

PROFECTUS



**INTERVIEW
WITH**

**PRAGYA SINHA
CHOWDHURY**

Vice President at DASA
(DevOps Agile Skills
Association)

Pragya Sinha Chowdhury, a proud alumna of Miranda House, holds a degree in History (Hons.) and later pursued an MBA, shaping a career in business and strategy. With extensive experience in leadership roles, she is currently the Vice President (Product) at DASA

(DevOps Agile Skills Association), a European Industry Body on High Performance Digital Transformations. Over the years, she has contributed to reputed organizations like BCG, Tech Mahindra, and others, driving innovation and growth in diverse industries. Her career trajectory serves as an inspiration for young graduates, proving that a background in humanities can open doors to dynamic opportunities in business and management.

TO *Empowering* WOMEN



INTERVIEW WITH Ms Pragya Sinha Chowdhury

By Placement Cell,
Miranda House

1 YOUR CAREER SPANS MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES — EDTECH, CONSULTING, AND NOW DEVOPS. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO EXPLORE SUCH DIVERSE FIELDS, AND HOW DID YOU NAVIGATE THESE TRANSITIONS?

I have worked in different industries but have not changed the core of my career. I am in the field of providing learning solutions and products. This calls for skills in Instructional Design and management. Instructional design makes use of learning psychology, communication science and technology to design the best possible learning solution. So whatever the industry be, or topic be the base remains the same.

While I was working in edTech, or consulting or technology, I was always designing learning and knowledge products and managing and mentoring teams dedicated to these pursuits.



2 WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASPIRING TO LEADERSHIP ROLES IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, CONTENT STRATEGY, OR EDTECH?

1. **Be curious. Self-learn.** Learn what happened, how it happened; if things failed, why it failed; if something/someone succeeded, why it succeeded. Learn what's going to happen across the world.
2. **Read, read, read and watch.** Build **Empathy** and **understand human behaviour**. To understand human behaviour the best tools are good books and movies. Product Management, content strategy and edtech are all about design and innovation. You must understand what people need, why they need it and how they will use it. What will they connect best with?
3. **Listen to all kind of thought leaders**
4. And then, **learn to connect the dots.** Always work on your critical thinking and analysis
5. **Be adaptable. Be prepared.**





3

MANY WOULD FIND STUDIES IN HISTORY DISCONNECTED FROM CORPORATE CAREERS. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO THEM?

Not at all. In fact I attribute my success to studying history at MH. I am so thankful to my professors at MH, who developed critical thinking. We did not study history to accept what was written on the paper. We were trained to study history to discover what actually happened. We trained to become curious, to understand human behaviour and therefore understand consequences of decisions made given the economic, social, political conditions. We were always encouraged to critically analyze. And this critical thinking and analysis has helped me a lot in my career. The purpose of learning is not just to know Akbar was a great leader. The purpose is to analyse what made him that great leader.

In my view whether it is corporate or not, one needs to find one's own uniqueness that sets you apart from the masses to be successful. My ability to critically analyse things, join the dots, be adaptable, design for the right audience, understand the needs of the people and communicate comes from the training that I got while studying history.

4

AS A WOMAN IN LEADERSHIP, WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM

As a woman, things don't come easy. People don't take your expertise, knowledge seriously and won't take your suggestions easily, instead you get patronized.

You can only fight back with your knowledge and sharpness. Be sharp. Always be prepared. Have a good grasp of what's happening in your field and always think ahead. When you are sharp and well prepared, your ideas and suggestions can never be dismissed. Know your consumer/client/market. Understand the needs of your stakeholders and meet their needs. Be a problem solver. Understand the problems completely and then look for a solution. Also, understand that time is valuable. So always deliver on time. Be strategic in your thinking but do not ignore the transactional issues. Also, learn the art of negotiation and networking.



5

LOOKING BACK AT YOUR JOURNEY, WHAT'S ONE DECISION THAT HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON YOUR CAREER?

There was a time when the industry wanted people to pick either design or management. I wanted to do both, in order to get the complete picture of the business. So I moved to a smaller organization where there was freedom to do both and that really helped me in my journey.

Even then, in my view, industry was simplifying processes for easy management of work but I was convinced that I cannot design well unless I understand businesses and their management, nor manage well unless I know what it takes to design, so I didn't want to specialize in one. Industry now needs leaders who can lead design and manage business and there are very few who can do both.





6

HOW HAS MIRANDA HELPED YOU TO BECOME WHAT YOU ARE TODAY?

MH shaped me into who I am today. The three years at MH gave me my critical thinking skills, the confidence to make my own decisions, question the norm and strength to go against the tide, if needed.

7

ANY FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE FOR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI LOOKING TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN THEIR CAREERS?

- **Learn, learn, learn.** Always invest in yourself.
- **Don't try to be a superwoman.** Take as much help as you can get and from every quarter. Also remember, that a balanced personal and professional day is a myth. Some days personal will take over and some days professional. And that is absolutely fine. Eventually, both have to be balanced but maybe not everything on the same day.
- **Draw boundaries. Learn to say No.** On both personal and professional fronts.
- **Don't be afraid of failure.** Learn from it. There is always a next chance.
- **Be aware of human emotions** and learn to manage emotional needs-yours and others. Remember, we work with people and for people. So understand human behaviour. Respect everyone, juniors and seniors, knowledgeable, not so knowledgeable. Be an empathetic leader.



8

WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO OFFER HUMANITIES GRADUATES AIMING TO TAKE ON SIMILAR CORPORATE CAREERS?

Humanities is the study of human behaviour in personal, political, social context. You also learn to critically think and articulate well. But yes, if you are copying your senior's tutorials then you will have to learn all of this.

However, if you have learnt all of this, be confident you will excel in professions that demand communication, people orientation, and design. Ex: Marketing, Sales, HR, Design Thinking, Leadership. However, if possible do get a degree in management. It just gives you an entry to the corporate world.



MASTERING *Public Speaking*

BY SHRUTI SINHA

Public speaking is a crucial skill that can set you apart professionally and personally. Whether you're gearing up for a high-stakes job interview or delivering a presentation to a large audience, your ability to communicate effectively can make all the difference. Mastering public speaking isn't just about speaking clearly; it's about conveying confidence, persuading your audience, and leaving a lasting impression.

Public speaking is usually linked with fear and nervousness, but it is a skill that can be acquired and developed. Good speaking skills enable you to establish credibility, make decisions, and engage with people on a deeper level. In a job interview or a presentation, your capacity to express yourself decides how your message is perceived.

Interviews are your chance to demonstrate your skills, experience, and personality. Employers judge not only what you have to say but how you deliver it. Confidence, clarity, and enthusiasm are the essential features of a strong interview performance.

A well-delivered presentation can establish your authority on a subject, persuade your audience, and foster engagement. Whether you're presenting in a boardroom or at a conference, your communication skills can make or break the impact of your message.

HOW

to

IMPRESS

in

INTERVIEWS



1

PREPARATION IS KEY

Prior to entering an interview, familiarize yourself with the company, the position, and typical interview questions. Organize your responses using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) so that you present concise and effective answers. Rehearsing your answers in a mirror or taping yourself will assist in perfecting your presentation. Practice with a friend or mentor as well to mimic actual interview situations and gain constructive criticism.

MASTER YOUR BODY LANGUAGE 2

Non-verbal cues dominate the scene during interviews. Show confidence and interest by making eye contact, sitting upright to depict professionalism, and employing gestures in a natural way to illustrate strong points. A firm handshake with a smile goes a long way to leave a positive impression. Don't cross your arms or twiddle your fingers, which send out wrong signals of nervousness or inadequacy.

3 ENUNCIATE CLEARLY AND ASSERTIVELY

Steer clear of filler words such as "um," "like," and "you know." Instead, pause to gather your thoughts and assert yourself. Varying your tone and rate can add depth and interest to your speech. Pay attention to your volume—speak loudly enough to be heard but not so loudly that it sounds artificial. Deep breathing exercises can steady your voice and keep nervous quivers at bay.

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING 4

Interviews are dialogue, not soliloquies. Listen attentively to the questions being asked by the interviewer, answer thoughtfully, and ask intelligent questions. Active listening proves your attentiveness and the capacity to have a meaningful conversation. The occasional nod and verbal acknowledgment such as "That's a good question" or "I see" can indicate your interest.

5 TELL ENGAGING STORIES

Instead of enumerating skills and experiences, make them part of interesting stories. Stories make your answers memorable and help to demonstrate your abilities in action. You can use concrete examples of how you handled difficulties, demonstrated leadership, or made a difference in the team's success. The more specific the examples, the more convincing they will be.

HANDLE NERVOUSNESS EFFECTIVELY

6

Nervousness is natural but should not overwhelm your performance. Practice slow breathing exercises before the interview and imagine success in relaxing. Attempt power-posing—standing up straight in a confident position for a few minutes prior to the interview can make you feel more confident. In case you sense your voice trembling, take a deep breath and speak slowly to take control again.

7 RESEARCH THE INTERVIEWER

Being aware of a little bit about the interviewer can help you. Research them on LinkedIn or the company's website to see their background and interests. Talking about a common interest or complimenting their position can build rapport and help the interviewee feel more comfortable.

PREPARE THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS

8

Toward the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any questions. Try to avoid boring questions and ask thoughtful ones regarding company culture, opportunities to grow, or team relationships. For instance, "What are the key characteristics that make a person successful in this position?" or "How does this team work on projects?" demonstrates your interest and engagement.

9 FOLLOW UP WITH A THANK YOU NOTE

Follow up with a thank-you email after the interview to show your appreciation for the interview. Reiterate your interest in the position and mention a quick highlight from your discussion. Not only is this professional, but it also makes you remembered by the interviewer.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS TURNING HOBBIES INTO CAREERS

"From Passions to Paycheck"

BY ESHA GAMBHIR

In contemporary times, social media is not just a platform anymore, it has now entered our lives influencing every aspect of it. It is our modern diary, our daily dose of entertainment, shopping complex, gossip corner which also keeps us updated on the market fluctuations, fashion trends and acts as a job portal. Over the years professionals from different walks of life have used social media to unveil their potential and exhibit their skills. From homemakers earning fame and income by posting videos on platforms like Youtube and Instagram to investment advisors sharing their valuable insights to help others become financially responsible – One can explore endless possibilities on social media platforms and use it to their advantage.

As per the statistics, more than half of the world now uses social media (62.6%) i.e. 5.07 billion people around the world are now on different social media platforms. 259 million new users have hopped onto social media within the last year. The average daily time spent on social media is 2h 20m. Added together, the world spends more than 12 billion hours using social platforms each day, which is the equivalent of 1.4 million years of human existence.

These platforms do not only help you to connect with your loved ones, they also help you to network with like-minded people, share your story with others adding some value to their lives and also hearing out others' stories and getting inspired by their learnings and experiences. Social media also helps companies—big and small—to build awareness around their brand and turn viewers into loyal customers.

Social media offers countless benefits, the one that stands out of all is its ability to turn dreams—be it big or small—into thriving careers. Whether you're into fitness, photography, gaming, or cooking, there's an audience out there for almost every passion. Moreover, Social Media platforms like Instagram not only provide you with a massive exposure but also have built tools to track your growth—be it as an entrepreneur, influencer, content creator, a marketing agency. Few of the most powerful tools are— Business analytics information, telling one about how many viewers and accounts did their content reach to.

Another one is Meta Advertising. It helps you create and run ads for Facebook, Instagram and Messenger. Other platforms like Whatsapp offer tools like automated messages and bulk messaging. Youtube provides tools like Brandwatch, helping you to engage with your audience. All these tools are easy to use and could be of great benefit when used correctly.

Although social media has brought many brands, small businesses, artists and professionals into limelight, the niche that has experienced major growth is content creation and influencing. Now, fame and money is not just reserved for celebrities and stars, a smartphone and potential to add value in the life of an audience through one's interests is enough to build a career on social media. What once began as a hobby has now turned into a business **estimated to be worth a whopping \$24 billion** by the end of 2024. What was once viewed as merely sharing personal life updates has now transformed into vlogging making people earn in six figures.

This rapid shift has given rise to new terms and occupations like- 'Content Creators', 'UGC Creators', 'Vloggers', 'Fashion Influencers', 'Lifestyle Influencers' 'Food Influencers' and many more. These professionals share their insights belonging to their interest areas. A fashion blogger/influencer might share fashion tips. A travel influencer takes their audience on a journey through their favourite destinations, dispensing recommendations, travelling tips and guide etc.

A bulk of their income is generated from social media platforms through the content they share with their audience and also from the perks they get alongside by collaborating with brands either for money or in barter.

If we set out to highlight individuals who have turned their ideas and hobbies into income the list would be endless. Yet some of the remarkable people who stood out are-

Prajakta koli (MostlySane) - What started as a hobby of making relatable comedy and lifestyle videos on YouTube turned into a full-fledged career. Today, she's one of India's top digital creators, featuring in Netflix shows and collaborating with global icons.

Komal Pandey - Komal began sharing her personal fashion experiments on Instagram and YouTube, and her unique styling tips quickly enticed a large number of audience. Today, she's a renowned fashion influencer with collaborations from major brands.

Mastanamma - At 106 years old, Late. Ms. Mastanamma became one of the oldest YouTubers, cooking traditional Indian recipes in her rural kitchen. Her grandson started the channel as a hobby, but it soon became a sensation with millions of subscribers. She sadly passed away but her legacy still continues to live through these social media platforms.

Another bunch that has turned passion into paycheck via social media is **e-commerce, small businesses and start-ups**. All it takes is just one reel or post that turns them into an overnight sensation. These emerging enterprises benefit from personalised marketing done on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X (previously Twitter), this type of marketing is more cost-effective as well as impactful as compared to traditional marketing tools. By leveraging these platforms, new-age businesses can connect to their target audience, building personal connections and networks and leading to improved customer satisfaction, increased sales, and a strengthened reputation by employing strategies like sharing their own story on digital platforms, collaborating with relevant celebrities and influencers. Small businesses like '**Caught Craft Handed**' turned a leisure activity of knitting and crocheting into a thriving business and built a community of 1.7 lakh people alone on Instagram. Green Start-ups like '**Phool**' are working towards making people conscious about sustainability and environment through their eco-friendly products like incense sticks, essential oils etc.

Apart from the specific professional groups making the most out of the opportunities created by technological advancements, the demographics that have largely enjoyed and have been impacted by this digital revolution is the Gen-Z. They have started to use social media as a platform for side hustle, monetising their passions and hobbies and gaining financial independence from an early age.

As per a survey conducted by Credit Karma nearly half of Gen Zers in the US, making money on social media earn more through content creation than they do working a traditional job, and 13% earn six figures. Through platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, these young minds have learned building careers from scratch without needing conventional support systems. Many have even gone on to launch digital marketing consultancies, freelance creative services, or sell their own products, showcasing how digital spaces are more than just social—they're income generators and skill-building arenas

At last, monetising one's hobby is not a straight or even a guaranteed path. It requires a lot of patience, dedication and optimism to analyse one's target audience, their needs and how to stay relevant on such platforms while maintaining the integrity and vision for one's professional life. As companies realize the importance of having a strong online presence, social media career prospects are growing quickly. Content creation and influencing as a career option is on its all time high, universities and course providing apps have even started offering courses for digital marketing, influencing, content creation and engagement boosting courses.

Social media's ability to break down barriers and connect like-minded individuals has redefined the traditional career landscape, offering unprecedented opportunities to those willing to take the leap. It's safe to say that in today's digital age, the journey from passion to paycheck is more achievable than ever before.

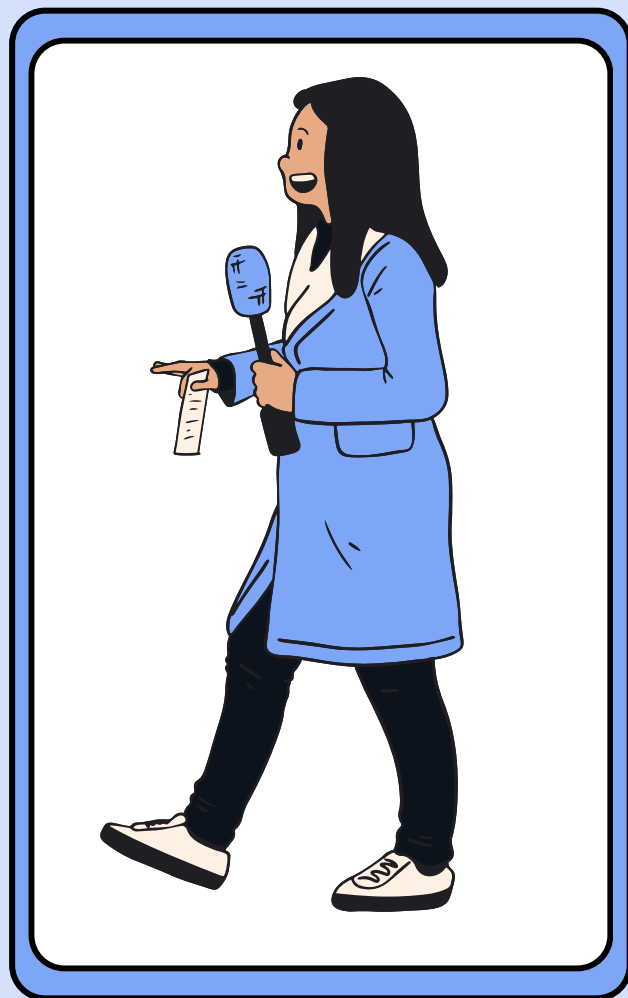
HOW TO STAND OUT IN A COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET

BY AARTI MAHESHWARI



The job market is evolving- are you keeping up or falling behind?" Here comes the art of standing out. In a world full of intellect and passion, when job applications are piled high and opportunities seem elusive, the question arises: How do you rise above the crowd? Today's job market is not just competitive- it's intensely dynamic, driven by shifting industries, new technologies, and changing global trends. Employers are not simply seeking candidates who fit the requirements: they're looking for individuals who bring something unique to the table.

Standing out in this world is not a matter of luck or chance. It's a systematic process that requires strategy, self-awareness, and action. Whether you're a new graduate or someone navigating career transitions, the path to success lies in being a memorable and valuable candidate. Let's look into how you can achieve this: -



METHODS TO MAKE *your mark*

Building a strong personal brand

Your personal brand is your professional identity—the story you present to the world. A strong personal brand reflects authenticity, consistency, and your unique value proposition. Begin by crafting a captivating online presence, especially on platforms like LinkedIn. Use professional headshot, write an engaging summary, and highlight your achievements and goals.

Your personal brand goes beyond digital spaces. Every encounter, from interviews to networking events, contributes to how others perceive you. Articulate your values, showcase your expertise, and ensure your action align with your goals. Remember, your personal brand must answer the question: What makes you compelling candidate for hire?

Developing Various skills: Hard skills and soft skills

Employers value candidates with a blend of technical and interpersonal skills. Hard skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. These skills allow you to effectively manage workplace dynamics. To enhance soft skills, look for opportunities to work in groups, practice active listening, and engage in self-reflection. Remember, your ability to relate and connect with others can often be a deciding factor.

Networking effectively

In the professional world, your connections can be as valuable as your knowledge. Networking isn't merely about collecting contacts: it's about building meaningful relationships. Attend industry events, participate in webinars, and join professional associations to broaden your network.

Don't underestimate the power of online networking. Engage with influential figures, comment on relevant posts, and share your insights. When reaching out to someone, personalize your message—show genuine interest in their work and clarify how connecting with them aligns with your goals. Networking is two-way street: offer help or value whenever possible.

Tailoring applications: Resumes and cover letters

A universal approach isn't effective for job applications. Customize your resume and cover letter to match the requirements of every job application. Highlight skills and experiences that correlate with the job description. Use keywords from the listing to pass Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and grab the recruiter's attention.

Your cover letter is your chance to share your story—explain why you're interested in the role and how you can make a difference. Be specific, concise, and authentic. Remember, customization shows effort and commitment, qualities that employers value.

METHODS TO MAKE *your mark*

Self-promotion without bragging

Promoting yourself is not about bragging; it's about confidently showcasing your achievements. Utilize facts, figures, and illustrations to support your claims. For instance, rather than stating, "I excel in marketing," explain how you boosted a campaign's ROI by 30%.

Practice humility and gratitude. Acknowledge the contributors of team members and mentors in your achievements. This balance between confidence and modesty makes your self-promotion genuine and relatable.

Showcasing your Unique Selling Propositions (USP)

Your USP is the unique combination of skills, experiences, and qualities that differentiate you from others. Identify what sets you apart—perhaps it's your creative problem-solving ability, your interdisciplinary knowledge, or your knack for turning obstacles into opportunities.

Communicate your USP effectively and clearly in interviews, elevator pitches, and online profiles. Use engaging stories to illustrate your unique value. Remember, your USP isn't just about being different; it's also being memorable and having a meaningful impact.

Being adaptable, resilient, and having a winning mindset

The job market is often unpredictable, making adaptability a prized trait. Embrace change, learn from failures, and stay open to new opportunities. Being resilient helps you to navigate challenges without losing momentum.

Cultivate a winning mindset by setting goals, staying positive, and continuously seeking growth.

Surround yourself with encouraging people and incorporate like meditation or journaling to build mental resilience.

Engaging in meaningful side projects

Side projects illustrate your initiative, creativity, and passion. Engaging in freelancing, volunteering, or working on a passion project can highlight your skills in action. For instance, if you aspire to be a content writer, start a blog. Similarly, if you're passionate about social impact, volunteer with nonprofit organization.

Side projects not only boost your portfolio but also demonstrate your commitment to growth. They provide concrete proof of your capabilities and set you apart from other applicants with similar qualifications.

REFLECTING ON THE *journey*

Standing out in a competitive job market requires a blend of creativity and strategy. It calls for a combination of strategic planning, continuous learning, and authentic self-expression. By creating a strong personal brand, honing diverse skills, networking effectively, customizing applications, promoting yourself gracefully, highlighting your USP, embracing adaptability, and participating in meaningful projects, you can carve your niche in the professional world.

Remember, the key is not just to fit, the job market may be competitive, but with the right approach, you can not only stand out-you can shine boldly.

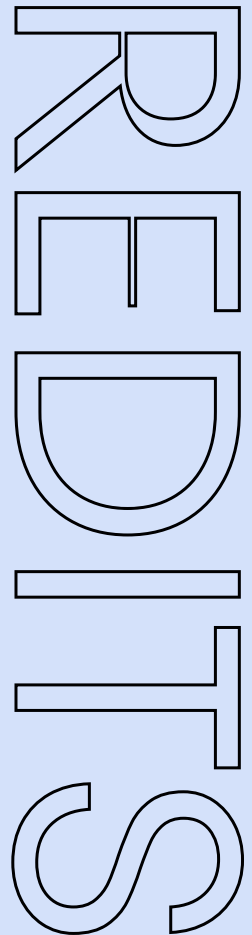
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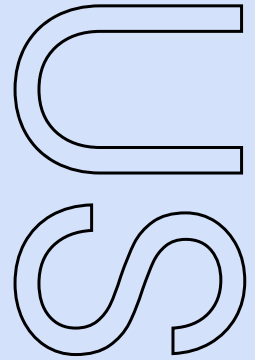
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