

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE INTERVIEW

Success in interview can be positively and readily ensured by clearly understanding its technique which includes its nature, scope, methodology, application and essentials. You can master the technique by purposeful, systematic and dedicated training. The aim of the employment interview is to assess the suitability of the candidate for the job for which he is being considered and interviewed. Therefore, when you are appearing for an interview you must make it a point to know as much as possible about the job for which you are being considered. As regards the personality test or interview, you must know what a professional is required to do, what qualifications and qualities are expected of him, to what extent you feel you could fill the bill and how best you could convey your conviction about your suitability to the Interview Board while answering or responding to their questions.

THE TECHNIQUE

During the interview, the Board evaluates your personality traits from the answers you give to the questions posed to you and also the manner in which you present your answers. Thus, to begin with, a lot depends on your ability to grasp and understand the question and your capacity to speak, express your ideas lucidly and convince the Board with the logic, rationality and credibility of your arguments. The important thing to bear in mind is that this personality test interview is not a mere question and answer session. The Board is not interested only in the answers but all the time it is on the watch out to take note of the personality traits you often unconsciously exhibit while giving those answers. In fact, for most of the questions there may be no such thing as the correct answer. The Board may simply ask for your views,

comments, opinion, conclusions and so on, and observe how you present the same. By asking you a question they create a situation and then watch your response and reaction. You will succeed if you react with confidence and sincerity in a positive and purposeful manner.

LEADERSHIP FACTORS

In a nutshell, during the interview, the level of your leadership ability is being evaluated. You must, therefore, be clear in your mind as to what precisely constitute the ingredients or attributes of the leadership factor. For the purpose of the personality test/interview, the leadership factor covers the following important aspects :

- (a) Intelligence, ideas, grasp, understanding, knowledge, power of expression, clarity of thought, imagination.
- (b) Organising ability, resourcefulness, planning, determination of priorities, selection of goals.
- (c) Dynamic qualities – enthusiasm, interest, keenness, urge, involvement, dash, determination, courage, enterprise, initiative, stability, perseverance, flair for action, stamina, speed of action, availing of the opportunities and so on.
- (d) Character – loyalty, integrity, sincerity, dependability, patriotism, commitment to human and social values, respect for law, etc.
- (e) Social attributes – friendship, cheerfulness, courtesy, cooperation, adaptability, team spirit, *esprit de corps*, ability to mix freely with others, sense of belonging, readiness to sacrifice for the cause and for others, etc.
- (f) Influencing or motivating factor – capacity to convince, impress, energise, coordinate and carry others to accomplish the common task, creating a firm and favourable impact on others by example, tact, adjustment, persuasion, logical reasoning and bind the team into a

harmonious one, selling one's ideas successfully and winning others to his way.

PRESENTATION

To illustrate how these personality traits are observed and evaluated during the interview, we are happy to present to our readers the tape-recorded version of a 'live' interview. In order to spotlight the moot points and salient features, comments of the expert examiners have been provided at appropriate stages. We request the aspirants to note carefully the important facts, learn the secrets and then undergo several practice interview sessions with friends, seniors or college professors. Knowledge plus application will crown you with positive and brilliant success.

When the going is tough, the tough gets going. How true in the case of those whose aim in life is to achieve the best and this is possible only if you care to slough off your sloth and make it a point to persevere.

THE CANDIDATE

Raj Kumar Bhatia is a young man of medium height and lean build, appearing for the personality test. He is of fair complexion with abundant growth of hair on his head which is closely cropped in the conventional or military style. He sports a thin moustache which goes well with his general smart appearance. He has taken care to dress himself appropriately to meet the requirements of the formal occasion. He wears dark-blue trousers, light-blue shirt and striped beautifully knotted tie, all of which show him to advantage as a well-dressed individual of taste and distinction. His high-heeled shoes are well polished and shine without any speck. The socks are pulled up and stay in position. Finger nails are trimmed and clean. In brief, with well-tailored, fitting dress, proper

hygiene and proper care to details like haircut, combing of hair, tie-knot, polishing of shoes and so on, he looks elegant and impressive. His upright bearing matches with his dress and turnout. He holds himself erect, head and shoulders high and walks with firm, confident steps. Before approaching for the interview, he remains calm, collected, cool and composed. His measured steps and purposeful movements indicate self-confidence and resoluteness. His eyes reflect enthusiasm, interest and warmth. He enjoys a cheerful disposition with a friendly smile playing on his lips. He is fully at ease in meeting, mixing and making friends with the other candidates who are all strangers to him. There are a couple of lady candidates present and he has no inhibition or hesitation in greeting them, introducing himself and carrying on a pleasant conversation with them. His deep voice conveys friendship and sincerity. He makes others feel important and wanted by his special, individual attention. When his turn for the interview comes, he bids good-bye to all with whom he was engaged in lively discussions and briskly walks towards the interview room. Before walking in, he gently knocks at the door, waits for a few seconds to observe the formality of obtaining permission to proceed inside. After getting in he closes the door gently, turns on his heels noiselessly and walks up towards the desk behind which the Chairman and Members are seated. On approaching the chair meant for the candidate he comes to a smart halt, clicks his heels to attention and greets the Board in a clear, audible and cheerful manner.

THE INTERVIEW

Bhatia : *(With a pleasant smile on*

his lips and radiating warmth and interest in his eyes, he looks up to the Chairman and Members and proceeds to greet them.) Good morning to you all, Sirs. (He continues to remain in attention position awaiting the response from the Board.)

3rd Member : *(A retired General from the Army) (Observing and appreciating the correct and smart way in which the candidate has been standing at attention position) Please stand at ease, Mr. Bhatia. Your records do not show that you underwent any NCC or other military training. Nevertheless, you seem to have had fairly good exposure to it. How did you manage it?*

Bhatia : *(Obeying the orders and changing to 'at ease' position) Thank you, Sir. My training is rather informal and a by-product of my sports activities. I was an active and keen sportsman both at school and college and the sportsmen are also required to do the march past. Thus one of the instructors from NCC taught us the foot drill.*

3rd Member : That is very good. By the way, please be seated.

Bhatia : Thank you, Sir. *(He sits down smartly without any unnecessary movements. The 3rd Member continues with his questions).*

3rd Member : You have indicated that your hobby is amateur dramas. How could you find time for dramatic activities when you are tied up with sports all the time?

Bhatia : We have the rehearsals mostly at night. This suits the other members of our local dramatic club also as most of them are office-goers. In any case, I act only in two or three dramas in a year.

3rd Member : Can you give some more details about your hobby, I mean what roles you play in the dramas? Where and by whom they are organised and

put on board? Who finances them? Do you follow my question?

Bhatia : *(With a pleasant smile) We have a recreation club in our locality, Sir, and it has a dramatic wing along with other club activities like tennis, swimming, library, etc. At the moment I happen to be the Secretary of the dramatic set-up. The club provides some funds and bulk of the expenses are met through sale of tickets when we stage the dramas. We also bring out a brochure on the occasion of staging a play and the advertisements in the brochure are another source of revenue. The members of the dramatic wing also pay a nominal monthly subscription.*

3rd Member : What is the most expensive item in staging an amateur drama?

Bhatia : I would say the rent we have to pay for the hall which incidentally includes electricity, furniture, etc. If it is a historical play, the costumes, settings, etc., may also turn out to be expensive.

3rd Member : In your experience, what is the most difficult thing in organising an amateur drama?

Bhatia : *(Smiles) Looking back nothing seems to be easy. But two things are really difficult. The first is the sale of tickets for the drama. The cooperation of the lady members is most essential for this purpose. The second, I would say, is organising the rehearsals. It involves so much work, coordination and cooperation of everybody.*

2nd Member : *(Who intervenes at this stage) Well, don't you think that the dramas are rather outdated in these days of colour TV and films?*

Bhatia : *(Smiling) I do agree with you, Sir, that TV and films have certain advantages. But dramas have their own appeal. You find dramas subtly*

WINNING STRATEGY

One cannot succeed in life unless one is totally involved in the project one undertakes. Success cannot elude one who mentally and physically associates oneself with the project in hand. For him who has chosen the goal, one idea after another will troop into his mind day and night as he becomes totally committed to attaining the goal. Total involvement or commitment encompasses such qualities as sincerity, confidence, perseverance, planning and fiery zeal. As one progresses towards attaining one's goal one would feel that circumstances too converge in such a way that boosts his optimism. One might get the right advice from experienced persons in the field or secure access to the right type of guidance material. It is the Providential way of helping those who help themselves and who mean business in their ventures.

incorporated in TV as well as in the cinema. Secondly, for those who are interested in a hobby, the amateur drama provides an excellent outlet. Those engaged in professional theatre know how to fight the cinema and TV and ensure their survival. Even in advanced countries, where TV, film and video are far more in evidence, the theatre is holding its own. Hence, I won't say that dramas are out-dated, either as a business or as a pastime.

Comments : *This candidate has created a very favourable initial impact. The first plus point has been his smart turnout and bearing. His dress, grooming and posture have been very good. Secondly, his cheerful disposition and keenness have been major assets. Next, he speaks clearly, crisply, fluently and audibly with poise and self-assurance. He understands the questions correctly and his replies are relevant and to the point besides being informative, complete and interesting. He makes good use of the opportunities to talk about his special assets. Thus he explains his distinction in sports and involvement in amateur drama in a natural and logical way though no direct questions were asked about his interest or achievement in sports. The 3rd Member probes him fairly deeply in regard to his hobby. The 2nd Member provokes and challenges him. The candidate confirms that his interests in dramatics are real and genuine by speaking about it with knowledge, enthusiasm and interest. He meets the challenge posed with courage and drives his point home with facts and conviction.*

Chairman : I am ready to concede your point that the theatre could still be relevant despite the growing dominance of TV and cinema. However, I am sure you should have done better in your studies or, for that matter, even in sports if you had directed your time and energy towards them instead of dramas. Do you agree?

Bhatia : *(Smiling pleasantly)* Well, Sir, with your kind permission I agree to disagree. We all know that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. We do need diversions and hobbies so that we can have rest and relaxation after which we can tackle the work more vigorously. I haven't done badly either in studies or

in sports. Certainly, there is room for improvement and it will be my endeavour to do better and excel. But I would like to submit that involvement in my hobby helps me to do better. It is a help and not hindrance, Sir. In any case that is my personal experience.

Chairman : What do you think of Indian film censorship? How could you reconcile it with the freedom of expression as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution?

Bhatia : Cinema is a powerful medium which has a great appeal and ready accessibility to the masses. Two prominent film stars were Chief Ministers in two important States in our country and the previous President of the USA Mr. Ronald Reagan is an ex-film hero. Cinema influences the conduct and behaviour of our youth in a very big way. Hence, we should not permit the abuse of cinema in India. Thirty-five percent people in India are still illiterate. The film industry is mainly interested in making profits by any means. It has yet to evolve a code of conduct and apply self-restraint. Hence we have to live with film censorship for some more time. As regards freedom of expression, our Constitution permits reasonable restrictions. Freedom does not mean licence. Every right has a duty to respect such a right on the part of others. Till we learn to observe our responsibilities on our own, such legal restrictions are essential.

Comments : *The candidate has come out with flying colours in his encounter with the Chairman. He shows originality, moral courage and high sense of responsibility. He displays a selective and positive approach. He does not hesitate to cross swords with the Chairman but he does so with tact, restraint and wisdom. His arguments are logical, rational and convincing. He goes by facts than by opinions and dogma. He has the courage and confidence to stand on his own and face the challenge with determination and overcome the obstacles with resourcefulness.*

4th Member : The recent bomb blasts in Hyderabad once again highlight the grave threats to human security in India. What would be your response to terrorism ?

WINNING CHECKLIST

- Try to update your knowledge on India and the world, the Indian economy, globalisation, organisations like UN and agencies like the World Bank, IMF, WTO which are all topical.
- Questions will invariably be asked on your Optionals, your hobbies, your State and other minute things in your bio data.
- Keep cool and smiling.

Bhatia : Sir, given the frequency of terrorist attacks in India and elsewhere, there is an urgent need to understand the problem in order to formulate effective responses. First I would suggest that there is a need to strengthen the law-enforcement machinery and civil society. An effective law-enforcement machinery will be able to respond to terrorism in an appropriate manner. It can also provide proper training to officials in formulating counter-terrorism policies. The development of a sound legal framework relating to anti-terror law is also necessary. Second, I think it is essential to reduce social and economic inequalities. This will help in dealing with discontent and marginalisation in society. The states' capacity to deal with poverty and impoverishment has to be strengthened along with efforts to promote peace and harmony among different communities. My third response to combat terrorism would be one that does not deviate from the universal values of human rights and fundamental freedom for all. The anti-terrorism laws should be compatible with national and international human rights framework and in consonance with the rule of law. Terrorism poses serious threat to national and human security. It is important to recognise that the response to curb it must be effective and legitimate.

Comments : *The grasp of this candidate is excellent and he is able to visualise the moot points of a complex and controversial question with intelligence and imagination. He is able to take a firm and original stand, argue his case logically and rationally and drive home his point with conviction. He bases his argument on*

merits and approaches each issue objectively and dispassionately. His knowledge is extensive and he is able to analyse the implications in great depth and at full length.

5th Member : Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has announced Rs. 25,000 crore Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for the farm sector, on the 60th Independence Day. In this context, can you describe the role assigned to the States for the revival of the agricultural sector ?

Bhatia : Sir, the National Development Council had approved the proposal of assigning Rs. 25,000 crore Additional Central Assistance for the farm sector in May 2007. It will be implemented over the five-year period of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan as and when States come up with visible district-level plans. With the idea to encourage States to spend more on agriculture, the Union Government will share by 50 percent the States spending on agriculture and allied sectors over the above baseline expenditure which would be the average of the last three years. The States will prepare state development programmes. Private sector participation will be encouraged in these schemes. In fact, the Additional Central Assistance (ACA) is an incentive for the States to come up with comprehensive plans for agriculture sector taking into account the agro-climatic conditions, natural resources availability and technology while integrating livestock, poultry and fisheries. The aim of such scheme is to bridge the gap between actual and potential yields. Again, the States are expected to prepare an action plan to include watershed management, extension support, seed availability and horticulture development. The target is to achieve 4% growth rate in farm sector.

5th Member : Can you identify the major challenges that the agriculture sector faces even after 60 years of independence ? What steps would you recommend to improve the situation ?

Bhatia : Sir, I agree that despite public policies and investments over the last 60 years, the agriculture sector still faces many challenges. First and foremost I think defending the gains is a major challenge. Economically, the cost-risk-return structure of farming is becoming unfavourable and consequently, majority

of farmers are indebted. Many even commit suicide. In such areas, it is important to promote conservation farming, minimum tillage and green agriculture. Green agriculture promotes the application of ecologically sound techniques such as pest management, integrated nutrient supply, and the use of the most appropriate crop and variety. The other important requirement is the conservation of prime farm land for agriculture. The second major challenge which agriculture sector faces is that of climate change. The aim should be to minimise the adverse impact of aberrant weather and maximise the benefits of normal monsoons. There is also need for research to meet the challenges of drought, flood, etc. Again, the third challenge deals with the need for small farm management revolution. A small farm management revolution can lead to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development goal of elimination of hunger and poverty since agriculture is the largest private sector enterprise in India. I would recommend the practice of different symbiotic and sustainable systems of contract farming. Finally, another major challenge is that of eliminating the knowledge crisis in rural areas. It is essential to involve the farmers in the decision making process. This would mean promotion of farmer to farmer learning, restructuring of Krishi Vigyan Kendras, establishing Gyan Chaupals or village knowledge centres to promote quality trade and legal literacy and to provide information on meteorological and marketing factors. Inclusive economic growth can be achieved when the benefits of the policy on farm sector reach the farmers in our country.

6th Member : The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the potential of being leveraged for transforming rural areas in India. What do you think are the key areas that ICT can promote for rural development ?

Bhatia : Sir, rural India consists of 700 million people, living in 6,38,000 villages. I agree that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the potential to initiate rural empowerment. ICT can and needs to be leveraged to promote education & training, health services, agriculture, agro industry, small industry, rural BPOs,

IT enabled outsourcing of production work and community oriented efforts such as water-harvesting and local governance. There are some significant experiments and initiatives on the education front. n-Logue communications, Tarahaat, Drishtee have developed programs to train rural children to obtain computer skills. Again, experiments of Te Ne T group of IIT Madras to provide Internet-based coaching program is impressive. In the area of healthcare, tele-medicine has emerged to be an important field. For example, a company called Neurosynaptics has developed a remote monitoring heart beat, remote blood pressure and ECG measurement. The idea of rural BPO, like Desi Crew is also promising. Rural BPO will definitely generate employment for the rural youth. In agriculture, use of ICT can be productive. ICT e-chaupal and EID Parry have utilised ICT to provide support to farmers and carry out procurement. n-Logue communications and e-sagoo project of IIT Hyderabad has used video-conferencing and photographs to provide advisory to farmers. Thus, it becomes evident that there are many companies that are setting up the base infrastructure in the villages over the last several years. If ICT-based services are successfully built, indeed it will benefit rural India.

Comments : *The candidate has given an appropriate answer to a question which seeks to analyse his administrative abilities. It indicates that he is focussed and his approach is positive and definite.*

7th Member : The successful launch of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) has been hailed to be another landmark in India's space history. Do you consider it to be "sweet success"? What are its prospects of developing better communication systems ?

Bhatia : Sir, after the failure in July, 2006 when the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle broke up just a minute after lift-off from Sriharikota, the launch of the 414 tonne GSLV-F04 carrying communication satellite, INSAT-4CR on September 2, 2007 is considered by ISRO scientists as "sweet success". A geosynchronous satellite is a satellite that travels above the equator and at the same velocity as the earth rotates so that the satellite seems to remain in the same

place. In fact, the launch of the GSLV is an indication of how important communication satellites have now become for the country. The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F04 is carrying communications satellite INSAT-4CR. The GSLV-Fo4 is a three stage vehicle. The satellite will be manoeuvred to its 36,000 km high geosynchronous orbit by firing Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM). The high power Ku-band transponders of the INSAT-4CR would be used for direct-to-direct home telecast, video-picture transmission, telecasting new live using satellite and business communications. In fact, this successful launch will provide

filip to the DTH service providers and also revolutionise the television industry.

Comments : *The candidate has kept himself fully abreast of domestic developments. His views are well considered and mature. His arguments are based on published facts and imaginative interpretation.*

Concluding Comments : *In brief, this smart and well-dressed candidate has shown himself as intelligent and imaginative who could perceive things in their true perspective. He displays a good initiative and appreciable originality in making best use of the opportunities offered*

to him. He meets the challenges with courage and resolves complex problems with resourcefulness. He can overcome obstacles with industry and vision and achieve his objectives with significant success. His grasp is excellent and he enjoys a wealth of ideas. He presents his views with conviction, authority and eloquence to sway his listeners and create a strong, favourable and lasting impact on them. His boldness, pragmatic approach and dynamism coupled with sterling qualities of character like loyalty, sincerity and integrity enable him to establish himself as the favourite member and natural leader of his team.

