

Face your first confidently

PLACEMENTS Getting your dream job through a campus interview can be a cake walk if you've prepared well, writes V Pradeep Kumar

The prospect of facing a personal interview in the campus, for your first job, can be quite unnerving. However, there's nothing to fear, as the companies that visit the campus are looking for the best of talent. Instead of getting nervous, prepare well and be a picture of confidence.

From my experience of campus recruitment, the most important observation is that, candidates often ask inappropriate questions towards the end, after having done well in the other stages. Another issue recruiters generally find in fresh candidates is very poor preparation in terms of knowledge about the company and the job profile.

Campus selections can get very competitive, especially with top companies and hot jobs. Therefore, it's useful to know in advance what interviewers look for.

What recruiters look for?

Personal interview is the conclusive part of the placement process, after completing other rounds such as aptitude test, essay writing and group discussion. Therefore, recruiters generally look for these specific factors in a candidate:

First impression: No matter what the position is, first impression is very important. **Suitability to job profile:** Job descriptions normally specify knowledge, skill sets and attitude. Therefore, this part of the assessment takes the maximum time.

Other requirements: From the corporate point of view, job necessity, stability on the job and ability to be a team player;



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etc., are important.

Documentation: Documents of completed courses, testimonials, project reports and references.

Preparation is the key: Campus placement is the first opportunity for most candidates to seek employment. You can't get your dream job by chance but through preparation. Therefore, you must research about the company and its performance, market share, expansion plans, as well as the job profile, skill sets required and the challenges involved. **Filing and arranging documents neatly** create a good impression.

Confident approach: Dress

formally, enter confidently, greet all the interviewers with a smile and wait for a signal to take your seat. Sometimes, an interviewer may deliberately not signal you to sit, in which case, don't stand nervously there. Feel comfortable to ask, "May I sit down?" In the beginning, interviewers ask 'open ended', ice breaking and testing questions.

Natural body language: Expert interviewers can easily read your body language and can even come to wrong conclusions, based on inappropriate gestures. Sit comfortably and use your natural body language.

Anticipate questions: Depending on the job profile,

anticipate typical interview questions and answer confidently. Do remember that you are trying to sell your services and hence the onus is on you to prove your ability to handle the job. However, seek details and clarifications on all aspects of the job to be sure of what you are getting into.

Typical interview questions are:

■ Why did you choose this specialisation?

■ Where do you see yourself in five years?

■ What are your strengths and weaknesses?

■ Why are you interested in our organisation?

■ What do you think will be your job profile?

Close on a positive note: Normally, interviewers do inform whether you are selected or shortlisted. If selected, they might also issue an offer letter.

Be careful to ask appropriate and relevant questions in the end. Some typical questions to ask are:

■ May I know your growth and expansion plans?

■ What career opportunities can we expect?

■ How is the competition for your products?

■ What changes in consumer/customer preferences do you envisage?

■ How do you promote your products?

After you finish with questions and clarifications, you will get the closing signal from the interviewer. Just as the first impression is important, it's good to leave the interview on a good note. Lastly, it's important to thank the interviewers for their time and greet appropriately before leaving.

Tips for campus interviews

1. Make your career plan.

2. Project yourself through an effective CV.

3. Be honest regarding your hobbies and interests.

4. Dress formally; pay attention to hygiene.

5. Greet appropriately with a natural smile.

6. Research the company and the job profile.

7. Update domain and general knowledge.

8. Read the terms of the offer letter before signing.

9. Leave on a positive note by thanking the interviewers for their time.

(The author is a management and career consultant.)