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*The Salisbury Center for Career Services*

**Interviews: Case Interview Strategies**

The case interview is a discussion, between the interviewer and the interviewee, on a real or hypothetical business or non-business scenario. Through this process, the interviewer intends to assess the interviewee's analytical and people skills in handling realistic situations. These interviews, while being most common in the consulting industry and in strategy consulting in particular, are not limited only to the consulting industry. You are liable to come across these interviews, from time to time, in other industries as well.

The case interview approach provides the interviewer insights into your thinking process for problem solving. Problem solving is often independent of your expertise in any industry - expertise in an industry simply gives you additional knowledge, which can be acquired later, when needed. The interviewer is interested in: your expertise in general business, ability and creativity to analytically apply your learning from formal education and work experience, and raw intelligence. Problem solving is a learnable skill, so the interviewer is assessing whether the "acceptable raw material" is there, on which the prospective firm should invest for further development, to capture lucrative rewards.

More specifically, the interviewer is assessing whether you can: identify the problem, formulate the problem so that it can be solved, and then proceed in an analytical (or structured) fashion to solve the problem. The interviewer wants to see you develop a structured "framework" for solution, for a correctly identified and well-formulated problem. The interviewer is NOT looking for the answer - it is the path you take to get to the solution that is of interest. Even when you think you know the answer, do not jump to it. Remember, the interviewer is interested in your thinking process leading to the solution. So it is your responsibility to walk through the process systematically, and to provide insights into your thinking and rationale. Chances are that you do not know the answer. Chances are that the interviewer has given you rather limited information, not enough to even formulate the problem, let alone solve it or know the answer to it. You can freely ask questions, and the interviewer would help you. You are in fact expected to ask questions to make progress, but your questions must be relevant to making progress in the discussion, and revealing of your structured thinking. There is no magic formula for success on case interviews, but you can develop a structured approach for dealing with them.

**Tools to help you prepare for a case interview**

- **Boston Consulting Group case interview preparation on-line**
- **McKinsey Corporation "Case Interview" on-line**
- **Inside Consulting**
- **Strategies for handling case interviews**
- ***Wet Feet Press* has many guides on preparing for case interviews. See (Also see sidebar on p. 1 of this tips guide)**
- **Another good site for case interview prep**