

INTERVIEW PROCESS

POSITIVE ATTITUDE: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

S.N.Jha, Director LIBM, demystifies the interview process and deliberates upon all that is expected of you as a candidate.

Having cleared Written Tests, you are both delighted and frightened as to what the interview would be like! What preparation will help you crack the interview and post a winning score? Speculations abound and there seems no definite clue. You reel under confusion and grow further uncertain. Just don't worry. That's something very natural. Hold your breath. Relax. Read on. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The object of this interview is to assess your personal suitability for a career in Public Service by a board of competent and unbiased observers. The test is intended to judge your mental calibre. In broad terms it is really an assessment of not only the intellectual qualities but also the social traits and interest in current affairs. Some of the qualities to be judged are mental alertness. Critical powers of assimilation. Clear and logical exposition. Balance of judgment. Variety and depth of interest. Ability for social cohesion and leadership. And intellectual and moral integrity.

Having pointed out the object of the interview it would certainly be pertinent to provide some hints about facing the Board. I know, giving advice is easy, acting upon them is rather difficult. Remember, interview is a test of personality which you build over the years, not over days or months. To me, guiding for the interview is like guiding somebody to prepare for life. Obviously, there can be no short cuts, at least I don't know of one. Remember again! There is no magic wand for success in life as also in the interview. It's the lifetime preparation that pays in the ultimate run.

You will be interviewed by a Board who will have before them a record of your career. You'll be asked questions on matters of general interest. The technique of the interview is not that of a strict cross examination but of a natural, though directed and purposive conversation, intended to reveal your mental qualities. It is not intended to be a test either of the specialised or general knowledge which has already been tested through the written examination. You are expected to have taken an intelligent interest not only in your special subjects of academic study but also in the events which are happening around you both within and outside the country. You are also expected to be aware of the modern currents of thought and new discoveries which rouse the curiosity of every well educated youth.

What the Board members are looking for?

In this context, I am reminded of an anecdote from Shiv Khara's best-seller, You Can Win. "There was a man who made a living selling balloons at a fair. He had all colours of balloons, including red, yellow, blue, and green. Whenever business was slow, he would release a helium filled balloon into the air and when the children saw it go up, they all wanted to buy one. They would come up to him, buy a balloon, and his sales would go up again. He continued this process all day. One day he felt someone tugging at his jacket. He turned

around and saw a little boy who asked, "If you release a black balloon, would that also fly?" Moved by the boy's concern, the man replied with empathy, "Son, it is not the colour of the balloon, it is what is inside that makes it go up."

It is what is 'inside' that matters. The thing inside of us that makes us go up in life is our attitude. If we can build a positive attitude towards life and anything that we do, it provides a solid foundation for success. That is precisely what the country needs: Officers with the right attitude to take up the challenge of nation building and fight the evils of corruption, poverty, ignorance, communalism, casteism and nepotism. Today, great value is attached to upholding the fundamental premises of democratic polity as secularism, social justice and human rights, upon which the survival and sustenance of India as a nation rests.

What constitutes positive attitude?

People with a positive attitude are honest. Upright, Sincere, Hardworking, Committed, Enthusiastic, Confident, Tolerant, Optimistic, Innovative, Patient, Humble, Generous, Courteous, Polite, Sensitive, Open to ideas, Willing to own up mistake. And learn from them. They do what they enjoy. And enjoy what must be done. They have a clear vision of things to come.

There are no quick-fix methods of developing these qualities and traits. But they are the ones that lay the foundation of a strong character and a powerful personality. And only conscious effort can help build them. If you don't have these, they will show up on your face. If you don't feel for the stand that you take, the interviewers can smell. If you lack conviction they can sense. So, never pretend to know what you don't. Never lie. Never be arrogant. Never get into arguments with the Board members. Never appear casual. And never-ever lose your temper. They each carry a hundred negative marks!!

Remember! The Board members are people with tremendous experience. They would be at least double your age. The amount of their experience is unfathomable. You just can't dodge them. The only key to success is to be your natural self.

How do they test you?

In the preceding paragraphs I tried outlining the basic traits that are likely to be probed in the interview. Now one must think and anticipate as to how this probe is likely to be operationalised. The process is analogous to what is called reverse engineering, where a finished product is disassembled step-by-step in order to ascertain the process of assembly of the end product. During the interview, this process is carried out on the basis of information available to the board members.

The basic source of the information available to them is the Written application form filled in by you, containing the details of your family background, domicile, subjects of study, academic performance, institutions attended, awards won, hobbies, interests, extra-curricular activities, service preferences, job experience etc. Remember to keep a copy of them form. If you haven't, try reconstructing. The personal details furnished by you in the form, provide the initial stimulus to the interview. These also provide vital clues to the personality traits they

are looking for. Your past performance and record of career is believed to be a reasonably good predictor of the future, though not the only one.

As I see it, the process of unveiling the personality traits is in four stages. The Board usually begins by asking questions on what you would be most comfortable with, i.e. about yourself. Gradually they widen the net and put questions relating to your special subjects of study. Further they test your higher faculties of analysis and decision making by putting questions on matters of general interest, especially current social, political and economic issues. Finally they pin you down by asking some critical questions to test your balance of judgment and intellectual and moral integrity. All this while, the Board continuously evaluates your personality and assesses your suitability to the job without your realising.

The initial moments are extremely crucial and could well steer the latter course of the interview. It is absolutely imperative to remember your bio-data and know everything thoroughly well about yourself, to be able to answer any question related to you with great ease. Any mistake or even hesitation here could amount to a blunder. It would be viewed with great suspicion and guess what could happen hereafter. Yes, you guessed it right! The interview could end even before it began! On your part, you can ensure that this does not happen by being honest in filling up your bio-data. Every small detail counts!

Most candidates tend to cook-up their hobbies and interests at the last moment. It could prove to be a blunder in situations such as; Your hobby is 'gardening' and you can't even recognise any of the indoor plants there in the Board room! Your hobby is 'reading' but you never read anything except newspapers! Your hobby is 'bird watching' and you can't name some common birds. And you can't even identify a male sparrow! Your hobby is 'cooking' and you never cooked anything except Rice and Dal! One-day Cricket is an area of interest and you don't know who started it! You play chess and you have to struggle hard to explain what castling is all about!!

As for your academic background more emphasis is generally placed on your Honours and Masters level subjects.

Admission Procedure

General Information for Admission

- You have to apply in the prescribed admission form with three copies of recent passport size photographs.
- Admission is given only against complete payment of the fees. No request for installment will be entertained. Fees once paid shall not be refunded under any circumstances.
- Payment should be made either in Cash or DD. In case of DD it must be in favour of Lakshya Institute of Banking & Management, payable at Darbhanga.

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