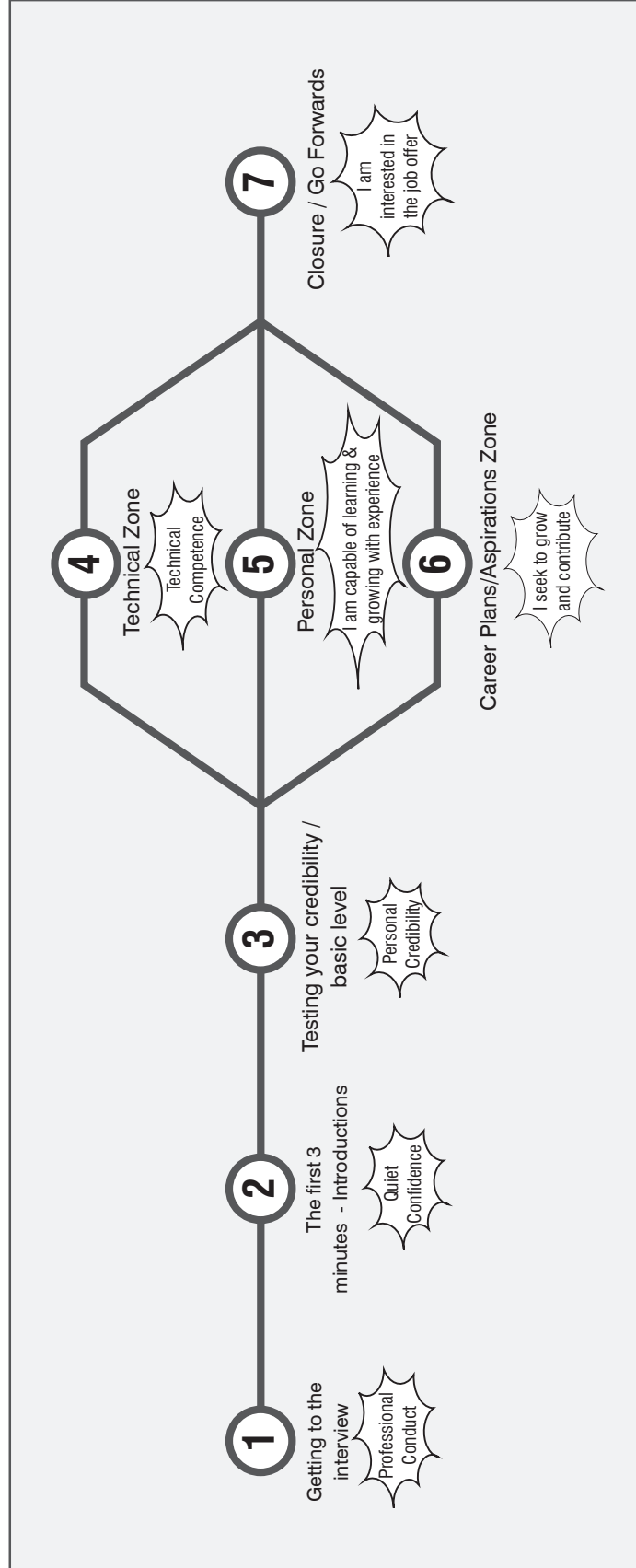
Q2. Even before you have said whether the person has passed and got the job, he/she asks about what salary and benefits you will be offering?

CHECKLIST: Prepare 3-4 questions you can ask of the employer at the close of the interview. Some ideas –

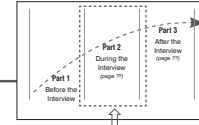
- Questions that clarify your role and the company’s expectations from you
- How this role impacts the overall business and the inter-linkages with other functions/ departments in the organization
- How advancements in technology could impact this industry
- What are the career advancement / growth paths available in the company
- What kind of on-job training you would be going through

And so on ...

Summary of your Communication Goals in each of the 7 zones of the interview:



15.6 The Contributor's conduct in an interview



How to conduct oneself in an interview

What I speak

Communicate facts

- It should not look like you are 'fabricating' or making up things.

The way I communicate

Speak clearly, relevantly and to the point

- Don't 'ramble' and give long drawn answers that will bore the interviewer.
- Don't go round in circles instead of answering directly.

The way I present facts

Show confidence in the facts you present

- Speak confidently and be sure of yourself.
- Being non-committal, vague, giving inconsistent answers – can give the impression that you are unsure of facts / lying.

The way I behave

Focus attention on the interviewer

- Be alert and listen carefully to all that the interviewer has to say.
- Make sure you understand a question properly before you answer.
- Focus on what the interviewer is looking for, and not on yourself and what you want to say.
- Not paying attention is a sign of disrespect.

My mannerisms

Ensure your conduct is pleasing, respectful, and comfortable

- Irritating or displeasing mannerisms, carelessness, insensitive behavior, untidy dressing, etc. will put off the interviewer.
- Don't act in a manner that will make the interviewer uncomfortable.

The way I present my suitability for the job

Let concrete actions / experiences speak for you

- Verbal assurances (words without action to back it) are not enough to convince the interviewer you are 'right' for the job.
- Demonstrate / concretely prove your suitability for the job. Even if you don't have certificates or past work experience to prove something, think of concrete examples from your college or personal life, that show how you are in action (don't make up examples, because the employer may sometimes want to verify these).

IN CLASS PROJECT: Do a mock interview

STEP 1: Form small groups of 3-4. Each individual: choose any one question to answer from any of the 'typical questions' given in zones 5 or 6 (on page 17 or 18).

STEP 2: In groups of 3-4 in the class, each group member gets a chance to present his/her answer, to others. Others listen, ask any further questions on the topic, and evaluate the person using the checklist "Self-test for Contributor's Conduct".

CHECKLIST: Self-Test for Contributor's Conduct

- Did you communicate 'facts', not making up things?
- Did you speak clearly, relevantly, to the point – without rambling unnecessarily?
- Were you alert and attentive, listening carefully to any questions asked?
- Were you confident of the 'facts' you presented? Were the different activities / examples you talked of consistent with each other?
- Was your manner pleasing, respectful, and comfortable?
- Did you substantiate all your claims convincingly?

STEP 3: Share feedback in a positive manner to help presenting group member improve (*LOOK OUT: Don't get into personal criticism*).

[Repeat steps 1 to 3 until all group members get their chance for presentation]

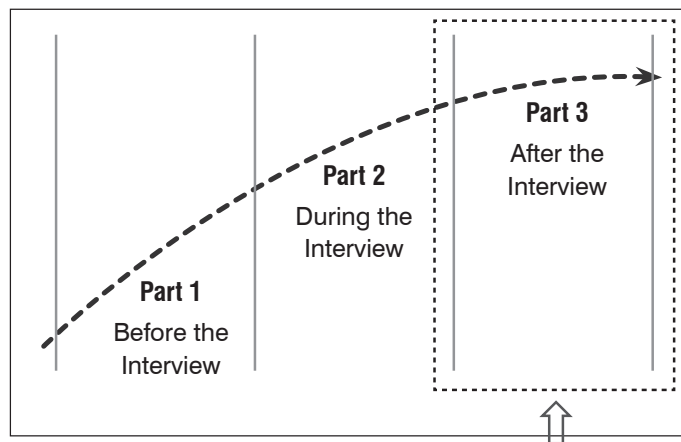
STEP 4: Individually, reflect and write down some key personal learnings – "tips for myself" to help improve.

PART 3:

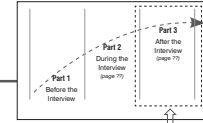
After the Interview

What are the impressions you have left behind in the mind of interviewer(s)?

Whether you get selected for the job or not depends on these impressions. Thus it is important to leave behind 'Contributor Impressions'.



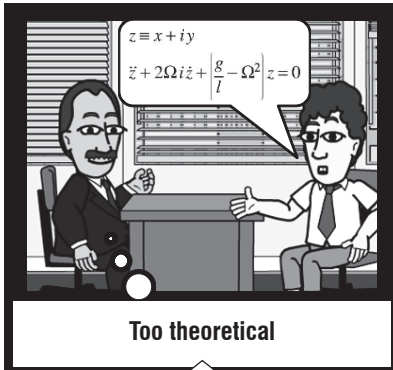
15.7 Last and lasting impressions



PRACTICE EXERCISE 11: Discuss in groups to answer the questions given in each of the interview scenarios below:

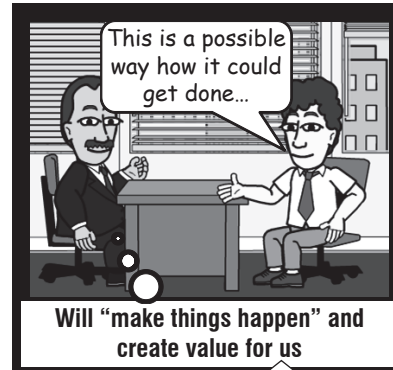
What impressions will you leave behind in the mind of the interviewer(s)?

[A] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[B] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



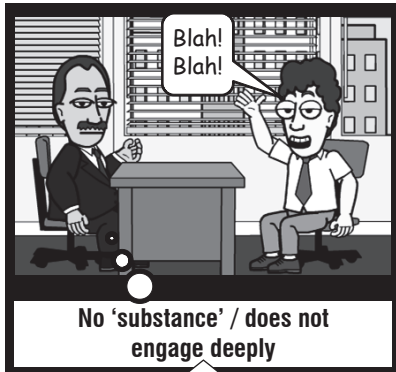
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



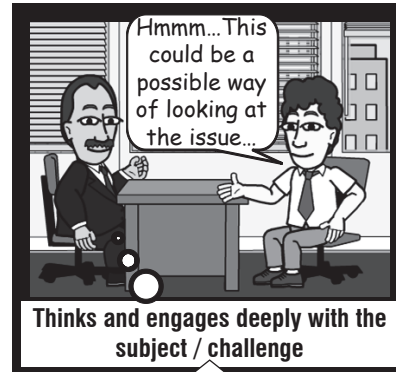
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[C] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



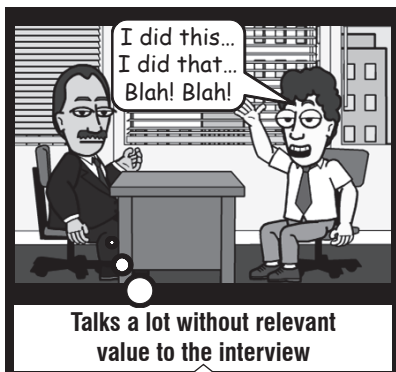
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[D] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



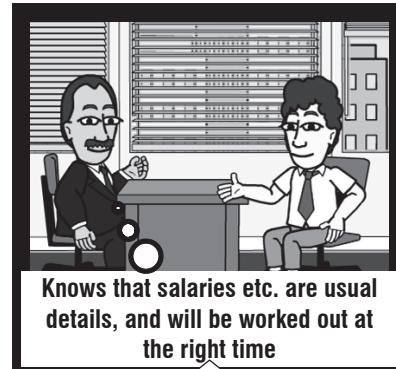
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[E] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



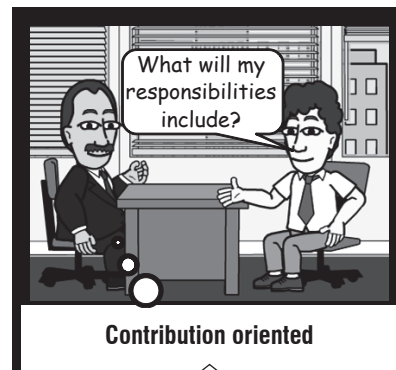
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[F] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[G] **'Non-Contributor' Impressions**



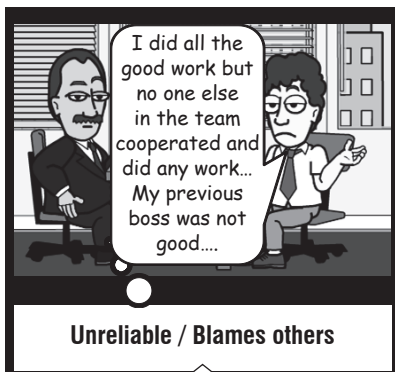
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[H] **'Non-Contributor' Impressions**



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



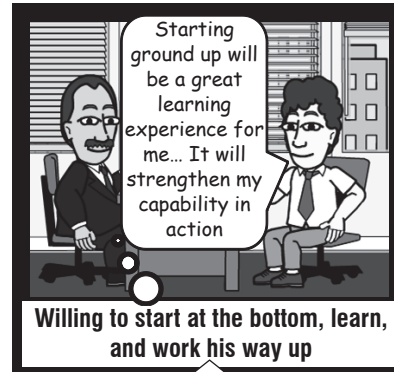
What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

[1] 'Non-Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

'Contributor' Impressions



What actions of yours could lead to such an impression? Discuss and answer.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 12: Put down some key personal learnings – “tips for myself” on what I can develop in myself, so as to leave behind ‘contributor’ impressions.

The material in this booklet is meant to be studied along with the material available at gtu.ibecome.in

You will find videos, concept presentations, quizzes to improve your understanding of the topic.

Booklet printed from I-Become ActivGuide