EXCEL JOB INTERVIEW CHEAT SHEET
Thank you for downloading our Job Interview Cheat Sheet which will give you an unfair advantage over your peers!

How to get the most value from this Cheat Sheet....

Over the last few years, I have interviewed 11 Microsoft Excel and Human Resource experts over at my Excel podcast show and asked them to share their insights and tips on these important job interview questions:

What will be the quickest and best way for someone that's going into a job interview, to prepare for that interview?

What are the best Excel features that they should use and learn to be able to get this job?

To get the best value from this Cheat Sheet, please follow these 2 important steps:

1. Read the transcript from each interview to get the context of each response and highlight the “Key Takeaways” on top of each page.

2. Join my Free Excel Masterclass where I will teach you the quickest way to learn all these Excel tips from each “Key Takeaway” by clicking on the link below and selecting the best time for you:

>> Free Registration – Microsoft Excel Masterclass

See you in the Excel Masterclass!

JOHN MICHALOUDIS
Microsoft MVP
Creator – The MyExcelOnline Academy
Founder – MyExcelOnline.com
**Key Takeaways**

- Start with key features to research – Excel formulas, Pivot Tables, and most popular keyboard shortcuts
- Join a forum to start asking questions about Excel to get free advice
- Start learning functions without the function builder
- Learn the VLOOKUP function and the pivot table to transition from a beginner to intermediate user

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**Interview**

John Michaloudis:

Godey guys and girls, and welcome to this special podcast episode. Now, I've been wanting to get this podcast out to you because it is the number one question that I get each and every week from a lot of my listeners and subscribers to my blog. And they ask me, "John, I have an interview coming up. Can you help me out? What should I do? Are there any websites out there that you can lead me towards so I can prepare for this interview?" And there are, but in my podcast show over the last couple of years, I have got the leading Excel experts and I've interviewed them. And as you may or may not know, at the end of the show, about five minutes to go, I ask them a question. I ask them with all the knowledge that they have, "What will be the quickest and best way for someone that's going into a job interview to prepare for that interview?"

John Michaloudis:

And I also ask them, "What are the best Excel features that they should use and learn in order to be able to get this job?" Now, I have 11 Excel experts that I've asked this question to, and they have come up with some great answers, some
answers that I know that you're going to love, and you're going to get a lot out of because it's going to help you, whether it's now, whether you are going for a job interview now or in the future, it's going to help you out. Now, listen to each and every Excel experts and their response. And all you got to do is take out three key concepts from this podcast and use that in your interview. Now, I'm certain that if you do that, then you are going to have a better chance than the peer or the next person that's going for the same job.

John Michaloudis:
So if you can apply three of the things that all these Excel experts are going to tell you now, then you're going to have a better chance of getting that job. And that's what we're here for. We are here to help you get better at Excel, get better at your job or get a new job or a pay rise. So it's an awesome show. Listen to it. All the links are going to be in the show notes and you can access them at MyExcelOnline.com/podcast. If you like this show, please share it with your friends and colleagues. And also go on iTunes or Stitcher and leave a review over there. I will greatly appreciate it. Okay, let's get straight into this great podcast show.

Speaker 2:
Welcome to the MyExcelOnline podcast, the need to know Excel insights, knowledge and tips brought to you by the experts that know them best. Are you ready to explore your full potential and get better at Excel? It's time to stand out from the crowd with your host, John Michaloudis.

John Michaloudis:
Let's welcome to MyExcelOnline's inaugural podcast, Chris Newman, also known as Chris Macro in the online world. Now, Chris, let's say it's my first time ever seeing Excel and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within one week for an important job interview. With all the Excel knowledge that you know today, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Chris Newman:
So I'd probably focus on some key features to research. So I would probably start learning the Excel formulas. I would learn pivot tables and I'd probably start learning some of the basic shortcuts or the more popular shortcuts. So the way I would recommend doing that is to use your good friend Google to start researching that. There's a lot of great websites that have blog posts, including mine, out there on some of those topics. And I would also join forum and just start asking questions about things and there's thousands and thousands of people on these forums that will just be your teacher for free and would be more than happy to answer your questions. So I think being able to have that interaction on the forums and being able to have so many experts at your fingertips would really get you the knowledge you need in time for that interview.

John Michaloudis:
Awesome. Awesome tips. Awesome tips. What would be the best Excel tool that a beginner should focus on?

Chris Newman:
I think when you're beginning, learning the functions without the dialogue box, the function builder, that really slows you down. So if you can kind of learn what the inputs are starting out, that's a huge win for you. I'd say next learning that VLOOKUP function and knowing the power that it can do is very key. And also learning the pivot table. I think VLOOKUP and pivot tables are kind of your gateway from becoming a beginner to an intermediate user. So I think those are both huge features that Excel has that are very, very powerful.
**Key Takeaways**

- Take an Excel online course built specifically for Excel beginners as the fastest way to level up in Excel
- For the more advanced level, find business problems to solve and use forums to help get answers
- Best Excel feature for accounting interviews would be understanding VLOOKUP, especially about its parameters
- Be ready for the question about the most complicated thing you’ve ever done in Excel
- Have a good command of formulas: SUM and averaging formulas

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**Interview**

John Michaloudis:
All right, Chris, thank you very much. Let's welcome from British Columbia, Canada, Mr. Ken Puls. Now let's say it's my first time ever seeing Excel. So I'm a beginner. I could be an intermediate user and I've got an important job interview coming right up. Now with all the Excel knowledge that you know today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Ken Puls:
Wow, that's a tough one. I'd plug a course that I did, if that's okay with you.

John Michaloudis:
Go for it.

Ken Puls:
I've got a course that I worked with a company called Skills. There is a Excel basic and advanced course at Skills, which was actually built specifically for that purpose. The idea was to take somebody who has little to no knowledge of Excel and get them schooled up and ready to go so that when they're in that job interview, they
can feel confident enough answering the questions and being able to use Excel on a regular basis. It's the Excel Basic & Advanced course, although you can go into just basic or just advanced if you wanted to as well, but that'd give you a really broad brush approach to Excel on sort of the macro levels.

Ken Puls:
It gives you lots of different features and gets you up and ready to go. That's by far, I think probably the fastest way to skill yourself up. If you want to take Excel to an incredibly deep level, then you start looking for... this generally happens when you're out there in the workforce, and that's where you find your own business problems that you're dealing with and find a forum to try and help bring that knowledge along. I think those two things really go hand in hand though, the basic training to get yourself started and then the self-actualization part is where you actually start trying to take that further and become much deeper. But certainly, I mean, if you're looking to start off with a basics check out that Skills course, it's very good. And we designed this specifically with that focus in mind.

John Michaloudis:
Now, out of all the Excel features out there, what will be the best Excel feature that I should focus on to get ready for this job interview?

Ken Puls:
That's a great question. And honestly, John, and that one is a tough one to answer because it really depends on what the job is. If I’m going into the accounting world... I mean, when I used to do job interviews and tried to hire people... Well, one of my favorite questions, what's the final parameter of VLOOKUP and what does it do if you forget? And to me, I was able to immediately separate somebody who knows a lot about Excel from somebody who doesn't based on that one question. But at the same time, I mean that's if we're looking for somebody who I'm trying to bring in to be an analyst, or I'm trying to bring in to build solutions. When I was hiring a junior clerk for accounts receivable or whatnot, the question was more along the lines of, what's the most complicated thing you've ever done in Excel? Tell me about what you built and what did it do.

Ken Puls:
Because I want to know, can you write individual formulas and whatnot? The biggest key piece, I guess, if you're working into an entry level job is I'd like to see
that somebody has a good command of formulas, some SUM formulas, some averaging formulas and stuff like that. I mean, nothing extremely detailed and whatnot. Do you know how to create a table? Not just blocks of numbers, but an actual official table, because that means that you can probably sort data and your formulas, aren't going to go astray on you. If you're working into an analyst job, well, then the questions are going to become a lot harder because, look, I mean, there's more that you need to know. So it's a tough one to answer. I mean, it really depends on what the job role is, what you're expecting to be done and whatnot.
Key Takeaways

- Find Excel resources that show case studies. These case studies show how to solve problems step by step in Excel
- Topics in mind are formulas (VLOOKUP), formatting and pivot table
- Check out the free Excel book called Don’t Fear the Spreadsheet
- Learn how to create summary reports using Pivot Tables in just a few clicks

Interview

John Michaloudis:
No, a great answer nonetheless. Let's welcome from Akron, Ohio Mr. Bill Jelen. Let's say that I'm a Excel beginner or intermediate user and I want to learn the most important features because I've got a job interview coming up in a week's time. Now, with all the Excel knowledge that you know today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Bill Jelen:
It's free. It's a resource. It's free. There was a book a few years ago. It was actually another book that I did in color, along with Tom Urtis and Kevin Jones and Tyler Nash called Don’t Fear the Spreadsheet. And this book is a 200 page book. I don't want you to take that time to go through those 200 pages. There's three case studies. The case studies lay out a problem and walk you through step by step how to solve that problem. The first case study is just formatting in Excel. The second case study will get you doing formulas. The third case study will get you doing pivot tables and out on Issuu, I-S-S-U.com, is a free PDF with just those three case studies. So you go out there. It is the greatest Excel job interview preparation tool there is. Absolutely free. In three hours, you'll be able to walk in there and talk the talk and walk the walk. And the hiring manager will think you've been using Excel forever.
John Michaloudis:
Even if you haven't and you'll get that pay rise, yeah?

Bill Jelen:
That's right. That's right.

John Michaloudis:
Wow.

Bill Jelen:
There's so many jobs that require Excel skills. If you go in there and know those terms, pivot tables, VLOOKUP, and the whole bit, you will blow them away and get that job.

John Michaloudis:
I should actually do a course, preparing for a job interview, how to use Excel.

Bill Jelen:
You should write a book.

John Michaloudis:
Yes. That's what I want to do. My final thing is to write a book if you can get me on your team.

Bill Jelen:
Yes, absolutely. You're signed on. You write the book. I'll publish it.

John Michaloudis:
Sounds good. I've always wanted to write a book. And I've got the YouTube channel. I've got my course. I've got my blog. I've got the podcast. The next thing on the list is a book and...

Bill Jelen:
There you go.

John Michaloudis:
There you go. All right. Good stuff. Okay. What would be the best Excel feature that I should focus on if I had to go on this job interview?

Bill Jelen:
Yeah. So if you can learn pivot tables that will allow you to wow them. Because they will be able to take their horrible, ugly data and create summary reports in six clicks. So pivot tables, I think, is the feature. You could learn it quickly, drag some fields to report, and just knock their socks off with an amazing summary report.

John Michaloudis:
Awesome, buddy. Appreciate that.
Key Takeaways

- Have an insatiable curiosity and perseverance to learn
- Learn how to use Excel tables to organize data
- Create charts, use cell styles and explore the Excel ribbon
- Also consider finding a good Excel course as they’re hyper focused to teach you

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Let's welcome to the show, Zack Barresse. Okay. So let's say that it's my first time ever seeing Excel. So I'm a beginner and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within only one week, because I've got a job interview coming up. With all the Excel knowledge that you know today, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Zack Barresse:
That's a really good question. That is a really weird scenario. I would say, first of all, you would have to have an insatiable curiosity and a very high tolerance for pain. I think some of the things that I would pass on to someone in that scenario is obviously tables, because very little time investment and you can have really great data looking at the end of it. But just really explore the ribbon. Tables is a really good base and from there you can create charts and it's very easy to kind of a couple of clicks create a good looking chart. And then cell styles. Styles is a really good tool that's really underutilized. Can be extremely beneficial.

John Michaloudis:
Good answers. And if I had to learn Excel using the online resources that we have available today, which way would you lead me towards?

Zack Barresse:
Probably a mix between forums and websites. And I could probably boil it down to about a half a dozen websites. There's MrExcel.com for good interactive. There's Experts Exchange for searching for good high level answers. Obviously, the MyExcelOnline has some great videos, probably some of the most informative websites that are keeping up to date with relevant Excel information. It's easy to disseminate, it's easy to understand, it's easy to learn, and it's easy to take what you see and then put it into action. And then the online forums are really interactive because you make a post and it is more of a Q&A than anything else. So I think that's probably where I would start.

John Michaloudis:
And do you think it's easier learning Excel today than, say, 15 years ago when you started out?

Zack Barresse:
Oh, absolutely not. No. I absolutely don't think so. I think it's much tougher today. There's so many more tools available. The base Excel is predominantly the same. The calculation engine hasn't... it's over gone a couple of overhauls, but it's kind of like just putting more packing on the mule. There's more things that you can do in the same flavor of application. And sure, some things have gone by the wayside, some older technologies, but by and large, there's so much to know in this application. There's so many things that you can do that it's almost impossible for one person to really know it all. I would say you definitely want to get good at what you do and then if you want to learn more, absolutely. And there's plenty of methods for you to explore and learn more about the application. But yeah, I think it's much tougher now than it was 15 or 20 years ago to learn the application just for the sheer amount of information that... sheer amount of features that is in the application for someone to learn. Sometimes when people jump in it's... when they jump in with both feet, they almost get lost because there's so much going on. So it makes it tough, I think.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah, yeah. I hear you. I hear you. But then you have the online tools like YouTube, forums, blogs. You have more blogs now then you had 15 years ago so...

Zack Barresse:
It's very true. Yeah, there are. And that's one of the really nice things about the time that we're living in is the information is so prolific and that does make it a lot easier to learn the application because there are so many avenues where you can go to find help to kind of wade through this huge application. The amount of stuff that's online is just growing exponentially. And I think it's great because it really puts the information out there for people. It makes it easily accessible and easy to disseminate that information and for someone to understand it and actually put it to use. So it's able to use for them in whatever they're doing, which could be anything. But yeah, like the YouTube, the Mike Girvin who has the ExcelIsFun YouTube channel, he's got... I mean, thousands. I think it's over 3000 videos on Excel help, tips and tricks. So, I mean, if you want to put the time in to find it, and you find a few great resources, I think really make learning Excel substantially easier.

John Michaloudis:
And also with the online courses, we specialize on different features like formulas, pivot tables, charting, macros. Online courses for me is another avenue where our listeners can learn Excel pretty quickly.

Zack Barresse:
Yeah. And the nice thing about that is they're hyper focused. And I really like that about training videos is you find the subject that you want and someone who puts together a good video on it, it's going to have really robust amount of information on that topic that you're looking for. I always like to think you get what you pay for. Sometimes it pays to just find a good site, a good course, and maybe purchase a few courses because they're so detailed.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. And YouTube, the quality of the picture, the sound is not there. You don't get the support and you have to be online to access YouTube. But with paid online courses, you can actually download the videos and keep them on your desktop forever. And whilst you're flying on a business trip, you can actually view the videos. You don't need to have access to the internet. It's also more structured. If you get a course, a paid course, it's more structured. If you go into YouTube, you get lost, you get all these popups, and then you start in Excel and you end up watching your football team and the best goals of 2014.
Zack Barresse:
Yeah. You end up watching super Vines of 2014, right?
Key Takeaways

- Read a good Excel book to get a broader view about the different Excel functions and features
- Learn about Excel Pivot Tables, this is done in two parts: learn pivot tables and how to clean and prepare your data into the pivot table

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Exactly. Let's welcome from Portland, Oregon, Mr. Oz du Soleil. All right. Let's say it's my first time ever seeing Excel. So I'm a beginner and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within a week because I've got an important job interview. Now, with all your knowledge that you know, all the resources online or offline, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Oz du Soleil:
This is a tricky question and it comes to me a lot. My first and easier answer would be Guerilla Data Analysis because it's like the buffet table for Excel. But here's what's hard about that question. You don't know what's going to be there when you show up at that job. That's the problem. That's when somebody said, "Oz, I'm trying to change careers. I need to learn Excel." "Okay, well." Say, my first five years of Excel was data cleansing. I had no use for a pie chart, bar graph. I was cleaning data. And then you got other people who don't know a doggone thing about cleaning data, but they're using the standard deviation and all of that stuff. So that's what makes it hard and that's where, when I do a workshop, particularly a private workshop, what are your people dealing with?

Oz du Soleil:
Then I'll find out, like at one nonprofit, we need to get ourselves together with layout. They thought they wanted to learn about all the newest and greatest and I was prepared to do that. But then when I get their data, they need layout. So that's the hard part of about that question because Excel is so big. And another thing, when I showed up as a commissions analyst, I inherited this spreadsheet that had all these crazy formulas in it. Now I'm doing forensics on somebody else's formulas. So that's what makes it hard with a vague question like I need to learn Excel.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. But to start, I think they have to read your book, Guerilla Data Analysis, because that's a buffet, as you said, and they need that buffet and they need that confidence. And one thing is having that confidence when someone asks you in that interview, "You do you know how to do a dropdown menu?" And if you can say, "Yes, this is how I do it. And this is how I do it." "Do you know how to insert a pivot table and refresh it?" If you can have an answer for that, if you're confident enough, if you know a little bit about every different feature within Excel, you'll get that job. And your book explains those features that each new or intermediate Excel user that's going for that job interview needs to learn and needs to know.

Oz du Soleil:
I would agree with you there. And that was part of the joy of writing. It was providing that buffet table within that longer answer that is still lurking in the background. and that's the scary part.

John Michaloudis:
All right. Good stuff. All right. Now the second part of that question is, what's the best Excel feature that they should focus on? But I think we touched upon on that. We said Excel tables. Do you have anything else there?

Oz du Soleil:
I would say pivot tables and understanding how your data needs to be set up to use a pivot table. That's a big thing

John Michaloudis:
So putting your data into a tabular format, as we said before. Don't have columns that are called January, February, March. Have one column called month and then all the months in their subsequent rows.
Oz du Soleil:
Yep, exactly. So it would be this two part. Yep. Learning pivot tables and what it
takes to get your data into a pivot table.
Key Takeaways

- Learn Excel hands on. Reading a book or watching Youtube tutorials is one thing, but hands-on exercises are the best means to level up in Excel.
- Best way in Excel is to be lazy, you want Excel to do your work for you. Take time to learn the feature or function that will automate the task for you.
- VLOOKUP function is the best feature to learn, learn the different lookup functions like INDEX, MATCH.
- Learn about Excel Tables and Pivot Tables to prepare for the interview.

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Good stuff. Let's welcome, from South Dakota, Mr. Jeff Lenning. Now, let's say that I'm an Excel beginner or intermediate user, and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within a week for an important job interview. Now, with all your vast Excel knowledge and all the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel and preparing for this important job interview?

Jeff Lenning:
Hm. Well, question, are you going in for an accounting position?

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. I know where you're going with this.

Jeff Lenning:
Sorry, I can't.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah, no, it depends. But let's say that, yes. Okay, I'm leaving my financial analysis job and I want to go into an accounting job.

Jeff Lenning:
Okay. Well, I mean, obviously Excel University's is a great resource, but setting that aside, I think that the best way to learn Excel and the fastest way to learn Excel is by hands on doing it. And it's one thing to read a book or watch a YouTube video or something like that. That's great, but it's the practice. And so I'd recommend doing these hands on kind of exercises. And that is the way to really quickly develop a core Excel proficiency.

John Michaloudis:
That is super, super important, what you've just said. And that is how I learned Excel. I look, I visualize, and then I apply it. And I make a mistake and then I get frustrated. Then I apply it again and then, bang, on the third go it sticks. And then the whole concept sticks. And to all the listeners out there, that is the quickest way to learn Excel is to apply. If you watch a YouTube video, you're just going to be watching and then you think, "Okay, you've got it." No, you don't. You've got to actually open your workbook, do that formula or apply that pivot table and then you'll get it. So that's a pretty, pretty incredible tip and one that everyone should use. Now, what's the best Excel feature that I should start learning in order to prepare for this job interview?

Jeff Lenning:
Well, there are so many different features and there's so many different ways people use Excel that my best advice there is, John, to be lazy. Wait, what? No, I'm serious. Be lazy because when you're lazy, it means you want Excel to do your work. You don't want to do your work. You want Excel to do your work for you. And that means you're going to take the time that it takes to figure out which feature and which function that you need to use to automate this task and to get Excel to do it. That means we're delegating our manual steps to Excel. So John, be lazy.

John Michaloudis:
Oh man, my wife calls me lazy all the time so I am lazy. All right. Okay. Now, I get your point and you have to be lazy. You have to be lazy. You have to make Excel
work for you, spit out the numbers. What would you recommend as one of the best features to go and to prepare for this interview?

Jeff Lenning:
Yeah. You're really going to need to know how you're going to use Excel, but I will say this. That in interviews kind of the default go to to measure sort of one's Excel proficiency is the VLOOKUP function and it's kind of like this. "Oh yes. Okay. Do you know Excel?" "Yes. I know Excel." "Okay. Do you know VLOOKUP?" It's just kind of strange, but that's kind of a measure of one's Excel proficiency these days as wrong or as right as that may be. So I would say you got to get comfortable with the look up functions of Excel. These are going to be VLOOKUP, INDEX, and MATCH. You're going to need to be comfortable with the tables feature and you're going to need to be comfortable with pivot tables. That's another way that interviewers might gauge your level of proficiency is, "Hey, do you know how to use pivot tables and things like that?" So, yep. Those are my thoughts there, man. And be lazy.
Key Takeaways

- An online Excel course or a book is the fastest way to learn since it’s structured
- The best Excel feature to learn is formulas, especially to understand someone else’s financial model.
- Another skill to learning Pivot Tables to save time in preparing reports and analyzing data

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Let's welcome from Orange County in the US, Mr. Jon Acampora. Let's say that I am an Excel beginner or an intermediate user, and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within a week because I've got an important job interview lined up. Now, with all the Excel knowledge that Jon Acampora knows today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Jon Acampora:
I would say definitely an online course is going to be the fastest resource or way to start learning because it's structured. So you have structured learning, you can follow the videos and just kind of apply that information or learn it very quickly. And a lot's going to depend on the job too, and what your employer's requiring you to do with Excel. But I'd definitely say, take an online course or get a book that has some structured learning to it to learn the basics.

John Michaloudis:
That's great. And online courses, they range between one hour and 10 hours. That's a weekend. You can learn a lot of stuff in a weekend. Unlock yourself, learn it, apply it, and then go to that interview and you'll be full of confidence. Because
the people asking the questions, most people don't know the answers. They just want to hear you. They want to hear you talk the talk. And if you can talk the talk with confidence, you'll get that job. And if you really know how to use it then, I can guarantee you that you're going to be in the short list for the next set of interviews and yeah, great stuff. Now, what's the best Excel feature that they should focus on for this interview?

Jon Acampora:

I think the best Excel feature is going to be formulas. That's really probably where you typically start. If you're going to take on someone else's financial model or their work and kind of take over someone else's work, you're going to need to know how the formulas work within that spreadsheet. From there, you can, I would say, learn pivot tables. You could definitely... You can't go wrong learning pivot tables because that's another skill that, surprisingly, not many people know, but it can save you a tremendous amount of time when preparing reports and analyzing data. So formulas, pivot tables, learn those and you'll be definitely ahead of the game.
Key Takeaways

- Confidence is very important. Pay attention to the way you answer their questions.
- Get confidence through practice and apply the new techniques and Excel formulas you have learned. Do not cram too much.
- Best Excel feature to focus is formulas, learn about using the correct formula in the right context. Also, reduction of errors in formulas.

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Great. Great response. Let's welcome from sunny Sydney, Australia, Danielle Stein Fairhurst. Let's say that I'm an Excel beginner, intermediate, or an intermediate user, and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within a week for an important job interview or a promotion. With all the Excel knowledge that you, Danielle, know today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel?

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think, as I said before, the most important thing when you're going into an interview is your confidence. You could know absolutely everything there is to know about Excel, but if you don't feel confident, that's not going to come across. When they're interviewing you, they might test your skills. They could well test your skills, but assuming they don't, they're just going to go by the way that you answer the questions and the confidence. So I think if you can kind of go into the interview knowing that you know more than most people about Excel or more than most people that are going to be applying for this job, you can really go in there with confidence.
Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
And the best way to get confidence is to practice, to just... As much time as you have available to you, just to go onto the blogs and read. In a lot of your webinars, John, that you have available, a lot of the blog articles that I have available, as well as LinkedIn forums and all those different things, and read through. And don’t get too sort of bogged down and stuff. Just try to sort of keep it light. But try to apply... You go into Excel and think about the scenarios that you've used or the situations that you've been in, in previous roles and think about how you would apply those new techniques and formulas. Don't sort of cram and try to do too much because you'll get sort of overwhelmed. But just try to apply those and think about how you would do that in your job situation.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. And confidence. That's a great answer. Confidence plays a big part. And if you can transmit that to the employer or prospective employer, then you are halfway there. You're halfway there.

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
Yeah. And you'll only get that confidence if you know what you're talking about. So make sure you know what you're talking about.

John Michaloudis:
Exactly. And if he asks you a question, then just answering with a question back so you can avoid that. Yeah. And another great tip is to take in your pen drive. What I did is when I got my job at General Electric, I was practicing all these dashboards in my previous job and then I made these cool dashboards and then I actually put that on a pen drive and I go, "Look..." I did the interview and I left him the pen drive. I go, "This is for you. Have a look at it." And had all my... what I did. And then I ended up getting that job. I don't know whether that is because the pen drive, but it does help. Yeah. It shows them what you're capable of. Of course you can go and-

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
As long as they...

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. copies.
Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
As long as it's files that you've done yourself. You can't...

John Michaloudis:
I know, I know. You're probably the only one that's going to come in with a pen drive. So they're going to think, "Okay. All right."

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
Probably.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah. At least.

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
But if you are going to do that, make sure that the author on that file is yourself. Make sure you haven't sort of...

John Michaloudis:
Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yeah. That's a good tip. So yeah, user. It might work. Might not. That's a nice... thanks for your answer. That's great. I appreciate that. And confidence is number one and the best way to get that is just to practice and have a general knowledge of the most popular features within Excel. Now what will be the best Excel feature that this person should focus on going into this interview?

Danielle Stein Fairhurst:
Yeah, probably... Well, and in financial modeling, it's all about the formulas. It's all about using the correct formula in the correct context and building it in such a way to reduce errors. That's probably the thing to focus on. Yeah. Reduction of errors and formulas.
Key Takeaways

- Find a good online Excel course to learn Excel quickly.
- Learn Excel formulas: LOOKUP, IF, INDEX-MATCH
- Learn how to sort, organize, understand and filter data
- Best Excel features to learn: Excel Tables, Pivot Tables, Slicers, building a dashboard

Interview

John Michaloudis:
All right. Nice, nice. Let's welcome from New York, Mr. Jordan Goldmeier. Now let's say that I am an Excel beginner or an intermediate user, and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within one week because I have an important job interview coming up. With all the Excel knowledge that you, Jordan, know today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel and preparing for this job interview?

Mr. Jordan Goldmeier:
There’s really two ways to go about this. So the quickest, quickest way is probably to join an online course, like my course, or like John's course, that really focuses on how to get you up to speed very quickly. And I'm not saying that to promote any course. I'm just saying that learning on your own, there's a lot of trial and error, can save yourself a lot of time, really just by learning the things you need to know. So obviously, courses like mine and John's are a very good place to start. But let's say you're also kind of into getting your hands dirty, then that's what you really should be doing, which is you should go on a site like Excel TV is a great place to start and you should be looking at how to use formulas because I think that's the most important place for you to start.

Mr. Jordan Goldmeier:
And that's the kind of thing that organizations are going to ask for. Now, it would be great if you can show them dashboarding skills and really show them that you can go beyond, but many of them are going to ask you formula questions and formulas, like IF, the LOOKUP, INDEX MATCH. So you must know how to use those and you need to know how to sort and organize and understand and filter data. So I think probably a great course for that and I bet, John, you didn't know I was going to promote your stuff, but I think... So one of the things that you could probably pick up is The Ultimate Power Query & Data Cleansing course. That's, of course, your online course, the one that you and Oz developed. And the reason I bring that up is Oz is like datascopie, his work is very geared towards getting you to where you need to be.

Mr. Jordan Goldmeier:
So my advice is you can do the course route. Also, you can, if that's not your thing and that's certainly a respectable answer, you can go into a site like excel.tv or chandoo.org, or like your site, John, and really start taking a look at the things that we're all writing about, because these are the skills you need to know. And I think it's also very important to take a look at the comment sections on these sites, because these are the questions that people will say, "How do you do this in my business?" These are actually going to be somewhat similar to what you're going to be asked. How do you adapt your skills to a new business problem? So you should have at least some understanding on how you would answer those questions, even if you don't have a solution.

John Michaloudis:
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Nice one. And what's the Excel feature that I should focus on going into this interview?

Mr. Jordan Goldmeier:
Going into this interview, the Excel feature. I would say the features... It all really depends on the interview itself. If this is more of a numerical thing, the features that you need to focus on are Excel tables, filtering, things like that, slicing and dicing data. So knowing pivot tables, knowing slicers are very important, kind of more for that data reporting role. And if this is a dashboarding role, obviously like the stuff I talk about in my course, knowing how to build a dashboard, knowing how to do data visualization is incredibly important. If you're doing kind of more of
a managerial role, I would say that probably knowing both things, knowing a little bit about dashboards and knowing a bit about reporting is also very important.
Key Takeaways

- Quickest way to learn is doing an online Excel course to have the flexibility and completing the training at your own pace
- Another important way is to have hands-on practice to retain the knowledge and increase confidence
- Top features to learn are Excel formulas and Pivot Tables

Interview

John Michaloudis:
Let's welcome from sunny Queensland, Australia, Mrs. Mynda Treacy. And let's say that I'm an Excel beginner or intermediate user and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within seven days because I've got an important job interview that I'm going to go for. With all the Excel knowledge that you know today and the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way from me to start learning Excel?

Mynda Treacy:
Well, without a doubt, the quickest way is to do an online course because you don't have to go anywhere. And often it's quicker to digest stuff that you see as opposed to reading. Now, I've had people call me at 4:00 AM because they couldn't stop watching my videos or... Not call me, they email me at 4:00 AM. Thankfully, not call me. I'm not recommending everyone does that. But online courses allow you that flexibility, complete the training at your own pace. But the key with any learning journey is practice and it's the same with Excel. Because I think with practice you get... Not only retain the knowledge, but you become more confident. And I think that's really important with interviews. Especially Excel interviews these days, they often make you do a test or ask you a question. And so it's really good to be prepared and practice is the key to that.
John Michaloudis:
Well, for me, it's the quickest way. Online learning, a small price to pay to get a pay rise or a new job. So people should focus on that. All right, now there's a lot of Excel features, pivot tables, power query, power BI, power pivot. Lots, so I'm going to stop there. What's the best Excel feature that someone going in this interview should focus on?

Mynda Treacy:
Yeah. Well, a beginner to intermediate user, or if they're an absolute beginner, I'm going to assume they grasp the whole rows and columns and cells concept pretty quickly, so the next thing is formulas and then closely followed by pivot tables. I think a lot of people are scared of pivot tables, but really you can't break them. And once you get it, once that light bulb moment happens, they're really quite easy. So they're my two key features they should focus on.
**Key Takeaways**

- Learning Macros and array formulas to prepare for the interview
- Show examples of your work that you can do in Power Pivot
- Always know your audience in the interview
- If it’s financial, then macros and array formulas are important
- If they’re not an Excel person, then Excel charts are important

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**Interview**

John Michaloudis:

Let's welcome from Indianapolis, USA, Mr. Rob Coley. Let's say that I'm an Excel beginner or intermediate user and I need to learn the most important features of Excel within a week because I have a job interview coming up. With all the Excel knowledge that you know today and all the online and offline resources available, what will be the quickest way for me to start learning Excel and preparing for this job interview?

Rob Coley:

Wow. I have found that, especially with a job interview, the unfortunate thing is the person interviewing you probably doesn't know the difference between someone who's good at Excel and someone who's not. That's fortunate and unfortunate. If you happen to be being interviewed by someone who is good at Excel, the number one way to impress someone today would be to say that you know how to write macros or even better, in some ways scarier, is to say that you know how to do array formulas. Those are sort of the apex predators of the "traditional" Excel world. I don't know that that going into a job interview and saying that you know power pivot, sadly, I don't think it's going to help you that much yet because the awareness isn't there. If you know about it, if the interviewer doesn't, you're not really going to get any credit for that.

Rob Coley:
If you could show them examples of the work that you can do with power pivot, that's different. Of course that requires that you have access to their data ahead of time, which doesn't really happen in an interview. The Excel interview is a tough one. Always know your audience. Even in a presentation situation, knowing who your audience is, if you can find out some things about your interviewer before the interview, that might make a huge difference. If they're a Wall Street, financial type going in there and talking about macros and array formulas is probably going to be your most wow factor. That'll get their attention. If they're not like that, if they're not an Excel person, being really good at charts, to make pretty charts, knowing how to make things pretty, will be your best skillset. And not knowing who the interviewer ahead of time is a big disadvantage. So if you think it might be one or the other, sort of an Excel novice that's interviewing you or a high end modeler, I would invest in those two directions. Be able to say with a straight face that you can write macros and array formulas. And also by the way, here's something that I made in Excel. I can make things look this good.

John Michaloudis:
Yeah, you're right. Because there's always a lot of imaginary reports that you do every month. So if you can show that charts and make it pretty, I'm sure that you will have an advantage compared to the next person coming in there. Hey guys, I hope you enjoyed this podcast show and thank you for listening. Now, I need your help. I need you to please leave an honest review for the MyExcelOnline podcast on iTunes. Now, ratings and reviews are extremely helpful and greatly appreciated. And I read each and every one of them. So if you go on to iTunes and search for the MyExcelOnline podcast, you can leave a review. And also subscribe so you can receive all the new episodes as soon as they come out. Also, if you go over to my blog at MyExcelOnline.com/blog, you can subscribe to receive weekly Excel lessons for free.

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