



Towards Excellence... Seminars, GD's & Interviews

A Guide for Students, Teachers, Researchers
& Executives

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar

Towards Excellence...Seminars, GD's & Interviews

A Guide for Students, Teachers, Researchers & Executives



Towards Excellence...Seminars, GD's & Interviews:
A Guide for Students, Teachers, Researchers & Executives
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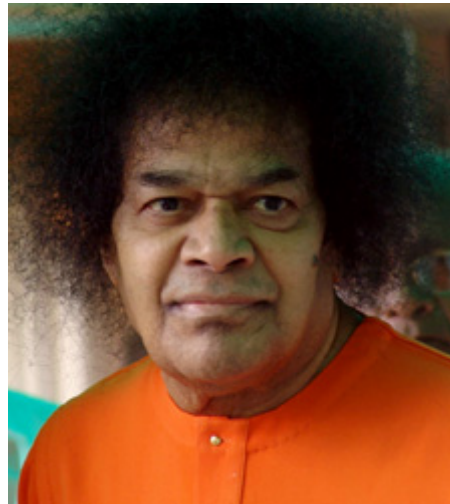
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Dedication

This work is lovingly dedicated at the lotus feet of:



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

**There is only one caste – caste of Humanity,
There is only one religion – religion of Love,
There is only one language – language of the heart,
There is only one GOD – and, He is omnipresent.**

...Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Message from Fr. Valerian D'Souza

former Director, St. Joseph Engineering College, Vamanjoor, Mangalore

A GUIDE BOOK TO PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

The transition from being a student to be an employee is at times painful. No doubt, the employer looks for the best talent to be employed and the candidate is expected to showcase his potential during the interview amidst stiff competition. Even before attending the interview, the candidate is required to know the basic techniques to present himself effectively before the Interviewing panel.

The booklet "Towards Excellence...Seminars, Group Discussions (GD) and Personal Interviews" written by Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar, Senior Professor from the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, is a guide to all students, to sharpen these techniques. As a senior teacher, Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar has compiled together the most required points, which will help the job seeker to be at ease during the selection process. I strongly recommend all the professional and management students to study and follow the guidelines given in this book.

I am sure that the students will find sound advice and helpful hints to face the placement interviews easily without tension and come out successfully.

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar's concern to help the student community is to be appreciated. By focussing on the very crucial area in the process of employment and guiding the students he has provided a golden avenue for success at interviews. On behalf of St. Joseph Engineering College students and others who will use this booklet, I salute his efforts and offer my sincere good wishes.

Fr. Valerian D'Souza
former Director – SJEC

About the Author

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar graduated in Mechanical Engineering from Karnataka Regional Engineering College, Surathkal, Karnataka, India, in the year 1965. He obtained M.Sc (cryogenis) from University of Southampton, U.K. and Ph.D. (cryogenics) from Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India.

He is a Fellow of Institution of Engineers (India), Life Member, Indian Society for Technical Education, and a Foundation Fellow of Indian Cryogenics Council.

He has worked in India and abroad on large projects in the areas involving heat transfer, fluid flow, vacuum system design, cryo-pumping etc.

He worked as Head of Cryogenics Dept. in Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Bombay and Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT), Indore, from 1966 to 1992.

He worked as Guest Collaborator with Superconducting Super Collider Laboratory of Universities Research Association, in Dallas, USA from 1990 to 1993.

He also worked at the Institute of Cryogenics, Southampton, U.K. as a Visiting Research Fellow from 1993 to 1994.

He was Head of the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues Institute of Technology, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, India for eight years.

He also worked as Head of Dept. of Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering, and then as Principal, Vivekananda College of Engineering and Technology, Puttur (D.K.), India.

He was Professor and coordinator of Post-graduate program in the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering in St. Joseph Engineering College, Vamanjoor, Mangalore, India.

A book entitled “**Fundamentals of Heat and Mass Transfer**” authored by him and published by M/s Pearson Education, India (2006) **has been adopted as a Text book** for third year engineering students by the Visweswaraya Technological University (V.T.U.), Belgaum, India.

He has authored a *free e-book* entitled “**Software Solutions to Problems on Heat Transfer**” wherein problems are solved using 4 software viz. Mathcad, EES, FEHT and EXCEL. This book, containing about 2750 pages, is presented in 9 parts and all the 9 parts can be downloaded *for free* from www.bookboon.com.

He has also authored *free e-books on Thermodynamics* entitled “**Basic Thermodynamics: Software Solutions**” and “**Applied Thermodynamics: Software Solutions**” wherein problems are solved using 3 software viz. Mathcad, EES, and TEST. Each of these titles is presented in 5 parts and all the books can be downloaded *for free* from www.bookboon.com.

He has also written and published three booklets entitled as follows:

1. Towards Excellence...How to Study (A Guide book to Students)
2. Towards Excellence...How to teach (A guide book to Teachers)
3. Towards Excellence...Seminars, GD's and Personal Interviews
(A guide book to Professional and Management students)

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar has attended several National and International conferences and has more than 50 publications to his credit.

Preface

This booklet, entitled “**Towards Excellence...Seminars, Group Discussions (GD) and Personal Interview (A Guide book to Professional and Management Students)**” is the third in the “**Towards Excellence...**” series. These books were first authored and published by me with generous financial help from the Director, St. Joseph Engineering College, Vamanjoor, Mangalore, India, and distributed *for free* to schools, Pre-University, Degree and Professional colleges in Mangalore Dioces area. The books were received very enthusiastically by students (and parents and teachers too) and there was great demand/suggestion to put them on the Internet so that a larger number of readers can take benefit of these books.

The first book for students, viz. “**Towards Excellence...How to study**” and the second book, viz. “**Towards Excellence...How to Teach**” were put on the Internet a few days ago, by courtesy of Bookboon. Now, this third book is being brought out on the Internet.

This booklet is an outcome of the lecture notes prepared by the author while delivering lectures on this topic to the final year students of St. Joseph Engineering College, Vamanjoor, Mangalore, as a part of their training programme to face the *campus interviews*.

Seminars, Group Discussions and Personal Interviews are important topics not only for students of engineering courses but for all students, academics and researchers, Managers or company executives, and, in fact, for all professionals or job seekers.

The booklet is divided into 3 sections:

First section deals with ‘Seminars’. Here, the subject is explained under the following headings: Purpose of the seminar, planning, preparation of subject and presentation, principles of public speaking etc.

In the second section, the topic of ‘Group Discussions (GD)’ is explained. Here, the purpose of conducting the GD, modality of conducting it, DOs and DON'Ts while participating in a GD, Grading different aspects of candidate's performance, Topics generally given in GD, Assessing a candidate in GD etc. are described.

Topic of Personal Interview is taken up in the third section. This topic is explained under the following headings: Purpose of conducting the personal interview, types of personal interviews, preparation for the interview, etiquettes to be followed, DOs and DON'Ts during an interview, some common questions asked, pressure tactics followed by some interviewers, etc.

References are given next. Addresses of several useful websites are given for those who want to get more information.

Three Appendixes containing useful information are given at the end:

Appendix-I gives a list of topics which may be useful while preparing for a GD.

In Appendix-II some hints regarding etiquettes to be followed at the Workplace, at a Party, on Telephone, at business meetings and about general manners, and Rules for a happy life.

Appendix-III lists some useful tips and advice to Management students. These are taken from the lectures given by Sri Sathya Sai Baba to the MBA students at the Sathya Sai University, Prasanthinilayam. In fact, these tips and advice are relevant to *all students and professionals*.

Acknowledgements: First, I would like to express my gratitude to Rev. Fr. Valerian D'souza, former Director, St. Joseph Engineering College, Mangalore, for encouraging me to write this booklet. His keen interest and positive support have been invaluable in bringing out this booklet.

The dignified presence and quiet encouragement by Rev. Fr. Joseph Lobo, Director, SJEC, is gratefully acknowledged.

Rev. Fr. Henry Mascarenhas, former Asst. Director, SJEC has given me his unstinted support with his kind words whenever we met.

Dr. Joseph Gonsalvis, Principal, SJEEC, and Dr. Thirumaleshwara Bhat, HOD of Mechanical Engineering Dept. have given me an opportunity to help our students by arranging my lectures on this topic to final year engineering students.

My colleagues in the Mechanical Engineering Dept. also attended the lectures and enthused me by their kind words of encouragement.

My sincere thanks to *all my students* who have always been a source of inspiration for me.

I put on record my sincere thanks to Ms. Karin Jakobsen, Ms. Sophie Tergeist and their editorial team from Bookboon, who have worked meticulously to bring out this booklet.

Finally, I express my deep appreciation to Kala, my wife, for her suggestions, unfailing support and sacrifice.

M. Thirumaleshwar

Author

Dec. 2014

Introduction:



Dear young friends! In this booklet, we shall deal with a few basic, but, important points required to achieve excellence in giving seminars, to be counted in Group discussions and to excel in personal interviews.

As professional students, you have to give *seminars* very often in front of your co-students and staff members. In fact, even after getting a job, you will be called upon to give seminars quite often in front of your colleagues and superiors.

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Then, you will have to participate and excel in *Group Discussions (GD)* during your admission process to B – schools or during the selection to good companies.

In the final stages of selection, you will have to necessarily undergo *personal interviews* with an interview board or in one-to-one interviews or with HR departments of the companies.

Therefore, to come out in flying colors during this process, you should be aware of the procedures to be followed, preparations to be made, the usual pit falls and the mistakes to be avoided.

Then, of course, you have to apply your mind, and practise, and practise...to achieve excellence!

We shall deal with the subject in three sections, as follows:

- **Section 1: Seminars:** We shall discuss: purpose of the seminar, planning the seminar, preparation with respect to the subject and presentation, principles of public speaking etc.
- **Section 2: Group Discussions:** Here we shall study: purpose of conducting the GD, modality of conducting the GD, DOs and DON'Ts to be followed during a GD, Grading the different aspects of performance, Typical topics for discussion in GD, Assessing a candidate in GD etc.
- **Section 3: Personal Interview:** Here, we shall delve into: purpose of conducting the personal of interviews, types of interviews, preparation for the interview, etiquettes to be followed in an interview, some DOs and DON'Ts, some common questions, pressure tactics applied by some interviewers etc.

1 Seminars



1.1 Introduction:

Seminars are mostly informal meetings with an audience of about 25 to 35 persons. Seminars are generally given by:

(i) **Professional students or research fellows** in front of their fellow students, guides, faculty, invited experts and staff members. Purpose of such seminars may be:

- to present their research work and discuss about the next steps, or
- to propose new ideas, or
- to report on the progress of current work , or
- to brief the audience about some interesting piece of news from recent literature, research journals etc.

Sometimes, giving such seminars is a curriculum requirement too.

(ii) **Executives** to inform/educate their senior and junior colleagues or managers. Here, the purpose may be:

- to brief about the current status of a project, or
- to propose and discuss new projects and budgets, or
- to brainstorm about new ideas, or
- to discuss sales or revenue position and strategies, or
- to get market feed backs.

(iii) **Public speakers** or social workers to inform selected audience about some topic of public interest, concern or importance, as for example in Rotary clubs or Hospitals or Social service organizations. Here, the purpose may be to inform, advise, warn or to disseminate information.

In all these cases, it is important that you, as a speaker:

- research your topic well,
- communicate effectively,
- impress and convince your audience, by your logical, clear and coherent presentation.

1.2 Steps involved in giving a successful seminar:

Generally, following steps are involved in planning and giving a successful seminar:

- Know the topic and the audience
- Plan the seminar meticulously
- Prepare thoroughly the subject and the presentation
- Deliver effectively
- Finish triumphantly

We shall discuss each of these steps in some detail:

1.2.1 Know the topic and audience:

- **What is the topic and the time duration allotted for the talk?** First of all, it is important to know on which topic you have to talk, so that you can prepare accordingly. But, it should be a topic on which you have some expertise or on which you can collect sufficient information to educate and impress your audience. Surely, you don't want to cut a sorry figure in front of your colleagues or friends by speaking on an unfamiliar topic. At the end of your talk, if there are any questions from the audience, you should be able to answer them effectively and convincingly.



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You should also know **how much time is allotted** for your talk. Accordingly, you have to prepare your slides, graphs and other presentation materials. It is also a good idea to do one or two rehearsals of your talk in front of your good friends to ensure that you streamline your thoughts, fluent delivery of the talk and keep within the time limit. Never exceed the time limit – or, the audience will start yawning or looking at their wrist watches repeatedly!

- **Who will attend and how many?** You should know in advance who will attend your talk i.e. will it be only the colleagues or juniors? Or, will the senior staff members and departmental heads will also attend? With this knowledge, you have to prepare to give information that is likely to be of interest for them and also be prepared to answer the questions they may ask from their perspective. For example, while colleagues may be interested in finer technical details, departmental heads may be interested in time schedules or budget allocations. Knowing the size of the audience will psychologically help you to face the audience and will avoid the element of surprise you may otherwise get as you enter the hall to give your talk.
- **Intellectual level of the audience:** Knowing the intellectual level of the audience will help you to prepare support materials for your talk.
If it is a technical talk in front of your academic/research colleagues and supervisors, you may have to give sufficient technical data supplemented by experimental details, equations, graphs, references etc.
If the talk is in front of your colleagues from the sales departments and departmental heads, you may have to include details of inventories, sales strategies, expected revenues etc with suitable tables, bar charts or pie charts etc.
If you are speaking on a general topic of public interest, your talk may have to be supplemented with Newspaper reports, financial details, legal aspects, benefit that will accrue to the community etc.
- **Where will the seminar be held?** Yes, be clear about the location of your talk, i.e. on which floor, at which room number etc. and confirm it half an hour before the scheduled time. It is not uncommon that many times, the venue is changed at the last moment since the hall booked earlier is not available, and when you arrive at the hall on time, you will find a notice pasted on the door saying that the venue is shifted to another room in another floor due to 'unforeseen reasons'! Then, you will have to run in a hurry to a different floor or different room carrying your lecture materials.
- **What are facilities available in the lecture hall?** You should know what facilities are available in the lecture hall, i.e. LCD/OHP projector, laser pointer, collar mike, black/white board, chalk/pen etc. This will help you to plan your talk and prepare your lecture materials such as written notes, overhead projections, slides etc.

1.2.2 Planning the seminar:

To give a seminar successfully, obviously you should plan meticulously, giving attention to the following points:

- Research the topic: i.e.
- Refer to books, journals, handbooks, theses, internet etc. as required
- Plan the presentation: i.e.
- Are slides, charts, posters, data tables required to be prepared?
- Possible questions on the topic and the answers

Now, let us discuss each of these points:

- **Research the topic:** Get as much information as possible on the topic in hand. At the end of your talk, the audience should feel that they are going back lot wiser than they were when they walked into the hall. For this purpose:
- **Your reference material** will obviously be dictated by the topic on which you have to give your talk. You can refer to books or encyclopedia if it is a general topic. For scientific and technical topics, you may refer to books or journals or handbooks. For specialized technical topics, you may have to refer to theses or research papers. Now, with the availability of personal computers and internet, huge amount of data on any topic is available, and you have to just spend sufficient time to search for it and use your discrimination.
- **Plan your presentation:** Yes, while collecting a good amount of data is quite essential, it is equally important that you present your data and communicate to the audience effectively. For this purpose, you have to plan your presentation quite well, i.e.
- **How will you introduce the topic? What will constitute the main body of your talk? How will you impressively conclude your talk?** Will there be any anecdotes or historical information in your introduction? Will you use any over head projections or slides or videos? Do you need a blackboard and chalk? Are you going to use charts, posters or data tables? Will it be an interactive session with the audience?
- **Possible questions and answers:** At the end of your talk, invite the audience to ask questions, if they have any. Be thoroughly prepared for possible questions and answer them with **confidence and humility**. Remember, someone in the audience may be more knowledgeable than you on a given topic. The manner in which you answer the questions will go a long way in giving a good and lasting impression about you and your talk, to the audience.

1.2.3 Prepare thoroughly...:

There are *two important aspects* that you should attend to during your preparation: (i) **knowledge of the subject**, and, (ii) the **presentation**:

- **Knowledge on the subject:** Yes, this is the most important aspect. You should be thorough on the subject matter concerning the topic of your talk, whether it is a scientific/technical topic or otherwise. Remember that there is no substitute for thorough knowledge of the subject. Audience will easily find out when you don't know the subject and start beating about the bush! Don't assume that your slides, charts, graphs and vocabulary will cover up your poor knowledge and lack of adequate preparation! So, gather as much knowledge as possible by referring to books, journals, handbooks etc. Collect related history, anecdotes, applications etc. which you can present to your audience to make the topic interesting. Prepare hand written notes and cue cards to help you during presentation.
- **Presentation of the topic:** As mentioned earlier, in addition to collecting sufficient amount of information, you should also present it to the audience in an effective manner. Nowadays, most of the people use slides with LCD projector coupled to a Personal Computer (PC), or transparencies with an overhead projector. With slides you can present photos, experimental set up, results, tables, graphs etc quite effectively. Slides are generally prepared with the popular 'Microsoft PowerPoint' software; of course, some may use some other software as their preference. If a computer and LCD are available, you can present short videos too with stunning effects.



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- **Use of slides for presentation:** It is tempting to use slides during a presentation, since you may think that it will be 'easy' to give a talk if you use slides. But, beware! It is not true. In fact, you have to be quite careful while using slides in your talk. Don't make the mistake of going on reading the written material from the slides. Use the slides only as prompts. Write only the points on the slide and explain the matter on the spot. Make sure that the audience is following your talk as you get busy in showing your slides!
- **Preparation of slides:** While preparing the slides for a presentation, keep the following points in mind:
 - Remember **two principles: KISS and KILL**, i.e.
 - **KISS: Keep It Short and Simple**, i.e. on the slides, write points or short phrases as prompts for your talk, and, not long sentences.
 - **KILL: Keep It Large and Legible**, i.e. even people on the last bench should be able to read the slides.
 - **How many slides?** Generally, on an average, you may take about 2 minutes to explain a slide. So, if your talk is for 30 min. duration, it is reasonable to have 10 to 12 slides, keeping some time for introduction, conclusion, acknowledgements etc. And, don't forget to *have some extra slides*, if need be, for the 'question time'.
 - **Generally, present one idea per slide.** It is a good practice to present *one idea per slide*. If you cram your slide with many ideas, readers will get confused and will not be able to follow your talk. Your aim should be not just to overwhelm the audience with a lot of information, but, to communicate *effectively* what you have to say!
 - **Not more than 6 to 10 lines in a slide:** Yes, don't turn your slide into the page of a text book! Audience will have neither the time nor patience to read all that stuff! Keep it simple, have just 6 to 10 lines in a slide, so that audience will be able to read them without strain.
 - **Use Arial Font 44 or 40 for Titles, Font 36 and 32 for Headings and Sub-headings:** This is only a suggestion. Again, the point is, your slide should be concise, clear and readable.
 - **Use sensible color contrasts for emphasis:** Don't use color contrasts which are glaring. Use color combinations which are pleasant and soothing to the eyes, ex: *use white color for letters on a blue background*. Don't use odd color combinations. Avoid using too many types of color combinations for different slides; rather, use same type of combination for all slides.
 - **Use clip art or animations for better effect:** Yes, clip art and animations give a special flavor to your slides. They help the audience to even relax momentarily. But, *don't* overdo it since they may cause distraction! Your aim is to focus the attention of audience on the topic you are discussing.
 - **Don't fill the slide with lot of information:** Just to emphasize this point, we are stating it again. Use the slide only as a prompt and don't just go on reading the matter written on the slide!

- **Graphs (line or bar) are preferred to Tables:** Often, lectures on scientific and technical topics will have results presented in tabular or graphical form. While reading a book, you have sufficient time to read through the information given in a table to the minute details. However, during a lecture, it is not possible for the audience to completely comprehend the data presented in a huge tabular form. So try to present the data in a graphical form; this also has the advantage of visually showing the trend in the variation of data. Present a table, only if it is essential to highlight some specific information. Information on Sales, Time schedules, Budgets and forecasts are presented effectively through line, bar or pie charts.
- **Rehearse your talk:** This is an important part of your preparation. Just having good slides does not ensure a good talk. You have to rehearse the talk when you are alone (preferably in front of a mirror), and then, in front of your friends who will give you a critical feedback, to enable you to 'fine tune' your talk with respect to timing, delivery and effectiveness.

1.2.4 Deliver effectively:

As already stated, you may have tons of information, wonderful slides, but, may finally fail to impress the audience and end up as a 'dull speaker' if you lack the skill to deliver your talk effectively! Read the following carefully:

To make your talk effective, you should remember *two things*:

- **Principle of 3 T's and Principles of Public Speaking**

Let us explain these principles in some detail:

- **Principle of 3 T's:** i.e. TELL first, TELL next, and TELL again! i.e.
Tell them – first tell them what you are going to tell them – i.e. give an *introduction* to your talk.
Tell them again – yes, this is the *main body of your talk*: tell them what you have to say.
Tell them again – yes, while *concluding your talk*, tell them again the summary of what you have already told them!
- **Principles of Public Speaking: This is the most important aspect of the seminar.** Audience will leave the hall with a good or bad impression depending on your performance as a public speaker. However, one need not worry that he or she is not a 'great speaker'! Skills of public speaking can be developed if you put conscious efforts to attend to the following points, and of course, practise, practise and practise!

- **Preliminary:** If possible, familiarize yourself in advance with the room, seating arrangement, stage, podium, light, mike, OHP/LCD projector, laser pointer etc. This will avoid your fumbling with the OHP, mike, laser pointer or switches when you go to the stage. If you familiarize yourself with these things in advance, you can mentally prepare yourself to walk to the podium and start your talk, in the short time available to you when the organizers introduce the speaker.
- **Dress:** Remember that the audience gets the first impression about the speaker while looking at him, by his dress, demeanor, by his walk and talk. Be aware of this. Dress should be *appropriate* to the occasion. For a normal technical talk in front of academic persons, a neat, casual dress would be enough. But, if it is a formal occasion or you are invited to give a special talk, then you should wear formal attire.
- **Demeanor:** While walking in to the hall, walk straight and with a pleasant smile, greeting the audience. Don't stoop or hesitate or look confused and distracted!
- **Don't stand near the computer/projector; but, stand near the screen:** If you stand near the screen, it is easier for you to explain what is projected on the screen. Also, it will ensure that you will be at the centre facing the audience.
- **Fix the collar mike properly:** The collar mike should not rub on your clothes when you move about or gesticulate; in that case, there will be unnecessary sound which will be disturbing to you as well as to the audience.

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- **Be confident. Smile. Start slowly.** Refer to notes for first one or two minutes, if required. Start slowly and with assurance. Let the audience not get an impression that you are in a hurry to 'do the ritual of a talk' and get back home!
- **Introduce interestingly:** To make the audience get interested in the topic, start with an anecdote, history or application of the topic. Or, tell them about the importance of the topic, benefits for the company or the public, the social or economic fall outs etc. depending on the topic.
- **Attend to your grammar, language, diction, pronunciation etc:** Yes, this is important. You should not make obvious **grammar mistakes** such as: 'I goes' or 'we goes' etc. Some lecturers create a funny situation in the class when they yell at the students: '**both of you three get out!**' or '**if you don't get out, I will ask the principal to get out!**' etc.
Language should be polite and simple. No need to use flowery language or unfamiliar and difficult words. Let your language be simple and understandable.
Diction: Let there be clarity in your thinking and speaking. Speak a sentence slowly, clearly and audibly. Don't start the sentence in a loud voice and then fade off and mumble your words as you end the sentence.
Pronunciation: In our country, people come from various States of India and the pronunciation obviously varies from State to State. However, introspect, or find out either from friends or from the reaction of the audience, if there is something glaringly wrong or funny with your pronunciation of some words. Take corrective action, if required.
- **Attend to your body language:** Body language says a lot about your personality. Be natural, don't dramatize. Make natural, measured and appropriate gestures and facial expressions to communicate effectively.
- **Maintain general eye contact with audience:** Maintaining eye contact gives intimacy with the audience and makes you and the audience feel at ease with each other. But, don't stare at any particular person and cause an embarrassment!
- **Modulate your voice:** Let not your talk be monotonous; then people will feel bored. To avoid this, *modulate your voice*; speak with 'feeling' and 'urgency'. Let your transparency and sincerity to communicate be felt by the audience.
- **Don't give a monologue:** Don't just go on talking endlessly. Do something else in between – tell them a joke, ask questions, distribute handouts, dictate important points etc.
- **Use 'silence' effectively:** Do you know that silence can be a very effective tool of communication when used properly? When you suddenly pause during your talk, the audience naturally gives attention immediately and waits for what you are going to say next. So, **before or after saying something important, give a small pause.** Or, make a statement or ask a question and give a pause to drive home its importance.

- **Explanations:** As a general rule, speak for one or two minutes per slide. Obviously, this will depend upon the contents of the slide. If it is on a scientific topic with some table or graph, you may need to spend more time on that slide. However, on an average, two minutes per slide should be good enough.
- **Be concise.** Be brief. Speak to the point. Don't divert from the track and speak irrelevant things. Don't unnecessarily stretch the talk on the same point. Have respect for the intelligence of the audience!
- **Give enough time for audience to follow:** This is important. In your enthusiasm to communicate whatever you have prepared, don't forget the fact that many in the audience may be unfamiliar with subject and will need time to grasp what you are presenting. So, you should pause now and then and make sure that the audience is also 'at the same wave length' and are following what you are saying. Ask them specifically if they are following you or not!
- **Attend to your mannerism:** Be dignified and upright. Attend to your mannerism and facial expressions. Don't indulge in funny or annoying mannerism such as wringing the hands, chewing the chalk or ballpen, twiddling with hair or buttons, putting hands in pockets etc.
- **Switch on the laser pointer only when required.** Don't play with it or direct it towards the audience or yourself!
- **Keep to the time limit. This is very important.** Understand that however good your talk may be, people will not appreciate it if you speak beyond the scheduled time limit. When they come to attend your talk, they are already '**psychologically programmed**' to sit for that duration of time only! And, if you exceed the time limit, they are sure to feel uncomfortable. Further, they might have already planned to do something else after your talk is over and will get anxious if you don't finish on time.
- **Give 'Question time'.** Plan for this in preparing your talk and allot sufficient time for questions, preferably at the end of the talk. Be proactive and *invite the audience to ask questions* if they have any.
- **Answering the questions:** If you don't understand a question, ask the questioner to re-phrase it. Or, repeat the question and ask the questioner if it is what he meant.
- **Answer politely,** to the point. For example, during the question time if someone yells at you: "you don't know anything about this subject", don't retaliate in anger. Tell him politely: "I have tried to the best of my ability to present what I know, but I am subject to correction if you kindly point out the mistakes". Politeness will win you friends! Remember that there are many others in the audience who are listening and they will make their own judgments after listening to your replies. Don't allow the unpleasant exchanges to drag on.
- **Don't bluff.** Say 'I don't know' straightaway if you don't know the answer to a particular question; do not bluff or avoid the question or silence the questioner by clever repartee. Instead, be frank; *invite someone from audience to contribute. Suggest sources from where the right answer could be obtained. People will appreciate your humility.*

- **Keep your cool.** *Don't lose your temper* if someone is aggressive with his/her question. If someone asks a stupid question, don't belittle him or her. Don't say "you have not understood what I was saying"; instead, just say: "I think that I did not explain it properly" or, "I think that I did not make myself clear" and explain the subject once again. Your balanced behavior will be much appreciated by the audience.

1.2.5 Finish triumphantly:

Concluding the talk is an important aspect of giving the seminar. In fact, the last 3–4 minutes of your presentation at the end of your talk will go a long way in creating a favorable, final impression on the audience. So, you should spend sufficient time in planning how you will conclude the talk. Remember the following points:

- Summarize briefly what you have presented in the main body of your talk.
- Give suggestions for future work, if it is a talk on a scientific or technical topic.
- Give references and sources from where interested persons can get more information on the subject.
- **End on a high and inspirational note. Give a good story, or a great quotation, or a question to think over, or an ideal to follow.**
- **Listeners should get motivated to know further or introspect or take some action, as result of your talk.**
- Acknowledge the help received from co-workers or superiors or other authorities, including those responsible for funding the project.
- It is *not* a good practice to apologize at the end of your talk, i.e. don't say "I am sorry for holding you up for half an hour!"
- **Thank the audience for their attention and patience and return to your seat in a dignified manner.**

So, to conclude: Seminar is an opportunity for you to show your ability **to present your work or research or view point effectively and convincingly.**

2 Group Discussions (GD)



2.1 Introduction:

Group discussion is an essential and important step in the selection process of many Business schools and reputed Organizations.

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Did you know that approximately 60% to 75% of the candidates are 'screened out' during the GD stage? Therefore, it is important that you be fully aware of the intricacies of the GD, how it is conducted, methods of preparation, how to participate in a GD and give a good impression to the examiners etc.

2.2 Group Discussion (GD):

Before attending a Group Discussion, you should be aware of the following:

- Modality of conducting a GD
- Purpose of conducting a GD
- Some DOs and DON'Ts
- Topics discussed in GD
- Assessing a candidate in GD

2.2.1 Modality of conducting a GD:

- Candidates are divided into groups, **each group containing 5 to 10 people.**
- One evaluator (or a panel) will lead one group in to a room and give them a topic to discuss after giving them some general instructions and a time limit. Generally, the time duration for a GD is 20 to 30 minutes. You may be given a few minutes to prepare and collect your thoughts. The topics may be from the real world, hypothetical, controversial or even abstract. **Expect the topics from any of the following fields: politics, social, education, economics, environment, law and ethics, science and technology, philosophy, sports...etc.**
- Candidates may be **seated in a semi-circular or circular formation**, so that each one can see others. Of course, sometimes, candidates may be asked to sit along the sides of a big rectangular conference table.
- Sometimes, instead of giving a topic to discuss, they may ask the group to **analyze a given hypothetical situation**; or, they may give you a **case study to discuss and come up with a collective solution or decision.**
- One of the candidates is expected to take lead and the GD should continue.
- The evaluator may remain with the group or may go out of the room and **watch the proceedings along with his colleagues from an adjoining room through a one-way glass partition.**
- Remember that the **evaluator will not interfere** during the GD, **but will closely observe** how each candidate conducts himself/herself and then evaluate him/her.

While preparing to participate in a GD, it will be instructive for you to know why, in the first place, the GD's are conducted at all:

2.2.2 Purpose of conducting a GD:

During an animated Group Discussion many of your talents and abilities are exhibited. In addition, without your knowledge, your weaknesses are also exposed! Group Discussion helps your prospective employer to gauge your personality traits, interpersonal skills, leadership qualities and ability to work in a team. Remember that the B-Schools or the employers set up a GD for you **to assess you with reference to the following qualities:**

- Knowledge
- Initiative
- Presence of mind
- Creativity
- Communication skills
- Reasoning ability
- Assertiveness
- Flexibility
- Ability to withstand pressure
- Ability to 'listen' to others' view points
- Ability to work in a team
- Ability for 'decision making'

Now let us briefly discuss these points:



The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. To the right, there are two smaller circular images: one showing three children looking at a book together, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. The background is a vibrant yellow and orange swirl design.

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About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

2.2.2.1 Knowledge:

It will be easy for the evaluator to judge your knowledge on the topic by observing you when you speak. Speak with quiet confidence and with assurance. Give relevant statistics, if you have, but, don't overdo this. Timely anecdotes or quotations will impress the group members and the evaluator too.

2.2.2.2 Initiative:

This does not mean that as soon as the evaluator leaves the room, you should be the first one to start the discussion! Of course, there is an advantage to start the discussion first, but do so *only if* you are thorough with the given topic and are confident of steering the discussion meaningfully. Otherwise, it will be a false start and will be to your disadvantage. You may also take the *initiative to gently steer the discussion to the right track* if any member is speaking irrelevant things unconnected with the topic.

2.2.2.3 Presence of mind:

If the discussion is getting 'out of hand' i.e. if some member is abusive or dominant or stupid, use *your presence of mind* to bring the discussion on track. For example, you may tell him "you seem to be right, and it is appreciated that you have your own view point; but, now, let us hear our friend on my left here, who seems eager to say something".

Your presence of mind will also be judged by the way you answer when someone asks you a difficult or stupid or embarrassing question.

2.2.2.4 Creativity:

Be creative. Think 'laterally', i.e. think in a direction different from the 'normal course' of things. While discussing a topic, can you think in terms of benefits to society, technical and economic fall outs, legal repercussion, addition to human knowledge, legacy to future generations etc. depending on the subject on hand? But, of course, your views should not look eccentric, odd or strange!

2.2.2.5 Communication skills:

This involves translating your thoughts into words in a way that is pleasant, accurate, brief, compelling and thought provoking. Surely, this quality is important to impress and win the other members over to your side in a discussion. However, this does not mean that you should 'shout' or 'monopolize' the discussion – certainly, it is not communication skill!

Also, it does not mean that you should have great command over English language. Of course, good command on the language is an added asset; but, ***what is more important is that you should have good ideas to contribute*** on the topic being discussed. If you feel that your language is not up to the mark, you should take corrective action to improve it. You know that extensive 'quality reading' will improve your language.

Good communication skills will win you friends and will carry the team members with you. So, a team leader should necessarily have good communication skills.

2.2.2.6 Reasoning ability:

By the way you articulate your view point, the evaluator will be able to judge your reasoning ability. Speak in a logical, orderly and coherent manner. Let the succession of thoughts expressed in your words be interconnected in a logical manner and not disjointed and jumbled up. Let the calm assurance of your talk show your reasoning ability and the force of logic behind it.

2.2.2.7 Assertiveness:

Assert yourself to be heard. Don't be timid. This does not mean that you should speak 'louder than others'. Once you know that you have a thorough knowledge on the subject under discussion, and are confident that your view point is right and unassailable, you speak with a calm assurance – and this is assertiveness. Also, if the group is 'stuck' on some point, then be assertive to take a particular viewpoint and steer the discussion in the right direction. **Thus assertiveness is an important leadership quality.**

2.2.2.8 Flexibility:

Remember that GD is not a debate. *You need not take a 'hard and solid' stand on any topic.* The very idea of a Group Discussion is to arrive at a consensus and a common decision. Therefore, approach a GD with some flexibility. In fact, this is the quality that the evaluator will be looking for, since this means that you can work in a group.

2.2.2.9 Ability to withstand pressure:

During a GD, while speaking to you, someone may lose temper or two or three candidates may jointly attack your view point. Never reciprocate by getting angry. **Be objective and never take any comments as personal.** Instead, speak calmly, politely and with assurance if you are sure that your viewpoint is right. Don't get flustered under pressure and lose your mental balance, since if you do so, you are likely to make mistakes and say something illogical.

2.2.2.10 Ability to listen to others' view points:

Yes, this is an important quality required for a leader. In fact, during a GD, apart from stating your viewpoints, *you should also listen with attention what others have to say.* After all, what is the purpose of a GD in an organization? Is it not to pool up all the available ideas from 'experts' and discuss, and then arrive at a logical decision agreeable to all? How will you do this if you are not patient and listen to others' viewpoints in the first place? **Let your ego take the backseat and listen to others carefully when they are giving their view points.** Remember that your aim as a 'leader' in the organization is to take the best and appropriate decision on given problem.

2.2.2.11 Ability to work in a team:

Practically, all works and projects in an organization are done by a team since expertise in diverse fields may be required to execute those projects. Therefore, when the group consists of many persons, each one being an expert in his own field, it is necessary that every one adjusts and cooperates with others. As stated earlier, **one should not be egoistic about his/her knowledge, skills, ability or status**, but work with the team in the interest of the project. i.e. one should have the ability to work in a team. In fact, you should have the tendency to help your colleague if he is stuck on some problem during the execution of a project. If you help another candidate (who may even be your competitor) when he is hesitant or fumbling during the GD, by prompting him with a correct answer, you are exhibiting your large heartedness and helping nature. This fact will be noted by the evaluator.

2.2.2.12 Ability for decision making:

Yes, this is an important quality of a leader. During the final stages of the GD, when all the group members are required to arrive at a consensus or solution to the given problem, your ability for 'decision making and carry others also with you' will be tested. The evaluator will observe your **ability to comprehend all the viewpoints expressed during the discussion and to summarize them and distill them into a correct decision and convince others.**

The RBS Group logo, featuring a stylized sunburst icon to the left of the text "RBS Group".

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2.2.3 Some DOs and DON'Ts during a GD:

Now you know what the evaluators are looking for during a GD. So, let us enumerate a few DOs and DON'Ts to be followed in a GD:

- Have a good '*knowledge base*'. Be prepared for the topics generally given for discussion in GD's.
- Surely, your aim should be to be heard by all in a Group Discussion. Then the evaluator will also hear you! So, be *assertive*.
- Be assertive, but *not stubborn*.
- Take *initiative* to speak. Don't just keep silent hoping that you will get a chance to speak later. You may never get that chance! But...
- *Think* before you speak. What you say must be relevant to the topic under discussion.
- *Jot down all the* points that occur to you as soon as the topic for discussion is given.
- *But, don't reel out all the* points when you start speaking; hold a few points for later interventions.
- *Be brief*. Don't go on reeling out statistics.
- '*Quality*' of your talk is more important than the '*quantity*'.
- *Be audible*, but don't shout.
- Good knowledge coupled with good *communication skills* ensures success.
- *Don't monopolize* talking. *Listen* to others' viewpoints also.
- Invite other members also to contribute their viewpoints.
- Don't interrupt another when he/she is speaking. It is 'bad manners'!
- If you have to interrupt another, if he/she is side tracking the issue, do so very *politely and tactfully*.
- *Smile* and develop 'rapport' with other members of the group.
- *Maintain eye contact* with members when you express your viewpoints.
- *Never* take any comments made by others personally. Nor should you make any personal comments on others.
- ***Be sensitive to others' feelings and beliefs. Never make any comments based on region, language or religion or gender or nationality.***
- *Don't use 'slangs'* or '*colloquialism*'.
- *Humor* should be used judiciously; otherwise, it may be taken as '*lack of seriousness*'.
- *Don't deviate* from the topic; don't be distracted by others' talks.
- *Listen to criticisms* with quiet dignity; defend your views logically, politely and calmly.
- *GD is a discussion, not a debate*; so, need not take a firm stand. The very purpose of GD is to view topic from all angles.
- Summarize the discussion, accommodating others' views, *including dissenting views*. The way you summarize the discussion should show that you are objective, impartial and can carry the group with you. ***These are, in fact, the qualities required of a leader!***

2.2.4 Topics discussed in a GD:

As already stated, you can expect the topics from any of the following fields: politics, social, education, economics, environment, law and ethics, science and technology, sports...etc.

As a general rule, you should be conversant with *current affairs and topics which are making headlines*.

Topics for discussion under **current affairs** *will test your awareness in the socio-economic sphere*.

Discussion of topics under **controversial topics** *will bring out your maturity to the fore*.

The evaluator will observe how you are able to present your views logically and coherently without getting emotional.

Abstract topics are given for GD to find out *your capacity for incisive, deep and lateral thinking*.

Topics under **case study** are discussed in a GD to evaluate your *ability to deal with 'real life situations' and look at the problem from all angles*.

Appendix-I gives a **list of common topics** which can be given for discussion in a GD. It is by no means exhaustive. Visit the websites given under References for more topics and hints.

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2.2.5 Assessing a candidate in a GD:

How is a candidate assessed by the evaluators in a GD? What are the main parameters (or 'qualities') they are looking for? What are the gradings given for each quality? It is instructive to know this; then, you can prepare accordingly.

Relative ratings awarded for each of the parameters in an IIM – MBA Group Discussion session are given below. (Ref: <http://way2freshers.com/cat/cat-gd/how-the-cat-group-discussion-is-evaluated.html>). Note that '**Strength of Point**' is given the highest rating at 40 points. This refers to your '*knowledge base*' regarding the topic. Then, '**assertiveness**', '**communication skills**' and '**body language**' are given next lower ratings of points 20 each. Also, note the various other parameters on which one is assessed.

Breakdown of the Parameter Weightage in IIM MBA Group Discussions

Criteria	Points Awarded
Strength of Point	40
New Point	10
Building Upon Existing Point	5
Rephrasing Existing Point	5
Rationale Explained Behind Point	5
Quality of Example Given	5
Quality of initiative Shown	5
Teamwork	5
Body Language	20
Style of Sitting	5
Eye Contact While Speaking	5
Movement of Hands	5
Listening Style	5
Assertiveness	20
Communication Skills	20
Command over Language	10
Clarity of Voice	10

Finally, note that GD gives you an opportunity to show your ability to *interact in a group, lead, guide and convince your colleagues*.

Indeed, GD is a great opportunity for you to showcase your **leadership qualities**.

3 Personal Interviews



3.1 Introduction:

Generally, in a selection process, a candidate goes through the following stages:

- A written test,
- A Group Discussion,
- Personal interview with a panel, and/or
- Personal/Technical interview with some senior authority in the company, and
- Personal interview with HR department to discuss salary, benefits and perks, deductions, company rules and conditions etc.

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The advertisement features a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a white blazer, smiling broadly. The background is a blurred city street. The text is overlaid on the image in a clean, modern font. A red diagonal line is on the right side. The AXA logo is in the bottom right corner.

So, 'personal interview' is an important stage for the candidate as well as for the company hiring him/her. However, many candidates are 'mortally afraid' of this stage! Even before the actual interview, they become nervous, feel nausea and headache, and imagine the worst scenario and almost give up and enter the interview room as 'nervous wrecks!' *This is totally unnecessary.*

Objective of this chapter is to prepare you well and make you confident to face personal interviews.

Towards this end, let us discuss the topic under the following headings:

- Purpose of Personal Interviews
- Types of Personal Interviews
- Getting ready: Initial research
- Getting ready: Initial preparations
- Etiquettes to be followed
- Some DOs and DON'Ts
- Some common questions
- Some 'Surprise tactics'

3.2 Purpose of Personal Interviews:

Simply put, both you as the candidate, and the company intending to hire you, want to know whether you are *'suitable for each other'*.

The company would like to know:

- if you have the necessary qualifications, knowledge, experience and skill to assume the responsibility or the function they have in mind.
- if your personal traits and habits will fit in to their work culture and company ethics.

You would like to know:

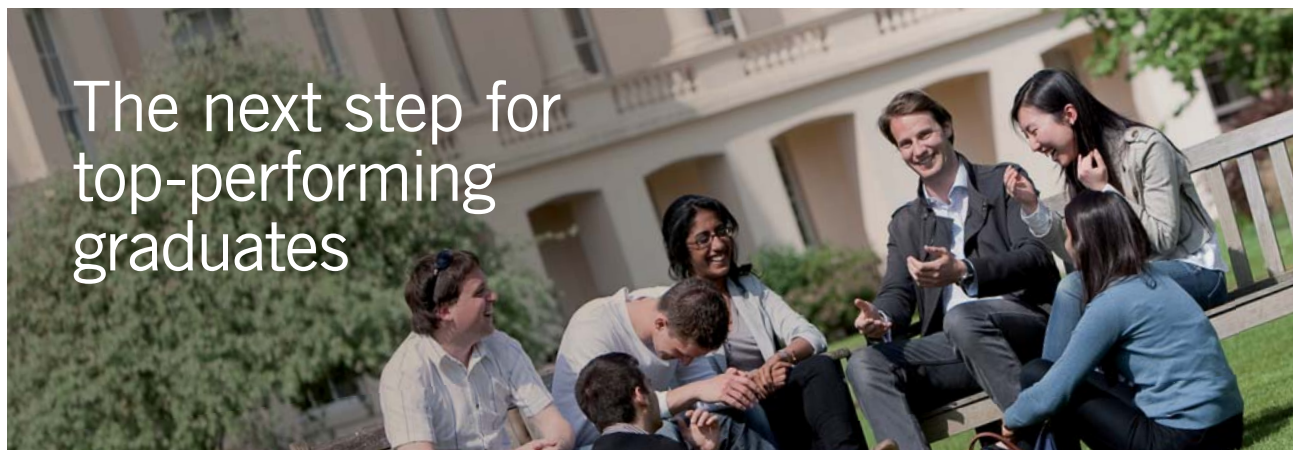
- about your work, responsibility and powers,
- culture and environment in the company,
- compensation and benefits,
- chances for future growth in your profession etc.

Personal interview is the time when all these questions are settled.

3.3 Types of Personal Interviews:

Following types of personal interviews may be identified:

- **Interview by a panel or board:** This is more of a 'formal' nature. If the interview is for a technical or specialized job, in addition to the 'core members' from the company, some 'invited experts' may also be on the panel. Each member of the panel will evaluate the candidate by observing how the candidate answers his question as well as the questions put by other members of the panel. After the interview is over and the candidate leaves the room, the panel members will discuss among themselves and arrive at a decision.
- **One-to-one Personal Interview:** This interview is generally of an informal nature. The evaluator will put you at ease in an informal environment and would like to judge your technical capability and skills and personal traits.
- **One-to-one follow-up Personal Interview:** Follow-up interview is held once you have cleared the initial technical interview. It may be with a senior person from the company and the intention may be to find out about your technical capability in-depth. Sometimes, it may be 'over a dinner for a chat' and then your technical capabilities as well as personal qualities and habits and manners will be in focus.
- **HR Personal interview:** Generally, this is held in the final stage of selection. Here you discuss about the rules and conditions of the company, salary package, work ethics etc.



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* Figures taken from London Business School's Masters in Management 2010 employment report



3.4 Getting ready – 'Initial research':

You have seen the advertisement for the job and know what the company is looking for. You think that you are the 'best candidate' for this job and apply for the same. Now, your work is not over! In fact, it just starts! By the time you are called for the interview, you should be ready to show that you are in fact, the best candidate. For this, you should take the first step of doing some initial research. It involves the following:

- **Know your knowledge base and strengths:** Do you have the necessary qualifications and experience? Are you specialized in a certain field? Do you have any special skills required for this job? What are your strengths? Do you have a successful track record on similar assignments? Be ready to speak about your knowledge base and special skills and strengths.
- **Know the skills required for the job:** Is the job highly specialized? Have you worked on a similar project earlier? Or, is it an extension of the job you have already delivered successfully? It will be to your advantage to convince the interview panel that you have the special skills required for this job.
- **Know about the Organization (location, size, products, organization structure, history, reputation, financial soundness etc.):** This is very important – after all, you should know what sort of company you are going to work for. Know about the organization, their products, sales, turn over and profits, future plans, ethics, reputation etc. You can refer to the company's official website, company brochures of products, audited annual reports etc. If you know someone working for that company, do speak to him/her to get more information. Or, seek help and advice from someone who knows more than you in that field.

3.5 Getting ready – Initial preparations:

After doing the initial 'research' mentioned above, you are ready to make the preliminary preparations. This is an important stage and you have to take special care while covering the following fundamental aspects:

- **Have a well written resume, not more than 2 pages:** Keep the resume brief. Let it contain important information about yourself clearly and truthfully: name, age, address, qualifications, experience, achievements, extra-curricular activities, references etc. Writing a good resume is very important and is an art. The employer may get a large number of applications for the job advertised, and they may not have enough time to read each and every resume carefully. Therefore, **make your resume brief, but highlight your major achievements and skills.** *Remember:* your aim is to persuade them to call you for an interview by showing them that you have the necessary expertise and skill required for the job.

- **Prepare answers for 'standard common questions':** Some 'opening questions' asked in personal interviews are rather common. Prepare well for the standard questions such as 'tell us about yourself', 'why should we hire you?', 'what do you know about our company?' etc. If you fumble while answering these preliminary questions, the interviewer gets a poor opinion of you and will think that you have walked into the room casually without any preparation!
- **If you need information or clarifications from the company, keep your questions ready:** Yes, many times, generally at the end of the interview, they will ask you: 'do you now have any questions for us?'. Then, you should not be taken by surprise. Be well prepared. Don't ask about salary etc. But ask clarifications about the job functions, your responsibility, chance for personal growth, future expansion plans of the company etc. Your questions should indicate that you are interested in the company and are keen to contribute by working for them.
- **Do some rehearsals in front of friends or mirror:** Surely, *this is important*. Conduct rehearsals in front of a mirror; or, in front of well meaning, good friends who can give critical advice. Rehearsals will show you the defects (if any) in your speech, posture, mannerism, body language etc. and then, you can take corrective action.

3.6 Etiquettes to be followed:

Personal Interview is an opportunity for you to impress the interviewer not only about your technical knowledge, expertise and skills, but also about your personal qualities, manners and polished behavior. Your very appearance and demeanor should make him feel: "here is a very upright, honest, disciplined, knowledgeable young man who is very keen to work for our company".

Give careful attention to the following points regarding the *etiquettes* to be followed:

- **Arrive early for Interview:** *Plan to arrive at the venue of the interview earlier than the scheduled time, say 20 to 30 minutes in advance.* This will help you to search for the room where the interview will be held, meet the receptionist, show your papers and register your presence, wash yourself and be fresh, and sit in a relaxed manner waiting for the interview. Don't arrive late and then give excuses such as 'I lost the way' or 'there was a traffic jam' etc!
- **Go well dressed, in formals:** Get well dressed, be well groomed. Generally, wear a dress similar to the one you are expected to wear in that position if you are selected to that position. Certainly, the interviewer will make an initial impression about you by looking at you, your dress, your hair style, manners and body language. Avoid bright colored or gaudy attire.
- **Knock the door, seek permission to enter:** Yes, you should enter the room after knocking the door and getting the permission from the interviewer or the panel. Don't just push the door abruptly with a bang and enter! Make sure that the door closes behind you gently. If members are busy looking at some papers or speaking to each other, ask pleasantly "May I come in, sir?"

- **Greet the committee pleasantly:** Upon entering the room, smile and wish them pleasantly saying "Good morning, sirs". Walk towards the committee gracefully. If the chairman extends his hand, don't be taken by surprise, but, do show warmth and shake hands with him and other members. While shaking hands, be relaxed, and smile, looking at his eyes. Don't just grip the hands very tight, nor should you leave the hand free showing lack of interest. The interviewer will learn a lot about you by observing the way you shake hands with him and others!
- **Don't just occupy a seat:** Generally, the panel members will all sit together on one side of a long rectangular table, and the candidate will sit on the opposite side at the centre, so that he can face all the members while answering questions. So, don't just grab the chair kept for the candidate and occupy it! Go to the chair and stand over there and wait for the interviewer (or chairman) to offer you the seat. Thank him and sit down.
- **Keep your bag on the floor, by the side of your chair.** Don't just dump your bag on the table with a thud! Instead, place the bag gently on the floor by your side. Keep the file containing your papers on the table so that the same can be passed on to the panel members when they ask for the same.
- **Sit comfortably:** Sit in a relaxed manner. Let your back be straight, and keep hands on your lap. Don't show signs of nervousness by twiddling with your hair or buttons or looking towards the ceiling or out of the window! **Instead, look at the eyes of the chairman or interviewer, smile, and lean forward** indicating that you are enthusiastic.



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3.7 Some DOs and DON'Ts:

In a personal interview, there are certain things you have to necessarily do, and certain things you have to positively avoid. Being aware of these points will be helpful:

DOs:

- **Switch off your cell phone:** Switch off your cell phone when you are sitting in the lobby waiting for the interview. Keep it switched off till your interview is over. It will be a great annoyance for the interviewer as well as yourself if your cell phone rings when your interview is in progress.
- **Be relaxed and confident, and smile:** After you take your seat, if they do not ask you questions immediately, but start speaking to each other or spend time looking at your papers, don't become impatient or nervous. Smile, be relaxed and wait.
- **Lean a little forward:** This shows that you are interested in answering the questions. It also shows that you are interested in the company and in the job.
- **Keep eye contact with members:** Yes, it is important to maintain eye contact with the interviewer while speaking to him/ her. It shows that you are trustworthy and helps in developing a quick rapport with the interviewer. While speaking to a member, never look down to the floor or up towards the ceiling or outside the window, or over the head of the interviewer; it indicates a lack of interest and/or poor concentration.
- **Give good initial impression by answering the usual, preliminary questions with ease:** You should be well prepared to answer the usual, preliminary questions such as: 'tell us about yourself', 'what do you know about this company?', 'why do you think we should hire you?' etc. *Some more 'standard questions' are given later in a subsequent section.* If you do not answer these initial questions well, the panel will think that you have come to attend the interview without adequate preparation or that you are taking the interview casually. It is a disaster to give a negative impression in the beginning of the interview itself!
- **Project your qualifications, skills, experience, achievements and abilities:** Invariably, the first question is: 'tell us about yourself briefly'. You should give an answer to this question very, very thoroughly. It is an opportunity for you to effectively project your qualifications, skills, experience, achievements and abilities. Do it with ease and precision. Prepare well at home for this answer. Rehearse your answer if necessary. It is an opportunity for you to convince them that you are the 'right man' for the job.
- **If you don't understand a question, rephrase it and ask if it is OK:** Sometimes, you may not understand a question – may be the interviewer was not audible, or he jumbled up the words, or question was not framed properly. Don't lose heart, or get nervous. Repeat the question after rephrasing it as you understand it, and ask him if it is what he meant. If 'yes', then proceed to give your answer.

- **If you don't know the answer, say so:** Be frank and say so if you don't know the answer to a question. *Never bluff* or beat about the bush. *Never* try to change the topic or speak irrelevant things and confuse the issue.
- **Be honest, straight forward:** This point cannot be overstressed! Surely, they would like to hire someone who is honest and straight forward! Let the way you walk, talk and interact with the members of the panel, naturally create this impression on them.
- **Listen attentively, with respect, when interviewer speaks to you:** When the interviewer is talking to you, look at him in his eyes, lean forward, smile and listen *attentively*. He should feel that you are genuinely interested to listen what he is saying. Don't look here and there or be fidgety in your seat. It indicates lack of attention and interest.
- **Watch interviewer's body language to get non-verbal clues:** Be *sensitive and sharp* to observe the body language or facial expression of the interviewer; inadvertently, or deliberately, he may be giving you clues. He may be saying: 'excellent', 'correct', 'wrong', 'I don't agree', 'continue, speak further' or 'enough, stop!'. Respond immediately and correct yourself, if required.
- **Show by your voice, expression and mannerism that you are genuinely excited to take up the job:** Basically, you should put it across to the interviewer or the panel that you are *genuinely interested* in the job you are being interviewed for. Apart from proving your 'knowledge base', you should also show them by your demeanor, mannerism and other means of non-verbal communication that you look forward to being a 'member of the large family' and contribute in realizing the goals of the company.
- **Show sensitivity to others' opinions, views:** Show maturity during your discussions. Be sensitive to others' opinions. Don't argue over silly points. Don't raise controversial topics based on language, region, religion, politics, gender or nationality. Don't try to prove that the interviewer is wrong!
- **Salary expected?...** At the end of the interview, invariably, they ask this question. Don't fall into the trap! *Don't give a figure!* You may be asking too much or too little! Instead, ask the interviewer about the salary range offered for that job. Or, tell them:
"I believe in the wisdom of this panel to pay me commensurate with my qualifications and experience". Surely, there will be another opportunity to discuss the details of salary, perks etc.
- **If you have any questions, ask them:** At the end, they may ask you: 'do you have any questions for us?'. Be prepared for this question. Ask for any clarifications you need regarding the job functions or responsibilities, where you will be placed in the company hierarchy, or company plans for diversification, expansion and growth. *Don't ask them stupid questions* such as 'is there a canteen here?' or 'is there a bus stop in front of this company?' etc.
- **Leave the interview room with a positive, pleasant note:** The impression you give at the end of the interview, while leaving the room is also very important. When they indicate that the interview is over, thank them, smile, get up, lean forward and shake hands in a dignified manner. Walk out of door gracefully, shutting the door gently behind you.

DON'Ts:

- **Don't go without adequate preparation:** Sure enough, you want to impress the panel and get this job! If so, you have to attend seriously to all the points mentioned above. Update your 'knowledge base' on the subject, make your preliminary 'research' and preliminary preparations, be attentive to etiquettes of the interview and observe the DOs and don'ts of the interview scrupulously.
- **Don't brag, boast, or be aggressive:** These 'tactics' are followed by many candidates, with the belief that they will impress the interviewer by this. ***But they are wrong!*** In fact, it is counterproductive. The interviewer knows that boasting or being aggressive is a sign of '*lack of knowledge*' and '*inferiority complex*'.
- **Don't be meek either:** Don't be meek. Be dignified. Don't beg for this job. Be confident that if you don't get this job, nothing is lost; you may even get a better job! Being meek shows lack of self confidence.
- **Watch your body language:** As stated earlier, you are sending non-verbal communication to the interviewer by your 'body language'. So, while speaking to the interviewer, look straight into his eyes, and don't stare at your feet or look at horizon over his head.
- **Never tell a lie:** It speaks very badly of you to tell a lie. It is against ethics. It is not gentlemanly. Never tell a lie or 'half truth', either during the interview or in your bio-data.



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- **Don't criticize your colleagues or previous employer:** If you are changing a job, it is natural to ask: 'why are you leaving your present job?'. In answer, don't blame your colleagues or previous employer. It is not ethical, and it *shows negative attitude*. Say that you are changing job for 'work satisfaction', or 'opportunity to learn more in your field', or for 'career growth'.
- **Don't interrupt your interviewer when he is speaking.** It is not good manners. It is irritating to the interviewer. Give him the respect that is his due.
- **Don't offend your interviewer:** Don't get irritated if you are asked an unpleasant question. Don't get agitated if the question is irrelevant and 'out of the blue'. Don't offend your interviewer by your words or mannerism; **show him respect**. It is a sign of maturity to *keep your cool* under trying circumstances.
- **Don't give ambiguous answers:** Be precise, to the point, brief and accurate in your answers.
- **Don't beat about the bush: Be concise.** Don't go on talking endlessly. Elaborate on a point only if asked to do so.
- **Don't brood over a question which you could not answer:** Yes, this is a mistake committed by many candidates. If you could not answer a question satisfactorily, don't worry about it while answering the next question. After all, the interviewer is not expecting the candidate to answer all the questions 100% correctly! Forget about the question you could not answer, breathe deeply and get ready for next question!

3.8 Some common questions:

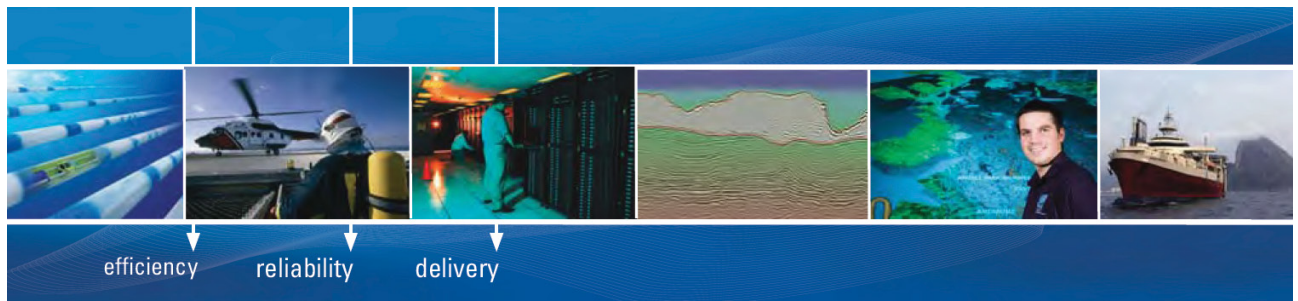
In a personal interview, some questions, generally asked in the beginning of the interview, are rather '*common and standard questions*'. You should be thoroughly prepared to answer such questions. *You should write down the answers and rehearse the 'delivery' of these answers in front of a mirror or in front of your well-meaning friends.* It is worth making such efforts. It will help you to create a great impression on the panel from the very beginning of the interview.

Here are some *common questions* asked in an interview. Some of them are straight forward and simple questions, some are tough, and some are really 'tricky' questions:

- **Tell us about yourself:** This is generally the first question you face from the panel. You should be well prepared to answer this. This is a great opportunity for you to project your qualifications, experience, skills and abilities. But, *be brief and effective*. Present it in such a manner that during your talk they should feel that you have all the credentials to get this position. Therefore, write down and rehearse your answer to this question in advance. It is worth it. While preparing, keep in mind what the company is looking for in the candidate as far as the job requirements are concerned.
- **Why do you want to work for our company?** To answer this question well, you should have done some initial research on the company, its products and expansion plans. Explain how your *experience and talents* will greatly help the company in realizing their projected goals. *Never indicate that salary is the main reason why you want to work for them!*

- **How do you think you will contribute to our company?** Once again, a good question for you. Take this opportunity to showcase your qualifications, experience and skills with reference to the job requirements, range of company products or the expansion plans of the company. Of course, you must have done your research on these matters before going to the interview.
- **Why do you want to leave your present job? Beware, this is a tricky question.** Don't start reeling out problems or differences you had with your earlier employer. It will give a *very negative impression* about you. Instead, tell them politely that you did not have sufficient technical challenges in the earlier job or that chances of learning more or a positive career growth were rather limited.
- **What are your strengths and weaknesses?** Think well before answering this question. Be diplomatic. Surely, you should present your strengths as being suitable to the job requirements they have in mind. Also, give suitable examples of your achievements from your performance history. Regarding your 'weaknesses' be diplomatic. Don't just go on speaking about your deficiencies from the technical or personal life! **Present your weakness in such a manner that it should look like strength!** For example, if you say "I have a great weakness of working overtime to meet the time schedule", or "I can't accept a mediocre job from my subordinates, it is my weakness", or "surely, come what may, I have to deliver. It is my weakness" will convey some positive impression about you to the interviewer.
- **How do you handle stress?** Good question, answer to which will expose your approach to work. Certainly, there will be pressure and stress when you work on a project with so many constraints such as a tight time schedule, delayed delivery schedules of parts/components, budgetary limits, unforeseen absence of workers or sudden resignations of colleagues dealing with critical aspects of the project etc. **Make it clear to the panel that stress motivates you to work harder.** This is a positive approach to say that a reasonable amount of stress on your part is good for the 'health of the project'!
- **What are your greatest achievements?** You should be prepared to give a good answer to this question. Give examples from your academic and professional career, awards received or projects you have handled successfully etc.
- **What motivates you most?** Give an *honest answer*. If the challenges motivate you, say so. Certainly, it should not be the money or perks. Or, it may be the stress of time schedule, or the congenial working conditions motivate you to perform to the maximum.
- **Where do you see yourself in next 5/10 years?** *Again, it is a tricky question!* Your answer will indicate to the panel something about your ambition and personal approach to life. Answer carefully. Don't be vague. If it is an academic position, say you would like to finish your M. Tech. or Ph.D., or guide 4–5 students in their projects, or publish 5–10 international papers within the next 5–10 years. Or, if you are going to work for a company, tell the panel that in the next 5–10 years you would like to see yourself working in a responsible management position.

- **Do you prefer to work in a group or alone?** Answer should be appropriate to the position you are being interviewed for. If you are applying for an academic or research position, preference to working alone may be OK, even though ability to work in a group and/or lead a group is essential for senior research positions. But, if you are going to be part of a group executing a big project for the company, obviously they need a person who loves working in a group.
- **What are your hobbies?** Not a 'tough question'. But, answer intelligently. It will be great if your hobbies are supplementary to your professional work – may be to increase your knowledge and skill or to help you relax from the stress.
- **What salary package do you expect?** It is a good question. *Don't jump into the trap* by immediately giving a figure. You don't know what is there in their mind; so, you may be asking for too much (in which case you will not get that job), or, you may be asking for too little (in which case you will be the loser). So, do some research before going to the interview and find out the salary package generally offered for similar positions in that company. Otherwise, ask the panel to tell you what the general salary range is for such a position and tell them that you have full faith on their wisdom to pay you commensurate with your qualifications and experience.
- **Do you have any questions for us?** Generally, this is the last question of the interview. Do feel free to ask them about the job functions and responsibilities, your position in the official hierarchy, company's expansion or diversification plans etc. It is also OK to ask them when you can expect them to communicate to you the result of the interview.



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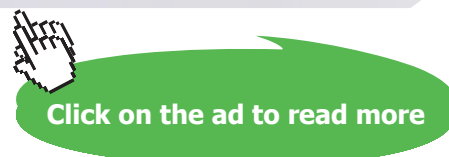
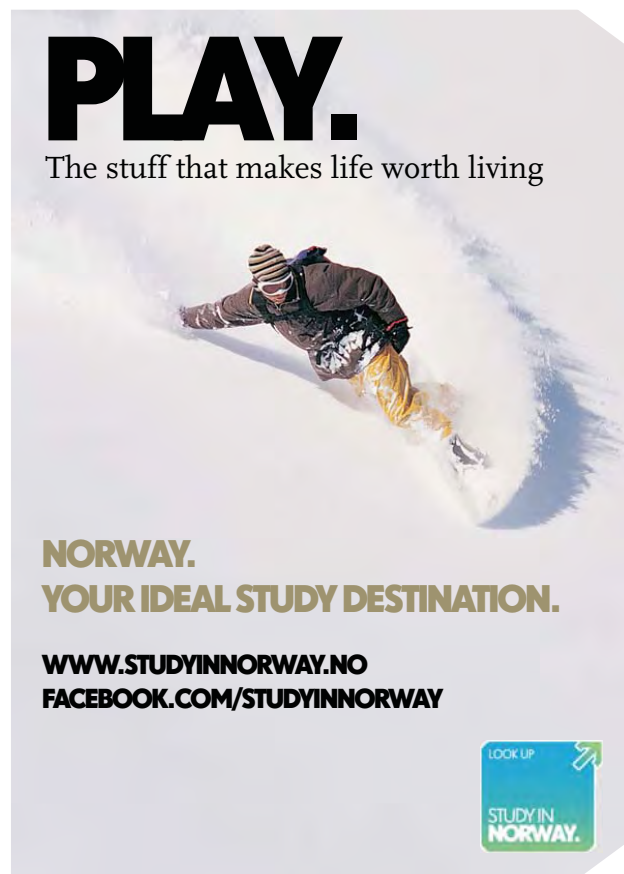
3.9 Some 'surprise' questions:

In some interviews, there may be some 'surprise' or 'uncommon' or 'queer' questions! The panel may shoot questions at you from out of the blue and may even look rude. **Don't get alarmed or lose your balance.** They may be **just trying the pressure tactics on you** just to see how you will react. You need not give the 'right answer' or, sometimes, there may not be any right answer at all; but, what is important is how you react. Think of the following situations:

- **Fire a question..., fire..., fire...!** Yes, a panel member looks at you gravely and fires a question to you. Before you begin your answer, another member shoots another question to you. When you start answering that question, a third person from the panel asks a totally irrelevant question! Don't get worried and look confused. Don't lose your composure or confidence. Keep smiling and nod with respect to each one as he speaks to you, tell them that you will answer them all, and wait for them to stop the barrage. Then, give your answers coolly.
- **Stupid questions:** Yes, sometimes they may ask questions that look stupid or untenable. Don't get flustered. Don't argue with the members or try to prove that it is a stupid question. Instead, smile, show maturity and answer diplomatically. Again, they are not looking for an answer, but they are gauging your reaction to the question!
- **Silence:** Yes, this is the most unnerving experience! He asks you a question, and you have given an appropriate and correct reply. But, the interviewer looks at you without blinking and says nothing and continues to stare at you silently. All other members of the panel are also silent. You don't know whether the panel agrees with your answer or not! This is a 'war of nerves'! Don't give in. Don't perspire or squirm in your seat or become introvert! Instead, keep smiling and look at the member concerned with respect. Break the ice! Make him speak. Perhaps, you can ask him: 'do you want me to elaborate further, sir?'
- **Intimidating look, body-language and manners:** This is really tough! The interviewer looks very serious, doesn't smile, stares at you and yells '**WRONG!**' when you give your answer. He shows his disapproval by his body language or facial expressions. How do you handle such a situation? Firstly, be sure that your answer is correct. That is your capital. Don't get angry. Don't talk to yourself saying 'this man is an idiot!'. Take care of your body language and expressions. Speak politely, smile and say: '**I am sorry that I did not make myself very clear. I will explain it further if you give me an opportunity now.**' Surely you will get the opportunity, and give the correct answer again.
- **Rate me as an interviewer in a scale of 1 to 10!** Yes, don't be taken aback by such a question. And don't immediately give him a rating of 10! It will simply mean that you are flattering him. At the same, know that everyone likes to be appreciated. So, give him a tactful reply. Don't give a figure, but say: "From my experience with you in this interview, I find that you are a hard interviewer. Your questions have been intelligent, tough, objective and practical. I am sure that your recruiting ways are highly efficient!". That should do.

Thus, Personal Interview is an opportunity for you to *effectively 'sell' your skill and convince the employer that you are the best!*

Remember that there is no substitute for a *strong knowledge base* on your subject. And, *practice well* about all aspects of the personal interview described above. Hone your skills. Practice will make you perfect!



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Appendix-I

Some Topics For Group Discussion

Ref: <http://www.freshersworld.com/interview/gd-general>

General GD Topics

- US war on Iraq-justified or not.
- Role of UN in peacekeeping.
- Position of Women in India compared to other nations.
- Environment Management.
- Is China better than India in software?
- Should SONIA Gandhi be made the PM?
- BPOs in INDIA.
- Govt. contribution to IT.
- Will punch lines rule the Advt.?
- Premarital sex?
- Is china a threat to Indian industry
- India or West, which is the land of opportunities?
- Water resources should be nationalized.
- “BALANCE BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND FAMILY”.
- Effect of cinema on Youth.
- Education in India compared to foreign nations.
- Is it necessary to ban COCO COLA in India?
- What is the effect of movies on youth? (is it good or bad)
- Are studies more beneficial in India or in Abroad?
- “UN’s peace activities” and “America’s war on Iraq”.
- “Environment – Whose Responsibility”?
- Is China a threat to the Indian software industry?
- Role of UN in Peace keeping.
- War on Iraq.
- About Hockey being the primary game in India.
- Can America occupy Iraq?
- Cricket should be banned or not.
- IS CHINA A THREAT TO INDIA?
- Present state of Indian Cricket team.
- Love marriage/Arranged marriage.
- Advantages of Co-education.

- How to deal with international terrorism.
- Should we pursue our policy of dialogue with Pakistan?
- Is peace and non-violence outdated concepts?

=====
 Ref: <http://www.freshersworld.com/interview/gd-current>

Current GD Topics

- A Unipolar World spells disaster for underdeveloped countries like India
- Is Globalization Really Necessary?
- What shall we do about our ever-increasing Population?
- Corruption is the price we pay for Democracy
- Foreign Television Channels are destroying our culture
- What India needs is a Dictatorship.
- With media publishing and telecasting trivia, censorship is the need of the hour.
- Kaun Banega Krorpati is less about knowledge but more about money and personality.
- Beauty contests degrade womanhood
- The rise of regional blocs threatens independent nations like India
- Six billion and one bronze!
- Is dependence on computers a good thing?
- Should the public sector be privatized?
- China and India are similar nations with contrasting ways
- Is India a Soft Nation?
- Value based politics is the need of the hour
- Religion should not be mixed with politics
- How to deal with high oil prices
- Our cricketers are not to blame for match fixing
- Why can't we be world players in industry as we are in software?
- Multinational corporations: Are they devils in disguise?
- Should there be limits on artistic freedom (the controversy on Fire).
- Should there be private universities?
- Does banning fashion shows and New Year parties save our culture?

Appendix-II

Etiquettes In Workplace, At A Party And On Telephone

I. Etiquette in Workplace:

(Ref: <http://www.successcds.net/Articles/Behavioural-Etiquettes.html>)

It is true that working individuals spend a large part of their life in their workplace.

So every working professional should follow some simple workplace etiquettes.

- Always be Punctual.
- Be a rational person.
- Follow the official dress code.
- Have mutual respect.
- Maintain office decorum.
- Stay away from gossip.



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II. Party Etiquette: Talking, Listening, Mingling

(Ref: [Excerpts from Ref: http://www.a-to-z-of-manners-and-etiquette.com/business-etiquette.html](http://www.a-to-z-of-manners-and-etiquette.com/business-etiquette.html))

- Think about other people and care about them.
- Act as if you're a host, not a guest.
- Be pleasant, cheerful, and upbeat when mingling, no matter what your mood.
- Listen more than you talk.

- Know how to gracefully end conversations.
- Avoid making negative comments on the room, the food, the guests or your host.
- To engage a stranger into a conversation, find a shared interest.
- Avoid any type of talk regarding physical injuries, sickness, accidents, or off-color language or jokes.

III. Etiquette on Telephone

(Ref: <http://www.advancedetiquette.com/2012/01/8-telephone-etiquette-tips/>)

- Always identify yourself, while making or receiving a call.
- Mind the tone of your voice...don't be aggressive or pushy.
- Plan and jot down what you have to discuss.
- Do not get interrupted during a conversation, by others around you.
- Always speak clearly and slowly; particularly so, while leaving messages.
- Turn off your cell phone while in a meeting, restaurant, theatre or a public place.
- Do not shout in to the mouth piece of your phone, watch the tone and volume of your voice.
- While on phone, don't carry on other works such as arranging papers, chewing, driving, speaking to someone else etc.

IV. Business Etiquette

(Excerpts from Ref: <http://www.a-to-z-of-manners-and-etiquette.com/business-etiquette.html>)

- Business Etiquette is about how to conduct your business with **other businesses and clients**.
- **Be helpful** and act with **honesty and integrity**.
- Show courtesy and good manners – always.

- Don't keep clients **waiting** while you wind up another task
- Introduce people by name and with **dignity**.
- If you play music while 'on hold' make sure the music is **soothing, gentle and non-invasive**.
- **If you have a website:** Make it as **simple** and straight-forward as possible.

- **If you employ a receptionist** to answer calls train him/her work professionally and **shows courtesy to all callers**.
- Always **dress smartly**, preferably in a suit for business meetings.
- Keep **calm**. Do not lose your cool.
- Don't **shout** or pound on the table – take a few deep breaths instead.
- Speak **softly and clearly** whilst making good eye contact.
- The old adage that the **customer is always right** still holds good.
- **Apologize** if you are clearly in the wrong.
- **Accept an apology** graciously and with compassion.
- If there is **conflict**, do not get personal in your remarks.

V. General Manners and Etiquette

(Ref: <http://www.a-to-z-of-manners-and-etiquette.com/manners.html>)

Manners **cost** us nothing; yet, **earn** us respect when we use them.

“**Manners maketh the man,**” is a phrase not used much these days. The basics of etiquette have been largely forgotten by the younger generation.

The **older generation** may well remember some of the following:

Don't **point** – it's rude.

Don't **smoke or eat** in the street – it looks 'common'.

Don't talk with your **mouth full** – disgustingly, you may spit some of it out!

Don't **shout** – Keep your voice down.

Don't **interrupt** – it's selfish and ill-mannered.

Don't **swear** – it impresses nobody (it's the language of low lives and those with a limited vocabulary).

Open doors for the elderly and for women.

Hold doors open for whoever is following you in (or out) – don't let it slam in their face.

Use **please** and **thank you**.

Don't **gang up** on anybody anywhere.

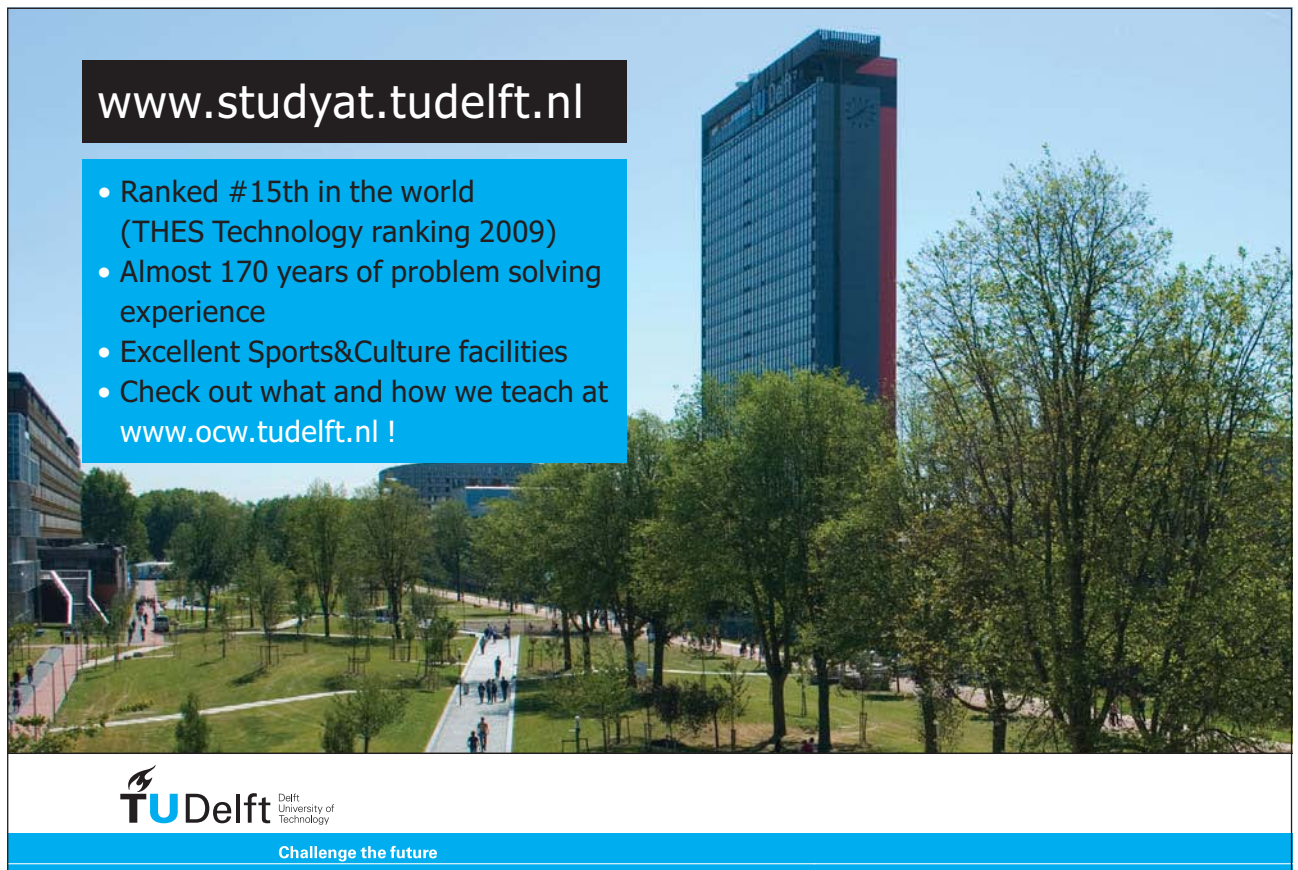
Don't talk **behind** other's backs.

Turn away from people, food and the phone when you cough or sneeze.

Show **respect** for those older and wiser than yourself.

Without respect **and** consideration for others, we are nothing but **savages**.

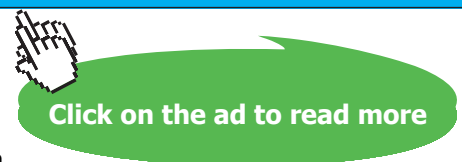
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Rules for Happy Life**(Ref: Anonymous)**

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion.
Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: 'In five years, will this matter?'
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone, everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.

- 36. Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.
 - 37. Your children get only one childhood.
 - 38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
 - 39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
 - 40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
 - 41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
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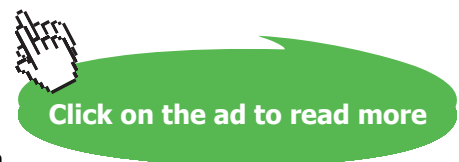


"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"

Jane, Chinese architect

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Appendix-III

Tips To Management Students

(From the lectures of Sri Sathya Sai Baba to MBA students)



Sri Sathya Sai Baba (respectfully called as 'Swami' by admirers) has established a University, where education is given from kindergarten to Postgraduate level, absolutely free. Here, the system of education is based on eternal values enshrined in our great Indian culture. Respect for parents, teachers and elders, existence of One God and universality of all religions, brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God... etc. are taught from an early age.

As Chancellor of Sathya Sai University, Swami has spoken to teachers and students on a number of occasions.

Following sayings are gleaned from his talks to MBA students of the University:

- At the time of inaugurating the MBA programme, Sri Sathya Sai Baba had said: **This Institute has not been established just to prepare you (students) for earning degrees. Its *main purpose* is to help you cultivate Self-knowledge and Self-confidence so that each one of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn Self-realization.**
- Baba's expansion of the term 'MANAGER' using it as an acronym:
 - **M: Mind of Man**
 - **A: Awareness of Atman**
 - **N: Nature of Nations**
 - **A: Aspects of environment**
 - **G: Guidelines for Goodness**
 - **E: Enquiry into Ethos, and**
 - **R: Role of Rules**

- **Education** is like insipid water, **Educare** is like sugar. Merely adding sugar to water does not make it sweet. It is only on stirring that the sugar mixes with water, making it sweet. The heart is the tumbler, divinity is the sugar and secular education is tasteless water. With intelligence as spoon and enquiry as the process of stirring, we can experience all-pervasive divinity. That is true wisdom, which enables us to recognize the unity of all creation. ***This recognition of unity in multiplicity is the ultimate goal of education.***
- Running a business honestly must be regarded as a form of social service and '*spiritual sadhana*'.
- **Comparing our body to a factory, heart is the 'Manager' and the 'Workers' are the various organs in the body. Body can function properly only when there is proper coordination between the heart and the rest of the body. It is also essential to remember that each organ has its own specialized activity, which cannot be performed by another.**
- It is essential for everybody in the organization or factory to remind themselves regarding the indispensability of each individual in the organization.
- Sai students, when employed, should take every possible step to have cordial relationships with the workers. To achieve this, one should **have both understanding and adjustment.**
- Educated youth should aim at *quality* but not *quantity*.
- Whatever company or organization you may join, you should run it smoothly and ensure that there are no agitations or strikes.
- Social dissensions prevailing in society which make inroads into organizations should be amicably sorted out through mutual love and harmony; and, people should not create vertical divisions among groups on the basis of various factors out of vested interest.
- All the ancient practices followed by the people in India in bygone times which formed part of Indian culture, traditions and customs were based on such rational and scientific principles.
- Quality should be principally inside and you should be ready to do any work.
- The key managers should not work by force but they should work by source.
- Top-management should not be swayed by mere market share, for it could be misleading.
- All the managers **should possess all the three aspects:** 1. Love for God, 2. Fear of sin and 3. Morality in society.
- Students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) should not be swayed by fat salary figures, but should give importance to work and organizational objectives.
- So, with full contentment do work and render service for whatever salary you get.
- You should always think of ways and means of improving the quality of products and services in your respective organizations.
- Youth **who take up rural development** should be assisted by six advisors, viz. WHO, WHEN, WHAT, WHY, WHERE and HOW, which will facilitate the successful implementation of various plans. i.e. one should ask: What should be done? Why it should be done? Where it should be done? etc.
- **Curb your desires, reduce your wants, live in spiritual austerity and with humility.** Then, tensions of a competitive socio-economic system will be dissolved and peace of mind restored.

- Don't waste food; don't waste time; don't waste money and, don't waste energy.
- Today, we find that **corruption and accumulation of black money** has taken roots everywhere. Hope lies only in Universal Education by which right conduct, fear of God and love for the motherland will be inculcated among the citizens from their childhood.
- Corporate philosophy should be guided by 'Dharma' (Righteousness). A business organization is to be treated as a temple, wherein the entire workforce, by means of sincere work, offer worship to God.
- Lasting solutions to economic problems can be found only in spirituality.
- The most important thing is that – you must **have faith in God**.
- **You should work for Society. Don't be egocentric. You are born in society, brought up in society, earn a living in society. So, you should work for others and the country.**
- Each student has a *watch* on his wrist. And, you look at the watch at least a hundred times a day. Well, learn from the watch a great lesson. When you watch the watch, remember the five letters of the word, **WATCH**; each is giving you a fine lesson for life: W tells you 'Watch your Words'; A warns you 'Watch your Action'; T indicates 'Watch your Thoughts'; C advises 'Watch your Character'; and H declares 'Watch your Heart.' *When you are consulting your watch, imbibe this lesson that the watch is imparting.*

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