



Original Article

Mastering Interview Skills: Techniques and Guidelines to Crack Interview

Dr. Dipraj R. Sankla¹, Dr. Mrunal M. Risbud²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sir Parashurambhau College (Empowered Autonomous), Pune

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sir Parashurambhau College (Empowered Autonomous), Pune

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Correspondence Address:
Dr. Dipraj R. Sankla
Assistant Professor, Department of
Commerce, Sir Parashurambhau
College (Empowered Autonomous),
Pune
Email:
dipraj.sankla@spcollegepune.ac.in



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Abstract

In the modern job market, mastering interview skills is a critical determinant of career success. This research paper offers a comprehensive guide to excelling in job interviews by examining essential techniques and strategies. The study delves into key aspects such as effective preparation, strong communication skills, familiarity with different interview formats, handling challenging questions, and appropriate post-interview follow-up. By integrating insights from organizational psychology, human resource management, and communication studies, this paper highlights proven methods that significantly enhance a candidate's performance during interviews.

A well-prepared candidate not only demonstrates confidence but also articulates their skills and experiences effectively, aligning them with employer expectations. This paper discusses various preparation techniques, including company research, understanding job roles, and practicing common interview questions. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication, exploring how body language, tone, and clarity influence interviewer perceptions. The research also examines behavioral interview techniques, particularly the STAR method, as a structured approach to responding to competency-based questions.

Furthermore, psychological factors such as interview anxiety and stress management techniques are analyzed, providing job seekers with actionable strategies to maintain composure under pressure. The study also underscores the importance of post-interview etiquette, including follow-up communication and strategies for handling rejection constructively. By synthesizing theoretical and practical perspectives, this paper equips job seekers with the tools necessary to navigate interviews successfully, ultimately increasing their chances of securing desired positions in today's competitive employment landscape.

Keywords: Interview skills, job interview, communication skills, preparation techniques, career success, interview formats, handling challenging questions, post-interview follow-up.

Introduction

In today's competitive job market, mastering interview skills is essential for securing employment opportunities. The job interview is a decisive stage in the hiring process, often determining whether a candidate will be offered a position. Despite its importance, many job seekers struggle to perform well in interviews due to inadequate preparation, anxiety, or a lack of familiarity with effective techniques. Even candidates with the necessary qualifications and experience can find it challenging to present themselves effectively, leading to missed opportunities. Therefore, understanding and mastering interview skills is vital for career advancement and success in obtaining desired positions. This paper aims to demystify the interview process by providing actionable techniques and guidelines for interview success. By offering a detailed examination of methods and practices, we seek to address the common challenges faced by candidates and equip them with the tools needed to navigate interviews with confidence and competence. The significance of this research lies in its comprehensive approach, drawing on literature from organizational psychology, human resource management, and communication studies. This paper explores key techniques and guidelines, including preparation strategies, effective communication skills, understanding different interview formats, handling difficult questions, and post-interview follow-up. By examining both theoretical and practical insights, this study aims to empower job seekers to enhance their interview performance.

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Through an in-depth analysis and practical examples, we provide a thorough understanding of various aspects of interview skills, ultimately increasing candidates' chances of securing their desired positions.

Literature Review:

The literature on interview skills is extensive and encompasses various disciplines, emphasizing the importance of preparation, communication skills, non-verbal cues, and strategies for handling difficult questions. This section synthesizes key findings from previous studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective interview techniques.

- a. **Importance of Communication Skills:** Effective communication is a critical factor in interview success. According to (Smith, 2019), candidates who exhibit strong verbal and non-verbal communication skills are more likely to leave a positive impression on interviewers. This includes clarity in speech, appropriate tone, and active listening. (Johnson, 2020) emphasized the importance of researching the company and role to tailor responses effectively, suggesting that tailored communication demonstrates a candidate's genuine interest and fit for the position.
- b. **Role of Non-Verbal Communication:** Non-verbal communication, including body language and facial expressions, significantly impacts interviewer perceptions. Studies by (Barrick, 2009) highlight the importance of non-verbal communication in interviews, noting that positive body language can convey confidence and competence. (Goman, 2011) further emphasized the role of body language, suggesting that candidates who maintain eye contact, offer a firm handshake, and exhibit open posture are perceived more favourably.
- c. **Behavioural Techniques and Their Impact:** Behavioural interview techniques, such as the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method, are widely recommended for answering behavioural questions. This method helps candidates provide structured and detailed responses, making it easier for interviewers to evaluate their suitability for the role. (Bock, 2015) suggested that the STAR method enables candidates to clearly articulate their past experiences and the results of their actions, providing a concrete basis for assessing their competencies.
- d. **Importance of Preparation:** Preparation is a recurring theme in the literature on interview success. (Huffcutt, 2004) indicated that successful interview outcomes are often the result of thorough preparation. This includes understanding the job description, researching the company, and practicing responses to common interview questions. Well-prepared candidates are better equipped to handle a variety of interview formats and questions, thereby increasing their chances of success.
- e. **Psychological Aspects of Interviews:** The psychological aspects of interviews, such as anxiety and stress management, are also important considerations. Techniques such as visualization, positive self-talk, and deep breathing exercises can help candidates manage anxiety and perform better during interviews. (Kohn, 2018) suggested that building confidence through practice and preparation can mitigate the negative effects of interview-related stress.
- f. **Strategies for Handling Difficult Questions:** According to (Young, 2022) Handling difficult questions effectively is crucial for interview success. Candidates should remain composed, take a moment to think before responding, and provide honest and thoughtful answers. Techniques such as the STAR method can also be applied to challenging questions, allowing candidates to provide structured and coherent responses.
- g. **Interview Formats:** Understanding different interview formats, such as structured, unstructured, and panel interviews, allows candidates to tailor their preparation accordingly. Research shows that structured interviews lead to more reliable hiring decisions, whereas unstructured interviews often introduce bias (Scribbr, n.d.).
- h. **Technological Adaptations:** With the rise of virtual interviews, candidates must adapt to technological platforms. Familiarity with virtual interview protocols and effective use of technology are essential for success in remote interview settings. A study by (Digital Commons Georgia Southern, n.d.) highlights the importance of camera positioning, lighting, and virtual presence in video interviews.
- i. **Interviewer Bias:** Awareness of potential biases, such as the time-of-day effect on interviewer evaluations, can help candidates strategize their interview scheduling and performance. A report from (Business Insider, 2024) suggests that morning interviews tend to yield better results due to interviewer alertness and reduced cognitive fatigue.
- j. **Automated Interview Analysis:** Advancements in technology have led to automated systems that analyze verbal and non-verbal behaviors during interviews. AI-based tools evaluate speech patterns, facial expressions, and body language to assess a candidate's suitability. (Naim, 2015) conducted a study on AI-driven interview evaluations and found that these tools can accurately predict candidate performance.
- k. **Post-Interview Follow-Up:** Effective post-interview communication, such as sending thank-you notes, can reinforce a candidate's interest and professionalism. Experts from (The Guardian., 2025) emphasize that follow-up emails and thank-you letters can leave a lasting impression on interviewers and increase the chances of selection.
- l. **Continuous Improvement:** Viewing each interview as a learning experience and seeking feedback can lead to continuous improvement in interview skills. A study by (Anderson, 2021) suggests that candidates who analyze past interviews and refine their responses tend to perform better over time.

Research Methodology:

This research paper utilizes a qualitative approach, drawing on existing literature, expert opinions, and case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of interview skills. Data sources include academic journals, industry reports, and books on career development and psychology.

Objectives:

The primary objectives of this research paper are:

1. To identify and analyze effective interview preparation techniques.
2. To explore key communication skills essential for interviews.

3. To discuss behavioral techniques that enhance interview performance.
4. To provide strategies for addressing common interview challenges.
5. To emphasize the importance of post-interview follow-up.

Findings and Discussion:

A. Preparation Techniques:

- **Research the Company:** Understanding the company's mission, values, and culture is essential. Candidates should explore the company's website, recent news articles, and employee reviews to gain insights into what the organization values in its employees.
- **Understand the Role:** Thoroughly reviewing the job description helps candidates align their skills and experiences with the requirements of the role. Identifying key responsibilities and required qualifications allows candidates to prepare relevant examples to demonstrate their suitability.
- **Dress Appropriately:** First impressions matter and dressing appropriately for the interview setting is essential. Candidates should aim for a professional and polished appearance that aligns with the company's dress code.
- **Plan Your Journey:** Arriving on time for an interview is critical. Candidates should plan their journey in advance, considering potential delays and aiming to arrive at least 10-15 minutes early.

B. Communication Skills:

- **Verbal Communication:** Clear and concise communication is vital during an interview. Candidates should practice articulating their thoughts and avoid filler words. Speaking at a moderate pace and using a confident tone can enhance the delivery of responses.
- **Non-verbal Communication:** Body language plays a significant role in conveying confidence and professionalism. Maintaining eye contact, offering a firm handshake, and sitting upright are key components of positive non-verbal communication.

C. Behavioural Techniques:

- **The STAR Method:** The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method is an effective way to structure responses to behavioural questions. Candidates should describe a specific situation, the task they needed to accomplish, the actions they took, and the results of those actions.
- **Active Listening:** Active listening involves fully concentrating on the interviewer's questions and responding thoughtfully. Nodding and providing brief acknowledgments can demonstrate engagement and interest.

D. Addressing Common Challenges:

- **Nervousness:** Feeling nervous before and during an interview is common. Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, visualization, and positive self-talk can help manage anxiety.
- **Difficult Questions:** Handling difficult questions requires calm composure and honesty. Candidates should take a moment to think before responding and provide genuine answers, even if it means acknowledging a lack of experience in a particular area.

E. Practice Common Interview Questions: Practicing responses to common interview questions can significantly boost a candidate's confidence and performance. Here are some essential questions and strategies for answering them:

- **Tell Me About Yourself:** Provide a concise summary of your professional background, highlighting key achievements and skills relevant to the position.
- **Why Do You Want to Work Here:** Demonstrate your knowledge of the company's values, culture, and mission by explaining how they align with your personal and professional goals.
- **What Are Your Strengths and Weaknesses:** Focus on strengths that are directly relevant to the job. When discussing weaknesses, choose an area of improvement and mention the steps you have taken to address it.
- **Describe a Challenge You Faced and How You Overcame It:** Use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method to structure your response, providing a clear and concise narrative that showcases your problem-solving abilities and resilience.
- **Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years:** Align your career goals with the opportunities provided by the company, demonstrating ambition and a long-term vision that benefits both you and the employer.

F. Follow-Up:

- Sending a thank-you email after the interview is a courteous way to express gratitude and reinforce interest in the position. This follow-up communication should be prompt, professional, and personalized.

G. Handling Rejection:

- Rejection is a common part of the job search process. Candidates should view each interview as a learning experience and seek feedback to improve future performance. Maintaining a positive attitude and resilience is key to long-term success.

Conclusion:

Mastering interview skills requires a combination of thorough preparation, effective communication, and the ability to handle challenges gracefully. By implementing the techniques and guidelines discussed in this paper, job seekers can enhance their interview performance and increase their likelihood of securing employment.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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