Course Name- Complete guide for campus interviews: Step by step preparation for Internships and Full-time jobs
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Week-03
Lecture-04
Campus interview guide

Hello, everyone. This session is about getting ready for campus interviews. It's going to be very relevant for people in campus who are in universities and who are looking for jobs and internships because it's all about walking through campus interviews and giving you specific tips to help you tackle campus recruitment in a very polished way. So the way we are going to begin is this is the topic we're going to cover today. We'll begin with skills. We'll talk about what skills are.

We'll talk about resume preparation. We have touched on a bunch of these things earlier, but I'm going to repeat that for campus recruiting, you have to double down, right, and have even more focus on these areas. Make sure you choose your sector and company wisely. Do the right interview preparation.

And also there are some very important tips to follow post the interview process. And that's where I'm going to spend some time. So firstly, skills. So we talked about skills many, many times. But ideally, every technical recruiter is looking for how do you match the skills in the job description.

Every HR interviewer is going to look for how do you match the skills in the job description. So it's all about skills. Every question in the interview is going to be based on it. Every shortlisting on the basis of resumes is also based on this. So again, skills is most important.

Taking even the human aspect away from this discussion, nowadays there's a deluge of resumes. There are probably around 2,000 to 3,000 applicants for every job posting. So many companies use something called ATS, which is Applicant Tracking System, which is a HR software tool which looks at the match in terms of words being used by your resume and what is already there in the job description. So if there's a good match, yes, they will take your resume forward. So the more you customize your resume, the more it will be picked up by ATS and sent to the recruiter.

Take care not to just spam your resume with just words picked up from the job description. Ask yourself, do you really have those skills? So do it in a sensible way. Just putting stuff to get noticed will not help you because immediately when there's a shortlisting interview, somebody from human resources or the tech team calls you and has like a 10 minute conversation, They'll know immediately that you don't have any of the skills they want because you've just done spamming of your resume with keywords. So that also will not help you. So be genuine.

Think about, do you really have the skills? And if there's a good match, make sure you're using the words of the job description in your resume. We talked about skill gap analysis in our earlier sessions, but the idea here is that you basically capture some of the skills which are required by that company and club that under whether it's a people skill, whether it's a business skill, whether it's a technical skill and try to use this three-point categorization of skills. It can be

basic, intermediate or advanced. So ask yourself, Where am I with respect to the skills and what does a company which is trying to recruit, what sort of skill level are they looking for? That's tough. That's not an easy answer.

What does a company want in terms of skill level? But take a shot, right? I mean, try to guess, talk to your professor, talk to people working from industry, ask them these questions. When you line up a conversation with somebody from industry, you should be asking these sort of questions. What level of expertise are required for this specific skill? And you'll get a good answer. Then ask yourself, do I have those skill sets? If you have the skill sets, it's fantastic. You have no problem.

If you do not have those skills, then you will have to learn that within maybe one year or two years. Then you map that gap. and come up with a learning plan to address that gap. So you can probably be a volunteer, you can probably do some projects, you can do some internships, and you could probably do some part-time work, open source work, especially if you're a software engineer. All these ways are ways for you to bridge the skill gap.

And that's the way you're going to move forward in the skill curve. So that's one big category. The second category is about resume preparation, right? We touched a bunch of things earlier, but the key idea is learn to read job descriptions. Job descriptions is not easy to read. First time if you're doing it, you're going to be very confused, but then quickly you'll get the hang of it if you're able to slot it under these three types of skills.

People skills, business skills, and technical skills. So learn to read job descriptions, classify skills, and then use those skills to optimize your resume. Every resume you create has to be customized for that job and the job description. So look from that perspective and then approach the problem. I have a bunch of videos on resume preparation where I've been talking to students across IITs like IIT Roorkee, Indore, Dharward, Palakkad and so on.

So maybe you and even IIT Madras at one time. So you can check up some of these videos on my channel and this will give you a good insight about how to customize resumes. I've done some resume workshops also on my YouTube channel. You can again check that up if you want to know more. But you get a good feel of what recruiters want when you listen to some of these sessions.

One easy way for you to pick up skills is not just the courses which is offered in your university, right? But if you go out, take some NPTEL courses, Coursera classes, whatever, right? Maybe YouTube classes, but Even if you don't have formal certification, if you're into learning and understanding from different sources, then you can do a very good job. So that really should be a target when it comes to skill development and reflecting that on your resume. We talked about this many, many times, but customize the language of your resume as per the job description. Again, that's important. There's a lot of content on your resume.

You can't put everything on maybe a one-page resume. And I strongly recommend that most people early in career, especially students, not have more than a one-page resume. Ideally, you should have more than 10 years of experience to have a two-page resume. But most of you may not have that. So move all the additional stuff to LinkedIn.

You don't need to put all of that on your resume. may not even have hobbies, right? That's not required. You just talk about how you're a match for the job in terms of skills. And that itself could take one page. So try to move all extraneous stuff to LinkedIn.

Customize, I think the more you customize, not just your resume, but a cover letter. This is something that people forget that when you're writing to a company, a lot of interviewers and recruiters look at the cover letter. And a cover letter is also a great way to talk about what do you bring to the table, right? And sometimes a recruiter does not want to read your resume. They may just look at your cover letter. So please spend time on your cover letter.

Do not waste your time by talking about very generic stuff. Specific target the resume and make it easy to read. You can use maybe with ChatGPT to help you out sometime. But end of the day, you have to refine it based on skills. And ChatGPT can help you a little, but not too much.

So that can serve as a starting point, but you have to sit down and optimize your cover letter, just like you optimize your resume. As you make more and more versions of a cover letter and customize it for that company, the better it's going to look like. Get feedback for your resumes and practice interviews. So try to have somebody like a career coach, friends, it could be professors, it could be mentors. Have these chats, right? Ask them to ask you questions and try practicing some answers.

Ask them to evaluate your resumes and give you feedback. All these are great ways to improve yourself. The more you get feedback, the better you become. So always lean towards getting excellent feedback. We come to this section about choosing sector and company.

So how do you go around making the right decisions? We've discussed a bunch of frameworks in the past. We discussed the outside-in perspective. We discussed the inside-out perspective. But ideally, in the best possible scenario, you should have done this homework well in advance. When you do a skill gap analysis maybe two years before you look for a job, you should then begin to identify what jobs are interested in, what sectors you're interested in.

track that company, track that sector for maybe at least a year. So keep reading newspapers like Economic Times, Wall Street Journal. Read, keep reading a lot of stuff. Keep reading the quarterly reports, annual reports. Surprisingly, there's full of information about what the company is doing.

And it's not even technical language. Anybody can read and understand. Even a layman can understand a quarterly report, at least 80% of it. So quarterly reports is not about finance statements, it's not about balance sheets, income and profit statements, but it's also about giving you a feel of what the company's plans are for the next year, next two years, next five years and so on. So it's a gold mine of information. So read the annual reports, track the big companies you're targeting, look at the competitors look at the economic landscape the big picture of where they work in what's happening so for example if you're targeting a company in europe what's happening in the european economy if you're targeting a company in us is there something happening in the us economy those are things you gotta learn by looking at the news and media out there so keep reading right you will see trends Anything, the sources of information can be newspapers, online media, a bunch of things exist, right? Industry reports exist, analyst reports exist.

Go through that. A lot of it is available online. End of the day, your goal is to become an expert in that sector, right? There should not be anybody who's better than you in that sector. So pick one sector, drill deep. The depth will make your answers look very polished. Again, I don't need to repeat that job descriptions and customizing resume is important, but on top of it, if you do all these other things about top-down, bottom-up approach, your answers will look even better.

We talk about this fact that making decisions only based on compensation doesn't help anyone, especially it's not going to help you. So many companies use salary as a hook to get students and they're hiding something bad about themselves. It could be, for example, they don't have a great working culture. Maybe everybody's working 24-7.

Everybody's getting burnt out. Everybody wants to talk about retirement. There's so many things which could be happening. So I'm not saying it will happen in the company you're looking for, but do your own research and check what the culture of the company is. Ask yourself, what is your long-term strategy? What is it you want to be? For example, which location do you want to be? Which country do you want to be? What sort of jobs would you want to be? Where do you think that you are best served? Which sector will serve you best? Is it the tech sector? Is it operations? Is it retail? Is it logistics? There are a lot of choices, right? And then you make a decision for yourself. One issue is that a lot of people don't think about these factors.

All they do is, whatever job they get in campus recruiting, they just take whichever job they get. The first job they get, they take up the job. And unfortunately, they are allowed the job to grant them. That job becomes a definition of who they are. So once you get, say for example, you get a job in finance as a first job in campus placements.

Most people try to not break away from the trap. So that means that they'll become a finance person throughout their life. Later on, 15 years later, 20 years later, when they say, I'm fed up with finance, I want to do something different. They cannot because they allowed themselves to get branded. So I would say that if you found your dream job, if you want to be in that sector throughout your life, that's fantastic. But many people don't look at all the different perspectives and then make a careful, considerate decision.

If you jump in and make a decision, there's a good chance it could go wrong. So that's why when you choose your first job, think a lot. Carefully choose your first job. Don't just go with the tide and do whatever others do, which is that whatever job I get, I join, right? That's not helpful. So we want to also maybe spend some time on interview prep.

We talked about looking at job descriptions, practicing skills, and practicing your answers with professors and mentors and so on. There's a bunch of videos where I've done some sessions with IIT students and a bunch of other students from other colleges on my YouTube channel. Check it up. practicing mock interviews is always good like it's always good to have somebody close to you or knows you ask you questions sit before them and allow them to ask you questions and try to take that seriously be in a formal setting be well dressed be in a room have the other person ask you questions and the more formally you treat it the more experience you get and the more experience you get the better you're going to sound in interviews so Nobody is a born interviewer.

Everybody makes a lot of mistakes. But you get better with time. The first interview is always the worst interview of anybody's career. So don't worry too much about how your initial interviews go. It's all about practicing.

The more you practice, the more perfect you become. So practice means perfection ultimately. Anybody whom you see as delivering a fantastic interview and doing a fantastic job, Mostly they've done a lot of homework. It doesn't happen naturally. Interviews are very strange.

It's very difficult to just talk to people directly. It's a very strange process. And talking about skills and so on is tough. So you've got to practice. So the more people practice, the better they become.

And try to get into the practice mode. Keep talking. Sometimes... Even if you don't find a job, if you're talking to multiple interviewers, it's a good thing because you are getting interview practice.

Just talking all the time makes you better. You may not know it, you may not sense it, but you are getting better. There are websites like glassdoor.

com, teamblind. There are a bunch of websites like levels.fii. There's Google. There's just so much information you can get about what questions can be asked by companies during the interview process. All this information is already there. You don't need to learn from scratch.

People have already gone through the process. So take notes. Look at all these questions. List down maybe if there are hundreds of questions. List it all down and group them into different categories. Ask yourself, if I get this question, how am I going to answer this? So have like a cheat sheet with you. Sometimes in some interviews, you can even take the cheat sheet with you during the interviews.

It's fine. It's totally OK. It's not like when you're doing an interview, you just have to be sitting with nothing on the table. You can have something on the table. You can take notes.

You can have some papers with you. That's totally fine. So take a cheat sheet if necessary. If there's a very important metrics and data you want to present to the recruiter, that always helps. Rehearse your answers. For example, if you have a bunch of metrics about the company you want to remember, look at those metrics before you approach the interview process.

You want to remember this. It should be in a short-term memory so that you can pick it up and relay that to the recruiter. Try to have answers for every possible question when you do your research because if you do not, you'll be blinded by some questions and that's not good for you. At a minimum, you've got to research a company for at least three to four days.

We talk about annual reports and how that can help you. Rehearse. A good tip is once you finish an interview process, send some thank you notes to the recruiters and interviewers. Very few people do it, maybe less than 5% of people do it, but if you do that, it can make you stand out really well. If you're not heard back from recruiters, it's okay to send reminders and telling them, hey, I'm very interested in the company.

Do you have any updates for me? It's not a bad thing. It's a good thing. Recruiters expect you to show their passion and interest and keep checking up. So that way, following up is good.

Sending tech notes is good. Maybe we'll pivot in a slightly different direction for this session, which is about also talking about what is the right process to follow post-interviews. Once you get an offer, something happens, something goes wrong, what is the right protocol to follow? What are some rules to take into account? So first thing first, try to choose a job where you're genuinely interested.

It's neither good for the company, not for you, if you don't like the job but end up taking up the offer, right? You'll burn out and within a couple of months you probably are done and exhausted. So choose a job where your heart is genuinely in it, right? So that's something you should have to be asking to make sure that you are in the right direction. Especially, for example, if you want to go for higher studies, right? You're just wasting everyone's time if you pick up a job offer. Your friends will not get the offer and you will not take up the offer either.

So it's a waste of everyone's time. So at least make it clear to the interviewer that you are going for higher studies. And let them evaluate that and decide whether they want to give you an offer or not. People change their minds at the last minute. So sometimes people say, I want to go for higher studies and may not go for higher studies.

Companies are aware of it. So knowing that they may give you an offer. But don't hide these things from the recruiters. Keep it open, keep it honest, tell them what you bring to the table, and then the companies can decide what they want to do with your candidature. It is also okay to drop out of interviews if you are not feeling comfortable. If you don't like the company, you don't like the culture, you don't like the compensation, it's okay to just reach out to the recruiter. Be honest, frank, say that, hey, I have a bunch of new opportunities turning up and maybe this is not the best fit for me when it comes to skills.

Maybe my skill is not what the company is looking for. Maybe I'm looking for a different company and exposure. That's fine. So you can drop out, but be open, honest, and courteous about it. The more courteous you are, The HR folks, the interviewers will look at you very positively and there will be no negative ramifications.

Declining offers is a very tricky topic. Nobody really talks about this, but what I recommend to everybody is if you don't like an offer after you get it, please don't just send an email saying, hey, I don't want to join the company. That's a very, very bad way of managing the process. be graceful, right? These situations that happen again and again in your life, you will join one company, you will move from one company to the other, and you have to be thoughtful about how you relate difficult news to stakeholders. You cannot just shoot them an email and say, hey, I'm going to leave the company.

I'm not going to come to work from tomorrow. That's a very bad way. So ideally, I would recommend that you at least send an email and say, hey, I want to have some time with you. I want to have a conversation. Talk to the recruiter, whoever has given you the offer letter.

Have a conversation. Very important. It means that then you're serious about keeping some relationship alive with the company.

Be polite in these conversations. Be very polite. Be apologetic. Be respectful. Please understand that the company has spent a lot of time on you, giving you an offer. So be respectful of the time, right? I mean, you never know. Tomorrow, maybe you'll have to go back to the company in some scenario. It's like there's a phrase saying that don't burn bridges.

Tomorrow, if you are very bad, if you want to reach out to the company again, you don't want to burn all your bridges that you have nothing left to go back to the company.

So you never know when things may come in useful. Plus, the other thing is that all these recruiters and people in... technology, the engineers, software engineers, managers, they keep moving from company to company. So maybe today they're in company X, but tomorrow they'll be in company Y, right? And you may meet them in a different company later.

So they will still remember you from maybe a previous bad experience. So you want to ensure that you leave on a graceful note. Be polite. Offer to the company when you're rejecting them that, hey, I love your company, but unfortunately I have some better opportunities come up, but I would love to maybe join you sometime later. So maybe a little bit of hope for the future means that you're interested in the company, and that's something which people really appreciate. is keeping to try to keep some relationship alive than completely breaking it and again as we talked about poisoning the world right don't burn the bridges in such a way that like um you give such a nasty experience that the recruiter decides hey this person is so bad that i'm not going to come to this college or university ever again in my life and that's not good for you or not good for the college you are representing so be Aware and thoughtful that you're not just representing yourself.

You're also a ambassador for the institution you're from. If you're from a university or college, you also represent the university or college. So be thoughtful, right? Just be polite and graceful. Recruiters understand the circumstances change all the time. So even if they know it's 100% match, something will always happen at the last minute.

And they're very comfortable with it. So they've seen hundreds of people declining offers in the past. So it's not a surprise to them. They will not be uncomfortable. So have that conversation and just be polite and honest and then you can definitely decline offers in a way where you don't burn the bridges. Okay, we talked about post interviews when you get an offer, but what if you don't get an offer at all, right? You're just facing lots and lots of failure.

So how do you deal with those situations? So one thing I would recommend is it doesn't matter whether you get one success, 100 success, 1,000 successes, because you can ultimately join only one company, right? You can only take one offer. Target just one company. That's really what you need to be looking for.

So decrease a pool of companies you target. Don't make it too big. Have a thick skin because you'll continuously face rejection. It's always going to be there. A bit like playing a video game, right? Sometimes something happens, then you fall down, but get up and then you play the game again. So this is like nothing's going to happen to you in the job search process.

At max, somebody may say that they don't want you. That's fine, right? You move on to the next company and then try your luck there. So just having a thick skin and keep reaching out. Don't always assume that if you don't get an offer, you are the root cause.

There's something wrong with you. So many a time, there are budgetary problems. There could be issues with over-hiring. There could be issues with business strategy, with the recruiting strategy, and they decide to cut down on the number of hires. So if you don't get an offer, it's always not about you. It could be different things happening within the company, which you would never have any idea of.

So don't take it too personally. He's the current CEO of Palo Alto Networks. I remember reading one of his interviews where he was saying that he applied to hundreds of companies, post his master's degree, ultimately got offered from SAP in Germany because he couldn't find a job in the US after he graduated. So he's right now a CEO. He did fantastically well in his career, but everyone goes ups and downs, right? There are times when you struggle for jobs. This is the nature of the game. don't read too much into it so learn from your mistakes if possible analyze what went wrong and see where you can improve it's not just about the job search process but for life generally okay folks hopefully you learned something from this conversation and cheers talk to you later