Preparing for an Interview with a Professional Service Firm, Part II… Second Round Interviews

There is a lot more **similar** than **dissimilar** for a 2nd round interview with a professional service firm!

Resume and Cover Letter

Summarize your credentials and activities in your resume

Cover Letter-

Properly addressed to an individual
State position you are applying for
Why are you interested in accounting?
Why do you want to work for that firm?
What skill set do you bring to the table?
Do you have a special credential?

Show your passion…

Nothing different here, right?

The Professional Service Firm is looking for the following:

Leadership

Teamwork

Strong academics and quantitative skill set

Certain personal characteristics (The "fit")

Nothing new here, we are just at the next phase in the process of determining all of this!

The Interview:

Be Prepared! Be Punctual! Be Professional!

When does the interview start? Already did! You are always being evaluated!

Overall, interview is more behavioral, less quantitative assessment

1) Looking for good communication skills
2) Friendly, interested demeanor
3) Appropriate appearance, dress, grooming etc (appropriate goes both ways!)
4) Candidate knows something about the firm, its sectors, specialties- shows you have done your homework
5) Confident as to what you want to do
6) Candidate who delivers the "right" message
7) The interview just must be fun… often a sign of a good interview!

Tell them:

1) Why you want to be an accountant
2) Why you want to work for their firm
3) What you have to offer.
4) Show your leadership and teamwork experience whenever possible.

What kind of questions are they likely to ask?

1) May emulate the questions above..
2) What are your strengths and weaknesses? "Personal Balance Sheet"
3) Talk about a time when you faced adversity… failed… things didn't go well… etc… How did you deal with it? OR respond to it.
4) Probably a question on working with teams or in projects. What did you do with the person who controlled the project… or didn't do their fair share…
5) How would you respond if you knew your boss had a wrong answer, bad info or research… they are looking for responsiveness with tact here!

6) The old “Where do you see yourself in five years?”… be honest, but it had better include you still being with firm, being an expert, being a cpa!

> OK, so what is new here with a 2nd round? Well, location- you are in their office, not on the CU campus where you are comfortable. Also, there is not a CU connection now… not CU alum interviewing you!
>
> It will be a series of interviews, or interviews over lunch, one staff, one manager, one partner… maybe an HR person.
>
> Hard to “stay up and focused” for so long. Feel like you are saying the same thing over and over…

Your Questions…

Have some “prepackaged” ones all ready… gets you over the hump if you are nervous.

No questions on…

1) Info already available at website… says you didn’t do your homework!
2) Payroll, benefits, hours, vacation, etc!
3) Grad school questions… tells them you are short term!

> No change here!

Good question types…

1) What resources are available to help me grow?
2) How do I grow professionally?
3) Questions about mentoring, coaching within firm?
4) Training opportunities…

One potentially big point here… I think you should be prepared to ask a more technical question here… something you have researched a bit… not over the top, but something you take ownership of. How about the new banking reforms? Implementation of IFRS? Ethical questions…. Something you can get into if the opportunity arises.

What about the advisory side “case based interviews?”

Post Interview:

Follow up! Email to interviewer is expected… personal note? card?

Follow up with recruiter? Other staff you met? All OK, frame it as “Building your personal network”

Nothing new here… got to follow up FAST with the second round interviews!

How fast will you hear? What do you do if you don’t hear when they promised?

What if they ask where else you have interviewed?

What do you do if rejected?