Consulting “fit” interview workshop

Nina Tandon, PhD
October 8, 2010
4pm, Mudd 337

Columbia University Consulting Club
Agenda

- About Me…
- What is a “fit interview”?
- General advice
- Breakout groups
- Recap
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About Me…

- PS/IS 217
- High School (Dominican Academy)
- University (Cooper Union) Electrical Engineering
- 1 summer in London making electronic musical instruments
- 11 years studying yoga
- 2 years at telecommunications company
- 1 year in Rome
- Masters of Bioelectrical Engineering (MIT)
- PhD Columbia, Biomedical Engineering, 5/2009
- Postdoctoral researcher, Dept of Pharmacology
Conducted research and analysis for client service projects, including:

- Market research for a major pharmaco to understand ophthalmologists' treatment algorithms in Europe
- Organizational structure for the R&D groups of a joint venture between two major pharmacos
- Global market scan of pharmacy benefits to locate areas for international growth for a US-based pharmacy benefits management company
- Developed US strategy for biologics products for a major pharmaco
- Performed brand valuation for a mature division of major pharmaco
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Recipe for “success”
Common types of “fit” questions…

1. Please take a minute and run me through your resume
2. What do you think makes a good management consultant?
3. Tell me your greatest professional weakness
4. What drew you to McKinsey/Bain/BCG/etc?
5. What motivated you to look into consulting careers?
6. Have you dealt with a difficult person? If so, explain how you managed the situation.
7. Describe a scenario where you lead a team in the face of a major obstacle.
8. Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership.
9. Tell me about a time you had to persuade someone of something.

From: http://www.brazencareerist.com, personal experience
Pick a question...identify the “unasked questions”

1. Have you dealt with a difficult person? If so, explain how you managed the situation.
2. Describe a scenario where you lead a team in the face of a major obstacle.
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“Fit” interviews: not just achievement, but skills!

- Consulting work is in teams
  - Tight-knit, collaborative
  - Tackling difficult client challenges

- Therefore, discuss yourself
  - In detail
  - With focus on your specific roles
  - Describing key actions critical to success
Fatal flaws...

- Not selling yourself enough
- Not providing a structured answer
- Too generic

From” [http://www.brazencareerist.com](http://www.brazencareerist.com)
Practical, personal

Self-deprecating

Self-aware

Self-aggrandizing

vs
Structured responses...

- Tell them what you’re gonna tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you just told them
Be your own paparazzo
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General advice on how to approach fit interview

Preparation:
• Write it down first
• practice

Game-time:
• Answer the questions that are asked
• Tell a story
• Be specific
• Concentrate on your role
• Avoid clichés
Memory

1st law of information theory
- The less probable an event, the more information it contains
- Be MEMORABLE!!!
  - (but in a good way)
  - Irony, metaphor, anecdote

Primacy-Recency effect
- Make a good 1st impression, and a lasting last-impression
A Note on Delivery

Grammar:
- Make sure it’s right

Pronunciation:
- Speak clearly, slowly
- BREATHE!
Flattery will get you everywhere: Do your research!

- Snoop around
- Note your impressions
- Interdisciplinary?
- Collaborative?

If you say "nice dress" make sure they’re wearing dresses!
Facebook/Myspace/Friendster/Blogs/Google

- If you search yourself, what do you find?
And then, it’s usually your turn to ask a question, don’t throw it away!

Chris Farley interviews Paul McCartney

Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNBlyGxV7Ek
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Resources

- Consulting Club
- Student Careers Office
- Personal coaches (ask me for references)
- Me: nmt2104@columbia.edu
Thank you!

- Questions?