

Practical help for GD/PI

Experts mentor participants at a workshop on skills for PIs and GDs

Garima Upadhyay

✉ garima.upadhyay@hindustantimes.com

A group discussion is a do-or-die situation for a candidate. Your performance in the group discussion (GD) and personal interview (PI) decides if you make it or not, so it is very important to highlight your achievements," said Sidharth Balakrishna, author, GD/PI expert and IIM Calcutta alumnus, who was speaking to MBA aspirants. "Knowledge is essential but having the confidence to share it is required. Don't just sit on the fence as a mute spectator. Be sure to make your point if it is substantial. Feel free to interrupt, add, disagree or second (another's) views while the discussion is on," he added.

Besides being advised on what to say, students were also counselled on how to say it. "Your tone and choice of words should not be belligerent. If you don't agree with a certain view, refrain from saying 'you are wrong'. Instead, say 'you should check your facts' or 'your data doesn't correspond with mine'.

Similarly, if you want to interrupt someone, do it while they are ending the talk," advised Balakrishna.

DOS & DON'TS

- Try to initiate the discussion but be sure to structure your approach well
- Be confident
- Highlight your knowledge about the topic or situation
- Refrain from stating opinions; instead, substantiate your statements with facts
- Don't beat about the bush; be articulate
- Be a team player; let others speak
- Show leadership by carrying forward the discussion
- Don't appear provocative, have patience
- Ability to think fast helps

Handy advice

- Read newspapers
- Go through relevant weeklies, magazines
- Keep a track of the latest developments across the country
- Brush up your analytical skills
- Speak on one topic every day
- Stand in front of a mirror and observe yourself while you speak