Behavioral interviews

How is McKinsey PEI conducted differently

- **<u>Time</u>**: During an 1-hour McKinsey interview, PEI (usually 1 question) will take ~20-25 mins; during an 1-hour BCG/Bain interview, 2 behavioral questions are typically asked for a total of ~15 mins

- **<u>Format</u>**: For McKinsey PEI, the interviewer may ask you 4 – 7 follow-up questions to understand the details of your story (see last slide) and you shouldn't repeat your stories to different interviewers; for BCG/Bain, the interviewer typically asks 0-2 follow-up questions

- **<u>Scope</u>**: McKinsey PEI will only ask you about Personal Impact, Entrepreneurial Drive, Inclusive Leadership and Courageous Change. You don't need to prepare different stories for McKinsey as PEI topics are mapped to our Big 4 Categories (see next slide) but you do need to know the ins and outs of your stories for the follow-up questions

What MBB are looking for in your behavioral stories

1.Leadership & Impact *(McKinsey PEI: Inclusive Leadership AND Personal Impact)*
- Focus on delivering results
- Tendency to establish challenging goals
- Proactively seeks responsibilities and challenges
- Willingness to offer opinions and direction
- Self-assurance: confidence in his / her ideas and work

2.Tenacity and flexibility *(McKinsey PEI: Entrepreneurial Drive)*
- Exceptional track record of tenacity in challenging environments
- Exceptional persistence and resilience in the face of adversity
- Takes appropriate calculated risks and thrives in environments of frequent change

3.Experience *(McKinsey PEI: Entrepreneurial Drive/Problem Solving)*
- Analytical skills: building models or conducting quantitative analysis
- Business judgment: assess cost-benefits, pros and cons, and make decisions based on business logic
- Curiosity: desire to learn new ideas / new skill quickly
- Creativity: go beyond the obvious and come up with creative ideas
- Output orientation: willingness to generate hypotheses with limited info and move quickly to output

4.Teaming & Collaboration *(McKinsey PEI: Personal Impact)*
- Ability to build trust with stakeholders and with team members
- Empathy: understanding and accepting others' feelings & thoughts
- Dependability: can we count on you to fulfill your responsibilities?
- Persuasion and consensus building: persuade others based on data, facts to change opinions / behaviors

Homework:

Sample questions &

follow-up questions

Homework: sample questions to practice (I/V)

We recommend that you prepare 5-8 stories to be safe, because McKinsey interviewers may ask you to switch a story if your first story doesn't sound relevant. After crafting your stories, practice with the following highly relevant questions recommended by MBB interviewers:

1.Leadership & Impact *(McKinsey PEI: Inclusive Leadership/Personal Impact)*
- Can you tell me about an instance when you believe you had the most impact on a project / team / given task? What set this event apart? How did you ensure success?
- Tell me about a time you were considered an expert or knowledgeable in a topic. How did you become knowledgeable? How did you share your knowledge with others?
- Give me an example of when you had to change someone's mind. How did you overcome objections?
- Describe a time when you had to make a decision on an issue where there was significant disagreement among your team. How did you manage that disagreement?
- Describe a time when you had to motivate someone to do something that they did not want to do. What about your approach worked well / did not work? What was the ultimate result?
- Tell me about a new leadership role in which you had to build up your own or your team's credibility. How did you do it?

Homework: sample questions to practice (II/V)

We recommend that you prepare 5-8 stories to be safe, because McKinsey interviewers may ask you to switch a story if your first story doesn't sound relevant. After crafting your stories, practice with the following highly relevant questions recommended by MBB interviewers:

2. Tenacity and flexibility *(McKinsey PEI: Entrepreneurial Drive/Personal Impact)*
- Can you give me an example of the most ambitious goals/deliverables that you've taken on or been given?
- Describe a time when it took a long time to reach a goal. How did you manage your path to get there? In what ways did you need to show discipline?
- Tell me about a problem/experience in which you had to change your approach. What wasn't working and what did you have to do to fix it?
- Tell me about an experience in which you had to work without clear guidelines. How did you approach your work and how did you accomplish what you set out to do?
- Have you encountered situations in which you've had to defend your point of view when your manager challenged you?

Homework: sample questions to practice (III/V)

We recommend that you prepare 5-8 stories to be safe, because McKinsey interviewers may ask you to switch a story if your first story doesn't sound relevant. After crafting your stories, practice with the following highly relevant questions recommended by MBB interviewers:

3.Experience *(McKinsey PEI: Entrepreneurial Drive)*
- Tell me about a project that really tested your analytical abilities.
- Walk me through your thesis topic. What are some of the practical applications of this idea? How could clients use this insight?
- Tell me about [x] on your resume. What did you learn from this experience? How could you apply those learnings at our firm?
- Tell me about a time when you had to use creativity to solve a difficult problem.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to submit a project that you did not feel was 100% complete. Why did you feel it wasn't complete? What did you do?

Homework: sample questions to practice (IV/V)

We recommend that you prepare 5-8 stories to be safe, because McKinsey interviewers may ask you to switch a story if your first story doesn't sound relevant. After crafting your stories, practice with the following highly relevant questions recommended by MBB interviewers:

4.Teaming & Collaboration *(McKinsey PEI: Personal Impact/Inclusive Leadership)*
- Tell me about a time you supported someone else on your team and did not receive credit. How did that make you feel? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you successfully dealt with a difficult and demanding client.
- Describe a time when you took on additional work to help your team meet a crucial work goal.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to create agreement between a number of parties who originally differed in opinion, approach, and/or objectives.
- Imagine you've joined us and are working on a case team with someone who has a very different style from yours. How would you respond? Would you adjust your approach with this person? Have you encountered a situation like this in the past? How did it affect your work and your ability to meet your objective?

Homework: sample questions to practice (V/V)

Below are some follow-up questions that help you go deeper into your stories.

Potential follow-up questions:
- Why is this important? What was the goal?
- What were the risks and potential consequences if nothing happened?
- How was the organization/project improved because you were in this role as opposed to anyone else? What distinctive or unique value did you bring?
- What was the biggest challenge in the process?
- What did you do specifically versus the team?
- How did you know it was the right decision? What other options did you evaluate?
- What trade-offs did you have to make to achieve this? (quality, cost, time)
- Did you need to change your approach halfway? How did you change your approach?
- How did you decide whether to continue pressing on versus scaling back your original goals?
- How did you set priorities?
- Did you need to convince anyone on the team? What were their views? How did you convince them?
- To what do you attribute your results/success? What were the key factors that contributed to the success/impact/results you described?
- Anything you would do differently if you could do it again?
- What did you learn from the experience? How would you implement this at our firm?