RemoteHeR · Module 7 · Decision game

MODULE 7 DECISION GAME

The interview, from your side

A real remote HR interview. You pick your answer from three, and see what the panel writes down about each.



Before you start

You have an interview for an HR administrator role at a distributed company. Two people are on the call: Sofia, who would be your manager, and Pedro from the wider HR team.

After each answer you will see what they wrote on their scorecards. That part is the point of the game — candidates almost never find out, and it is the single most useful thing you could know.

Nothing is graded. Answer as you actually would, not as you think you should, and then play it again.

Decision 1 · "Tell us a bit about yourself."

Sofia opens with it. It is the first question in almost every interview and it is the one most candidates handle worst, because it sounds like small talk and is not.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "I'm an HR administrator with a portfolio of seven pieces of HR work: screening, onboarding, reporting, a policy. Before that, eleven years in retail, six supervising fourteen people."	**Sofia writes:** "Knows what she is. Two sentences, present tense, concrete. Ask about the screening work." **Pedro writes:** "Portfolio — ask to see it." You have used about twenty seconds and given them two things to ask about. That is what this question is for: it is not an invitation to narrate, it is your one chance to choose what the next question is about.	good
B. "Well, I've had quite a varied path. I started in retail after school, then I took some time out for family reasons, and recently I've been retraining because I've always liked people..."	**Sofia writes:** "Chronological. 90 seconds and I still don't know what she can do." **Pedro writes:** "Time out — ask about the gap?"	bad

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	Everything you said was true and you have spent your best minute on your history rather than your capability. Worse, the only thing that stood out was the gap, so that is now the next question.	
C. "I'm hardworking, very organised and I love working with people. I'm looking for an opportunity to develop and I think I'd be a great fit for your team."	**Sofia writes:** "Nothing to score." **Pedro writes:** "—" Every adjective in that answer was written by every other candidate this morning. There is nothing false in it and nothing checkable either, which means there is nothing to write down and nothing to remember you by.	bad

Decision 2 · "Give us an example of your attention to detail."

Pedro asks it. It is a criterion on their scorecard, which is why it is being asked in these words.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "I reconciled the till and daily banking for a store taking about €4,000 a day, six days a week for six years. Two discrepancies in that time, both found by me before the weekly check."	**Pedro writes:** "Strong. Number, duration, and she found the errors herself. Score 4." Three things made that work: a number, a length of time, and the second sentence. "Both found by me" is the part that turns accuracy into ownership, and it took four extra words.	good
B. "I'd say attention to detail is one of my strongest points — I always double-check my work and I hate making mistakes."	**Pedro writes:** "Claim, no example. Score 1. Prompt once more." He will ask again in a slightly different way, and you now have one chance left on a criterion you could have banked in fifteen seconds. When a question begins "give us an example", the answer has to contain one.	bad
C. "In my last role we were responsible for making sure everything balanced at the end of the day, and we had a really good record."	**Pedro writes:** "'We'. What did she do?" The work may well have been yours and the sentence gave it to the team. In an interview, "we" is a generous habit that scores nothing — the scorecard has your name on it, not the store's.	mixed

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Decision 3 · "You haven't worked in HR before."

Sofia says it flatly. It is not hostile — it is on the form and she has to ask it.

This is the moment most career changers lose the interview, and almost always by agreeing too quickly.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "Not under that title. I've handled absence, disciplinaries, rotas for fourteen people and staff records under GDPR, and I've built HR work I can show you. What I haven't had is the job title."	**Sofia writes:** "Good distinction. She's right — that is HR work. Not defensive." You have separated two things that sound identical and are not: no HR experience, and no HR job title. Only one of those was true, and the difference is the whole interview.	good
B. "No, that's true, but I'm a fast learner and I'm really keen to get into it."	**Sofia writes:** "Confirms gap. Keen. Nothing else." You have agreed with the weakest reading of your own history and offered enthusiasm to cover it. Enthusiasm is not evidence, and every candidate today is keen.	bad
C. "I know it looks that way on paper, but honestly the work is very similar and I'm confident I could pick it up quickly."	**Sofia writes:** "Says it's similar. Similar how?" The claim is right and it is unsupported, which invites a follow-up you now have to answer under pressure. Name the tasks and it becomes a fact instead of an argument.	mixed

Decision 4 · "How would you keep employee data safe working from home?"

Pedro again. This one matters more than it sounds: they are about to give a home worker access to a system holding salaries, health information and home addresses.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "Separate login, encryption, screen lock, nothing stored locally, two-factor. Two risks I can't fully fix: the laptop is shared and the room has no door, so I use headphones for named people."	**Pedro writes:** "Best answer today. Named her own residual risk without being asked. Score 4." **Sofia writes:** "This is someone I'd trust with the HRIS." The second half is what scored, not the first. Anyone can list controls. Naming what you cannot fix, calmly, is what a	good

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	professional sounds like — and it told them you had actually looked.	
B. "I take confidentiality extremely seriously and I'd follow whatever policy you have in place."	**Pedro writes:** "Compliant, passive. Score 2." It is a safe answer and it answers a different question. They asked what you would do, and most real situations are not covered by a policy — which is precisely why they asked.	bad
C. "My set-up is completely secure — I work alone in a separate room and nobody else uses my laptop."	**Pedro writes:** "No risk at all? Hasn't looked." No home set-up is risk-free, and claiming one is signals either that you have not examined it or that you would not tell them if something went wrong. This is the answer that most often loses an otherwise strong candidate.	bad

Decision 5 · "What are your salary expectations?"

The advert published a range: €28,000 to €34,000.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "You published €28 to €34. Based on the systems experience and the supervisory background I'd be looking at the upper half — around €32." Then stop talking.	**Sofia writes:** "€32. Reasoned, and she stopped." There is a four-second silence. Sofia fills it, not you. That silence is the whole technique: the number was the easy part, and not talking through the pause is what stops you negotiating against yourself.	good
B. "I'm flexible — whatever's fair for the role really."	**Sofia writes:** "Flexible. Start at 28." Flexible is heard as the bottom of the range, every time. You have handed the decision to the person with the opposite interest, and they will take it politely.	bad
C. "Around €32,000 — is that in the right area? I know I don't have direct HR experience so I'm open to discussing it."	**Sofia writes:** "€32, then argued herself down. Start at 29." The number was fine. The sentence after it undid the number. Asking whether your own figure is acceptable, and then supplying the reason to reduce it, does the employer's work for them.	bad

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Decision 6 · "Do you have any questions for us?"

Sofia is closing. There are four minutes left.

Choice	What happens	Verdict
A. "Is the hybrid arrangement in the contract or at a manager's discretion? And what does someone doing this job well look like after six months?"	**Sofia writes:** "Sensible questions. Knows the difference between a policy and a term." The first question protects you and quietly demonstrates that you read contracts. The second gets you the success criteria in the interviewer's own words — useful if you take the job, and useful in the follow-up email if you want it.	good
B. "No, I think you've covered everything, thank you."	**Sofia writes:** "No questions." A neutral note that reads as mild disinterest, and you have skipped the only part of the interview you control. Two questions, prepared in advance, cost nothing.	bad
C. "What's the company culture like?"	**Sofia writes:** "Generic." You will get a pleasant answer that tells you nothing, because there is no version of this question anyone answers badly. Ask something that has a real answer — how decisions get recorded, what happened to the last person in the role, how often the team is actually online together.	mixed

Ending · Sofia's summary: second interview

Most of your answers gave the panel something to write down: a number, a duration, a named action, a risk you had looked at. Sofia's last note reads: "Evidence throughout. Invite to second interview; ask her to bring the recruitment pack." That is what an evidence-based interview sounds like from the other side of the screen.

Ending · Sofia's summary: kept on the list

Some answers scored well and some gave the panel little to hold on to. Sofia's last note reads: "Capable, uneven. Strong when she named what she did; vague when she said 'we' or reached for adjectives. Possible second interview." Look back at the answers where the panel wrote a question mark, and find the artefact that would have answered it.

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Ending · Sofia's summary: not this time

Most of your answers were true and gave the panel nothing to score. Sofia's last note reads: "Pleasant, keen, nothing checkable. Not progressing." Nothing here is about your ability; it is about what you said. Play again with your portfolio open, and answer each question with something you made.

Debrief

What the scorecards were actually recording. **Evidence, not adjectives.** Every answer that scored well contained a number, a duration or a named action. Every answer that scored nothing contained words anyone could have said.

Your verb, not the team's. "We had a good record" is invisible on a scorecard with your name on it.

No HR experience is usually not true. No HR job title generally is. They are different sentences and only one of them is a problem.

Naming what you cannot fix scores higher than claiming there is nothing to fix. In the data question it was the only thing that separated the candidates.

Say the number, then stop. Everything said after your figure is used to lower it, including by you.

The last question is yours. It is four minutes you control completely, and most candidates give them away.

My decision log

What I chose on my first play, and what happened

What I changed on a second play, and why

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