

Dear **Consultant**,

Congratulations. Having proved your mettle, Source One is pleased to select you for developing and executing software projects in the United States of America. Your H-1 visa has been put for process and we will keep you informed of its progress.

We have scheduled telephonic interviews with one of the many possible clients in the US. Given below is a list of guidelines that you need to follow **BEFORE** you start on these interviews. This is essential since we prefer the approach of “Do it Right the First Time”.

The telephonic interview will be an operator assisted call, initiated by a representative from Source One Pro who will introduce you to the client. **[For all practical purposes, the client will henceforth be called Client Manager].**

Guidelines

1. Get the **name of the Client Manager**. This is very essential, since you will be **addressing him/her by his/her first name** during the remainder of the interview. It will always be John / Ruth or Nancy, not Mr. John, / Ms. Ford or Mrs. Thomas.
2. **Speak Clearly and Slowly**. Comparatively, Indian speech patterns roll faster off the tongue than American speech patterns. Please make determined effort to speak SLOWLY and CLEARLY.
3. It is very much possible that the Client Manager will indulge in pleasantries. S/He might ask you your name, about your general well being etc. Please ensure that you greet your interviewer and answer their questions with dignified enthusiasm.
4. **LISTEN. DO NOT INTERRUPT THE CLIENT MANAGER**. This has two implications. Firstly and importantly, it shows that you are an avid listener. Secondly, it gives you time to modulate your response. Wait patiently for the question / response from the client, which brings us to the next point.
5. The Client Manager would normally start with a clear and rather longish description of the complete project. Listen carefully as this contains all the information that pertains to the project. At the end of the description, (and only at the END) you need to ask questions that you either missed out or need repeating for the sake of clarity or are issues that have been left out but are necessary for your complete understanding. It is possible that the Client Manager asks you if you have understood the described project and whether you have questions thereon. Take this opportunity to **ask only RELEVANT questions**.
6. You need to understand the **purpose of the interview**. Foremost purpose is to **estimate your Communication Skills**. The second is to **gauge your Technical competence** vis-à-vis the job at hand.
7. One of the oft-repeated questions that recur in various forms is “Tell us About Yourself?” Use this as a launching pad to **SELL YOURSELF**. There will not be a better opportunity to address the twin purposes of the interview than to answer by starting off this answer with your educational qualification (if you happen to be an Engg / Computer Science graduate) or your most recent project, if otherwise.

- It is imperative that you convince the client that you are the **RIGHT PERSON, FIT** for their requirements.
8. **Answer to the point and then offer to elaborate.** For egs., when asked “How long have you been working on XML?”, your reply should be, “I have worked on XML for {this much duration}. After a pause, again start confidently, “I am very confident of my XML expertise, since I have been part of the {name of the project}. Since I have also worked on the previous version of the software for {name another relevant project}, my conceptual and practical understanding of the software is of a high order.” You can freely embellish your achievements with what you feel the Client Manager is looking for. To repeat, you need to **SELL YOURSELF**.
 9. Clients usually are looking for candidates who have contributed to the growth of the organizations that they have been part of. Therefore, you need to **emphasize your role in the projects that you are describing** and giving specific inputs to the role you played. A short and simple reply of “6 months” to the above question with no relevant follow-up is a highly undesirable situation and should be studiously avoided.
 10. **Take Notes during the Interview.** This will help you reiterate what was said some time previously during the interview.
 11. When answering technical queries, give details.
 - a. What was the application?
 - b. What specific language, utilities, database, Case tools(if any), and methodology were used?
 - c. What was the team size?
 - d. What was your role?
 - e. What impediments / problems did you face during the project phase?
 - f. How were these resolved?
 - g. Were you involved in user interaction? How much and to what level?
 12. It is an obvious positive if you can **allude to your prior experience with other US companies** while being in India, in off-shore development / support mode. This clearly shows that you will fit in and adapt quickly to the American culture.
 13. Practice **explaining your experience in relationship to the client’s project requirements**.
 14. Always give concrete examples of how you **picked up new software skills** “on-the-job”.
 15. **Please refrain from giving Negative Responses.**

Answers like “I don’t know” or “Maybe...” or “I am not so sure” etc. with reference to your technical competence, are to be **AVOIDED**. Couch such statements with, “I can study the relevant manuals and I am pretty sure, given the opportunity, that I will not take long to master it.” Bring in Point 14 to reiterate this fact.

16. Please **do not feel alarmed and/or anxious if you feel there is no acknowledgement** during the conversation/interview. Usually, there will be no acknowledgement from the Client Manager during your talk, but s/he is very much there LISTENING. If you feel that there is something wrong with the telephone connection, you can enquire, "You there <Client Manager's name>". However, do this judiciously.
17. Towards the end of the interview, the Client Manager would normally ask "{your name}, Do have any questions to ask?" Take this opportunity to **ask relevant questions**. You can ask questions about the work environment:
 - a) How quickly do they need the resource?
 - b) What is the current status of the project?
 - c) At what stage is the resource expected?
 - c) What is the team size?
 - d) Any particular factor that will help in successfully completing the project on schedule?
 - e) Any concerns about my abilities?

If client expresses any concerns about your ability etc, take care to redress the concern in a positive frame. If the client has a concern about say, your short experience as against the needed span for the post, you can point out your confidence in handling the current role and responsibility. Base it on the record of your previous projects that you have successfully managed. Sprinkle your arguments with your positive personality traits that can convincingly counter the supposed lack of necessary experience. ("I have a strong work ethic. I have worked with the product heavily over the last few years which I feel is almost equivalent to about 5 years of normal usage.") **YOU MUST BE ABLE TO SELL YOUR CAPABILITIES.**

18. At the end of the interview, after you and the Client Manager have finished your dialogue, the Source One Pro representative will become active on the line and ask you to hang up if no more questions are there and that they will revert to you ASAP and let you know the result. Take that as the **cue to DISCONNECT**.
19. Take time for a last minute reiteration of your complete understanding of the project requirement, your willingness to get started asap, and after thanking the Client Manager for their time, you may **DISCONNECT**.

There are some Specific NO-NOs that you must adhere to during the interview.

- a) Where relevant, do not answer questions with one word answers – yes or no. Volunteer information wherever it seems it will bolster your case.
- b) Do not use the word "achha" or "theek" or such other word(s) common in your vernacular. Americans do not know what these mean. In addition to sounding foreign to them, there will creep in the element of miscommunication.
- c) Do not evade answering a question. If you have not understood the question, please say so. Ask the Client Manager to either repeat or restate the question.

- d) Do not say "Hello? Hello? Hello?" if there is a time-delay between answering a question and the Client Manager's response. You are attending a trans-oceanic tele-conference call. The time lag is quite natural. It is also quite likely that the client is assessing your answer and / or thinking about the next question to ask.
- e) Do not be tense during the call. Where possible and within reasonable limits, be light-hearted and laugh. Clients like to see the 'human side' of the technical consultants.
- f) Do not interrupt the interviewer.
- g) Never define a product. You may, at best, explain how you utilized the product by giving examples.
- h) Do not be overconfident and answer questions in a condescending manner, however trivial the question may sound to you. If the Client Manager seems to be asking irrelevant or simple questions, s/he could either be inexperienced at interviewing or just checking your communication skills. Either ways, you could trip up!

Please carefully study these guidelines and make conscious effort to incorporate the suggestions during the interview.