

Be Prepared

A compilation of interview experiences of a few students from Class 2005

Hi,

This letter is addressed primarily to final year students who would be sitting for placements. After all the slogging and hours that you have put in it is time to reap the rewards.

This document is a compilation of the experiences of students who got through the top companies in campus. I have tried to make as few a changes as possible to what people sent in.

How and why this document was compiled?

After getting my job I felt that if I had had prior information on what to expect during interviews I may have performed better. The feeling remained as a small regret. And the only solution seemed to be compiling a document which had information on “What you are going to face during the interview?” This document is more about “What to prepare?” rather than “How to prepare?” The latter question I believe is for an individual to decide.

About the material:

You may find the document repetitive at times because people do share similar experiences/advices. But it is still better to be reminded again and again rather than miss out on any point. And at some places in the compilation people may differ in their opinions and advice which I guess was obviously bound to happen.

Again this compilation is about “what to prepare?” and that comes directly from the questions these people were asked and also asked the interviewers. It is this information gap that this compilation wishes to fill.

You will find the material biased towards consultancy/analyst/outdoor jobs rather than core or software. Reason is that I myself was interested in consultancy/outdoor jobs and I

(after talking to my other batch mates) felt there is a lot of other material already available out there to prepare for software.

I have inserted the following keywords:

Advice

Questions I asked

Questions they asked

Lessons

to make the search easier. You may use them if you are searching for one particular thing. Another way obviously is to search by company name.

I have tried not to change anything in the write-up that has been submitted to me except insert comments which I thought may be helpful to you. Rest the individual experiences have been kept in their original formats and language so that the information is presented to you in the way they felt it and the way you are going to experience it in different manners in the coming months.

I am thankful to Anip and Arpit for providing the database of the selected students and Zishaan for discussions on the content. A special thanks to all the students who contributed for the database.

I hope you would find this productive.

ALL THE BEST

Harpreet

hsgrover@ gmail.com

Aakash Rawat

Inductis

Hi,

I am sending a small write up on my experience in the placement.

Firstly, some fundaes on pre-placement preparation.

Advice

- I had prepared my resume myself after having a look at some previous resumes and did not consult anybody else on that. The resume turned out to be good but it could very well have been the opposite so this is the very first point that one should take care of. Do consult a couple of your "*good*" friends while making your resume. A very important thing to remember is that it is not important to write a lot of things on your resume, you can mention just a couple of your good achievements, highlight and just stress on them. I had seen some of my batchmates' resumes where a lot of things like president of this, gsec of that etc. were mentioned but none of them looked interesting enough to capture the attention of the reader.
- Gather fundaes from seniors, specially those who have gotten jobs like the ones you are looking for, this should be done early enough i.e. before they leave.
- Start retrospecting, trying to answer questions like what have you achieved in the past 4 yrs in IIT and before that, what have been the major events/happenings/achievements in your life and what have you gained from them, what are your strong points etc. This will help greatly in HR interviews.
- Prepare for CAT a little bit which might help in tests like CapOne and Inductis.
- Make yourself aware of the selection procedures of all the companies, as in, which ones shortlist on the basis of a written test, what sort of test, how many rounds of interviews etc.

- It is good if you can try out some puzzles, from anywhere - summers, internet anywhere..plus junta with not a strong mathematics/probability background should revise probability and try out some puzzles on that too. This can be a inductis specific point.
- Practise some case-studies, take note only some and not many. You are not expected to be aware of the technical jargon and stuff, but you should be able to ask good questions and for that it is good if you can have a look at some approaches to solving case studies.

Now some points on how to face the placement season:

- Don't put too many hopes on any one particular job, it might be good if you get that particular job but if you dont - it is not the end of things, there are going to be lots of other opportunities. Plus my personal experience says that wearing this attitude ie. Not being too hopeful also helps in carrying yourself well in the interviews. If you are not selected for some job and some other punter is, it does NOT mean that he or she is better than you.
- Be very clear on what you are looking for in any particular job, and why is it that you want to get it. These might not be very genuine reasons but should be convincing enough.

Now a list of the questions that I can remember:

McKinsey

(Questions they asked)

2 case studies -

- A. What do you think is the future of IT in India going to be like.
- B. Some company wants to launch an environment-friendly gadget, estimate the market for that.

For McK case studies, you should be aware of some current hot issues being discussed in the media, reading editorials for some time can help. Plus the interviewers can be a bit rude/unfriendly so you should not lose heart in case you have to face any such person. No HR for me.

BCG

Very friendly interviewers, very soft spoken and really good people :).

Questions they asked

1st interview: A lot of discussion on what do I see for myself in my future, how I want to go about it, why not MBA at this point in time, what I did in MI..how did it help me, a little about my PT at HLL and what I learnt there.

Then a very basic case study - some chaiwala wants to set up a chai-stall at the top of a hill, at what height should he set up the stall. Started by asking questions to clear up the scenario like tourist spot/hill station etc..then threw some more ideas etc..basically most of these people expect you to be good at interpreting graphs and also plotting them. so do include such statistical measure in your analysis.

2nd interview: Some general talk, then straight to the case study. Some automotive company makes loading trucks but the share is going down has been going down in the past, analyze this. One of the things that I remember was important was that even if the company might be growing, it might be losing the market share. Again by the end of the analysis had a couple of graphs drawn.

3rd interview: Talked about my PT, the interviewer had also done his PT at the same place. Had to justify why I wasn't keen on joining the same company where I did my PT. Then came the case study. A company has come up with a new eye solution which can remove the need for spectacles, how should the drops be priced?

Lessons

The feedback I was given was that my approach to problems was not aggressive enough i.e. being more reactive than proactive.

HR interview : Just one question - "tell me something about yourself". And then this lead to many other things and topics. I was asked about some incident when I had been embarrassed. The feedback that I was given was that let the other person complete his/her speaking and only then start speaking.

Inductis

Advice/Questions they asked

Try to score good in the test, it plays an important part in the final selection, as do other things. Practise a lot of puzzles. While at the interviews venue, if you hear beforehand of some puzzle which you are asked, be frank and accept that in the interview.

1st interview : A lot of talking with the head - Sandeep, mostly about my career goals, why inductis, why not MBA, why a switch to management from technical, why my CPI had been declining, was asked about my role in MI, and also a little about my internship. Noquestion/puzzle.

2nd interview : A little talking, was asked about who all I knew at inductis and what all I had heard about the work/culture there. These people pass on the points noted down in the previous interview to the next interview so do take care of being consistent throughout the interviews. Was asked just one puzzle: 25 horses, 5 tracks, only can race 5 horses at a time, find out the best 5 horses in the most efficient way. Be interactive, think loud.

3rd interview : A lot of talking again, why job and not MBA. A simple quantitative puzzle - fill this room with balls of this size, how many balls do you think will fit. Had to come

up with an exact number and also then analyze how good this number was.

4th interview : Very little talking, a very good case study. Not very interactive (unlike BCG). Estimate the number of cycles in India.

Aakash

Akshi

My Experience

I just sat for two interviews in all before I got my job. The first was Microsoft where I only gave round one interview which was purely technical. Anyways didn't get short listed for round two there, so that was the end of that.

The next interview I sat for was CapOne. The first stage was a written test which is quite simple as such but has long data analysis questions. So basically, you should be quick with calculations etc. to do well there. They short listed some 52 students after the written test for the interviews.

(Questions they asked)

Each person first had one interview which could be *a case study or an HR interview*. In my case it was case study. It was purely calculations based. They start with a simple profit loss problem, and then gradually keep making it more complicated by introducing more constraints. **Thinking aloud** is a good idea, since it gives them a picture of which direction you are thinking in and makes the time you are taking for a calculation seem justifiable. Quick mental math definitely helps.

They shortlisted some 20 people after the first round interviews. There were two more interviews for these people, such that *each person in the end gave 2 case study interviews and one HR interview*. My second interview was also a case study. Again the same comments as above. *You should not get nervous because of small errors in calculations, they are pretty normal with almost everybody*. They usually ask you to check you answer again in such a case and then go on with the problem.

The third interview was HR. The lady who was taking this interview was quite nice and made me feel quite at ease. Infact it was more like just chatting with her. There were three standard questions. I hadn't really prepared answers for HR interview but I did sit

and think of the projects, important events I would talk about in case I was asked the night before.

The questions were:

- Give an instance of a time when you were part of a project group. There are many questions related to the points you have mentioned in your answer, so I guess it takes some courage and smartness to get away with bluffing. I did not attempt that, so basically I talked abt my summer internship, a little lacklustre but it seemed to work.
- The second was, give an instance of a time when you recovered successfully from a crisis situation in a project. Here I spoke about a course project we did in a group.
- The third was, give an instance of a time when you had to sacrifice something for the better of the group as a whole. I apparently didn't answer this very well (I'm not much of a sacrificing type in general). She repeated the question again giving an instance from her own life, I did come up with an answer eventually and I guess it was good enough to see me through.

Questions Asked by me

Ohh about the *questions I asked*, I asked the guys taking my first case study interview about the CapOne offices in Britain and Canada i.e. if they were at par with their US offices. I asked the HR interview lady the difference between a business analyst and a data analyst and whether we'll always be working in groups etc., since all the questions were related to working in a group.

Advice – These questions show that the person has been very careful in preparing for the company. He has gone through the website, knows where the offices are and does want to know his position before accepting.

Thats it, I finally got through.

I wrote back to Akshi, and he replied telling me what I wanted and not knowing it ;).

On Mon, 21 Feb 2005, Harpreet S. Grover wrote:

> Hello Akshi,

>

> I went through your write up, have made a few minor changes.

> Also it would be great if you can write a bit about why you could not
> get through Microsoft.

>

> The rest is excellent, I have added a few comments. Please approve them
> once so that I can compile it.

> Thanks again.

> Harpreet

Hi,

Yeah I'm fine with whichever format you want to put this writeup up in.

Just get rid of the 'That's it, I finally got through' line at the end :)

makes it sound like some kind of a marathon.

About Microsoft, ummm I really don't have much of an idea. I wasn't expecting to clear it also really, since my CPI is not all that great.

The interview was an algo related question which I think I answered decently enough. However, I think to be able to clear Microsoft you need to be an excellent coder, they expect you to be able to write flawless code etc. on the spot from what I heard. Like I said, I don't have a very good idea. You could ask somebody who got through Microsoft about what it takes to clear their interview.

Akshi.

Anant Inani

I had applied for BCG, ITC, BG and Techspan before Fractal. I was not short-listed by BCG. I screwed up the GD's of ITC and Techspan and then realized that a little bit of preparation could have done wonders. My BG's GD was good and I was quite content after the GD but I can only say that it just wasn't my day. No regrets now though :).

Also, I didn't apply for Inductis because of the preconceived notion that it selects only CSE and EE guys. I was so wrong in my thinking. I also missed Capital One as I was ill and couldn't sign the JAF. I seriously regret these two blunders as my present offer has the same job profile as these two.

My experience with Fractal:

What should I say..it was a perfect day. I attended the ppt, appeared for the test, apparently cracked it :D and was called for the GD. My GD topic was "*Significance of censor board in the present scenerio*" It went good and this time I was well prepared to face my first interview of the placement season. The interview was kind of a dream interview for me. All the questions which were asked referred to my resume. *The interviewers checked out even the minutest of the details of the points which I had mentioned in my resume.* Apparently, they were looking for logic and analytical skills behind my each and every argument. Then they threw a puzzle at me and I managed to solve it easily. Then came the two most important questions (Questions they asked)

- Why fractal
- what are your short term and long term plans

The basic knowledge of the work profile of fractal helped me answer the questions very well. I didn't want to leave any chance and when they said this is it for the interview, I asked them a prepared question about some specific work of the company which I believe was impressive on my part. My words to a friend when I came out of the interview,

"There is no reason that they can kick me out today". I faced another round of interview which was more of a formality than a test..

Advice

A few points which I feel job aspirants should take care of:

- Don't miss the ppt of the company you are seriously aiming for.
- Do your homework properly. Talk to seniors, read the website.
- Do practise some aptitude tests and logical reasoning, trust me it will definitely help.
- Prepare some questions related to the company to ask in the interviews. It is like a pull back opportunity during the interview.

Remember, don't say if I deserve the job, I'll get it; instead snatch the job and say I deserved it. :)

Feel free to ask anything in which I can be of some help.

My email: anant.inani@gmail.com

Contact: 09863966463

Anip Sharma

ATKearney

During the interview and after the interview I have the following impressions: Unlike Mckinsey and BCG these ppl typically make a decision in 2.5 interview rounds and maximum 3. There is a lot of authority vested with the people who are actually interviewing. I had undergone 3 rounds of interviews:

1st round: One case + few HR questions+ Single Interviewer (20 mins)

Case: A chocolate manufacturer's profitability is falling. Analyze and suggest potential problem areas. Pretty standard case and preparation would definitely help.

I was also asked to do a turncoat: Speak one minute on why India is gr8 and one minute why India is not gr8.

Questions they asked

Then there were HR questions like "tell me abt urself" and "biggest achievement" and "why consulting". In my opinion "my consulting" is a question one should be thoroughly prepared for. Cases were different for everybody and in one panel no case was asked.

2nd round: two mini cases + one guesstimate + exhaustive HR + 2 interviewers (40 min)

Case/Guesstimate: Estimate the market for contact lens in India Another common guesstimate - no of tennis balls in Mumbai.

I was also asked the business aspect of a course project. I was asked to estimate the effect of appreciating currency on exports/imports.

HR was exhaustive and spanned many domains was general.

3rd round: Decisive + 25 mins+ One case (same for everybody) + 2-3 general questions

Case: What is the net economic value which a car running on diesel gives to a customer vis a vis a petrol car (everything else being the same)

Question is tricky because of language but the guy wanted to check the concept of net present value (NPV).

Advice: "*there is no alternative to practice and preparation*" There are so many online resources prepare well for guesstimates and business cases and you will be just fine.

Anip Sharma

Ankit Gupta

I've jotted down my experience below. Hope it helps the next batch.

Here it is.

Hi

To whoever's reading my experience on my interview with McKinsey, the only interview that I was able to give before getting placed (luckily or unluckily). The reason why I think of it as unlucky at times, is cause I did not experience the placement season, the ups and downs, the anxiety and excitement of that phase, which I feel are a great learning experience. On the other hand, it also feels great to have got a job with McKinsey, a company I had no high hopes of getting through till the moment my name was announced in the final selected list.

I do not know how far this could be true, but I feel that my attitude of not having great hopes of getting through was a boon in disguise, because I was hardly tensed during any of my interviews. I took them pretty casually, answering questions with what ever came to my mind instantly, without feeling the pressure of whether what I have said is right or wrong, whether it has impressed the interviewer or whether he thinks that I'm a jerk.

Well, I'll try taking you a little more systematically through my interviews with McKinsey. I had 4 interviews in total with McKinsey before being selected. Initially, 30 students were selected, and we had 2 interviews in the first round. Based on these interviews, 10 students were short listed for the next round which comprised of 2 more interviews.

Questions they asked

The cases that I got were:

Case 1 - The profits of a theater in town have been going down since the

past few years. Find out the reason and suggest recommendations to improve performance.

----- --
I blew up this case. Was not able to crack the reason behind the decrease in profits on my own, and was too slow in suggesting the basic recommendations. I felt I had lost it here.

Case 2 - Estimate the number of tractors in India.

I made blunders here too. I was always getting my ratios wrong, whether it was the ratio of urban n rural population in india, or whether it was the ratio of people who were into farming v/s the rest. You can find such questions and their answers on any good consultancy site. While solving such questions, u need to be very creative in your thoughts, considering all possible cases. But creativity need not necessarily mean wild imagination. You need to be very practical in your points too.

Case 3 - A film producer approaches a music company and wants to sell the music rights of his film to the music company. Should the music company go with the deal? Discuss.

Case 4 - Indian Oil wants to open automatic petrol stations in the country, where people can come and fill petrol themselves by feeding money into the machine. Should they go ahead with this decision? Discuss.

I have not talked much in detail about the cases, cause many people can have different ideas as to how to go about solving a case. *Trust me, there is no one right answer to solve a case.*

Advice

A few good points which helped me while solving any case with an interviewer were (it's not necessary that these are guidelines and a set of rules as to how one should solve a case, they are just my experiences):

- **Think aloud**

I always kept telling the interviewer about what lines I was thinking on. That showed my communication skills, as to how well and how clearly I was able to communicate my ideas to d interviewer.

- **Be creative in thinking**

Anyone can come up with those standard answers. One needs to prove that he has the ability to think laterally, and simultaneously work out a practical conclusion as to whether the idea is encashable or not.

- **Feel the situation**

This attitude helped me a lot. In all my interviews, the interviewer would tell me the case and say that the client has approached you for consultancy, how will you help him out. While discussing the case with my interviewer, I always tried to feel the situation as if I were an actual consultant and tried talking to the interviewer as if he were an actual client. That helped bring a more professional attitude in the whole interview.

Besides these case fundaes, I did a lot of groundwork to prepare myself for my placement in general. There are some very good cases and general requirement tips on the McKinsey and BCG sites, and you should definitely go through them to get an idea of what qualities these people are looking for. Besides this, preparing yourselves for the standard HR questions like "tell me about yourself" and "what your biggest achievement is" do help for the placements in general.

I guess this is it! Hope you benefit from reading this and get a cracku job! Best of Luck buddy!!

Hey one thing .. u can feel free to contact me if u've got any further queries. Here's my mail id: ankitgupta@iitb.ac.in

chalo then .. c ya !! Ankit

Devdatta Gangal

CapOne

Hi,

This is my interview experience; I think most of the guys had a similar one.

(Questions they asked)

Interview1:

We are a credit card company. For every customer that we get we get a profit of \$80. We advertise by sending flyers to as many people as possible. Each flyer costs 50 cents. the acceptance rate is 2%. We decide to change the strategy and promise to give a \$10 worth phone card along with our credit card. This system aids in increasing the acceptance rate by 0.5% making it 2.5%. Which strategy is better?

Interview2:

Note: Both the case interviews were simple mathematical (arithmetic) problems. They were like our 10th standard problems. Very simple. But you are not expected to make any mistake. You should formulate the approach and how you would solve the sum fast. I listened to the problem carefully and then told the interviewers my approach in no time. i.e. come up with a formula for the problem, the final expression. I knew I wouldn't go wrong there. But then the calculation part I did really slowly and carefully. Simple things like 5% of 2000 I took my time. Dont fumble at any step. I wrote 5% of 2000 as $(5 \times 2000)/100$ then cut the 2 zeros in front of him from both the numerator and denominator... then did $5 \times 20 = 100$. I think this is fine, but

This interview had simple parameters of the credit card world. The maximum credit limit. Average credit taken. Defaulter rate. Interest rate. Etc. It is better to know the terms, but it is really fine to ask what they mean. No problems with that. Better to be sure about everything before you start off. There were simple problems: find out the profit. Then how interest rate should we change to get some result. How much defaulting can we tolerate to offset some change, etc. Keep cool and every-one must be able to do it. Later

some tricky questions can be asked, but not so very tough ones.

Interview three: PI

He asked me 2 questions. and I had to tell him some situation and how I handled the situation. Both questions pertained to team work.

1. What should a leader be like? Where have I failed as a leader? How were you successful as a leader.
2. Where have I worked in a team, and how good team member was I.
3. A project was suffering. What did I do to take it to completion?

All the best to all.

Wish you all success in life.

Devdatta

GAURAV PORWAL

Here goes my story----->

1. Boston Consulting Group (BCG)

- Around 20 taxis are owned by a guy in Mumbai. How can he increase his profitability?

Places where I messed up (lessons):

- a. No structured way of approaching the problem. It was more like trying to solve a jigsaw puzzle, putting bits and pieces together.
- b. Failed to get the big picture (low creative thinking)
- c. Was not able to ask the right kind of questions from the interviewer.

In a nutshell, complete disaster. *But as in all consultancy interviews, I came out happy and contented :)*

2. Schlumberger

Questions they asked in HR interview

1. What is Mood Indigo? What was your role in the event?
2. Give an incident where you did something inspite of the fact that didn't like doing it?
3. Why don't you play team games? (Oops !)

The interview also included some other general questions about myself and life at IIT.

Lessons from this episode –

- a. Try your best to be truthful, but never get into confessional mode.
- b. Don't get very serious during the interview. Be informal, not casual with the interviewer.

- c. Start playing team games. (I just felt that my interviewer was a little biased towards people who play such games coz. all the guys who made it to 2nd round from my panel played team sports).

3. Capital One

Two rounds of case interviews. All were number crunching stuff with some little application of business sense. I do not remember the figures.

(Questions they asked)

Round One

1. There is a cable operator who wants to increase profits. Suggest ways. Also perform some basic calculations about various cost parameters.

Round Two

1. Something related to the profitability of a company and the number of employees it has.
2. Credit limit issues related to credit cards and interest rates.

Lessons learnt:

- a. Get a chip embedded in your head!. Or just practice to crunch numbers fast. I tried to do it only during the interviews and made lot of mistakes. Use pen/paper if required.
- b. It will really help if you have some sense as to how the credit card system works. Some finance fundaes will help you to fine tune your presentation of the answers and you interviewer will be more than happy with that.

4. Procter & Gamble *(Finally the last company :)*

4 rounds of HR interviews (with little shots of tech questions). I think what those guys were looking for was consistency. All the rounds has more or less the same questions but asked in a different manner. So if you bluffed them in one round, there is virtually no chance you can save your face in the following one. So, I guess honesty is the best policy.

Some of the questions as I remember are(Questions they asked):

1. Tell us about yourself (Most common and most difficult question.
Nobody exactly knows what to say)
2. What is your final year project? What is your contribution to the subject?
3. Where did you do your training? What did you do?
4. Why did you choose the discipline you are studying?
5. What was SPIC MACAY National Convention? What was your role in that?
6. As the G.S.Cult, what was your contributions to the cultural scene?
7. Give an incident, when you had to work with a difficult person.
8. Give an incident, when you decided to achieve something and finally achieved it.
9. Why such a low CPI (7.65 at the time of interview)?
10. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
11. Do you think that you'll face any problems working in Japan?

Lessons

Tried to learn some lessons described earlier :). Everything went on quite smoothly without much hiccup's. I guess sometimes it's just your day. All I can say is that if you can show some traits of discipline, sincerity and honesty, you are in!

Best of luck for your upcoming interviews.

regards,

Gaurav

Harpreet S. Grover

What you should do before the placement season begins

Advice

- Make sure you know which company profile you are looking at, consultancy (McKinsey, BCG etc), data analytics (Inductis, Fractal), management (ITC, HLL), software or core. Mould your preparation that way. I was sure that even if I do not get placed till the end I would not sit for software companies.
- There are basically two kinds of interviews, at least for consultancies. Case study and HR. In one you are evaluated on your power of thinking on your feet and in the second about how well you know yourself, your aims etc.
- Start collecting information about which questions companies ask and also write down the answers to basic questions, like define yourself, tell me something that is not in your resume etc. Make sure you do these before reading someone else answers. And do not leave your resume for a last minute job, it deserves much more importance.
- Before you sign in a company understand what the company is offering. You may be end up with less in hand with a company offering 7 lakhs as CTC and much more with other companies offering less say 5. Get clear about the various terms like Gross, CTC, Basic pay etc.
- Listen to the PPT's carefully. Take a notebook and pen, and note the questions that come to your mind.
- Make sure you go through the company website in detail and frame questions as they come in your mind, you should have a list of at least 6 different questions and do not repeat them with the interviewers in the same company.
- Have a list of facts for the case studies, like population of India, Mumbai area, percentage of people below poverty line etc.
- Finally, get your clothes in place. No rushing on the last day please.

Now coming to my experience with the placements –

McKinsey

Dream Job – IIT. That is what it is. Well by the time this company came I was well prepared in HR but it was only in the last week I came to know that there is something called the case study interview and I finally started doing them after I got short listed.

Questions they asked

Case Studies

- How many tractors are there in Punjab
- Number of ATM's are there in India
- There is a theatre company going into loss, what to do
- A retail store company is going into loss due to a competitor, plan out a strategy
- How many litres of paint does Asian Paints sell in Delhi each year

HR

- If there is one thing you could change about IIT, what would it be
- One thing that I would like to change about my life at IIT
- Define yourself in three adjectives
- How would your juniors define you in three adjectives

My strong points – as told by the McKinsey guys later

- All the interviewers enjoyed the interview
- Good on analysis
- Was creative

Where I f#%\$&# up - as told by McKinsey guys later

- Too quick in analysis
- Use pen and paper, writing down would help you structure thoughts
- Too quick to jump to numbers which at times were wrong but when provided clues you get to the right conclusion.
- Back intuition (numbers) by logic
- Tell the interviewer what you are thinking; he should not need to prod.

Make sure you go to the guys to talk if you were not selected after the final interview.

BCG

In BCG I learned a very important lesson. Every person who comes out of a consultancy interview is satisfied and happy. It was and only when I later sat back and thought did I notice what actually went wrong. Reflection helps a lot.

Positives

- Good presence
- Creative

Negatives

- Did not take initiative in case study, was too conforming to what interviewer said
- Get better structure on case studies

And finally, where I finally got through.

Inductis

By now I thought I was enough experienced and also I believed I was in a crisis state. This is how I went about it.

Went to the PPT – Jotted down questions – Went to the website – Got details of the persons who were going to interview me – Called up guys who were working at Inductis – Talked about the guys who would be conducting my interview and other information about the firm – prepared personal questions based on my interviewers experience and history.

What they say about Inductis - if you get the puzzles you are through. In my case I got all of them. And whenever I had heard the puzzle before, I told them so and asked for another one. If you do not do so they are experienced enough to find out by the time you take and the way you solve it.

Questions they asked

HR

- Among IIT guys rate yourself on three scales – IQ, EQ and hardwork
- Your SPI seems to be following a cyclic pattern of ups and downs. How can I make sure that the same thing would not happen at Inductis

Remember they would be looking at the approach you follow, not the answers you reach. Make sure you understand that. Also my experience tells me that any *important* lies in resume are almost always caught.

Remember, everything you say is discussed afterwards. If each interviewer the same question, then your answers would be matched afterwards. So be consistent in your answers.

My two pence – ***be prepared.***

In case I can help in any other way, you can get me at *hsgrover at gmail.*

Harpreet

Nikhil Karamchandani

Fractal

Questions they asked

- For people with reasonably good CPI's , the first and the most obvious question is are they gonna app? My answer was a confident "no":D. I would advice people to give very "to-the-point" answer to this question rather than beat round the bush saying "I haven't thought" or "If I get Stan, I will go". Also try supporting your answer with reason. For eg., In my fractal interview, when I denied any plans to app, I said I had worked at Intel in the summers and a part of my proj. involved an algorithm for queue stability. Now in my UROP, I had developed an improvised version of a similar algorithm. But the Intel guyz were using quite a simplistic algorithm in their commercial switches. When I asked them why, they said to use complex algorithms was way too costly in terms of hardware and wasn't needed in fact. So I used that in my interview, saying I realized how different theory was from practice and I did not wanna app because I don't wanna do simply theoretical work with no practical output. *Moral being, if u want the job, my advice, strong NO with some backing with reason..*
- Attend PPT's. I was asked a question regarding the PPT. I lied saying I had attended and was almost, almost caught. Easily avoidable.
- Also had some kind of a stress interview. They kept firing weird questions. My advice - Don't panic. Stay cool. Take your time.

Questions I asked

- Simplest One. If the name is a little weird, ask why that company name?
- You can ask them to describe a normal day at their company?

Advice

Don't Panic. Prepare answer to some common questions beforehand. Go through the website and attend PPT. Avoid lies, unless u r sure u wud be able to bk up.

Hey, I am Niranjana Chavan, 00D10028, Mechanical Eng. student specializing in TFE. I am placed in Schlumberger Asia Services Ltd.

The interview season starts with great apprehensions. Here's my effort to relieve the tension. Firstly, some pointers on drafting of resume:-

- 1) Make your resume to project your personality as well rounded one i.e. some companies like diverse personalities esp. consultancy firms
- 2) Avoid writing too much mundane details of your project work. Take it from me – *no one is interested*. I had written only topics of my projects in my resume.
- 3) Needless to say, make your resume attractive. Identify your thrust areas and bring them out strongly through your resume.

Our placement started in August, 2004. I had applied to first four companies on campus - McKinsey, BCG, ITC & Schlumberger. I was short listed by all four. I had two interviews with McKinsey in the first round and did not go further. I had one with BCG and also didn't go further. And I had one group discussion, one group event and one interview with ITC before I was rejected. I had one interview and one group exercise in Schlumberger and got an offer for the post of Field Engineer.

Day One:-

McKinsey & Co

McKinsey had short listed about 30 students. For short listing, probably these people have a number of spikes funda i.e. they count the number of spikes in your life in IIT. Probably with more than 2 spikes you are in the shortlist. McKinsey has the practice of mailing you your "spikes" after short listing you. Taking my personal case, you can understand what is meant by spikes. McKinsey says I was short listed because:-

- 1) I was topper of my specialization.
- 2) We had won the ASME International Student Design Contest.
- 3) Also I had been Techfest Manager and had got a hostel cultural color.

Surprisingly, they had chaffed out the crucial points out of my resume. I should say in this point, probably other consultancy firms have similar short listing criteria because out of McKinsey and BCG 's shortlist, some 25 odd people were common.

Details of my interviews are as below:-

Interview 1:-

Questions they asked

The interview started with typical HR kinda questions. Tell me about yourself? Strengths? Career Goals? etc. etc.

This was my first interview in my life and God, I was nervous. My answers were incoherent and also not so "pointed" or "focused". I was so jittery while speaking.

Case: A famous foreign automobile company wants to open dealership outlets in Mumbai. How much should they open?

My interview had a bad start, and I really didn't know how to analyze a case. I tried to solve by all means, but it was terrible flop. Halfway, through the interview, I was sure of the outcome.

Interview 2:-

I had messed the first interview so much that I didn't really see the point of going for second interview. My second interviewer was into banking and all. He insisted me to sit on same side of table. Probably, he wanted to study my body language. This time, I was bit composed (I guess, I had given up), so words were falling in place. So I managed to answer the HR questions properly.

Case: Estimate the number of ACs used in Mumbai.

This time, I think I took a more sensible approach towards analyzing the case, though there were numerous snags in the approach.

I knew I had screwed both of my interviews, but what I missed doing, was asking for feedback. These people give very constructive feedback and being consultants themselves, they can make quick assessment of personality of the interviewee. I guess at that moment, both interviews went so berserk that I was too embarrassed to ask for feedback.

Final Offers:-

After two interviews of 20 minutes each in the first round, they short listed ten. And after two more interviews of 30 minutes each, they made 3 offers.

Day2:-

The Boston Consulting Group

BCG short listed about 40 students. As I said earlier, most of the short listed candidates of BCG and McK were common. This time, I had prepared most of the HR questions and was somehow mentally prepared to give a consultancy firm interview.

The interviewer was pretty casual, made me comfortable. Since this was my third interview and I had prepared typical HR questions, I waded peacefully through the HR questions

Case: A foreign automobile accessory firm wants to enter Indian market. What is strategy should they use and what kinda market are they expecting at the end of a year?

I solved this case pretty systematically, and probably reached to sensible conclusion. But, what I lacked was, a rigor to my approach. I picked data from air. These things were confirmed by feedback from the interviewer. Obviously, I was rejected after first round. But, at this stage, I was apprehensive about my communication skills, which I talked to

the interviewer. Really that helped. He not only pointed out my weaknesses, he also made me realize my strengths.

Final Offers:-

After several rounds of interviews, BCG made 3 offers

One point I need to tell here, typical last question of each and every company is “Any questions for us”. So before going for an interview, have a question prepared in mind.

ITC

ITC short listed 51 students based on the detailed form filled up.

Group Discussion:-

The GD was based on housing allotment problem faced by HR division of an industry. It had some 6-7 kinda of workers and we had to decide the worthwhile owner, if only one house was available. Issue was quite debatable. Our group discussion turned into a total mess. At the end of it, I was pretty sure, the interviewers weren't impressed by our performance. Luckily enough, I was short listed further in final ten.

Group Event:-

The session was 90 minutes. They made us simulate a committee meeting in which each person was given an identity. It was a 45 minutes meeting to discuss the design of a monument of national significance and heritage to be built in the city. In the next 45 minutes, we actually had to build what we had discussed using thermocol, tapes, colors etc. Apart from team work, creativity etc. we also had to keep in mind the budget of the structure. At the end of 45 minutes, our team managed to erect a building that looked something similar to what we had discussed.

This was a helluva experience. In our preliminary discussion, each person was given a role to play in committee and was given his selfish agenda to be discussed in the meeting.

I was given the role of person from mayor's office. Obviously, I was inherently convener of the discussion and had maximum opportunity to express myself, which I supposedly screwed up. All people of group event were interviewed.

Interview:-

Questions they asked

This interview was too formal. Three over aged people in front of me, one I could identify as a psychiatrist or something, because he didn't speak at all in entire duration of interview. The interview started in typical bureaucratic manner asking for details like JEE rank, CPI, DR, etc etc. Then came typical HR questions, which I was peacefully thru. Then, they started discussing, how should we have handled Group Event? They started pestering me. All my answers thereon received very cold and dubious look. At the end of interview, I knew I was not the one.

Final Offers:-

ITC made 5 offers.

Day4:-

Schlumberger Asia Services Ltd

I had three rejects from three consecutive days. On fourth day, Schlumberger short listed me. By now, I knew, I was very good on resume, but after 3 rejections, I was totally dejected. Schlumberger had interviews for 40 odd people and then short listed 15 for final round of group exercise.

Interview:-

First time, I was interviewed by a foreigner. But, that guy was cool and very receptive. Probably, he was impressed by my resume too. By this time, words literally used to pour out of my mouth. My statements were pointed, well framed, all relevant. But, communication with foreigner is different ballgame. I could never analyse his response.

Group exercise:-

Then, Schlumberger had engaged us in a 6 hour long group exercise. At start, they made some presentations about work in Schlumberger, probably to freak us out. After that, there were group activities for groups of four, which they monitored minutely.

After few days, Schlumberger made offer to 3 students for the post of Field Engineer, out of which, I was the one.

I was lucky enough to be placed early in placement season. But good companies keep pouring throughout the year, so it is not bad if you are not placed early. Anyways you don't get a head start by joining job early if you are placed early.

Best luck for your placements!!!!

Niranjan Chavan

Pratibha Bajaj

Mc Kinsey & Co

Case 1:

“Estimate the no. of air pollution control equipments required in Steel Industry in India?”

This question was asked in the background of my one month training at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). Mc Kinsey had done consultancy for RSP sometime ago. I was even asked the Steel output of India and RSP in particular. The interviewer was known for stressing interviewees as was evident from PPT itself.

Other questions: An incident where you motivated people to do a particular task, one thing you would like to change in your life at IIT and lots of cross questioning.

(Questions they asked)

Case 2:

Again Steel Industry. But this time about US Steel Industry. *“Estimate the capacity of ETP (effluent treatment plant) required for the entire US Steel Industry and what should be the price charged for cleaning water.”*

Other questions: One was regarding leadership abilities. At the end the interviewer asked *“If I would like to work in Steel industry, why or why not?”*

Questions I asked: “Why are so many HR heads women? Is it a trend or just a coincidence? Mc Kinsey, BCG, and ITC all had female HR managers at that time.

The Boston Consulting Group

Case1:

“A supermarket wants to increase its gross profit from 15% to 18%. Determine the measures.” I applied some fundaes of an audit course ‘Operations, Planning and Control’. The interviewer was fairly impressed by that.

Other Questions: One achievement you are really proud of in your life. (Questions they asked)

Question I asked: How did you manage being a 10 pointer?

Case2:

I don't remember exactly but it was something regarding different capacity auto carriers. One was supposed to compare those on a lot of parameters. Throughout the interview I had a feeling that something is wrong. The interviewer was trying to confuse me by always replacing my assumptions with contradictory facts.

Other Questions: Something about my BTP.

Question I asked: Something about job satisfaction

Case3:

"A new eye drop is coming into the market. It claims to cure your eye sight problems permanently. How should it be priced?" Knowledge of Economics was tested. I was asked to draw breakeven point graph among many other things. I was asked to do Competitor Analysis too.

Questions I asked: How he manages time for his hobbies? (The interviewer introduced himself at the beginning.) Where does BCG go when it wants consultancy?

HR interview:

20 minutes of continuous questioning mostly related to my resume. One should be able to back everything in the resume with convincing replies. One interesting question was "What and when was the last time you did something for a friend?" The ultimate one: "Why do you think you can be a good consultant?" A well thought answer was expected.

Questions I asked: What is the job of an HR manager in a consulting firm? And some general questions about the job.

Case4:

“Bulb B (20W, Rs. 200) wants to enter the market in competition against Bulb A (100W, Rs. 10). Should it?” Quick calculations were required. I was asked about how you would advertise for the chosen bulb. Some out of the box thinking was expected.

Other questions: What do you mean by a successful life? What would you like to have among these three: power, influence or wealth?

Questions I asked: Do you regret not being an IITian? How did BCG start in India? How do you convince people to hire consultants? Given a choice what should one go for: MBA in IIM or MBA abroad?

Advice

Some general things: A consultant's business is to ask questions. Feel free to ask as many as possible. Prepare a list of them. You are getting consultancy from the best in the industry without paying them. Make the most out of it!

Vinayak Sheshasayee

Here's my take.

Placements - My Experience.

As far as advice on how to prepare for, and ace interviews is concerned, I do not really think anyone can provide an objective treatise on this subject. It is ultimately a matter of a panel of people judging and deeming you fit to join their organization, *and it takes a different set of virtues to please each recruiter*. The usual tips on confidence, clarity of speech, ideas etc will always hold. So without going into those specifics, let me just elaborate on my own experience with the placement process.

ITC

Unlike a lot of people, I bagged an offer on my first interview, with ITC Limited. Maybe there was some good fortune in there, but nevertheless, for my part, I took the interview very seriously. More so since ITC is one of probably only 2 companies that offered really good positions in the field of work that I was interested in - Industrial Engg and Manufacturing. (HLL, the other, did not visit campus this year.). My **advice** for the coming season

- Be discrete in applying to companies, and prepare well for those that you do apply to

I had made my mind up, even if worst came to worst, not to apply for any positions in software.

With that said, this is how my interview went.

The Group Discussion:

The topic involved professional and personal ethics. This was very abstract because unlike a case discussion, there was no right or wrong. It was just a matter of pushing opinion forward. A certain amount of aggression was necessary, and luckily, my group did not get too unruly and actually did end up with a conclusion. Now, group discussions with HLL, ITC etc have always had a high "mortality" rate.(1or 2 usually go through from a group of 8-9). Hence it is important to distinguish yourself as the one of the most valuable contributors to the discussion. Contributions to a GD could be any of the following:

(advice)

- Generating ideas, and consolidating them.
- Weeding out flawed ideas.
- Moving the group towards a conclusion.
- Eliciting ideas from others in the group.
- Keeping the discussion from getting chaotic.

This of course, is just speculation based on my own experiences.

The Group event:

Of the 50 or so that entered the GD, 9 moved forward to the final rounds. The group event was an exercise that involved all of the final 9 candidates. We were given a task to be accomplished (development of a monument). The first half of the event was to plan out and conceive the logistics. The next half was to implement a scaled version of the project. A draw of lots gave us roles to play during the event. None of us were prepared for anything of the sort, so I feel it just boiled down to *critical thinking and teamwork*. All in all everybody put up a good performance, so I cannot imagine how this event was judged.

The Interview:

The interview was scheduled immediately following the group event. Post of clearing the

group discussion I was really motivated. The preparation steps that I took were (advice):

- *Using the ITC website to familiarize myself with their businesses*
- Interacting with some friends who had had internships with ITC
- Making some notes about myself. It is important to know yourself and be yourself during the interview

The interview panel consisted of 3 very senior people at ITC. Their presence put me at ease immediately as they never once tried to unnerve me or cause me any unease.

(Questions they asked)

My interview in the end, boiled down to just one question: Tell us about yourself. I spent about 25 minutes answering this question, spanning out my entire life, goals, achievements etc. Periodically the interviewers stopped me and enquired for specifics. It ended with me asking one or two questions about the position and what it involved. I also expressed my desire to take up a factory position (may sound like heresy to most nowadays...). That was about it. I was somewhat surprised by the fact that there was no technical interview. But in retrospect I think they were looking more for the willingness to learn and mould oneself. One statement that was made, just prior to the results which I feel really meant a lot was: The selections were made not only on the basis of individual competence *but also on how each candidate's aims and aspirations matched the needs of the company.* (I think this holds true in case of all companies).

And then of course, they made me the offer and all was well...

Vivek Shivhare

Placed in: **ANZ-IT** (Software Engineer Blore/Melbourne)
Work is either in mainframes or as Java/C# programmer.
Procedure:Test+GD+Interview

Test: It was pretty simple. With logical reasoning and lots of verbal. PPL preparing for GRE or CAT may have slight advantage in this test. The tech part had only abt 10 questions on programming. Rest was all analogies plus some DI type questions.

GD: Topic was "*India's performance in Olympics*". It was VERY peaceful. And it wasn't the eliminating kinds. The shortlisted pretty much everyone who was trying to participate. It was a 15 minute affair. I spoke ok. wasn't the one who talkd the most. But wasn't the one talkd the least either. so it worked out fine I guess.

Questions they asked

Interview: Panel of 3. All HRish kind. They were just trying to make sure am interested in the job and will b joining. Askd a few plain questions on my projects and some on programming regarding binary tress and all. Askd abt why I am I not applying for PH.D or going for a techie job, gave them some gyaan on how that doesnt fit with my long term goals. Askd abt my long term goals :) told him that I wud like to move into the management side. Asked how long do I plan to work. Told them abt 3 years after that I wud like to go for a management degree. Some questions on why am I leaving electrical and going for a job in a banking company. askd me do u even know wot we do, the importance of banking etc. Abt my hobbies. I told them reading. askd abt a few book I read.thats it. Overall peaceful affair. They were only checking my interest I think.

As for the questions I askd them. I had read up on their site abt something called the fast trac program. I askd abt that. I also askd them something abt why they closed their banking operations in india. Also abt the overseas placement thing. And also abt the possibility of muing into analytics from software. Turned out that one of the panel members had done jus that.So she told me that its possible but not very easy. However

the interviews varied for everyone. I think they were going with the profile and wot the student led them to. One of the other guys selected had a long discussion on hacking etc coz he showed an interest in that. I had more of HRish experience as I showed a inclination to management side. But they needed some convincing that I was interested in the job. **(Questions I asked)**

Other Interviews I had flunked earlier

Capital One

Veritas

Cap One: Test was easy. U jus need a calm head to clear it. Jus make sure not to make any mistakes. The accuracy is imp I feel rather than the numberof questions correct. Interview: Behavioral. I wasnt prepared for it Actually. had a late nite Veritas interview the previous day after that early morning cap one. was kind of dissappointed on losing out veritas that reflected here I guess. As for the interview it was very peaceful, the guy made 3 pages of notes on me :)

Questions they asked

Questions asked

- Describe a situation where u took initiative as a leader to solve sme problem.
- Describe a situation where u had an original idea and how did u go abt implementing it. What was the outcome.

Overall advice: Jus be clear on the std set of behavioral questions cap one ppl give. Those r the questions they ask. But they r trained so u can't really bluff.

Veritas: total techie test+ total techie interview.
C++, networking,My Projects etc etc

Some more questions that I prepared.

- What r u looking for in ur dream company.
- Long term goals, short term goals.

Advice

Point is be clear abt wot u want. Dont be confused in ur thoughts. I guess thats the most important thing. U shud know wot kind of a job u want and work accordingly. If looking for a techie brush u c++, and those data structures, these r the eternal favorites of the panel.

All the best.

Vivek

Zishaan M. Hayath

This page (www.hayath.com/zishaan/iit/interview.html) is my experience of the placements and is here to help IIT-B students get a flavour of it. It has some standard questions, a compilation of few case studies and sample resumes. Its not exactly "Dos and Don'ts for an Interview" (you will find that at a lot of places elsewhere). Its more of an experience that I underwent during the process. If you are careful enough, you will read a lot between the lines.

Please note that the content of this page is based on my personal point of view; and you are required to read it objectively. You may or may not agree with what is written here. Also, I am writing this entire Illiad exhaustively so that the first-timers can get a good insight into various company interviews. When I was sitting in the placements, I had a lot of questions that I wanted to ask. Now that the disclaimer is in place, lets move ahead :-)

Our placement started in August, 2004. I had applied to three companies - McKinsey, BCG and ITC. I was shortlisted by all three. This is the [McKinsey resume](#), the [BCG resume](#) and the [ITC form](#) (apart from these, I also made a general [one page resume](#)). I had 2 interviews with McKinsey in the first round and did not go further. I had 5 with BCG and was in the Final-6. And I had one 1 group discussion, 1 group event and 1 interview with ITC before being made an offer.

[McKinsey & Co](#)

McKinsey short listed about 30 students. After 2 interviews of 20 mins each in the first round, they short listed 10. And after 2 more interviews of 30 mins each, they made 3 offers. Here are the cases that I got -

Case # 1: A ferry service, from Vashi to Nariman Point and back, wants to enter the market. Discuss the feasibility.

When I walked out of the room, I thought I did the interview well. But so did everyone else. As the saying goes, "If everybody is thinking alike then somebody isn't thinking". On hindsight, I think I did the interview rather poorly. No wonder I was not short listed for the next round. I was incoherent with my thoughts. I was disorganised in my thinking. And I did not complete the case.

Case # 2: Estimate the number of twin edge blades manufactured annually in India.

This interviewer had come for the Career Counseling session on the campus a week ago. And I must admit that I was very impressed with his ideas about life and work. Maybe the pressure in front of him was too high. Forget the case, I couldn't even get my "Tell me about yourself" answer right. So its worthwhile to practice your basic answers. And as far as the case is concerned, I took the Top-down approach, which is rather disappointing, no out-of-the-box thinking and add to that a few calculation blunders. Here are some of the questions he asked me -

Tell me about yourself. How would you describe yourself in precisely 3 adjectives? How would your friends describe you in precisely 3 adjectives? What do you think, Zishaan, are the qualities/ traits of a leader.

Other notes:

After the 2 McK interviews, I learnt that a consultancy interview never goes wrong. And even if it does, you will never know about it. For most of us, our first chance of an interview is also the best chance that we get (although in my case I would consider my second company as my best chance). And missing the first/ best chance always hurts.

I took feedback from my second interviewer, and despite not having the evaluation sheets with him at the moment, he was very kind to tell me about my weak points. Feedback helps, ask for it! At the end of the day, I was not short listed for the next round. My attitude had been wrong. I never believed I could make it to McKinsey. But I had another firm the next day - the BCG. And this time I made up mind to give my best.

The Boston Consulting Group

BCG short listed about 40 students. They had 1 interview in the first round and short listed 15, 2 interviews plus 1 HR interview in the next round and short listed 6. And in the final round, they had 1 case interview before they made 3 offers. All BCG interviews were about 30 mins each. Here is how my interviews went -

Case # 1: A supermarket wants to increase its gross profit from 15% to 18%. Determine the measures.

This interviewer was a 10-pointer from IITK. The key to doing well in his case was that I was asking a lot of questions. And I guess I was thinking aloud. He dropped a lot of hints, which I was careful to pick. Of course, the most important point was to get the case right. It was increase of profits from 15% to 18%

A shortlist of 15 came after the first interview and we proceeded to the next.

Case # 2: An old established bank wants to enter the Credit Card market. Should it?

Although I could have been more creative in estimating the number of credit card users, the case went OK overall. Also, these interviews give you your best chance to know about the profession ahead. So when I was asked if I had any questions, I usually asked about two things - One, the trainings that I would get. And two, did the interviewer love his job and why?

Case # 3: Bulb B (20W, Rs. 200) wants to enter the market in competition against Bulb A (100W, Rs. 10). Should it?

This interviewer was one speaker! The PPT that he gave was, by any measure, the best of all companies. His questions came in fast. And if you were not concentrating, you would get intimidated quickly. He asked me -

Tell me about yourself. How did you become the OC? Tell me, why is your GPA not 9? Whats your greatest achievement? Whats your greatest regret? What turns you on? What are you best at?

HR Interview:

This was one heck of an interview. The interviewer was swift with the questions. And she was very polite and warm. Her questions were very different in deed. They were kind of seeking insight into you and your mind. Actually, I was not aware that this was an interview ... probably my greatest blunder. After an initial question, I got a little disturbed and lost my concentration. I sat there almost dumb and was hardly present in the room. Sometimes you wish you could go back into time. The questions in the interview were something like this -

Tell me about yourself. What quality in a person would turn you off? How would you describe yourself in three words? How do you think would your friends describe you? Is there anybody that you are very close to? Are you always so silent a person? If you find that a client is also not initiating a talk, would you try to start a conversation? Do you dream, Zishaan? Are you a dreamer? What do you dream? Dont worry, I am not into interpreting dreams ;-). Tell me what did you dream last time? If you could be at a place at this point of time, where do you think you would be and what would you be doing? If you think you have hurt someone, and the other person does not know about it, would you still go to him/her and apologise? Are you a forgiving person? Would you like to be forgiven? Are you aware of the choice you are going to make? Do you think you know enough about the profession that you would take up at BCG?

I learnt a very important lesson from this interview. Do not drop your guard - You are always being evaluated. Evidently, there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers - its only your presence that matters. After the offers were made, I did not/ could not take feedback from this interviewer.

A next shortlist of 6 came after the above interview.

Case # 4: A spare part manufacturer is reporting a loss of Rs. 300 Cr. Identify the problem.

Another interview! All of us were very low on energy physically. It had been a tiring day. This interview, I think, was more to evaluate if you understood the profession of consulting and were prepared for it. "Business Doctors - that's what we are", told me the interviewer.

Other notes:

Must tell you one interesting thing. In both, my first McK interview and my first BCG interview, I was asked a question as soon as I entered the room - "Is it too cold here? Should I switch off the AC?"

In McK, I said, "Go ahead, as you wish" although I didn't want the AC to be switched off. But in case of BCG, I said it wasn't necessary to switch it off. Later, I asked Pratibha if she was asked the same/similar question, and she said Yes. I wonder if this was part of their evaluation or was it just that they were trying to put you at ease! Whatever be the case, it was an interesting point to note ;-)

A point to be mentioned about the feedbacks - your interviewers are too polite to ever tell you that you did badly. They will always tell you that they were looking for certain things (analytical skills, creativity, drive, communication skills, and I guess leadership) but would never criticise you or point out directly where you went wrong. I feel that they have a very methodical way of giving feedback, which is sometimes, just too polite for us IITians ;-)

ITC

ITC short listed 51 students based on the form filled up. They took 10 students after a group discussion. These 10 students had a group event and 1 HR interview before 5 of them were made an offer.

Group Discussion:

We were given a passage to read. It had some 6-7 characters and we had to rank them in the order of their goodness. Clearly, no answer was right or wrong. Our group did rather well in that it did not make a "fish market" of the discussion. All of us could reach a consensus, which was appreciated.

Group Event:

The session was 90 minutes. The first 45 minutes were a meeting to discuss the design of a monument of national significance and heritage. In the next 45 mins, we actually had to build what we had discussed using thermocol . Apart from team work, creativity etc. we also had to keep in mind the budget of the structure (the thermocol, pins and gum were very expensive!). At the end of 45 mins, our team managed to erect a building that looked something similar to what we had discussed.

One word - ENERGY

HR Interview:

This interview was very different from any other interview I had so far. There were 3 people, all of them very senior in age, on the panel. Whereas I could refer the McK and BCG people by their first names, I would only use 'Sir' for the people sitting in front of me. It was a relaxed and slow affair ... more of a talk than a question answer session. My interview was scheduled for 20 mins. And when they asked me "Do you have anything to ask us", it stretched another 25 mins, making it almost 45 mins total. The essential

difference, I feel, between a consultancy interview and an ITC interview is that, in McK/BCG the emphasis was on my analytical and communication skills. Here the stress was on values and my willingness to learn.

After this interview, I was made an offer to join the company :-)

That's all folks! I have tried to make this page more of an experience, rather than a fundae-giving affair. I hope it will be useful.

One final word - A road that we choose today will take us to a destination. And the others that we don't (or cant) would have taken us to so many other places. And we know that these 'other places' will probably never come across our way again. Life is about choices - those that we have and those that we make. Are you satisfied with the choices you have? And given the choices, are you sure about what you are going to choose? If you are poetically inclined, do read Robert Frost's "Road not Taken".

Good luck!

Zishaan