

Hello Guys!! We all work hard 3 years, take part in different activities, take projects and POR's due to interest and at least a subtle goal of good placement. This blog tries to cover story of my 7th semester, why I chose placements over going for masters and the preparation I did which landed me at Sony Japan. This blog should be very useful for those who are specially aiming Japanese firms.

About Me

I am Sachin Goyal, currently a 4th year UG in the Electrical Engineering department. I hail from the city of Udaipur. In the past 3 years, I have been intrigued by areas of Image Processing and Computer Graphics. I like to explore statistical and mathematical aspects of problems and combine modern approaches with classical solutions to solve research problems.

My Profile

- 1 Research paper in Medical Image Processing
- 2nd year Intern - Johns Hopkins University
- 3rd year Intern - Qualcomm, Hyderabad
- 1 other major project

First things First !

Why Placements and not Masters

Truly speaking, I spent the whole time from semester start (mid July) to midsems (mid September) in figuring out whether or not to apply for masters. Nevertheless, I started preparing for GRE and TOEFL (took 1 month to prepare). My reason to opt for placements was that I need a break for academia at least for an year or so after my BTech. I started feeling too much fatigued from continuous hard work and projects. Apart from this another major reason to choose for placements was that I felt having an industry exposure would help me a lot to decide what actually I want to do in my masters/PhD in future. Having an industrial exposure surely helps one to gauge where the market and technology sector is heading towards in future and hence will help you in proper planning of your graduate studies. Many people may disagree with me on this, but in the end it is you who has to decide. Remember, graduate studies need a lot of devotion and you have a lot of responsibilities also thereafter (loan repayment ex.). Hence you need to be sure of your commitment before opting for masters. PLEASE JUST DON'T GO FOR HIGHER STUDIES BECAUSE YOUR FRIEND IS ALSO GOING OR PEER PRESSURE.

So it's mid-September now, in less than 30 days company tests are going to begin !!! Coding Tests and Aptitude Tests.

Coding Test Preparation

I was good in basic coding concepts and knew syntaxes in C++ and Python since I had completed my CS minor and had taken 2-3 CS courses every semester. Being from electrical department also aided. But you need to prepare for Competitive Coding for placement tests.

Mostly the test comprise of 3 algorithms/data structure based questions which you need to solve in 1 to 1.5 hours on coding platforms like hackerrank or hackerearth.

I referred mainly to Geeks for Geeks SudoPlacements course and InterviewBit for coding preparation. These 2 website would serve more than enough. Also, you will get numerous blogs on web which will guide you properly for coding test preparation.

SOPs for Japanese Firms

IIT Bombay is fortunate enough (and probably the only IIT) to host 6-7 japanese firms in the placement season. Companies like Honda, Sony, NEC Japan, Hitachi, Murata, Softbank, etc visit IITB and offer various exciting roles with decent pay. All japanese firm require the student to submit an SOP for the recruitment process. Japanese people are quite conservative about their culture and there country, and hence want to know mainly following things about you : -

- 1) How much do you know about Japan?
- 2) Will you be able to adjust to cultural change and mainly the Language Change? Have you had any such past experiences and how you have tackled the same.
- 3) How do you plan to contribute to the firm and why do you want to work in Japan.

Be sure to cover these points in your SOP. Try to give a story where you faced such challenges, maybe one you faced when you went to another country during 3rd year intern, or if you are a north indian and went to banglore/hyderabad for intern, that too can be counted as one (North South Huge Difference). Remember India is a huge country and you can always build an impressive story. You can also mention the cultural change you faced when you joined your college and met people from diverse backgrounds and languages from all over the India.

Companies Shortlisted

I got shortlisted majorly for Microsoft, Tower Research, Sony, Honda, Samsung Bangalore, Softbank and Hitachi.

Interview with Sony Japan

Sony takes one single interview which is basically fragmented into 2 parts - Technical and HR. The HR starts a time of 45 minutes at the start. The first 5 minutes, HR starts the conversation and breaks the ice.

Technical ->

Next 30 minutes technical team members will take over and ask you about your projects and your interest. I had applied for Graphics RnD profile and had done 2 projects related to graphics. I explained both the projects to them and was simply cross questioned on those. The sony graphics team lead was one of the interviewer and he asked me about possible future work in my project and ideas which I had to overcome the current issues in my implementation. Apart from this, at max he asked 1 or 2 simple questions related to the profile.

HR ->

For the last 10 minutes, the HR takes over again. He asked me to describe myself, why I want to join Sony and why Japan. After this he asks some odd questions like are you Vegetarian or Non Vegetarian? Is your family comfortable with you moving to Japan?

The interview gets over with HR asking you if you want to ask any questions. I would suggest you guys, always be prepared to ask atleast one question. Maybe some clarification of profile or if you don't get any, simply ask - What is a normal day at the firm like.

At the end of the day, I was notified about my selection at Sony, Japan. One important thing to remember during placements is to KEEP YOUR CALM. DON'T GET PANICKED. BE CHILL AND CONFIDENT DURING THE INTERVIEW AND TRY TO BE YOURSELF AND NOT PRETEND.

Some Common Japanese Interview Tips

- 1) It is a good practice to bend and wish arigato at the start and end of the interview. Watch a youtube video on how to wish arigato.
- 2) Practice speaking in very slow english. Use extremely simple english words in the interview. Listen to what they are saying very carefully, it will be sometimes hard to grasp as japanese are not well verse in speaking english. Plus there are ascent problems.
- 3) Never ever point fingers towards interviewers.Keep hand movement limited during the interview.
- 4) Ensure to knock the door before entering the room surely.
- 5) Dress well for the interview.
- 6) Make them believe that you plan to stay long time at there firm. Japanese people dont switch firms that frequently. Also try to magnify the company by applauding 1 or 2 of there products which amaze you.
- 7) Try talk to your friends who have been to Japan on an intern maybe. Feel free to contact me also.

Feel free to contact me if you have any further doubts.

Thanks

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