How to prepare for the consulting interview

Patricio Ramirez - MIT SEBC Consulting
You will face something like this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Interval</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 15 minutes</td>
<td>Open discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss prior experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25 minutes</td>
<td>Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 minutes</td>
<td>Q&amp;A, your questions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# MIT students prepare, but not enough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open discussion</th>
<th>Fail here, more often</th>
</tr>
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<td>Discuss prior experiences</td>
<td>Fail here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral questions</td>
<td></td>
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To succeed, you need to answer interviewer internal questions

Is this someone who …

1. I would like to work with?
2. makes a good impression on clients?

I would like to work with?

1. makes a good impression on clients?

is an achiever focused on results?

can solve problems efficiently and logically?

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1. [http://web.mit.edu/career/www/graduate/caseinterviews.html](http://web.mit.edu/career/www/graduate/caseinterviews.html)
Nail the interview by preparing your hard and soft side

Is this someone who …

I would like to work with?

makes a good impression on clients?

is an achiever focused on results?

can solve problems efficiently and logically?

You need to …

Connect and be positive

Prepare behavioral answers

Prepare for the case
To perform well then …

1. Prepare for the case
2. Prepare behavioral answers
3. Connect and be positive
1. Prepare for the case
## Approach the case in five steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Analytics</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen, listen, listen</td>
<td>Take time, 1min</td>
<td>Ask for data</td>
<td>Tie back to start</td>
<td>Propose implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take notes of the goals</td>
<td>Create structure to solve (brainstorm)</td>
<td>Follow structure</td>
<td>List recommendations</td>
<td>You might skip this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm details</td>
<td>3 - 4 points</td>
<td>Quantify</td>
<td>30-sec summary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explain impact</td>
<td></td>
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Here tree from Cosentino’s book
Use a nice structure, they love it and it will help you if you get lost

Here tree from Cosentino’s book

1. Cosentino, M.P. Case In Point.
Read Cosentino’s “Case in Point” and these extras

• Cosentino videocast at MIT
  –  http://web.mit.edu/career/www/graduate/podcasts.html

• MIT’s Bilal Wahid folder of cases
  –  http://web.mit.edu/~bilalw/www/cases/

• Free case (very detailed) at “MBACase.com”

• AT Kearney’s cases

• The “Vault guide to the case interview” is not good
  –  The Vault guide to companies are very good though
Be promiscuous: practice with many partners and ...

- **Do**
  - Use a relevant framework to structure and prioritize
  - Ask clarification questions
  - Think out loud
  - Give examples: personal or from business literature
  - Use the clues interviewer gives you, don’t be stubborn
  - Summarize if stuck

- **Don’ts**
  - Ask for data before having a structure
  - Repeat every detail from case setup
  - Make critical assumptions without explaining logic
  - Ask “How did I do?” at the end
2. Prepare behavioral answers
Prepare answers for these questions and the one’s in Cosentino’s book

• Tell me about a time when you:
  – convinced someone/a group of doing something they didn’t want to do
  – achieved a goal you had set for yourself
  – had to persuade a group
  – deal with a crisis/difficult situation

• Why consulting? You don’t want to go into academia anymore?

• Why this city?
Use Answer = Headline + STAR

• **Headline** = sentence describing achievement
  – “I convinced my advisor to pursue a new line of research”

• **Situation or Task** = background
  – “Let me give you some background …”

• **Action** = overall approach and details
  – Name the main ideas:
    “I realized I had to do three things to convince my advisor…”
  – Explain each of them

• **Result**
  – Finish with summary of results

Use mock interviews from the careers office and …

• Listen to “Connecting Resumes and Interviews”

• Learn the STAR method
Dos and don’ts

• **Do**
  - Build answer around key points
  - Pick accomplishments in advance
  - Have 2 min and 4-5 min answers
  - Focus on the specific things you did
  - How do you add value, what make you stand out

• **Don’ts**
  - Relate events chronologically
  - Give exhaustive explanations
  - Ignore the time and pace
3. Connect and be positive
Use the profiles of interviewers to find something to connect

Here profile of interviewer
Make it a conversation and smile!

- Make the interview a conversation
  - Might be harder with young consultants

- Communicate energy: smile!

- Relax and be genuine
  - If they like you they will help you more

- Don’t get frustrated with the case or questions

- Listen to “Interviews - The Introduction”
Prepare and be positive

1. Prepare for the case
2. Prepare behavioral answers
3. Connect and be positive

Good luck!