

Practice makes it perfect

Tips on how to prepare for the personal interview at CAT

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Watching the beautiful IIM-Bangalore campus in the Aamir Khan-starrer "3 Idiots" might have renewed the enthusiasm among CAT aspirants to enter the portals of IIMs.

Most students tend to relax once the written part of the examination is over and assume that they can prepare for the next round (Group Discussion/Personal Interview) after the results are out. But, this strategy could be fraught with danger.

The time between the announcement of the results and the commencement of the interviews — less than a month — is too little to make a significant impact on the preparation.

Preparing for the personal interview involves a lot of introspection and

requires time. Although it does not require the 10-hour-a-day preparation like the CAT, you should aim to spend at least two to three hours a day for the next two months. There are two aspects to preparing for the personal interview: learning how to behave and preparing for the content of the interview.

Behaviour

You should train yourself to behave in a formal manner throughout the interview. This training can be obtained by participating in mock interviews conducted by professionals. You can also practice by requesting your friends, family or other aspirants to conduct mock interviews.

Although most interviews tend to be stressful, some of them (called 'stress interviews') dial up the stress and aim at getting the candidate as

flustered as possible. The focus should be on remaining calm through the most stressful of situations.

Personal questions

You should prepare a long list of potential questions that can be asked on your background and write down the answers for them. Why did you make the career choices you did, why do you want to do an MBA, why do you prefer the particular college for which you are being interviewed, what do you intend to do with the MBA degree are questions that will almost certainly be asked.

Another very common question is: tell us about yourself. Answers to this question should focus on talking about yourself (at least for a minute) highlighting aspects of your career, education, interests or extra/co-curricular activities which might not have been highlighted in the application form. If any hobbies or interests were mentioned in the application form, you should be prepared to answer a lot of

question on that area.

Other questions

You should be prepared to answer questions on any aspect of your education and work (if applicable). As it is not possible to revise what was learnt in the last three or four years you should focus on revising basic concepts and brushing up on courses in which you performed well. In case the interviewer asks questions on subjects you are not confident about, you can always steer the questions to the area you prepared well on.

Preparation for the general questions can be covered by reading magazines and newspapers regularly. One thing that you should remember though is that it is always better to tell the interviewer that you do not know the answer rather than try to bluff your way through it. The interviewer almost certainly will know more than you, whatever the question may be.

(The author is an alumnus of IIM-B and is a freelance writer)

Never try to bluff your way through an interview

IIM-A to revamp placement system

To switch over to "cohort-based placement process" from February, 2010

Manas Dasgupta

AHMEDABAD: The Indian Institute of Management here has decided to make drastic changes in the recruitment and placement system for its students from the current academic year.

The institute has decided to switch over from the present "daily recruitment basis" to "cohort-based placement process" from February, 2010, IIM-A placement committee chairman Saral Mukherjee said.

The new system was finalised on the basis of the feedback the institute received at a meeting of representatives of some 60 top recruiting companies and other organisations held recently in Mumbai. The institute would now try to reach to other

recruiters who could not make it to the Mumbai conclave and try to incorporate the feedback received from them before giving the new system the final shape.

According to the new system, recruitment and placements would be conducted on the campus in continuous week-ends called "cohorts," instead of everything clubbed together in five to six continuous days. The firms to be invited in each "cohort" would be those offering similar roles and opportunities and the sequence of inviting the firms would depend on the batch preference. The first cohort-based placement camp would start from February second week and continue for one to two months.

Since it would take more time, the new system would

- Recruitment and placements will be conducted in continuous week-ends
- First cohort-based placement camp will start from second week of February

give more time to the students and recruiters for interaction and to think over the offers and take appropriate decisions instead of taking on-the-spot decisions now. "The cohort-based process is longer process but has significant advantage. The move essentially aims at a better match-making process, ensuring a better fit between the students and firms," Mr. Mukherjee said.

'Ideal system'

Considering the ever-increasing number of students, particularly with the imple-

mentation of the reservation policy, the IIM-A was looking for an "ideal system" for placements. "The new system may not be ideal but certainly is a move towards one. This will ensure that decisions are not made hastily on either side," he said.

The IIM-A would also develop internally a "talentbouquet" system that would allow interaction between the firms and students through networking tools such as chatting, forum and alumni inter-action. The finer details of the system would be finalised soon, he said.