The Final Step: Acing the Interview

BY: SHARON BERNSTEIN

LEVEL BOOTCAMPS FROM NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE, HIGH-DEMAND TECH SKILLS, AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS.

You've been networking with friends, family, alumni, and former colleagues. You've reached out to recruiters, applied to job postings, and attended meetup events. You got the call for an interview for your dream job. Your suit is pressed and resume printed. You've done your research on the company and the employees you are meeting with. As interviewing for an analyst position will test all your skills - technical, soft, and critical thinking - here's what you can expect when you walk in the door. Just remember to always act professional, and have self-confidence. You got this!

ASSESSING YOUR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

When interviewing analysts, employers need to know candidates have strong problem solving skills. This will be the bulk of the questions asked about your experience:

• Expect a question around how you've used data to solve a problem, and what the results were (you might even be asked for examples for when you've used data in your personal and professional lives, so be prepared!).

• Be equipped to talk about a project or analysis where the results made a business impact. For example, you can talk about an A/B test that improved website conversion, or a social media listening analysis that showed consumers response to a product or campaign. If you can't talk about specific data points or results for confidentiality reasons, just mention directional implications (e.g., “there was a positive lift that changed the checkout flow and increased sales revenue”)

• You might be asked a brainteaser question that doesn't require a specific answer, but will show your thought process. For example, “how many tennis balls fit inside an airplane?” or “how many haircuts take place in the world every year?” These questions also test how you act under pressure, as they require you to think on the spot. Don't be caught off guard if you are asked one.

REVIEWING YOUR TECHNICAL SKILLS

You might be asked about your comfort level with technical tools like Excel, SQL, etc, but you also might be expected to apply your skills to a case study as part of the interview process. It is usually given to you 24-48 hours before, and it's meant to test a multitude of skills. Don't be turned off by this part of the interview process. It's a great tool to test your skills, but also provide an opportunity to document your strengths and growth opportunities for your new boss should you receive and accept an offer. It shows your:

• Ability to use tools/software (including PowerPoint)

• Data QA skills (remember, the data might have traps. Feel free to question the data set and point out errors if you find them!)
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- Comfort with synthesizing data
- Proficiency in understanding business problems
- Writing and data storytelling skills
- Presentation skills
- Poise and character

SHOWCASING YOUR HUMILITY

Your job as data analyst is to be the messenger, an “objective third-party.” This means you need to represent the data and let it tell the story, so you will be assessed for your ability to play this role. As analytics positions typically sit within a cross-section of multiple teams within an organization, candidates need to act on their feet with poise. Be prepared to have a stance on how you would handle a situation where you have a recommendation, but your client or teammate has a different perspective. Think through how you would handle this ahead of time, and have an example of when you’ve been in a similar professional situation.

CONCLUSION

You got through the interview. You did your best, now you’re waiting for next steps. Don’t forget, always send a thank you note to everyone you met during the interview process. Make sure to customize it, as they do compare notes!

This article is the second part of a series of articles on launching your career in analytics. Read part one and part two now.