[Transcript] My First Million / MFM Mini - 5 Hacks to Landing Your Dream Job

All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now, HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell, and they break down why these pitches were winners or losers, and each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find another bite on whatever podcast app you listen to like Apple or Spotify or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

All right.

I thought it would be fun to share a few of my hacks for job interviews or getting your dream job.

When I was 23, 24 years old, I had just finished doing a startup in Australia.

We had gotten funding and it was moving on to the next phase and I said, all right, do I want to, do I want to keep going with this or do I want to bounce?

And as I said, hey guys, we hit our goal, got our funding, we got to go do this field test.

That's going to take years to figure out if this technology works.

Good luck to you guys.

I want to move to Silicon Valley and I want to see what's in the water there.

Now the problem was I had none of the experience you needed to get any of the jobs I wanted at tech companies, right?

I would go look online and it said, you know, are you an engineer?

Nope.

Don't know how to code.

Designer?

Nope.

Finance?

Well, not really.

Don't really have those skills.

Okay.

You could be a product person, right?

Which is sort of code for PM, which was I thought project manager, but turned out it's product manager.

Either way, it's sort of the same thing.

It's the person that kind of like shepherds the product along, shepherds the project along and their job is to make it successful and they're the person who doesn't code, doesn't design, but they tie together all these pieces.

Now the problem was every job posting said you need, you know, seven years of PM experience, blah, blah, blah.

I had none.

In fact, as you can tell, I thought it stood for project manager.

So I had zero years of experience and zero seconds of experience.

But nonetheless, I wanted to apply for these jobs and I ended up getting my dream job.

I got a job at this idea lab, working for this couple, this sort of billionaire couple, and they were super successful in their past and they were looking for somebody to come in and join this incubator, this idea lab where you would dream up projects and then you'd have a team of people already announced to build them.

And that was, that was the gig.

And so, you know, like this podcast is about spitting out business ideas.

That's what I got to do is my job and then actually build them and bring them to life.

So anyways, how did I get this job?

Well, I'm going to share with you a few of the things, some of these that I did and some of these that I've seen or have stood out to me since then, because I've hired, I don't know, 50, 70 people since then, personally, and you know, some people do a good job standing out.

So here's my hacks for getting to stand out, to not just be another resume on a pile of resumes on somebody's desk, right, hoping for the best.

So here's what, here's three categories that I'm going to talk about.

First of all, you got to know that almost all the value happens in the prep, happens before you even step foot in the office to do a job interview.

There's two types of prep.

There's prep for yourself and then there's prep for the company.

Let's talk about prep for yourself.

When you get in there, you are going to be asked questions.

There's three generic questions you need to be prepared for.

Number one, so tell me about yourself.

How do you answer the tell me about yourself question?

You want to prep this, you want to make it sound like it's off the cuff, but it's actually something you've thought about, you kind of knew where you wanted to go with it.

You don't want to bore them with just a series of events of your life.

You want to tell the story, right?

So you want to say, you know, I grew up in a family, I grew up in a small town, you know, we had, our whole town had four traffic lights, that's how small the town was, both my parents were teachers.

I thought for my whole life I would become a teacher until I turned 21 and realized, you know, teachers make $50,000 a year and hey, I like money, right?

You sort of present some version of, here's my backstory, right?

I grew up, I always thought I wanted to be a doctor and then when the time came that I needed to sign up for eight years of medical school, I thought to myself, well, maybe I should go and see what a doctor does and so I shattered a doctor for two weeks and knew at the end of those two weeks, many things, the most important thing I learned was I don't want to be a doctor, but now here I am, I'm 21 years old and I don't know what to do next, right?

So you're telling a bit of a story and the beginning setup should be, I thought X, not it should be, I should say, easy formula is I grew up thinking X and then bam, I got punched in the face when I realized X is wrong and that's when I pivoted or adjusted or I realized, you know, I grew up in a family of 42 engineers, right?

Every aunt and uncle I have is an engineer.

I thought, you know, the word job was basically the same thing as becoming an engineer.

In college, I failed my engineering classes, right?

I was terrible.

I was such a like poor student in engineering and so at some point I realized, hey, mom, dad, it's not going to work out for me becoming an engineer, but the good news was I figured out one thing I was good at talking.

I was good at talking to people.

I was good at selling and I realized that there's a whole set of jobs.

That's how I got into business development.

That's how I got into sales and ever since then I've sold shoes, I've sold medical equipment, blah, blah, blah, right?

So you're going to create this pivot point in your story.

The pivot point says, I used to do X, I used to think about, I used to think I was going to do X, then I realized Y. So now that's how I shifted into Z. That's how I stumbled into Z. And wow, Z has been an amazing ride for me, right?

That's what you're essentially trying to say.

And you want to lead them to where you are now, right?

And so since then I've just been kicking butt and taking names, doing this at all these companies, but you know, I've really been just looking for that next challenge and I decided that this next chapter of my life is going to be about working on a product that I truly, truly enjoy.

So that's why I applied to this company, right?

So that's when you get to the kicked butt phase and then you're going to say, you know, I had to ask myself, what do I want?

What do I really want?

And I decided that this next chapter is going to be about X, learning, going to be about challenging myself, going to be about making an impact.

That's why I'm choosing to apply to work with you guys.

All right.

So that's the tell me about yourself question.

Hopefully that gives a generic structure that you can plug your life into and you're going to discard, cut all the fat and just tell a story that fits that structure.

All right.

Second thing, they're going to ask you questions about, oh, tell me about a time when you dealt with X. Tell me about a time, you know, tell me about some of your strengths.

Tell me about some of your weaknesses.

Tell me about a time you failed, blah, blah, blah.

You can't prepare for all these broad questions specifically because you don't know which one they're going to ask.

What you can do is you want to prep three stories, right?

So you don't want to answer the question of, you know, tell me about a time without a story, right?

They're asking you for a story and these behavioral interview questions are very common where people

are going to ask you about, you know, tell me about a time when this happened.

So you want to come prepared with three times.

The three I would prepare is number one, when you overcame an unexpected obstacle, you know, we were doing great, you know, the business was doing phenomenal, and then all of a sudden Facebook changed the rules and overnight our revenue went from $250,000 to $42,000.

And we were weeks away from going out of business or whatever, right?

So things were good and then an unexpected obstacle came and here's how we overcame it.

That's story number one.

Think through your life.

And that could be anything.

It could be I worked at an ice cream shop, you know, and the, you know, the most important part of an ice cream shop is having cold ice cream and then our freezer broke.

And we had to scramble and figure out what are we going to do?

Do we just close the shop?

No, we went and we, you know, blah, blah, blah.

We got ice from the neighboring restaurants.

We created a little barricade and blah, blah, blah.

You know, we, we, we, the ice cream didn't melt.

So you want to overcome an unexpected obstacle.

Number two is you dealt with a team issue, a people issue.

So we were at work and this one person really wasn't pulling their weight and nobody wanted to address it, but I felt like it was the right thing to do.

So here's how I addressed it.

Some team issue.

Number three is the world was going a one way and nobody really knew where that, you know, everybody sort of thought the world looked like X, but then I realized I saw this, I had this insight why.

So what you're saying is how you found a new opportunity.

You know, we only used to do this, but then one day I noticed this and it got me thinking, maybe we could try this new thing and boom, that new thing worked.

So you know, the three story structures, you overcame an unexpected obstacle, you dealt with a team or people issue, and then lastly, you found a new opportunity or you observed a new opportunity.

Okay.

So those are the things you're going to prepare about yourself.

Then how do you prepare for the company?

Well, there's two things I think people should do here.

Number one, a lot of people forget like the table stakes.

You should definitely come in having looked up what the company does.

But I think furthermore, you should have an opinion about what they're good at, what they're bad at.

Now this can be you kind of auditing their product so you can go through their product.

You can take screenshots, you can make a presentation, you can make a list of the three things you think that could be improved, that could be better, and you notice them by playing with the product.

We had somebody once who has gone on to become a very successful founder, you know, sold a company 20 million bucks and is very well known.

They came in and they said, yeah, actually, I saw your product, I really liked it, but I wanted to understand what customers thought about it.

So I actually reached out and I sent this message to about 10 customers and I asked them these three questions, and would you guys like to hear kind of like what your customer said?

And we're like salivating at this point, wow, this person did the work.

They showed me they could do the job by doing the job beforehand.

That is the easiest way to paint a picture in my head that you can do it is by having already done it, right?

Talk to the customers, audit the product, that's the easy thing to do.

Last thing is they're going to ask you a question.

So do you have any questions for us?

What do you say, right?

You've been sitting there for 50 minutes, they've been bombarding you with questions, and then they give you this little opening at the end, hey, last five minutes, do you want to ask us any questions?

And you're like, dude, I just want to go to the bathroom.

I need a pee break, but I know I need to come up with something here, because this is part of the test.

This isn't you being kind.

This is part of the test where you're trying to see where my head's at.

And I could ask about the job, blah, blah, blah.

Here's the little hack that I would do.

So what I would do is I would say, I think I've got a really good sense of what you're looking for, but I'm curious, if you think forward six months from here, a year from now, and you picture whoever you hire for this role, the person you hire for this role, they're doing an awesome job, what do you picture them doing that would tell you that they've knocked this out of the park, right?

What would it feel like?

Would it have changed if somebody really knocked this job out of the park?

That does two things.

It tells them you're sort of thinking forward about how you're going to please them, essentially, how you're going to solve their problem, which is why they're hiring you in the first place.

They have a problem.

And you're getting them to articulate what winning looks like.

So you know how to position yourself.

You know what?

I think I could do that.

I think that if I came in, I'd be able to do XYZ and get to that outcome you want, right?

But you get them to state the dream.

And even them just saying out loud what they think a killer job looks like while staring at your face, there's sort of this association that happens.

And they appreciate that that's where your head's at.

You're not thinking about, well, what are your hours like?

What's your vacation policy?

That's about me.

And so I'm making it about the role.

I'm making it about the company to say, what would winning look like?

And I'm trying to ask questions, probing questions to figure that out.

So I think that's the most important question to ask at the end when it comes to what questions do you have for me.

The other one I like to ask here is, let's say this goes great.

You hire me, and I come into work, and it's my first kind of like 30 days on the job, my first 90 days out of the job.

What do you think would be the most important thing for me to focus on during those first 30 days, those first 90 days?

Or opposite could be, what do you think would be a trap that would be easy for me to fall into but should be avoided?

And you're sort of going with presumed assumption that you're getting the job and you get them to think outside the box and sort of highlight a priority or highlight a common trap that you would avoid.

Just asking that question will tell them that you are a sort of sharp, clear thinker who is team first.

Okay, last thing that I would say is little hacks, little tips that work well.

Use a whiteboard if they have one.

This works great when you're in person.

I know a lot of interviews right now on Zoom, I would still try it on Zoom.

I would have a piece of paper in front of me, I would draw something, or I would use the whiteboard feature in Zoom or whatever.

There's something about when you say, I'm a visual person, I'm a visual thinker, can I draw something here?

And all of a sudden it just breaks the pattern of this sort of looking down at my paper and asking you a question to like, oh, something exciting is going to happen.

What is he going to draw?

What picture does he have at his head?

And it could be anything.

You could just draw, here's my understanding of how the business works.

Correct me if I'm wrong.

If I have the right picture.

You've got your suppliers over here and then you have your customers over here, you have

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two segments.

So let's call it the high end and the low end segment.

And you just draw some diagram.

This is, I don't know, it has this swagger and confidence that just exudes here.

And in doing so, you turn it more into a brainstorm versus an evaluation versus a judgment that they're putting on you.

Okay, so those are my very basic, very, very, very basic things.

And then obviously follow up, follow up strong.

So say, hey, I had a great time in our conversation.

And by the way, you know, after our conversation, I was looking up this thing.

Check this out.

It's pretty cool, right?

Just add value and you're not sitting there begging for a job.

It's a two way investigation of is this the right fit?

That's how high, you know, winning players evaluate jobs.

Is this the right thing for me and am I the right thing for you?

And we're going to both opt in for this to happen.

It's not just a one way thing where pick me, pick me, pick me.

Okay, so those are the, those are the tips that I got.

Hopefully that's helpful to those of you who are looking for jobs.

But of course, my preference as always is be the person creating the jobs.

Start a business, own a piece of equity in a business that that is the way to go.

But if you're looking for a job, hopefully this was helpful.

All right.

I'm Sean.

And if you like this, let me know.

You can tweet at me Sean VP or go to my website, email me Sean at Sean puri.com.

All right.

I'm out of here.

Hey, my first million listeners.

This is Steph from trends.co.

If you know trends, you know, our bread and butter is our newsletter where we share trends and how to capitalize on them.

But after working on this thing for nearly two years, I got to say that one of the coolest things is when people in our community actually build businesses from these trends.

And one example is an article we wrote in October, 2019, and it was called the A to Z of SAS and SAS is spelled X-A-A-S because it meant anything as a service.

And we walked through literally from A to Z or A to Z in Canada, 40 different models of something as a service, including analytics as a service, clothing as a service, compliance as a service, egg freezing as a service, legal as a service, malware as a service, testing as a service.

There were so many different business models that we found, which all framed around this idea of something as a service, which basically means that you create something that's hard enough for someone to build in their own company.

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So they're willing to pay for it as a service.

And we covered specific examples of companies in each one of these models and the money that they had raised.

Now, one of our trends members, Chris Corner, saw this article and he saw an opportunity shortly after he launched something called Send Eats, which he calls E-A-A-S, which is e-commerce as a service.

He basically helps companies fulfill their e-commerce and he bought a domain for $8.

You can go to it at sendeats.com.

And fast forward to today, Chris and Send Eats just raised their Series A at a $17 million valuation.

Chris also recently tweeted that his warehouse is growing from 10,000 square feet to 36,000 square feet and his orders shipped in June were growing 45% month over month.

They're basically out of space.

Send Eats is one of many success stories from Trends, so much so that I was recently asked why I'm still at Trends instead of pursuing these businesses on my own.

So if you want in on these Trends before they actually get big, sign up at trends.co.mfm.

We've got a special deal for you.

It's trends.co.mfm and we'll see you on the inside.