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# UNIT 12 INTERVIEW AND JOB SEARCH ETIQUETTE

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## Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 During an Interview, and After It
  - 12.2.1 A Form of Communication
  - 12.2.2 Answering Questions
  - 12.2.3 Asking Questions
  - 12.2.4 Expressing Gratitude
  - 12.2.5 After an Interview
- 12.3 The Interview as Oral Communication
  - 12.3.1 Language Specific Speech Skills
    - 12.3.1.1 Pronunciation
    - 12.3.1.2 Vocabulary
  - 12.3.2 General Speech Skills
- 12.4 Telephonic Interviews
  - 12.4.1 Preparing for Telephonic Interviews
  - 12.4.2 During the Call
- 12.5 Job Search Etiquette
  - 12.5.1 The First Step
  - 12.5.2 A Job Fair
  - 12.5.3 Before You Come to The Job Fair
    - 12.5.3.1 What to Bring
    - 12.5.3.2 What to Wear
    - 12.5.3.3 Do Some Research
    - 12.5.3.4 Arrive Early
  - 12.5.4 While You're There
    - 12.5.4.1 Salary
    - 12.5.4.2 Follow Up
- 12.6 Frequently Asked Questions in an Interview
- 12.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit will take you through an interview situation, to help you reflect upon what to say, how to say it and when to say it during an interview.

Section 12.4 specifically deals with telephonic interviews. (After going through it you can relate it to face-to-face interviews as discussed in Unit 11.)

The topics discussed here will help you:

- To understand oral communication and acquire good spoken skills in English,
- To prepare for telephonic interviews, and
- To accustom yourself with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in a job interview.

This unit also familiarizes you with job fairs and gives you some ideas about how to get the most out of job fairs.

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## 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit we have learnt about the purpose of an interview and the preparation needed to tackle an interview well. Here we are going to look at what happens during an interview, and what we need to do after the interview is over. We will also look at the difference between face-to-face and telephonic interviews and discuss the frequently asked questions in an interview.

We speak as well about preparation for attending a job fair and how to find out and give relevant information to potential employers at such fairs. A job fair is usually organized by a third party recruitment consultant at a neutral venue like a school/college auditorium where multiple employers come under one roof to select people according to their requirements. Companies save time and effort by participating in job fairs as they can put up a stall and meet multiple candidates on a single day.

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## 12.2 DURING AN INTERVIEW, AND AFTER IT

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### 12.2.1 A Form of Communication

The interview is an opportunity for you to communicate your abilities. It is also a way of evaluating the job that you are seeking. For the employer, it is an opportunity to delineate the line of work you have applied for and to evaluate your abilities in light of it.

“Half the interview is over when you enter the room”, says a placement consultant.

So you have to enter the room with confidence. You cannot hide behind the door or the curtain! As soon as you are in the room, instead of looking down, up or sideways, look at the interviewers and greet them politely and appropriately as you would greet them outside the interview situation (“Good morning/good afternoon”). You may wait to be asked to sit, or if there is clearly a chair meant for the candidate, you may go towards it and sit down. Smile at them as you take your seat.

#### *Activity 1*

Read the following and answer the questions that follow:

Sharmila appeared for an interview. She was tensed. As a result, she talked little and looked less at the interviewer. She avoided verbal contact (replies to questions) and nonverbal contact (eye contact or gestures).

For Akansha, it was her second interview. She tried her best to correct the mistakes she had made during her first interview. This time she tried to listen to her interviewers and to answer them as required, in spite of being anxious. She used both her verbal and non-verbal skills at the interview.

*Sharmila enters:*

Interviewer: Please come in...

Sharmila: (comes and stands near the interviewer's table, expecting the interviewer to say something)

Interviewer: Good morning, have a seat.

Sharmila: (Sits down, a little relieved, holds her file tightly between her folded arms, looks down)

Interviewer: (observing her nonverbal behaviour) Are you feeling nervous?

Sharmila: No, ma'am.

Interviewer: Can I have a copy of your résumé?

Sharmila: (Opens her file and searches for her résumé, hands it over, and bursts into speech) Ma'am I am Sharmila ... completed my final year BSc. ...my favourite subject is Computers and my pastime is reading books...I live with my parents and...

### Check Your Progress 1

a) Is Sharmila confident? Is she nervous? How can you tell?

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b) How do you evaluate Sharmila's verbal communication? Is she in too much of a hurry to give information about herself?

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### Activity 1 (continued)

Akansha enters:

Interviewer: Please come in...

Akansha: (with a smile) Good morning Ma'am.

Interviewer: Good morning, have a seat.

Akansha: (looks at the interviewer, keeping the smile) Thank you ma'am.

Interviewer: Can I have a copy of your résumé?

Akansha: Sure. (Opens her file, takes out the topmost page and gives it to her). Here it is.

Interviewer: (while going through the résumé) Do you have any experience as a receptionist?

Akansha: No ma'am, but I'm aware of the responsibilities of a receptionist. I've completed my final year BSc this month, and am eager to take up a job.

**Check Your Progress 2**

a) Is Akansha confident? How can you tell?

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b) Who do you think performs better during the interview? Give reasons for your answer.

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**Discussion:** While attending an interview, enter the room with a smile, greet your interviewers and treat them as real individuals rather than just as interviewers. Unlike Sharmila, Akansha does all these and hence performs well from the beginning of the interview. Sharmila forgets to reply to the interviewer's greetings too! May be she is altogether nervous, but she hesitates to accept it when asked, which is worse. If you really feel nervous the best thing to do is accept it. That will help you gain confidence.

The next thing Akansha does is to listen carefully to the interviewer's responses so that she can understand what is more important for them to know. Sharmila on the other hand speaks before she is asked a specific question, and gives information without reflecting on whether her interviewer requires it.

This brings us to an interesting question. At an interview, should you speak only to answer questions, or can you speak without being asked to? This is discussed in detail below.

Here are some "do's and don'ts" while you are in an interview:

The second set of **DOs**:

**Greet** your interviewers with a smile. Treat them as 'real' individuals rather than just as interviewers.

**Listen** and try to understand what is more important for them from their responses.

**Answer** clearly and to the point.

Your **body language** (the expression on your face, the way you sit, what you do with the hands) is important.

The second set of **DON'Ts**:

Don't try to answer each and every question immediately. Take some time to think about what you want to say.

Don't ask questions about salary and benefits right away. Wait for the right moment.

Don't argue. If you do not agree with the interviewers' point of view, say so politely, but do not insist on your point.

Don't speak with your head down, or tap a foot on the floor or a finger on the chair.

Look up at your prospective employer(s) Don't nervously shake your legs, or wring while you speak, but do not stare. Sit your hands!  
up comfortably, not bolt upright, not slouching.

### 12.2.2 Answering Questions

The first thing you need to follow while facing the interviewers is to be yourself. You should not try to pretend to be anything or anyone but yourself! It is important that your interviewers know who they're getting in their company and that you know that you'll work well together. While answering the questions, be honest. Don't be too cautious about expressing your own views. Getting influenced by others' opinions and saying what you think the other person wants to hear, doesn't help in the long run, and may make you appear lacking in integrity.

The next thing you need to do is to phrase your answers positively. If you are asked about an unpleasant previous job, or your weakest characteristic, again be honest and leave your interviewers with a positive impression of your attitude. For example, you might say that group communication is the area in which you need to improve the most, but add that you have improved greatly since high school and you are still trying. Or you might say that you want a job that pays more, because you have improved your qualifications; or that money is only one of the considerations, but you find your current job not enough of a challenge.

And finally, if you are nervous, accept the fact that you're nervous. It's a part of stepping forward in life. Besides, acceptance will boost your confidence.

### 12.2.3 Asking Questions

The general etiquette at the start of the interview is to speak when you are spoken to. As the interview progresses you can judge if and where you can say something of your own.

Some interviewers might even encourage you to ask questions. This means that you should have thought **in advance** about what questions to ask. Asking questions suggests that you have an active interest in finding out how **you'll** fit into the organization. You may ask questions that deal with

- job responsibilities,
- job expectations, or
- the company's management and set-up

It is not advisable to ask questions about salary and benefits until later in the interview, or until you are actually offered the job. Most interviewers will give you such information before you leave.

### 12.2.4 Expressing Gratitude

A very important thing you must remember at the end of the interview is to thank your interviewer(s). If the interview panel is too large for this, include everyone with a look or a smile. (Your words and expression could be similar to when taking leave of a host after a formal dinner.) You might say a couple of words about why you are still interested in the job. You may ask when and how you will be informed about the results of the selection.

## 12.2.5 After an Interview

What do you do after the interview is over? Do you feel relieved, ready to go home and go off to bed? Or do you want to discuss it with someone? Usually, your own reaction can tell you how well you have done in the interview.

A very important thing you should remember to do after you leave the room is to recollect whether you have given your prospective employer(s) all the necessary information needed to get back to you. In case you have forgotten, leave your contact numbers with the receptionist or any other person who had guided you through to the interview in the beginning. Collect any extra information available in the form of brochures etc. at the office about the company. You may spend a few more minutes there before you leave the place.

After you are relaxed and have overcome the tension of the interview, it is time to reflect upon it. **Think about the questions you were asked.** Give yourself points for your answers, for example, on a scale of 1-5. Reflect on your promptness and correctness in answering a question. Think of the areas where you need to gather more knowledge and improve yourself. You can always discuss your interview with a friend or family.

You may get impatient waiting for a communication from your interviewer(s) about acceptance or rejection. You can kill time by preparing for other interviews! If you keep yourself busy, you'll be better equipped to control your anxiety. After about a week, you may call to find out about the results, but by then your disquiet will have become less!

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## 12.3 THE INTERVIEW AS ORAL COMMUNICATION

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We all know that interviews are seldom taken through the written mode of communication. In this regard, we will now focus on the aspects of oral or spoken communication. We will specifically look at improving our language and pronunciation.

While written communication may ask for grammatical competence and a good vocabulary, oral communication has a third component to it – articulation and pronunciation. Regular exposure to models of good speech, and the ability to listen critically and appreciatively, is the key to successful oral communication. This helps you to improve your language specific speech skills and also speech skills in general.

### 12.3.1 Language Specific Speech Skills

#### 12.3.1.1 Pronunciation

A candidate who speaks English with a “neutral” accent – or with little or no regional accent – is likely to be understood better at an interview, where the interviewers may be from different parts of India, or from different parts of the world.

A candidate who speaks English fluently may also appear more confident. Fluency in a language, especially when it is not one's mother tongue, comes after much practice. We will now discuss how to acquire an ‘acceptable’ way of speaking English.

The first thing you should know is that a letter in English may not correspond to a single sound. For instance, the letter ‘a’ is pronounced in four different ways in

the words *arm*, *age*, *ant* and *about*! Thus there are 44 sounds in English, written in only 26 letters of the English alphabet.

You should also remember that the **sounds** of English may not be the same as in any of the languages you already know. For example, your mother tongue may have 'j' as in *judge*, but may not have 'z' as in *zoo*. A common tendency occurs therefore, to replace the English 'z' with the 'j', which results in *Jew* and not *zoo*! You may need to specifically learn the 44 sounds of English and practice them carefully. You can make up your own exercises for this. For example, try to pronounce the 'j' sound and the 'z' sound correctly in the phrase 'digital zoom!'

English words are spoken with an emphasis on a particular part of the word. For example, the word *difference* is pronounced as 'DI-*ffr*-ence,' where 'DI' is **stressed**. This stress or emphasis is fixed for any word. If you pronounce the word with the stress on the wrong syllable (di-FFER-ence or di-ffer-ENCE), it will either sound like some other word (such as *defence* 'deFENnce'), or not be understood!

The next important fact in spoken English is elision. The unstressed part of the word is sometimes **shortened** or curtailed in English. This is done by deleting the vowel sound of the unstressed part of the word. For example, the sound of the first 'e' is curtailed in *difference* so that it is pronounced 'DIFF-rence'. Another example is *interest*, pronounced 'INT-rest'.

Due to the stress pattern of English, the rhythm and **intonation** of English (or what it 'sounds' like) is different from our other languages.

Since the language used in interviews is predominantly English, it is important to pronounce it well. We give you some tips to improve your pronunciation:

- **Learn to read the Phonetic Alphabet for English.** There are 26 letters in the English alphabet, but there are 44 sounds in English. The phonetic alphabet contains 44 symbols, one each for the 44 sounds in English. Among these there are 24 consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds. Most learners' dictionaries for English use a 'key of symbols' to indicate the pronunciation of words. The standard symbols and their corresponding sounds are listed with examples at the beginning, in such dictionaries.
- Whenever you learn a **new word**, try to learn its pronunciation along with its meaning, with the help of a dictionary where you can follow the symbols for pronunciation.
- Listen to **radio and TV programmes** in English such as the news, interviews, sports commentaries, and so on. Regular listening will help you to speak and understand English well.

### 12.3.1.2 Vocabulary

The ability to find the right word and use it the right way determines one's fluency in a language. Reading books, magazines and newspapers in English, can build up a good repertoire of English words. Learn to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

To learn a new word is to know its meaning and to use it appropriately too. For this you may consider the following guidelines:

- A word may have more than one meaning or pronunciation. Learn the **various meanings** of a word and their pronunciations. Use them in different sentences and compare them.

- Check for levels of **formality**: whether a word is used in formal or informal situations. Also check whether a word is used more in the **written** form or the **spoken** form. Beware of **slang** and derogatory words.
- While learning a word, find out its **grammatical** characteristics from a dictionary.
- Learn at least one **synonym** and one **antonym** for the new word. This way you can build up a web of words by associating one word with another. This will also help you remember a new word better.

Suppose you are talking about your role model or idol. You might say that you want to 'get/acquire' the qualities of that person in you. A better word will be to 'imbibe' the qualities. Some people may use 'immitate' the qualities, which is not a preferred word in this context. 'Emulate' can be a better word to say it.

### 12.3.2 General Speech Skills

A good speaker has control over his or her **breath** and **voice**. To acquire good speech skills you need to pause according to the content or the length of a sentence, thought or idea. Make sure whether your thoughts are getting conveyed to the listeners by breaking the sentences into meaningful chunks with suitable pauses and tones. You can control your voice by raising or lowering the pitch-tone and volume. It depends on the distance between you and the listener(s) and the amount of attention you need from the listener(s).

Your **posture**, i.e. the way you carry yourself – sit or stand – while speaking also reflects your communicative abilities. It will be obvious that a person is nervous if he sits or stands stiff at one place without moving at all. On the other hand, if a person is relaxed and confident, her posture will not indicate anything odd or unusual that will draw away the listener's attention from her speech.

**Organizing** the content of speech is a very important skill that comes from practice. It includes techniques such as linking one thought or idea with another, keeping the cause and effect together, distinguishing facts and opinions, and avoiding too many deviations from the proposed topic.

Apart from the above general speech skills, a good speaker also takes into consideration the **situation** where (s)he speaks. Speaking in an interview is different from speaking in a group discussion or speaking to peers.

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## 12.4 TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS

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Many employers use telephone interviews to screen candidates for basic qualifications and they also use them when it is not practical to bring an out-of-area candidate to the office.

The main difference between a face-to-face and a telephonic interview is that you are **unable to see each other** in a telephonic interview. So there is a limited scope for utilizing your non-verbal skills and you have to depend only on your **articulatory** (speaking) **skills**.

The importance of the **content** of your answers increases when compared to face-to face interviews.

The four areas you need to concentrate on for telephonic interviews are:

- Phone manners



- Clarity of speech
- Voice tone or Voice control
- Listening skills

Your interviewers are listening for signs of enthusiasm and interest in the job. You need to make your voice sound energetic, warm, cheerful and clear. Listening carefully is especially important on a telephone interview, where you **can't rely on visual clues** from the interviewers.

It is very likely that you will receive the interview call at home. So ensure that your **family members** understand the importance of phone messages and know how to respond to them. For example, tell them how to say simply, "Just a moment, please", and get you immediately, if the caller asks for you. Also teach everyone, in case you are not available when a call comes for you, how to take a proper message: including the name of the person calling, company name, and a complete phone number. Leave a **message pad** and **pencil** next to the phone.

### 12.4.1 Preparing for Telephonic Interviews

- Make sure your CV gives correct and up to date contact information and the best time and method to contact you.
- Use a quiet, private room with a telephone in good working condition. Make sure you are in a place where you can read notes, take notes, and concentrate.
- Have your résumé and a list of accomplishments for each of your positions in front of you so you can remember highlights of your experience.
- Keep track of the jobs you apply to. You may be applying to dozens and dozens of jobs but it will hurt your chances and be very embarrassing if you can't remember a thing about the company or job when a potential employer calls you.
- Always note down the details of the companies when you apply for a job: their contact number(s), the names and phone numbers of the person(s) whom you may contact.
- Have a friend call you to do a mock phone interview so you can practice being interviewed over the phone. Let them ask you typical interview questions and then answer them. Get feedback on your voice quality and speech, or better yet, record the entire session on tape so that you can listen to it afterwards.
- Repeat the mock phone interview based on the feedback, especially if you have a difficulty with your voice.
- Have an outline in front of you to remind yourself of the key points to cover with the interviewer. For example, think about the questions an interviewer might ask and note examples you will want to use to answer them. Do not read from your notes but refer to them whenever required.
- Prepare questions to ask the employer.
- If you have an answering machine, do not record a long greeting on it. If you are already expecting an interview call, record an appropriate answering message on it.

✓ Check Your Progress 3

Read the following excerpt from a telephonic interview and answer the questions given below:

Prakash had applied for the post of Customer Support Executive in General Electronics in Hyderabad about a week ago. Soon after that he had chicken pox and informed the company that he was unable to attend the interview. When asked for a telephonic interview he readily agreed to take one. A week after that he received a telephone call at his residence.

Prakash: "Hello"...

HRD Manager: "Good morning, I'm calling from GE, could I speak to Mr Prakash Sawant?"

Prakash: "Good morning, Prakash here."

HRDM: "Well, Mr. Prakash, your CV seems pretty well up to scratch, now I wonder can you tell me more about yourself?"

P: "Um...Yes...I think I'm serious -"

"Serious-

"- serious-minded, I'm calm...

"OK, you're calm...

"I...I like to joke though...good sense of humour, and I don't panic in a crisis...

"What interests you about this job?"

"I like to extend my services to people and I want to help customers interact with my company more efficiently."

"Suppose a customer is dissatisfied with a product, how would you deal with the situation?"

"I would first listen to him very carefully, keep my calm, and try not to argue with him. Then I would try to tell him the facts about the product and if necessary, the conditions that apply. I would request the customer to keep the product intact until I call him back. Then I would find out what is to be done according to the company rules and regulations and get back to the customer as soon as possible."

"Thank you Mr Prakash. We will get back to you soon."

"Thank you, good bye"

a) How would you grade Prakash on a 5 point scale (1-5) on his

i) Answering the call at the start?	
ii) Preparation for the interview?	
iii) Confidence?	
iv) Reliability?	
v) Responses: content?	
Responses: manner?	
vi) Listening skill?	
vii) Ending the call?	

Support your grading with your observations.

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b) Did Prakash forget to take down any important information he might need later?

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c) What suggestions would you give Prakash to help him improve his performance on telephonic interviews in future?

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### 12.4.2 During the Call

You know that in a telephone interview, the interviewer cannot see you. However your voice can easily convey your posture and your actions to the interviewer. For example, your voice quality when you are standing is different from your voice quality while you are sitting or lying down. Similarly it can be made out from your way of speaking if you are chewing something or drinking; smiling, agreeing or disagreeing with something.

- Make sure you know who is calling and from where.
- Speak in a formal way. Qualities such as sincerity and trustworthiness can be communicated on the phone by your way of speaking.
- If you are tense, try to smile while you are talking. The person on the other end of the phone will be able to sense an improvement in the tone of your voice.
- Don't eat or drink while talking.
- Consider standing— often your voice will sound better than if you're slouching in an easy chair.
- If you cannot hear the interviewer properly, say that it is a bad line and you will immediately call him back again.
- Take notes on important information for later use.
- If you think of a question or comment while the interviewer is speaking, note it down so that you remember it later.

- Do not give long answers, make sure that the interviewer wants to know what you are saying. Use appropriate phrases and sentences in between your speech in order to understand the interviewer's response. For example, "I hope you agree with me...", "If you think so...", "If this is fine with you...", "I hope this interests you..."
- To let your interviewer know that you are listening with interest, use words and short phrases whenever there is a pause without interrupting what (s)he wants to say. For example, "Yes...", "I understand...", "Sure...", "Certainly..."
- First impressions are as important on the phone as they are in face to face interviews – the first 30 seconds are crucial. The way you answer the phone has an impact on the caller. Your voice must express interest, enthusiasm, and confidence.

√ **Check Your Progress 4**

The following questions were asked in a telephonic interview to evaluate the candidate. Guess and write down the ability that is intended to be tested by each question in the space given below.

a) Spell your name.

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b) Tell your phone number.

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c) Is the quality of talkativeness a benefit or a disadvantage for you?

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d) If an employee is appointed under you and he/she is not performing well how will you motivate him to perform well?

.....

e) What do you think about the concept "earn while you learn"?

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*Activity 2*

Now sit back-to-back with your friend. One of you play the role of an interviewer and ask the above questions one by one. Let the other try and answer the questions as if you are attending a telephonic interview.

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## 12.5 JOB SEARCH ETIQUETTE

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### 12.5.1 The First Step

When you are looking for a job you will probably look in the popular newspapers and employment journals for advertisements. Supplements such as Times Ascent, Opportunities, Power Jobs as well as the internet jobsites (naukri.com, monster.com) provide you with many openings in various fields under various categories. However, you must think about the unadvertised jobs as well.

Contact with people working in your choice of jobs can prove to be helpful. You

may also seek help from a skilled consultant to find a good job faster. What type of job search will be most effective for you depends on your understanding of the job scenario based on your qualifications. You may target a particular company, or you may target a particular skill set to steer your search.

In any career, the best way to establish yourself is to get some experience. Seek out training, do some project-based work and find a company that will be interested in that project. Most employers will respect your efforts, and you'll also gain confidence in your abilities. You can apply for an internship in the same way you would apply for a job, by sending a cover letter and resume and clearly mentioning that you are looking at an internship.

The art of self-promotion is very helpful for job seekers. You can start writing for various trade magazines/websites etc and mention that in your résumé. You can also join clubs which take active interest in all activities. More often than not, it's the active and visible professionals who get the maximum opportunities from prospective employers. If you have worked on some interesting projects in your career, put a small portfolio together. Treat every project as a portfolio piece and use it to showcase your knowledge and exposure.

## 12.5.2 A Job Fair

You've probably heard about a job fair from a friend or seen an advertisement in the newspaper. A job fair is an event usually organized by a third party recruitment consultant at a neutral venue like a school/college auditorium where multiple employers come under one roof to select people according to their requirements. More and more companies are saving time and effort by participating in job fairs as they can put up a stall and meet multiple candidates on the same day.

If you are a fresh graduate or an executive with 1-2 years of experience, a job fair can be a great event to evaluate your career options in the BPOs, hospitality, banks, retail and I.T sector. Many job seekers tend to overlook job fairs, as they can be crowded, busy, competitive and confusing. Also one needs to invest more time (sometimes a full day) to evaluate all the options available. But job fairs give you the opportunity to contact many potential employers all within one place, learn more about the companies that you are interested in, meet and share ideas with fellow job seekers and build professional contacts. Not to forget there is a good chance that you may even land a job.

## 12.5.3 Before You Come to the Job Fair

### 12.5.3.1 What to Bring

Pack 20–25 copies of your résumé, which effectively represent your educational background, skills and abilities. Proof read your résumé and print it on plain white or cream coloured paper. If you expect companies from multiple sectors such as BPOs & Retail, you may want to carry two or three résumés with different career objectives.

Carry all your documents in a professional way. A neat folder or an executive file is fine. Do not carry them in a polythene bag or in your hands. Make sure that you have copies of your résumé, mark-sheets, certificates and reference letters in your file.

### 12.5.3.2 What to Wear

Stick to conservative professional attire and be neatly groomed. Avoid jeans and t-

shirts and go for business casuals. You can't go wrong by dressing as you would for an interview or business meeting. Leave your backpack, large purse or other college paraphernalia at home.

### 12.5.3.3 Do Some Research

A list of employers scheduled to attend the job fair you intend to go, is usually available in the advertisement or the website sponsoring that event. Select companies that you would like to target and visit their websites to get some basic information like – turnover of the company, number of employees, products/services they offer etc. Jot down relevant information on your notepad and carry this in your file.

### 12.5.3.4 Arrive Early

If the job fair is scheduled to start at 10.00 am, be there by 10.15 am. The recruiters are fresh and attentive during the start of the day and most of your competitors may not even have arrived. Visit the stalls of employers you are most interested in working for first.

### 12.5.4 While You're there

Don't hit multiple stalls with a group of friends. Interact with the recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression, as this is not a group activity. Be ready with your 2-3 line sales script to share basic information about yourself and your career interests.

For example, smile, provide a firm handshake and say:

“Good morning. My name is *Rohini Sharma* and I am an Economic Honors graduate from Delhi University. I am interested in the role of a Relationship officer in your bank. I did my summer raining with XYZ Company and developed an interest in retail banking. Here is my résumé for your review.”

Step back enough to listen to the employers speaking to other candidates and decide if you need to adjust your pitch.

You'll probably be asked to fill out an application form after you submit your résumé. Be sure to bring a pen and a “cheat sheet” with the information you'll need to complete job applications on the spot. This is less cumbersome than copying everything from your résumé and will save you time.

Be prepared for an interview. Some companies may have booked exclusive space to conduct interviews with candidates they like. Here are some questions you can ask to show genuine interest:

- What are the kinds of assignments given to new recruits?
- What type of training is provided?
- What career opportunities are available in your organization?

Keep track of where you submit your résumés and make a list of the companies you apply for. Jot down notes about conversations you have with representatives or topics discussed during interviews. This will help you when you get a call from them later.

### Check Your Progress 5

Make a list of ten most important things to do when you attend a job fair.

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#### 12.5.4.1 Salary

Some companies especially BPOs may even give you the final offer on the spot. It helps to do some research and find out the salary range for the positions you are interested in. Companies usually have standard slabs and do not negotiate with freshers.

#### 12.5.4.2 Follow up

*Get their business cards* — Collect business cards from recruiters you speak to. Make small notes about the company and the job profile offered on the back of the card. Use this information later to follow up if their offer sounds lucrative.

*Brochures/CD's/Pamphlets* — Most companies stock brochures, CD's, job description pamphlets, and other data at their stall. Pick them up for future reference, as you won't have time to deal with these at the fair.

*Send a thank-you note if possible* — Send a thank-you note to every employer you speak to at the career fair if you have their e-mail IDs.

So, attend the next job fair in your city and walk out with a job offer!

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## 12.6 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS IN AN INTERVIEW

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### General:

- How would you describe yourself?
- What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- Which was your favourite subject in school?
- Describe the characteristics of a successful manager.

### Professional:

- Describe the type of positions that you've held.
- Why are you interested in our organization?

- What type of position are you seeking?
- Why have you chosen this particular profession?
- Describe a stressful situation or problem and describe how you were able to handle it.
- What interests you about this job?
- What can you contribute to this company?
- What does being a team player mean to you?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- Why do you want to leave your present job?
- Have you any questions for us?

**Personal:**

- What do you do in your spare time?
- Do you have any plans for higher studies?
- Do you have any role-model?
- Do you think your grades are an indication of your academic achievement?

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## 12.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit you have learnt how to conduct yourself during a face-to-face interview. We have discussed that interviews are an opportunity to communicate your abilities as well as to evaluate the job sought.

Answering questions comprises a major part of the interview. You have to be well organized while speaking and answer clearly after you have listened to and understood what is being asked.

If you don't agree with the interviewer, say so politely without arguing. Be honest while answering the questions. If given a chance to ask questions, you can enquire about job responsibilities and expectations or the company set-up and management. Don't forget to thank the interviewer(s) before leaving the room.

To develop a good fluency in English, you need to:

- Learn the Phonetic Alphabet containing the 44 sounds and their pronunciation guidance.
- Regularly listen and understand radio and TV programmes in English.
- Build up a good repertoire of English words by reading books and magazines in English of your own interest.

To prepare for telephonic interviews, start by giving the most up-to-date information and contact details in your CV. Make sure that your phone is in good working condition. Keep things ready to make notes or read from notes. When you attend telephonic interviews you must focus on:

- Phone manners: speak in a formal way, communicate your sincerity and trustworthiness by your way of speaking, make sure who is calling
- Clarity of speech: smile while you speak, don't eat or drink while speaking and do not give very long answers



- Voice: stand as you speak to improve your voice, express interest, enthusiasm, confidence
- Listening skill: take notes on important information, respond with appropriate phrases to show that you are listening with interest

To attend a job fair you must remember the following:

- Target a few companies based on the advertisement.
- Bring 20-25 copies of your résumé and certificates, a pen and notepad.
- Arrange all the documents neatly in a folder.
- Arrive early and visit the companies with whom you are more interested to work with.
- Interact with the recruiters on your own.
- Remember to take their business cards
- Be prepared for an interview on the spot

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## 12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. a) Sharmila was not very confident about herself. She spoke less and avoided eye contact. Her body language conveys that she was uncomfortable and nervous, e.g. she holds her file tightly and has folded her arms.  
b) The interviewer had asked for her résumé but she starts introducing herself. This shows her anxiety resulting from her nervousness. She speaks in broken sentences and in a haphazard way.
2. a) Akansha is quite confident and composed. Her smile ensures a pleasing personality. She looks at the interviewer as she talks and is more organized than Sharmila.  
b) Akansha performs better than Sharmila because she has begun well. She greets the interviewer with a smile as soon as she enters the room. She doesn't forget to thank the interviewer while taking her seat. She has arranged her things properly to avoid wasting time in searching for the obvious. This creates a good impression on the interviewer. She listens to what is asked and answers accordingly without any haste.
3. i) Grade- 4.  
Prakash answered the phone by saying 'hello'. He may not be expecting the call from the company. But he performed well because he was prepared for the telephonic interview. When he added some more information about himself, he kept in mind that the caller had already read his CV. So he didn't repeat what is usually got from a CV.  
ii) Grade-4.5  
He was well prepared for the interview.  
iii) Grade-5  
He was confident as he didn't waste any time to impart the information required. He also answered according to the questions asked.

iv) Grade-5

Prakash spoke in an organized way. He made it a point to state that he was not easy-going or carefree but was 'serious-minded'. He gave a good hint to say that though he was serious, he did have sense of humour. Moreover he had done his homework to find out the skills required for a customer support personnel.

v) Grade-5

Most of the time he was prompt in replying to the point. His responses were good in both content and manner.

vi) Grade-5

His listening skill was good.

vii) Grade-3

He ended the call with the necessary and sufficient words.

- b) The caller didn't introduce himself on the phone. Neither did Prakash know that the caller was the HRD manager. Prakash could have asked for his name and contact number. For any communication later this reference would prove useful for Prakash.
- c) Prakash spoke quite well for the telephonic interview. In future he can show a little more interest in the job and the company by asking a few questions with permission from the caller.
4. a) Clarity in speech, ability to clarify letters that may sound the same on phone. (e.g. p and b, t and d etc.)
- b) Clarity in communicating numbers, grouping them properly for convenience. (e.g. 098-1234-5678 or 098-123-456-78 etc.), asking the receiver to repeat the number.
- c) Ability to think quickly and respond appropriately without being nervous.
- d) Ability to manage and solve a difficult situation, positive attitude.  
Ability to understand a long question, language aptitude.
- e) General awareness, peer feelings.
5. ● Select companies to target in the fair from the advertisement or the sponsor's website.
- Visit their websites to get some basic information.
- Jot down relevant information on your notepad and carry this in your file.
- Prepare three résumés with different career objectives depending upon your choice of career.
- Take along 20-25 copies of résumé, mark sheets, certificates, reference letters, pen and notepad.
- Carry the documents neatly in a folder or an executive file, not in a polythene bag.

- Be ready with 2-3 line sales script to share basic information about yourself and your career interests.
- Dress up in professional attire instead of jeans and T-shirts.
- Arrive early.
- First visit those companies you are most interested to work with.