

Navigating the Job Interview (Final)

The Job Interview by Jacqueline Dumas Who Would You Hire?

Cast of characters:

- Sashi Chandra** – female member of interview panel (South-Asian born; early 40s; direct but diplomatic approach) HR professional
- Bob Johnson** – male member of interview panel (Canadian born; mid 50s; oldest member of panel; no-nonsense, get-er-done kind of guy) Manager Environmental Projects; Direct report of team lead, Water Resources
- Joseph Cardinal** – male member of interview panel (Aboriginal born; early 40s) Manager Regulatory Compliance
- Mei Li** – female job applicant (Chinese born; mid-30s; recently married to a Canadian born) Master's degree in Biological Resources Engineering; Experience: 12 years tech in China and Canada, including 6 years team lead in China
- Ahmed Hussein** – male job applicant (Jordan born; mid 30s; married) Master's degree in Water Resources Engineering; Experience: 8 years tech in Jordan, Dubai and Canada, 3 years project manager in Brazil and 1 year in Canada
- James Brooke** – male job applicant (south of England born; early 50s; married; oldest applicant with most experience) Master's in Civil Engineering from Oxford; MBA from London Business School; Experience: 28 years tech in Manchester, London and Canada, including 15 years manager in London and Geneva
- Louise Michaud** – female job applicant (Canadian born; mid 30s; single; youngest applicant with least experience) Master's in Applied Science in Environmental Engineering from UBC; Experience: 7 years tech in Vancouver, including 3½ years project manager in Fort McMurray

Context: Four applicants for position of Senior Project Team Lead in Alberta engineering firm. The project involves water management within the Environmental Services group. The soft skills of the candidates are crucial – technical skills alone are not sufficient. Panelists have copies of the candidate résumés and a grid to check off how well each candidate is doing. Each candidate has already met and undergone a preliminary interview with Sashi Chandra.

SCENE	VISUAL	AUDIO
<p>Interview Scenario 1 Scene 1: Interview Room – Panelists with Mei Li</p>	<p>Shot of interview room</p> <div data-bbox="738 352 812 405" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 45px; height: 25px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Joseph Bob Sashi</p> <div data-bbox="492 451 833 525" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 210px; height: 35px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Candidate Chair</p> <p>Joseph Cardinal and Bob Johnson are seated at an oval or round table. Joseph has a glass of water in front of him, Bob a cup of coffee.</p> <p>Each panel member has an interview package on the table.</p> <p><i>Throughout the interviews, they take notes, primarily checking off items on a prepared list.</i></p> <p>Behind/beside Sashi's place is a side table with water, coffee machine, kettle, tea, glasses, cups, etc.</p> <p>Sashi Chandra is at the door.</p> <p>Title up: Job Interview with Mei Li 9:00 AM</p> <p>Sashi opens the door. Bob and Joseph stand.</p> <p>Mei enters the room.</p>	

	<p>She is neatly dressed in a conservative business suit.</p> <p>Mei limply accepts the handshake – lighter than the more vigorous norm in Canadian business. She lightly clasps Sashi’s fingers, not touching palms.</p> <p>Again, limp handshake from Mei.</p> <p>Mei tentatively extends her hand, then withdraws it awkwardly. She feels uncomfortable because it’s unclear what she should do.</p> <p>The three panelists sit down. Mei remains standing until they are seated, then sits down.</p> <p><i>Throughout the interview, Mei is polite, mirroring back what she is asked. Her body language is restrained, generally maintaining a polite, fixed smile.</i></p>	<p>Sashi (<i>smiling and extending her hand</i>): Nice to see you again, Mei.</p> <p>Mei (<i>shaking Sashi’s hand</i>): Nice to see you too.</p> <p>Sashi Thank you for coming... Mei, I’d like to introduce you to our team. (<i>Gestures toward Bob</i>) This is Bob Johnson, our manager of environmental projects ...</p> <p>Bob (<i>extending his hand</i>): Nice to meet you, Mei.</p> <p>Mei (<i>nodding and smiling as she shakes his hand</i>): Nice to meet you too.</p> <p>Sashi: ... and Joseph Cardinal, our regulatory compliance manager ...</p> <p>Joseph (<i>nods and smiles</i>): Welcome. Sorry, I have a cold.</p> <p>Mei (<i>looking down</i>): Oh, I’m sorry.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>indicating Candidate Chair</i>): Please, have a seat.</p> <p>Mei: Thank you.</p>
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	<p><i>Throughout the small talk, the panelists give brief, repeated eye contact.</i></p> <p>Joseph and Sashi nod and smile knowingly.</p> <p>This moment is about power distance and initiative – Mei’s choice is to look agreeable and remain silent.</p> <p>Joseph realizes that Mei is not following the conversation. He sits back and lets the conversation continue.</p> <p>Sashi intercedes and tries to put Mei more at ease. <i>Throughout, Sashi gives encouraging nods to Mei.</i></p>	<p>Sashi (<i>gesturing to side table</i>): Can I get you a cup of coffee? A glass of water?</p> <p>Mei: No thank you.</p> <p>Sashi: Are you sure? A cup of tea, maybe?</p> <p>Mei: No thank you. I just had some tea.</p> <p>Bob: So... how’s the traffic out there now? I got stuck for half an hour on the way in, but it should’ve died down by now.</p> <p>Mei: I came here okay.</p> <p>Joseph: What about parking? Did you find parking okay?</p> <p>Mei: Parking was not necessary.</p> <p>Bob (<i>taking a sip of coffee</i>): Can be a real pain, especially in winter. After they plow? Cuts off our parking lot completely. And nothing breaks through those windrows, not even my 4-wheel drive.</p> <p>Mei (<i>smiles and nods at Bob in a neutral way</i>): Ummm...</p>
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	<p>Mei looks briefly at Joseph, then looks away. Joseph's wiping his nose so openly makes her uncomfortable.</p> <p>Mei wants to be supportive of the interviewer's process.</p> <p><i>Throughout the interview, Mei defers to Bob and looks mostly towards him (he's older and she's deduced he is the senior person). She only looks at Joseph or Sashi when they address her directly.</i></p> <p>Mei is slow to catch the transition from small talk to formal interview, so initially her responses are slow. Then she realizes</p>	<p>Sashi: Yes, well I guess by now you've noticed how hard our winters can be. And how did you get here today, Mei? Did you take the bus?</p> <p>Mei: The bus does not come frequently – not at this time... My husband drove me.</p> <p>Joseph: Smart... <i>(Wipes his nose)</i></p> <p>... Avoid the parking hassles altogether.</p> <p>Bob: <i>(Shuffling his papers)</i> Okay now, what do you say? <i>(Looks briefly from Joseph to Sashi in turn)</i> Time to get down to business?</p> <p>Sashi: Good idea. Now Mei, we're going to ask you a series of questions, and after that you'll have a chance to ask us any that you might have. Sound okay?</p> <p>Mei (looking briefly at Sashi, then to Bob): Yes, that's good <i>(with low-key enthusiasm)</i>.</p> <p>Sashi: So Bob, why don't you start us off?</p> <p>Bob: Right. Okay now, let's see now... <i>(Looks down at his papers)</i> Mei, can you tell us why you want to work for our company? What's your motivation?</p>
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	<p>that they are all listening to her, so by the end of her response she has shifted into responding to the question.</p> <p>Mei is pleased to hear “good” and feels she has answered correctly.</p> <p>Indirectly, Mei means that she knows what skills are needed, and she has them, but she doesn’t want to appear arrogant or boastful.</p> <p>Mei worries that she’s not doing well because Bob often says “okay” (which means “average” to her).</p> <p>Mei refers to superior projects and extensive experience – while remaining humble. She is demonstrating her investment in continuous self-improvement – an expression of initiative. She understates her competence to show credibility.</p> <p>Bob is underwhelmed. Her response does not meet his expectations. He wants a more confident statement of competence. He interprets her answer</p>	<p>Mei: <i>(Pause)</i> Motivation comes when the team works well together. <i>(Pause)</i> We listen and discuss with the others about how to solve our technical problems. <i>(Pause)</i> We combine our specialized knowledge to complete our projects. This is the way we reach our goals.</p> <p>Sashi: Good... And what would you say attracts you to <i>our</i> company?</p> <p>Mei <i>(pauses and looks briefly at Sashi):</i> Oh, yes... I am attracted to your company based on what I learned from the research I conducted. <i>(Looks at Bob)</i> The position requires high levels of technical and human skills and good experience.</p> <p>Bob: Okay, tell us now: what is it that interests you about this position as Senior Team Leader in our Environmental Services group?</p> <p>Mei: <i>(Pause)</i> I am interested in this position because of the responsibility. In a recent project in China, our design team worked together on the Three Gorges Dam in Hubei province. Between 2003 and 2008 we worked there. <i>(Pauses)</i> To complete the project was very good experience. It brought long-term benefits to the people.</p> <p>Bob: And how would this position align with your own career goals?</p> <p>Mei: For my career goals. <i>(Pauses)</i> My career goal is to join my knowledge with specialist knowledge from other professionals. My education was at</p>
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	<p>as a skills deficit.</p> <p>Mei turns her focus internally, with unfocused eyes as she collects her thoughts to answer. <i>This continues for her next responses. While she has eye contact, it is non-focused eye contact – her focus is inward.</i></p> <p>Sashi is trying to help, to mediate.</p> <p>Bob is getting impatient.</p>	<p>Tsinghua University in China, and my working experiences have been with strong national companies. For the future, the success for your company will come from combining these kind of strengths and skills and working hard together.</p> <p>Bob (<i>raising an eyebrow at the papers in front of him</i>): I see. Okay now, let's get down to specifics. Can you give us an example of a recent time when you motivated your team members to complete a project on time and on budget?</p> <p>Mei (<i>looking away from the panelists</i>):</p> <p>Sashi: Yes, what approach did you use?</p> <p>Mei (<i>looking up at Bob</i>): (<i>Pause</i>) Our team was working on a difficult project. This was last year. We had some problems when the client wanted us to finish on time. We asked them to be patient with us and we would try to keep our word. Our group was strong and motivated. The team worked many long hours to do a good job. We had our good plan based on past work, and we finished on time. We gained respect from our client. Also, the company saved money when we designed some innovative technology.</p> <p>Bob (<i>shuffling his papers</i>): And what about conflict? Can you give us an example of a time when you managed a conflict between team members?</p> <p>Mei: (<i>Pauses</i>) Yes, it was the same project. At</p>
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	<p>Discomfort is building among the panelists. Joseph shifts his weight. Sashi rubs her chin. Bob glances at Sashi.</p>	<p>the beginning there was some disagreement about our priorities. Some members said more safety requirements were necessary. <i>(Pauses)</i> Other members said the budget was too small for that. <i>(Pauses)</i> At the end, together, we found a way that saved money and also provided safety to the local community.</p> <p>Joseph: And how exactly did you manage this?</p> <p>Mei: We managed this by gathering the data and analyzing it together.</p> <p>Sashi: And what leadership skill did <i>you</i> use with the team?</p> <p>Mei: <i>(Looks down, then up at Bob's chin.)</i> We were a good team who knew that we must analyze the information from many sources. Then we discussed the problem together and found what was missing.</p> <p>Joseph: What was the final outcome?</p> <p>Mei (Thinking): The final outcome...</p> <p>Sashi: Yes, the result...</p> <p>Mei: Oh, the result was good. We learned that we needed to discuss with the community leaders. The company made a formal agreement with the local community. The client was satisfied about the budget and the safety.</p>
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	<p>Mei is pleased to hear “very good” from Sashi, and so presents more confidently.</p> <p>Bob raises his eyebrows slightly and indicates to Sashi with a gesture that she is to ask the next question.</p>	<p>Sashi: Very good... And finally, Mei, could you tell us what makes you a good candidate for this position?</p> <p>Mei (looking at Bob): My education background in China is strong, and technical experiences in China and Canada are worthy. I have worked as a team lead for 6 years, and want to share these experiences with people to do a great job for your company and for Canada.</p> <p>Sashi: Thank you. Now we’ve asked you quite a few questions. Do you have any for us?</p> <p>Mei: Yes. How many people are in the environmental services group?</p> <p>Sashi: Do you mean in this location?</p> <p>Mei: Yes, in this location.</p> <p>Sashi: It varies, as we have casual, short-term employees as well as student positions. But in terms of full-time professional engineers and geologists, at the moment we have around 25? That would be in your group. Is that about right, Bob?</p> <p>Bob: Yeah, that’s about right.</p>
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	<p>The three panelists stand.</p> <p>Bob shakes Mei’s hand.</p> <p>Mei is trying to make a polite exit from the interview. She isn’t sure exactly how, and her husband told her to thank all the panelists for the interview.</p> <p>Joseph wipes his nose and nods pleasantly at her.</p> <p>Sashi walks Mei to the door.</p> <p>Bob is baffled by the interview. He raises his eyebrows at Joseph. Joseph shrugs.</p> <p>Fade-out</p>	<p>Sashi: Do you have any other questions, Mei?</p> <p>Mei: That was my only question.</p> <p>Sashi: Thank you for coming in, Mei.</p> <p>Mei: Thank you for meeting me. <i>(Stands and looks at each of the panelists in turn)</i> Thank you Mr. Johnson for your valuable time.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Thank you Mr. Joseph.</p> <p>Sashi <i>(holding the door open for Mei and shaking her hand):</i> Thanks again, Mei. We’ll be in touch some time next week.</p> <p>Mei: Thank you Miss Sashi.</p>
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<p>Interview Scenario 2 Scene 3: Interview Room – Panelists with Ahmed Hussein</p>	<p>Title up: Job Interview with Ahmed Hussein 10:15 AM</p> <p>Bob and Joseph are at the table Sashi is close to the door – waiting for Ahmed’s arrival. Her water is at the table Each has a cup of tea or coffee in front of them. Bob is tapping his fingers on the table. He looks at his watch.</p> <p>Sashi goes to the door, and Ahmed walks in. He is smartly dressed in a suit and tie. He does not seem hurried or nervous.</p> <p><i>Throughout the interview, Ahmed’s manner is formal, prepared, and high-energy. He has formed a relationship with Sashi through the pre-screening process, and his manner towards her is neutral.</i></p> <p>Bob and Joseph stand up.</p> <p>Bob makes an I-told-you-so glance at Joseph.</p>	<p>Sashi: He <i>did</i> call to say he’d be a bit late...</p> <p>Bob: Still not the way to make a good first impression.</p> <p>Sashi Well he’s here now.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>nodding and smiling as she shakes his hand</i>): Come on in, Ahmed. Nice to see you again. How was the traffic?</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>smiling, looking into Sashi’s eyes</i>): The traffic was fine, no problem.</p> <p>Sorry I’m late. We had a family emergency. Everything is okay now – nothing to worry about – but I am very sorry for the inconvenience.</p> <p>Sashi: We’re glad you could make it. Ahmed, let me introduce you to Bob Johnson, our manager of environmental projects. The team lead reports to Bob.</p>
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	<p>Ahmed’s handshake is soft – an extended index finger with no palm contact. He is fully present during the handshake.</p> <p>Ahmed reaches quickly forward to grab Joseph’s hand.</p> <p>Ahmed adjusts easily to non-contact with Joseph. He greets Joseph warmly and moves towards him.</p> <p><i>Throughout, Joseph responds positively to Ahmed’s expressive and warm manner.</i></p> <p>Bob, Joseph and Ahmed sit down.</p> <p>Sasha gets the coffee while the small talk begins. Ahmed turns his attention back to Bob and Joseph.</p> <p><i>Throughout, Ahmed maintains his attention</i></p>	<p>Bob (<i>extending his hand</i>): How do you do.</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>warmly</i>): How do you do, Mr. Johnson, how do you do. I’m very pleased to meet you.</p> <p>Sashi: And this is Joseph Cardinal, our compliance manager.</p> <p>Joseph (<i>backs away slightly, puts his hands up, and goes to sit down</i>): Nothing personal, I have a cold—</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>smiling</i>): Thank you for letting me know. Very nice to meet you.</p> <p>Joseph (<i>smiling back</i>): Nice to meet you too. Thanks for coming in.</p> <p>Ahmed: Oh thank you for inviting me, Mr. Cardinal.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>indicating Candidate Chair</i>): Please Ahmed, have a seat. Would you like something to drink?</p> <p>Ahmed: Do you have coffee?</p> <p>Sashi: Yes.</p> <p>Ahmed: With sugar, please.</p>
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	<p><i>and focus. His responses come quickly, with no delay. He sips his coffee now and then and relaxes more as he settles into the interview.</i></p> <p>Sashi places Ahmed’s coffee in front of him and sits down.</p> <p>Bob is getting annoyed by the time-wasting. His expression shows it.</p> <p>Ahmed looks at Bob with a pleasant, expectant look.</p> <p>Bob is internally trying to set a distance between Ahmed and himself – he’s conscious of the interview starting a little late and doesn’t want to linger on any part of the process now.</p>	<p>Joseph: You don’t find our coffee kind of weak?</p> <p>Ahmed (smiles): As long as it’s sweet, I like it. Speaking of coffee, I noticed a Montreal Canadiens coffee mug in the lobby. Is not everyone here an Oilers fan?</p> <p>Joseph (laughs): Everyone in <i>our</i> group certainly is. You like hockey, do you?</p> <p>Ahmed: I’m learning to appreciate it, and hope to go to a live game one of these days.</p> <p>Bob (looking at his watch): We’re running a bit behind schedule. Perhaps we could get started.</p> <p>Sashi: Yes, good idea. Ahmed, we’re going to ask you some questions, and when we’re finished you’ll have an opportunity to ask your own. Would you like to begin, Bob?</p> <p>Bob (leaning back in his chair and crossing his arms): Okay, first question. Can you tell us what motivates you to work for our company?</p> <p>Ahmed: Yes, of course. Two of your colleagues have told me what a great place to work this is. I researched your company, and you have an impressive reputation</p>
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	<p>Ahmed easily holds the floor when he speaks.</p> <p>Ahmed is sharing his idea of leadership – the personal inspiration of the team he leads. He maintains eye contact with Bob, working to secure the relationship.</p> <p>Bob is perplexed. Joseph smiles. He relates to Ahmed’s response.</p>	<p>internationally. It would be mutually beneficial – for your company and for me - to take up the challenge to continually adapt to the latest reclamation techniques so to guarantee your company’s strong environmental record. In Brazil I made many connections in China, India, US ... And in Fort McMurray, I have met professionals from across Canada. This experience can help your company.</p> <p>Bob: And what about this position in our Environmental Services as a Senior Project Team Leader? What interests you about it? How does it align with your career goals?</p> <p>Ahmed: While working on eco-system restoration in Brazil, we needed to take into account ecological, economic, and social concerns before development could begin. This involved a deep study of the rivers and forest – fascinating work. To get good results from a team, it is necessary to have passion for one’s work. An enthusiastic leader will inspire the rest of the team to follow. The challenge comes in finding solutions for a specific environment. Methods must be adaptable. In Brazil there is the Amazon River and the Rio de la Plata; here we have the Athabasca and the North Saskatchewan. In the jungle are ocelots and jaguars; here, wolves and cougars – all of them mammals, but unique. The same, but different.</p> <p>Bob (scratching his head): O-kay, let’s move on... <i>(looks over at Joseph)</i> Joseph?</p> <p>Joseph (still smiling): Yeah... Can you describe a time – a</p>
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	<p>Ahmed looks briefly at Joseph, and then maintains strong eye contact with Bob.</p> <p>The answer doesn't quite land for Bob. He looks perplexed.</p> <p>Joseph and Sashi look at each other briefly and exchange a smile. They are enjoying Ahmed's response as well as Bob's reaction. Joseph and Sashi have a lot of affection for the curmudgeon in Bob.</p>	<p>recent time – where you motivated your team members to complete a project on time and on budget? What approach did you use?</p> <p>Ahmed: I have had many such times, but one is very recent. The team was making good progress, but then our client in Texas asked for the work to be finished more quickly. They thought the project was taking too long and because of this it was costing too much money. They said to speed up. It was my responsibility to get the team to perform better. The first thing was to get everyone together for some team-building activities. This became an ongoing process - important to keep a team in harmony. It was very successful. Soon everyone was cooperating and working together in perfect synchrony. At the end of the year the president of the company recognized our team as a top performing one, for being on time and on budget. Our client became a good client- one with return business.</p> <p>Bob (<i>looking down at his questions</i>): Right... and now will you give us an example of a recent time when you managed a conflict between team members? What you did, what the outcome was.</p> <p>Ahmed: With conflict it is important to discuss with everyone individually, to listen to their suggestions, and to bring them together. Good results are arrived at when accord is established. In a recent project, the forestry head thought that hydrology was taking too long to produce their report and that this was the reason for the lateness of the project. On</p>
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	<p>Bob is asking this question looking for a demonstration of how Ahmed learns from his leadership experience – i.e., how he reflects on his leadership style.</p> <p>Ahmed receives the question as an opportunity to restate how his approach to leadership works well. (He misses the intent of the question.)</p> <p>Ahmed looks briefly at Sashi, then addresses his response to Bob.</p>	<p>the other hand, the chief hydrologist said it was risky to go faster; he said forestry was wasting resources. They were blaming each other for the delays and the cost overruns. So I discussed with the chief hydrologist and the chief forestry engineer, first alone, then together, and with this tactic the two were led to a solution. Hydrology found an approach to go faster and forestry found a method to save money. The trust was built and work proceeded well – so well in fact that the project was included in the Year end President’s communication as a great success!</p> <p>Bob: Is there anything you would do differently next time?</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>smiling broadly</i>): Leaders can learn from their employees. A good leader will consult trusted subordinates and give deep thought to their opinions, but of course it is the leader who must make the final decision. It is important to know that team building is best done over time.</p> <p>Bob (<i>turning to Sashi</i>): Hmmm... Maybe you can take the last question, Sashi?</p> <p>Sashi (<i>smiling at Bob, and turning to Ahmed</i>): You bet... Ahmed, could you tell us what makes you a good candidate for this position?</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>smiling</i>): In Brazil our projects involved both in-situ and ex-situ remedial design and implementation. By using cutting-edge technology we generated innovative, timely solutions to the challenges we faced. Of course, the success of such an</p>
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	<p>Ahmed hopes he has persuaded Bob that he is the right man for the job.</p> <p>Bob looks over at Sashi. He would like her to be brief.</p> <p>Bob and Joseph nod in acknowledgement.</p> <p>Bob and Ahmed stand and shake hands.</p> <p>Joseph and Sashi follow suit and stand too</p> <p>Bob looks surprised. He looks to Joseph.</p>	<p>inter-disciplinary approach depends on motivating others to share their individual expertise too and work well together. Such skills would be valuable to your company.</p> <p>Sashi: We've asked you our questions. Do you have one for us?</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>very confidently</i>): I would like to know about your company's loyalty program.</p> <p>Sashi: We have what I think is a really interesting approach – one that relates employee feedback to our reward system. The idea is to enhance the relationship between organizational goals on the one hand, and on the other, participation in special projects above and beyond an employee's primary responsibilities. (Pause) I could fill you in on the details at a later date. Anything else?</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>glancing at Sashi, then looking to Bob and Joseph</i>): Thank you for this opportunity to meet with you.</p> <p>Bob (<i>leaning back but holding his hand out to Ahmed</i>): Very nice meeting you. Thanks for coming in. (To Bob): My colleague, Peter Howell, asked me to pass on his regards to you.</p> <p>Joseph (<i>smiling at Ahmed</i>): It was nice meeting you.</p>
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	<p>Sashi walks with Ahmed to the door. She opens the door and extends her hand.</p> <p>Fade-out</p>	<p>Sashi: Thanks for coming in, Ahmed. We'll be in touch sometime next week.</p> <p>Ahmed (<i>lightly and briefly shaking her hand</i>): Thank you.</p>
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<p>Interview Scenario 3 Scene 5: Interview Room – Panelists with James Brooke</p>	<p>Title up: Job Interview with James Brooke 11:00 AM</p> <p>The three panelists are standing in the interview room. Joseph is stretching. Bob is sipping his coffee. Sashi is reviewing her notes.</p> <p>Knock on the door.</p> <p>Sashi opens the door, and James walks in. He is dressed in a dark business suit and dark blue tie with an English tieknot.</p> <p><i>James is confident throughout the interview. He relies on his language ability, and his responses come with about a 2 second delay. He uses the pace of his cadence to linger on certain words for emphasis and to rush through other parts – a way to demonstrate self-deprecation.</i></p> <p>James registers Bob as the highest status person in the room. He shows this with a firm, longer handshake. <i>There is an affinity between Bob and James – more than with any of</i></p>	<p>Sashi (<i>looking at her watch and going to the door</i>): Right on time.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>smiling and shaking James’s hand</i>): Good morning, James. Come on in.</p> <p>James: A good morning to you, Ms. Chandra. Nice to see you again.</p> <p>Sashi: Yes, likewise. Thanks for coming in.</p> <p>James: You are most welcome. And thank you.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>gesturing towards Bob</i>): James, I’d like you to meet Bob Johnson, manager of environmental projects...</p> <p>Bob (<i>extending his hand</i>): How do you do.</p> <p>James (<i>firmly shaking Bob’s hand</i>): Very well, thank you. Nice to meet you,</p>
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	<p><i>the other candidates.</i></p> <p>Bob, Joseph, and James sit down. James sits formally, upright and with his legs together.</p> <p>Sasha gets James a glass of water and sits down herself.</p>	<p>Mr. Johnson.</p> <p>Sashi: And this is Joseph Cardinal, our compliance manager.</p> <p>Joseph (<i>smiling and nodding at James</i>): How do you do – I won't shake your hand. I have a cold.</p> <p>James (<i>nodding in a friendly manner to Joseph</i>): Mr. Cardinal... Tell me about it. I just got over one myself... It's that time of year, isn't it?</p> <p>Sashi (<i>indicating Candidate Chair</i>): Make yourself comfortable, James. Can I get you something to drink? Coffee? Tea? A glass of water, maybe?</p> <p>James: I'd like a glass of water, thank you.</p> <p>Bob: Any trouble parking?</p> <p>James (<i>settling into his chair</i>): I had to drive around the block a couple of times, but not a problem for me, really.</p> <p>Bob: Good. Parking can be wicked around here.</p> <p>Sashi: When we last spoke, you were on your way to the mountains. How was your weekend?</p> <p>James:</p>
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	<p>James speaks with self-deprecating humour.</p> <p>Joseph smiles and exchanges indulgent glances with Sashi and Bob. They are bemused. They've heard these stories about wild animals from international visitors before.</p> <p>James nods in the affirmative and sits confidently back in his chair. <i>Throughout the formal interview, James includes all three panelists in his responses, maintaining brief and repeated eye contact. He has experience in doing interviews and is comfortable talking about what he brings to this position. He is willing to be himself and is looking to see if this company/position is a fit.</i></p> <p><i>Sashi makes notes. Joseph checks off his boxes, occasionally</i></p>	<p>We had a <i>splendid</i> time, mostly taking in the air, despite a rather tense encounter with a bull elk.</p> <p>Joseph: What happened?</p> <p>James: What first springs to mind couldn't be spoken of here. Let me just say that I was so unfortunate as to find myself between a bull and a female. Little did I know that I had stumbled into the height of rutting season. I took the coward's way out, meekly retreating and conceding victory to the bull.</p> <p>Sashi (laughing): And all's well that end's well.</p> <p>James: Indeed. It's all about survival, isn't it?</p> <p>Sashi (looks at Joseph, then James): And I guess that's a good point to begin the formal part of the interview? James, we're going to ask you some questions, and when we're finished you'll have an opportunity to ask your own.</p> <p>Sashi (Looks at Bob): Bob? Would you mind starting it off for us?</p> <p>Bob: You bet. First question: Can you tell us what motivates you to work for our company?</p>
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	<p><i>wiping his nose.</i></p> <p>James speaks slowly, with emphasis on the italicized words. His pace demonstrates the importance of the interlocutor.</p> <p>James speaks more quickly when speaking directly about his résumé and slows down again to finish.</p> <p>Joseph blows his nose. He is not impressed. James's response is too much, as if by accepting the position, James would be doing them a favour. Why James wants to work for the company is not registering with Joseph.</p>	<p>James: Hmmm... Well, first of all, I am <i>quite</i> familiar with your general operations. You have rather a <i>good</i> reputation, both nationally and internationally. And as you can see from my resume, I have quite a decent technical and managerial record, particularly abroad, which could <i>fit in</i> rather <i>well</i> with your <i>vision</i> for the future.</p> <p>Bob: Okay, good. Question 2: Tell us what interests you in this position in our Environmental Services as a Senior Project Team Leader? How does it align with your career goals?</p> <p>James: Well... my time at Oxford and at the London Business School imbued me with clear understandings of the requirements of leadership, action planning, and implementation based on data, creating fair outcomes, and treating your team decently. If you are looking to be a respectable leader, I would say that a combination of these is essential. As to my personal career goals, you are well established, for a North American outfit. <i>(Pauses and crosses his legs)</i> I look forward to joining your leadership team. I believe I have more than a small contribution to make to your company, particularly in engineering analysis and design.</p> <p>Bob:</p>
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	<p>James speaks as if everyone in the room shares his international, company-hopping experience; he is not adapting to these interviewers and their context.</p> <p>Sashi nods automatically.</p> <p>Sashi nods in acknowledgement.</p> <p>Sashi laughs. Joseph wipes his nose.</p> <p>All three panelists are attentive.</p>	<p>Okay, moving right along to Question 3: Can you describe a recent time where you motivated your team members to complete a project on time and on budget? What approach did you use?</p> <p>James: Let me see now... Ah yes (<i>to self</i>)... In the last project I was involved in, the situation in Europe compelled us to cut back on the number of employees, which in turn presented difficulties in terms of meeting our time commitments. (<i>Pauses, looks at Sashi</i>) Most problems can be resolved with a dash of common sense, wouldn't you agree?</p> <p>What was the solution? (<i>Enjoying the sound of his own voice</i>) I drew up a tight schedule, set up clear goals, and I encouraged each member of the team to take responsibility for completion of one phase of the project. In this way, both our revised financial and time objectives were fulfilled in quite a timely and satisfactory manner – and team members were recognized for their individual hard work and successes.</p> <p>Bob (<i>looking down at his questions</i>): Good. And now: Will you give us an example of a recent time when you managed a conflict between team members? What did you do? What was the outcome? Is there anything you would do differently next time? ... That sort of thing...</p> <p>James (<i>smiling</i>): I could elaborate on the situation with the bull elk, but I don't suppose that's the sort of example you're looking for.</p> <p>Bob (<i>laughing</i>): No, but we promise to take that into</p>
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	<p>James is demonstrating his trust in the expertise of his team members to reach a rational decision, without unnecessary interference from him as leader.</p> <p>James is expressing solidarity through humour.</p> <p>Sashi receives the last comment as too flippant. Bob smiles.</p> <p>Joseph's face is neutral. He scratches the back of his neck and looks down. The response does not meet his expectations.</p>	<p>account.</p> <p>James: Let's see now... there have been a number of touchy instances over the years... But a recent one involved our water resources engineer from India and our Belgian biologist. We had run a hydrologic analysis, and although the two agreed on the validity of the numbers, they strongly disagreed on the interpretation of the data. Without a clear view of the environmental risks, the project was at a standstill. What did I do? <i>(Uncrosses his legs and leans forward)</i> I shut the two malcontents in a room together and let them sort it out. <i>(Laughs)</i> Not sure they ended up friends, but they did come up with an acceptable proposal... What would I have done differently? Locked them up a good deal sooner.</p> <p>Bob: ... Okay <i>(turning to Sashi)</i>... Okay, Sashi, you're up.</p> <p>Sashi <i>(smiling at Bob, and turning to James):</i> Thank you, Bob... Okay, one last question. Could you tell us what makes you a good candidate for this position?</p> <p>James: ... Well, Ms. Chandra, I suppose you could say that my educational credentials are fairly decent, Oxbridge and the LSE and all. And I believe that my experience, particularly in London and Geneva, would make me a highly suitable—and, if I might say—<i>profitable</i> addition to your existing team.</p> <p>Sashi:</p>
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	<p>All three panelists stand.</p> <p>Joseph nods at James and Bob shakes hands with him.</p> <p>Fade-out</p>	<p>We've asked you a lot of questions. Do you have one for us?</p> <p>James: I have two, if you don't mind. First, I wonder if you could outline for me what advancement opportunities exist for someone with my skills and experience.</p> <p>Sashi: Bob, you want to take this?</p> <p>Bob: Sure. This is a company where loyalty and hard work are rewarded. We have exciting opportunities for advancement, both in the technical field and in management. I think you'll also find the salary range to be more than competitive.</p> <p>Sashi: And your second question?</p> <p>James: When can I expect to hear back from you?</p> <p>Sashi: A week from today at the latest.</p> <p>James: Superb. (<i>Stands</i>) Gentlemen, Ms. Chandra, thank you very much for your time and attention.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>opening the door and extending her hand</i>): Thank you so much for coming in. Like I said, we'll be in touch next week some time.</p> <p>James: (<i>shaking hands</i>) Thank you. It's certainly my pleasure.</p>
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<p>Interview Scenario 4 Scene 7: Interview Room - Panelists with Louise Michaud</p>	<p>Title up: Job Interview with Louise Michaud 2:00 PM</p> <p>Joseph and Bob are seated, examining Louise's résumé. Sashi is pouring herself a glass of water, which she sets down at her place.</p> <p>Knock on the door.</p> <p>Louise walks in. She has a pleasant expression on her face. She is neatly and conservatively dressed.</p> <p>Joseph and Bob stand.</p> <p>Louise waits to see whether or not Bob extends his hand.</p>	<p>Bob (<i>to himself</i>): So, the last one...</p> <p>Sashi (<i>opening the door and smiling</i>): Good afternoon, Louise. Come on in.</p> <p>Louise: Hi, Sashi. Thanks for asking me back.</p> <p>Sashi: Thank <i>you</i> for coming in.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>gesturing towards Bob</i>): Louise, I'd like you to meet Bob Johnson, our manager of environmental projects ...</p> <p>Bob (<i>extending his hand</i>): Hello Louise, how are you?</p> <p>Louise (<i>firmly shaking Bob's hand</i>): Fine, thanks. Nice to meet you.</p> <p>Sashi (<i>gesturing towards Joseph</i>): And this is Joseph Cardinal, our compliance manager ...</p> <p>Joseph (<i>smiling and gesturing</i>): Welcome – I have a cold, so excuse me if I don't shake your hand.</p> <p>Louise (<i>smiling at Joseph</i>): It's that time of year, I guess. I've been lucky so far.</p>
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	<p>Bob and Joseph sit down.</p> <p>Sashi gets Louise her water and sits down.</p> <p>The panel and Louise talk comfortably here, at unconscious ease. Louise looks equally at each person she responds to. Everyone is comfortable to take turns in this small talk. Relationship is being formed through the commonality in the topic (fitness habits).</p> <p>Bob wants to shift to the interview (time focused). His tone is light and unstressed.</p> <p>Louise nods</p>	<p>Sashi (<i>putting her hands on the back of the Candidate Chair</i>): So Louise, please have a seat, make yourself comfortable... Can I get you something to drink? We have coffee, tea, and water...</p> <p>Louise (<i>sitting down</i>): A glass of water would be great, thanks.</p> <p>Sashi: You've got it.</p> <p>Louise: Thank you. (<i>Takes a sip</i>) I went for a short run this morning and should have had more to drink.</p> <p>Joseph: So you're a runner are you?</p> <p>Louise: Nothing too serious – 4 or 5 times a week – and during the summer I like to sign up for some of the local 10 ks.</p> <p>Joseph: I was on the track team in high school and university – middle distance runner.</p> <p>Bob (<i>looking at Joseph</i>): Something else I didn't know about you. I'm impressed.</p> <p>Sashi: I stick to yoga – it's calming ...</p> <p>Louise: Oh yeah, I've been meaning to add that in to my workout.</p> <p>Bob: And on that note, why don't we work our way into the first question?</p> <p>Sashi:</p>
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	<p>acknowledgement.</p> <p><i>Throughout the formal interview, Louise leans attentively forward. When she answers the questions, she includes all three panelists by maintaining brief and repeated eye contact.</i></p> <p><i>Throughout, Joseph observes and checks off his boxes. Occasionally he wipes his nose.</i></p> <p><i>Sashi makes notes and does a lot of head nodding.</i></p> <p>Joseph and Bob nod in response – they like what</p>	<p>Sure, good idea, Bob. Louise, we're going to ask you some questions, and when we're finished you'll have an opportunity to ask your own.</p> <p>Bob, why don't you start?</p> <p>Bob: Okay, ready Louise?</p> <p>Louise: Absolutely.</p> <p>Bob: Good. Tell us now: what motivates you to work for our company?</p> <p>Louise: I believe, what you're doing here is solid, really impressive. Especially the work on removing liabilities and environmental risk reduction – you're really considering all the options. It's truly exciting and forward looking. I'd like to contribute from my background in water resources management</p> <p>Bob: And what interests you in this position as a Senior Project Team Leader in our Environmental Services? How does it align with your career goals?</p> <p>Louise: I've been building leadership skills in every job I've had since graduating from university, but I feel now is the time to focus on using these skills towards more long-term goals. I think I've learned how to build confidence in a team, how to lead them to consensus. I'm especially good at managing long-term goals – you know, setting expectations, achieving results. And I'm really attracted to the</p>
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	<p>they hear.</p>	<p>prospect of working on multiple projects. From what I know of your company, you're involved in lots of interesting and challenging ones, and you're on the leading edge of balancing development with environmental concerns.</p> <p>Joseph: Describe a time recently where you motivated your team members to complete a project on time and on budget? What approach did you use?</p> <p>Louise: Interesting you should ask that. Due to the early freeze-up this year, we had to shift gears in the middle of our project. Losing time meant losing money, and as it was, we were already on a tight schedule. So I decided it was time to be proactive. I called the team together, reviewed the data with them, and in a very short time we managed to reshape our priorities and reallocate our resources. With hard work, counting on everyone on the team, the project was back on track within five weeks. We completed it just last month – bang-on budget and only six days past the initial time estimate – all to the client's satisfaction. I was very proud of our team's achievement.</p> <p>Bob: Good. Now will you give us an example of a recent time when you managed a conflict between team members? What did you do? What was the outcome? Would you do anything differently next time?</p> <p>Louise: This was with the same team. I'm sure I can outline the general picture without betraying confidentiality. Anyway, two members of the team couldn't seem to</p>
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	<p>Joseph nods in approval.</p>	<p>see eye to eye on anything. They were in the habit of approaching me individually with any suggestions or concerns. Eventually I realized that this behavior was disruptive to the team, so I told both of them that I appreciated their input, but that in future anything they had to say would be best shared at our team meetings. I recognized that it was important for everything to be in the open, and for each team member to feel their input was valued. It took a little longer that way, but in the end, I think the exercise was good for team morale. What would I have done differently? I learned about the importance of setting team guidelines and ensuring everyone follows the rules... and how important it is to act decisively and proactively, to avoid conflict in the first place.</p> <p>Bob: Right. That's it for me. Sashi, do you have any questions?</p> <p>Sashi: Yes... Could you tell us what makes you a good candidate for this position?</p> <p>Louise: Yes, I have excellent written and verbal communication skills – which I'm constantly improving on. I'm good at leading a team to first consider all the factors involved, and then moving quickly to get things done. To this end, I'm ready to take on additional responsibilities – to challenge myself – and to contribute as much of value as I can. I think I'd be a good mentor for the team and a really good fit for your company.</p> <p>Sashi: We've asked you a lot of questions. What question do you have for us?</p>
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	<p>Louise, Joseph and Sashi look at Bob.</p> <p>Sashi stands first and moves towards the door. Bob, Joseph and Louise stand. Louise reaches across the table. She and Bob shake hands. Joseph nods in acknowledgement.</p> <p>Sashi opens the door. She and Louise shake hands.</p> <p>Fade-out</p>	<p>Louise: I'd be interested to know what you like about coming into work every day.</p> <p>Sashi: Wow. <i>(Pauses)</i> Well, I guess for me it's the people. We have a great group of people who work here. It feels like family. <i>(Looks across at Joseph)</i> What about you, Joseph?</p> <p>Joseph: Yeah, definitely the people. Such a diverse, fantastic group of co-workers. I learn something new every day.</p> <p>Bob: Right. For me I'd have to say it's a combination – my colleagues, for sure, and the job itself. There's so much going on that's interesting.</p> <p>Louise: Thank you, that's great to hear. When will you be able to let me know your decision?</p> <p>Sashi: We'll be in touch next week for sure.</p> <p>Louise <i>(looks at Bob and Joseph in turn):</i> Thank you both so much.</p> <p>Sashi: Thanks again for coming in.</p> <p>Louise: Thank <i>you</i>.</p> <p>Sashi: Good bye, and take care now.</p> <p>Louise: Bye...</p>
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<p>Follow-up 4 Scene 8: Outside Interview Room – Louise Michaud on her cell phone.</p>	<p>Title up: How did it go?</p> <p>Title up: How do you think Louise Michaud did?</p> <p>Fade--out</p>	<p>Louise: ... Hi, how's it going? Yes, I just finished. I think it went okay, but you know how it is. Yeah, they said they'd let me know next week. Yeah, I'll just have to keep my fingers crossed and hope for the best...</p>
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<p>Follow-up 5: Scene 9: Inside Interview Room – 3 panelists</p>	<p>Bob, Joseph and Sashi are sitting around the interview table.</p> <p>Title up: The Debriefing</p>	<p>Bob: ... Louise Michaud – the least experienced of the four, but very impressive...</p> <p>Joseph: ... Runs four or five times a week... Shows great self-motivation...</p> <p>Sashi: Yes (<i>looking at résumés</i>), she has the least actual leadership experience though... What did you think of Mei Li?</p> <p>Bob: She didn't seem to have much to say for herself.</p> <p>Joseph: I know what you mean, but I think maybe I understand her a little bit. Maybe she didn't want to appear too boastful. She clearly has a good amount of experience, and she'd probably make a really good team member...</p> <p>Bob: I agree, but it's a team <i>leader</i> we need.</p> <p>Sashi: I think I know where you're coming from, Joseph. We didn't get it in the interview, but according to her résumé, she was a very high-level manager in Hubei. I suspect she's much more competent than she appeared to be in the interview.</p> <p>Bob: Yeah, but I'm not sure how she'd manage a team here, though.</p> <p>Sashi: On the other hand, she would satisfy the diversity criteria that we're trying to maintain – on two counts.</p>
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	<p>Title up: Who would you hire?</p> <p>Fade-out.</p>	<p>Joseph: Yes, both gender and ethnic-wise... What about Abdul Hussein? He certainly showed a lot of enthusiasm...</p> <p>Bob: Yeah, maybe too much. I would have liked a little more substance.</p> <p>Sashi: And do you think he might have some gender issues? Difficulty working closely with female colleagues?</p> <p>Joseph: Perhaps he could learn... And we are in the process of increasing our business in the Middle East... He could be a great addition, especially to grow our networks there.</p> <p>Bob: I like James Brooke – right to the point, no-nonsense. He'd be great presenting to clients. And he does have the most experience.</p> <p>Joseph: You didn't think maybe he came across as a little arrogant? Not overly sensitive culturally? Think he'd fit in with the team?</p> <p>Sashi: I know what you mean... Not sure I understood that crack about locking those two in a room together...</p>
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