

A to Z of Interview

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A TO Z OF INTERVIEW

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Himalaya Publishing House

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INTRODUCTION

A

Ability

Achievement

Ability

Analytical ability

Appearance

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CV

Campus Interview

Challenge

Change of job

Checklist

Clothes

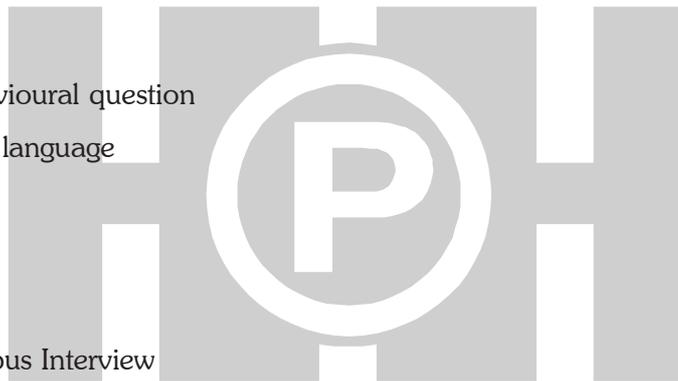
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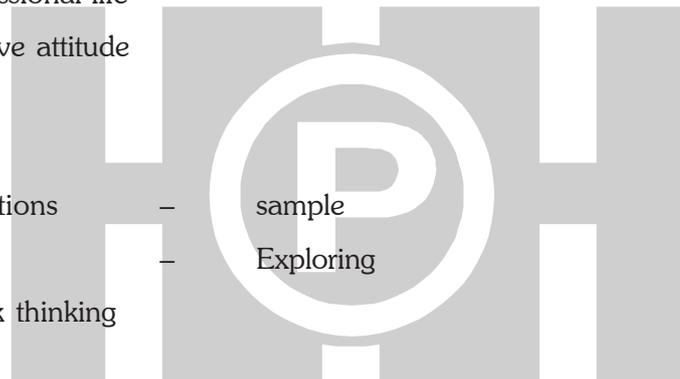
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Sitting posture

Smile

Special questions for

- Women
- Disadvantaged group



Strength

Stressful situation

T

Team player

Time management

U

Unfavorable comments

W

Walking

Weakness



APPEARANCE

Appearance is 'outward look'. It makes an impression in the interview. The first impression is the last impression.

Appearance is

- Face
- Hairstyle
- Way of walking
- Sitting posture in interview
- Return from the interview
- Clothes

Face: Face is the index of your mind. Go to the place of interview with a smile. Smile is inviting. Smile is pleasing. Dale Carnegie says, employers hire the services of a less qualified girl with a lovely smile than a highly qualified person with a long face.

Smile shows that you are:

- Happy
- Relaxed
- Enjoying life.

But don't smile throughout the interview. If it is natural for you. You are fortunate. There are a very few who are so fortunate. The rest of us can smile at the beginning. If you force a smile all the while you may be misunderstood.

Change your face depending on the questions during the interview. The question is about the lighter side. Answer with a smile. The question is about very serious issues. Don't make it trivial with your smile. In other words, rhyme with facial expressions of the interview board.

Hairstyle:

Hair should be neatly combed for boys and girls. Keep a small comb handy in your bag. But don't use it before other people, Gentlemen should be well-shaven. In literary meet, unkempt hair or shaven face may give an intellectual look. Not so in the interview. Those who wear a turban should ensure its cleanliness. It should also match with your dress.

Those who wear a beard for any reasons, should keep it clean and trimmed.

Way of walking:

Walk with confidence.

Walk with fearlessness.

Walk and say with a firm voice 'Good morning to you, sirs or Good afternoon' (depending on time).

Talk with a pleasant smile on the face.

Don't sit until you are told to.

Cultivate this habit of walking. It does not often come naturally. Hold your head straight and look ahead. This indicates your courage/ conviction.

Walking should combine sobriety with dignity. It should not be fast as if you are in a hurry to attend and do away with the interview. It should not be slow as if you are nervous.

Sitting Posture:

Sit comfortably as if you are at ease, occupy the complete chair. Don't touch interviewer's table/desk.

Sit a little away from interviewer's table. Sit without shuffling your leg- an indication of nervousness. Don't cross your feet frequently in the chair as if you are not at ease. Face the interview boldly. Don't look too submissive. Don't look defiant either. Face the interviewers as equal. You are going for the job. They are going for the right candidate. Both gain, it is a not a one-way street. Look at the Chairman and other members of the interview board. Don't look at the Chairman or a particular member all the time.

Returning from the Interview:

Often people don't thank the interview board and come out. As if they are in a hurry to leave.

Some look back. This is not to be done.

Walk confidently as if you have achieved the purpose.

Some don't keep chair in its original position. It does not indicate tidiness.

After verbal part of the interview, the non-verbal part is important. A slight mistake and the whole impression is lost.

Clothes:

- Wear well-tailored dress
- Wear clean and well ironed dress
- Wear a dress in keeping with the current trend. Suitable in the current style.
- Tie to match you shirt a and the suit. Don't wear shirt without a tie. Suit is still a preferred dress in a sales job, most private sector executive jobs.
- Wear shoes-clean and well-polished.

Don't wear a new dress. You may be uncomfortable

Don't wear new pair of shoes or tight pair of shoes.

Don't wear casual clothes, jeans and multi-coloured shirts or trousers.

Don't carry unnecessary papers, pocket diary,pen to make shirt/trouser pocket bulging.



SUMMARY

Appearance is:

- Face
- Hairstyle
- Way of walking
- Sitting posture in interview
- Return from the interview
- Clothes.

Do's	Don'ts
Face	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Go to the place of interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Smile throughout the interview with a smile
Hair-Style	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hair should be neatly combed. Well shaven face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No pseudo intellectual look with unkempt hair or irregularly grown beard.
Way of Walking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Walk with confidence.Walking should not be too fast or too slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Don't sit till you are told.
Sitting Posture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sit comfortablySit a little away from the interviewers table.Occupy complete chair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Don't lean.Don't sit on the edge of the seat.Don't change your positions during interview.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep leg firmly on the floor. • Face the interviewer boldly. 	<p>Don't be too submissive. Don't be defiant either. If there are more than one interviewer, look at each of them, but do not stare at any one.</p>
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Returning from Interview

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the interview board. • Walk back confidently. 	<p>Don't look back.</p>
--	-------------------------

Clothes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear clean and well ironed Clothes. • Wear shoes-clean and well polished. • Suit with matching tie is still the preferred dress. 	<p>Don't wear new dresses or new shoes for the interview.</p> <p>Don't wear casual clothes-jeans.</p>
--	---

INTERVIEW: WHO, WHAT, HOW

Who

In an interview, you have to tell about yourself. Compare the following statements of candidates and comment.

- (1) What would you like to know about me-my personal life or professional life?

COMMENTS:

You have left initiative behind for others. You should have led with your bio-data etc.

- (2) I am from Kolkata. My father is a government employee, my mother a homemaker. I am a graduate from Kolkata University and now, a PGDM.

COMMENTS:

The answer is right. It gives bio-data information. But it does not give out your personal strength and important characteristics.

- (3) I am from Kolkata. The city gave me breadth of experience which helps me in the present job. I am an Economics Hons graduate from Calcutta University. I have done PGDM from IMIS. I have learnt economics for decision making. I have good communication skills. I can work with a broad range of people at various levels.

COMMENTS:

Strong answer. It tells more about you. It gives out your personality traits and an outline of job knowledge.

SUMMARY

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell about your personality traits.• Tell about your knowledge/skill which is relevant to the current job.• Tell specifics and details, not generally about yourself.• Give a glimpse of intellectual ability.• Tell about subjects read. What they tell you by way of application.• Personality traits. Discipline, Leadership, Interpersonal skills which make you a different person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't lose the initiative.• Don't be evasive.• Don't walk through the resume (Where born, parents, brother, sister, qualification) qualities.• Don't elaborate on information which is already there in the resume. The papers are there before the Board.• Don't tell about a subject which you have read long long ago.• Don't make the mistake of stating that you have all these qualities

Social traits

(Ability for social cohesion, general awareness and current events)

What to prepare

- Your educational qualifications (How it is relevant for the job).
- Your professional qualification (Is it relevant for the job?)
- Your hobbies and extra-curricular activities. (Does it not give a clue about your personality?)
- Current events (Are you abreast with the latest news and views?)
- Political, social economic, cultural problems relating to India: their reasons and solutions. (Are you a concerned citizen? Do you have breadth of information?)
- Problems of different states, particularly your own state?

How to deal with embarrassing questions.

Q.1. You are a Doctor? Why do you want to be an administrator? (IAS)

A-I: IAS is the master of all he surveys. A doctor can become Director. An IAS is Secretary of the Health Dept. So, for the sake of career, I have opted for IAS.

COMMENT:

A stark reality. But it does not indicate how your valued degree and professional background. will be usefull and relevent in the IAS. Is it only means to earm-more money, more power?

A-II: This is the era of specialisation. IAS cannot afford to be a generalist. My professional qualification will help in shaping policy on a vital sector concerning common man.

COMMENT:

Presentation of viewpoint which is decidedly better than AI

Q.2. You are a Ph. D in Sociology/Economics. You should be in either University or Research Institute. Why have you to join IAS, IPS?

Ans. Ph. D in Social Science gives me broader knowledge of the society I propose to serve directly. IAS/IPS is directly concerned with maintenance of law and order. When I know the roots of the problem, the solution becomes easier.

COMMENT:

A thoughtful view. Board members will certainly like someone more knowledgeable saying that he likes to apply the knowledge, in the field of action.

Q.3. Why do you want to work in this unit/Company/organisation

Ans. I want to work for a reputed company/organissation like yours. I have skill and abilities which match yours job requirements.

COMMENT:

The 'reputed' company line is O.K. But organissations want from the interviewee his skills and ability which the candidate should have explained. He should say

- What he can do for the organisation
- What the organisation can do for him

Q.4. Why do you want to work here?

Ans. I like your organisation which has produced quality products. My friends and I regularly use your product. These are quality products. You are known for your quality.

COMMENT:

The quality line is O.K. for the consumer; you are the interviewee, not merely a consumer.

What you have and you can do for the organisation is not emphasised.

Moreover, if you praise quality, do you find any link of its quality with your ability/achievement? The link up will bolster your claim to the job.

Q.5. What is your strength?

Ans. I like people. I love working with people. I like them; they, in turn, like me. I am sure if I am on the job, customers will love it all.

COMMENTS:

Just imagine – this line can be applied with any company. This is a general answer. The company can see through your interaction.

Tell about your

- Expertise – How is it relevant for the company?
- Qualification – How relevant for the job?
- Special skills – How these help you on the job?
- Excellence – What do you have that others don't have?

Q.6. What are your strengths?

Ans. I have good communication skill which is useful in Service organisation as such, and this company in particular. I like people and can build a team of professionals with my interpersonal skill.

In fact, my project report on “Customer satisfaction in insurance” has been well-received in the organisation as well as academics.

COMMENTS:

Strong answer. You have emphasised on 2 skills very important to service Industry - Communication skill, Interpersonal skill.

Your project report is directly relevant to service industry.

The project report on the relevant subject shows that the interviewer will look forward to select you.

Q.7. What are your weaknesses?

- Ans.**
1. Not to my knowledge. You tell me.
 2. I am workaholic. I don't get time for leisure and personal work.
 3. I work hard, I hate idle minds and hands.
 4. I am overworked. So, I cannot meet deadlines.

COMMENTS:

1. If you are not aware of self, that is a great weakness
2. You are really telling about your strength. Interviewer will not like you to tell a lie.
3. This is not a weakness. Once again, you are putting your strength in the form of weakness.
4. Not a good answer. Heavy workload is work not managed well. An interviewer may note that you are in the habit of not meeting deadlines.

Q.8. Why has it taken so long to find a job?**Ans.**

1. I have applied here and there. You know, now-a-days, it is difficult to get a job without connections. Unfortunately, I don't have any.
2. The job market is tight. I got a job but the salary is so low that it is demeaning for an engineer to work with. After all, the salary should be somewhat commensurate with one's qualification.
3. I found that Civil Engineers are not in good demand now-a-days. I have done a course on SAP which is generally considered useful by the IT industry.

4. I felt that engineering degree with an additional management degree can work wonders for my career and industry, I got very few offers with engineering degree but now I have opportunity to choose from.

COMMENTS:

1. Telling about connection demeans your personality.
2. You did not like to start with initial low salary. You don't have any experience. It does not speak favourably about you.
3. You have utilised the interview period in acquiring additional points. You are certainly a candidate for the interviewer who sees in you an urge to improve.
4. Formidable combination, you are a required candidate. You have not wasted time; you have equipped yourself with a relevant degree.

Q.9. What experience do you have for the job?

Ans. I have worked in retail sectors for 3 years. I have managed the shop floor in retail business - X. I had 7 members of staff working under me. Leaving 8 hours of sleep and essential duties, I have worked, day and night.

COMMENTS:

You have given your experience. You have told about your commitment. Your leadership quality is seen.

Q.10. What experience do you have for the job?

Ans. I know the job, I like challenges, I like working with the team. Given opportunity in this company, I shall take it as a challenge.

COMMENTS:

This answer can be applied anywhere. So this is not acceptable. It does not give specific information about the position of companies and the problems solved.

Q.11. What do you know about the organisation?

Ans. I know the challenges faced by your organisation during the last 3 years. I know about your plans and priorities. I also know that you hold second position in the industry and propose to take the first position during the next year.

COMMENTS:

Good answer. The candidate has made research about the company, he knows its present and the future plans. He has made additional preparation for the interview.

Q.12. What do you know about the company

Ans. I know this company well. This is a leading company but there is strong competition. I like to join this company and make it no. 1 in business segment.

COMMENTS:

The answer has information about the company but it should be specific.

Q.13. What is your management style?

Ans. I ask the employees, working with me to work, but I don't remind them again and again. I favour 'hands off' approach and the work is done.

COMMENTS:

The candidate should not have prescribed 'hands off' approach to management.

Q.14. What is your management style?

Ans. If you ask my batch mates, they will tell, how I work. I work hard till the project is completed; I have no problem in working with all types of people. I can convert unwilling workers to work. I have done it in the last company, and I will do in future.

COMMENTS:

The candidate demonstrates his commitment. He will ask the interviewer to check up with the team mates. In every company the problem is how to convert an unwilling worker to be a willing one. Any company should be happy with such promises.

Q.15. If I ask your employee to say positive things about you, what would they say?

Ans. They will probably say that I am a responsible fellow. I don't do socialising, I don't like to gossip. May be people don't know much about me but why in work, we should be concerned with personal traits?

COMMENTS:

Work is not so impersonal. In any organisation, the problem is how to get along with the people. So the interviewee does not show the social ability and is not a team player.

Q.16. If I ask your employee to say positive things about you, what would they say?

Ans. They will say that I am knowledgeable. They will say I am one of them. They will also say that I respect them.

COMMENTS:

Good candidate should be confident. He has relationship skills; He is also a team player. What more do you expect?

Q.17. If I ask your employees to say positive things about you, what would they say?

Ans. I have excellent communication skills.

COMMENTS:

This is the type of answer which can be given by any number of people. So what is unique about the candidate?

Q.18. If I ask your employee to say positive things about you, what would they say?

Ans. I am a good musician and I have 5 albums to my credit.

COMMENTS:

This is an interesting answer but it has no relation to job. The interviewer was asking about the strong point on-the-job.

Q.19. Are you willing to be posted anywhere in India?

Ans. If there is a choice, exercise the option. If there is none, select the best location from your point of view. Please remember that the company does not necessarily have too many choices. If they have also, they are likely to offer the least favourable location to the new comers and better ones to their experienced employees.

For the experienced candidates the choice exists. They should exercise it, taking into account all options. Usually, this cannot be renegotiated after getting the letters of appointment. Hence, one has to be careful.

Q.20. Are you willing to travel?

Ans. This is an issue for the marketing professionals. This is particularly important for women candidates. The answer can only be in affirmative. If you have reservation, you should not have gone for the job.

If you say about your past experience which involved a lot of traveling, this gives a favourable answer.

Q.21. How does your past job help in the present one?

Please emphasise the positive aspects of the job which help you now.

Ans. My past job is a stepping stone for the present job. I had to deal with all sorts of people and situations. This gives me confidence in the proposed job.

COMMENTS:

This says about what was there in the last job. It gives introduction about your capabilities.

Q.22. Are you over qualified for this position?

The question is to elicit answer about your capabilities and to test your method of managing irrelevant issues/questions.

Ans. I do hard work, round the clock till the project is completed. I am a doer; I also get work done. Yes, I have been in the industry for a long time. If this is an over-qualification, please appreciate my position.

COMMENTS:

‘Years of experience’ may not matter much because paradigm of yesterday is changed today. So, experience may mean nothing. One who is best in manual way of working may be a liability because of years of experience. You should have emphasised the fact that though you are a senior personnel, you are not out of touch with the reality now.

A better answer may be:-

My experience of 10 years is not one year rolled over ten times. I have worked in manual environment with success. I have also adapted myself in computerised environment effortlessly and my organisation has honoured me for the efforts. You will find my experience useful and my adaptability a worthwhile trait.

COMMENTS:

You have understood the question in its proper perspective.

Q.23. Tell us about your achievements?

Ans. I am known for hard and honest work.

COMMENTS:

It is a general answer. This question should have been answered to tell about your uniqueness, you have not done this.

A better answer may be:-

I am known for my computer skills. I have qualified as a Computer Auditor in the online test conducted by the American institute of professionals.

COMMENTS:

You are specifying a special skill – This is your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

Q.24. What motivates you on-the-job?

Ans. I am always motivated. I don't require external stimulus.

COMMENTS:

No answer. This should be about specifics.

Ans. I am a creative person. In the last job held, my team and I have come out with a product variation which suits the tropical climate.

COMMENTS:

It is a specific answer. You have done something different. This is commendable.

Q.25. You say, you are hard working, can you give an example?

This is known as Behavioural interview question. You should give work-related example rather than talking vaguely.

Ans. It was a Disaster Management Project. Our company was to build twenty houses for Tsunami affected people. I accomplished it within a record time of six months much before the company's deadline.

Q.26. How did you handle your disagreement with the boss?

Ans. A co-worker was found to be irregularly punctual. He was advised by me and the boss on three/four occasions. He persisted in this behaviour, only the boss wanted me to fire him. I took an opportunity, called him for counselling. He had acute family problems. He was willing to work late hours provided he was allowed to report late. I gave him 'flexitime'. He became a good worker in the eyes of the organisation.

COMMENTS:

An apt example of your capability. The recalcitrant worker becomes a good worker. This is transformational leadership.

Q.27. How did you handle a stressful situation?

Ans. Please find out what is stress-on-the-job and outline specific situation which you handled reasonably well.

Ans. It was a busy day. The coastal Orissa suffered from cyclone. The state government wanted that all insurance claims be made simple and we helped people in filling the requisite forms. We were only five and there were fifty villages for coverage. We devised a strategy. We fixed datewise central village which was easily accessible to 7/8 villages in the neighbourhood. This was done by prior mike announcement. We helped the villagers in filling the claim form. We propose to adopt a similar strategy for processing and settlement of claims.

COMMENTS:

Camp approach, going to the victim's place and helping them are all positive steps taken by the candidate to settle a difficult human problem.

Q.28. Tell us how quickly you adapt to change.

Ans. Our target was not achieved. Two months were left. I changed the strategy, offered substantial discount on purchases. Everyone thought it to be a mad idea. I persisted; the volume increased substantially. The target was crossed.

COMMENTS:

You have gone for a change in a new direction. You have taken calculated risk and the outcome is positive.

Q.29. What is your view on quality vs quantity? Did you sacrifice quality to meet quantitative targets?

Ans. I am all for quality. There is no substitute for quality, now as also in future. Government wanted 'inclusive' growth. We had to open a million of bank accounts. The deadline was 31st March. Three months were left. We had to organise opening of accounts following 'know your customer' guidelines. This is a statutory requirement and cannot be set aside. A sacrifice was made regarding some less important provisions of opening of account. The task was accomplished. Other provisions were taken into account in April-May, the lean months.

COMMENTS:

The deadline was met. The essential requirements were met. You have followed a strategy. If you would have followed total steps in the procedure, it would not have been possible to open a million accounts. Your business-orientation will add prestige to the Bank and get business for the future.

Q.30. How did you contribute to development of a subordinate?

Ans. I found a worker lagging in performance. I understood his problem. He had to take the children to school at 10 a.m. He could not attend office in time. He also had to get them back at 5 p.m. He is willing to work for extra hours. I allowed him 'flexitime'. His productivity increased sharply.

COMMENTS:

This is a strategy adapted to fit into a situation. This cannot happen everywhere. This is not possible in a factory where everyone has been allotted work during the prescribed hours. But this is a successful strategy in office.

Suppose you would have counselled this employee without providing flexitime facility. The employee knew his problems. You were the coach but you have not empowered the employee.

Q.31 Are you a popular boss?

COMMENTS:

This is a double edged sword. If you are popular, probably you have not taken unpleasant decisions. If you claim yourself to be an unpopular boss, the inference may be that you are not in tune with the people.

Ans. I found that some class IV jobs (peons) are redundant. It is a question of their livelihood. They have been working satisfactorily. I found that they don't have work in the office. But if they learn the trade of plumbing, they can be gainfully employed in the company's Maintenance wing. I took them in confidence, arranged for their training and they were gainfully employed. An unpopular decision was taken for relocation but with an employee orientation.

Q.32. Give me an example of your customer service skill.

Ans. I like customers and customers like me. I have got several letters of customers complimenting me for my help.

COMMENTS:

This is a vague answer. The question is about specifics. You should have answered with a specific example. You could have said:

I found out service deficient to a customer remitting money to his account at Delhi. No service charges should have been collected. But it was wrongly done. I credited the customer's account and apologised over telephone and in writing. The customer remembers this incident after years. We have developed personal relationship.

COMMENTS:

This is about specifics. The example is apt. You have discovered the service deficiency and made good.

Q. 33. What type of books do you read?

COMMENTS:

Some books are generally considered good, read them. Mahatma Gandhi's My experiment with truth, Vinoba's Thoughts on Gita, Nirad C. Choudhury's Autobiography of an unknown Indian, Khuswant Singh's A Train to Pakistan along with classics like Ramayan, Mahabharat and stories like Panchatantra, Kathasarita Sagar etc. are good books to read, understand and analyse (The story books now-a-days provide managerial lessons) Ragnekar's In the wonderland of Indian Managers, Shiva Khera's You can win, along with international best sellers like In search of excellence, 7 habits of effective people, Chicken soup for the soul are considered good reading material for management students, in particular. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Q.34. Who is your hero?**COMMENTS:**

Each hero has his own importance

Bhisma (Mahabharat)	–	Determination, obedience
Shri Krishna (Bhagavat)	–	versatility–work with detachment
Arjun	–	Goal setting
Ashok	–	Benevolent king
Vikramaditya	–	Navaratnas
Gandhi	–	Non-violence and civil disobedience
Netaji Subhash	–	Patriotism
S. Radhakrishnan	–	Scholarship
Pandit Nehru	–	Visionary Statesmanship
Sardar Patel	–	Iron will, Unity of India
Rabindra Nath Tagore	–	Literature
Kiran Desai	–	Literature
C.V. Raman	–	Scientist
V.K.R.V. Rao	–	Economist
Verrier Elwin	–	Anthropologist
J.B.S Haldane	–	Scientist
Mother Teresa	–	Service
Ela Bhatt	–	SEWA

Read their work, understand their contribution before declaring them as your hero. Ignorance of their books/causes dear to them will backfire.

Q.35. Please sell me this/that product**COMMENTS:**

Don't make the mistake which most candidates do by telling positive features of the product. Product is to be marketed. So, customer's needs and preferences are to be ascertained before describing product features which satisfy these requirements.

Q.36. What is your view on 'pull' and 'push' money?**COMMENTS:**

Some advocate that this is necessary and candidates should say that it is to be paid. My answer is in negative. There cannot/should not be compromises on ethical issues. Short circuiting may be a strategy to win easily and in the short run. But pragmatism must prevail. On long run considerations, reject corruption firmly.

Q.37. What is your weakness?**COMMENTS:**

Most often answer – 'I don't' have any weakness. Wrong. Well, if you are very truthful, you may land yourself in trouble.

- (i) I don't care about honesty as long as the work is done
- (ii) I love heavy drinking
- (iii) I am a chain smoker

While going for 'weakness' you should be tactful not to mention yourselves as liar, dishonest or womaniser. You are not confessional in an interview.

Tell about the qualities which you lack, e.g. getting angry quickly, low listening skills, not having variety of interests/ hobbies, etc.

Q. 38. Which type of job you like?**COMMENTS:**

You are having marketing specialisation. If you are opting for a job with finance specialisation, you should have cogent reasons. Otherwise, your biodata and aspirations would run parallel.

Engineering graduates/Doctors have also justified their application for IAS, IPS, Allied services. Reasoning ability is important. In our job market, a change of job from that dictated by your academic career is justified. Only you should have cogent reasons.

Q. 39. What salary do you expect?**COMMENTS:**

One has to be acquainted with the company's salary structure. Their briefings provide an indication. You may suggest a little higher salary, not very high salary. You can cite your achievements/experience to justify.

