IDinsight

How to prepare for the first interview at IDinsight

The core of the first interview is a case study about evaluating a hypothetical client's program. You will be asked to consider the types of evidence that the client would find convincing and how you would effectively present that evidence. You will be awarded points on your ability to think critically and creatively about the problem and to construct a logical and concise argument to support your position.

While there are no "right" answers to the case study – and in fact you will receive extra points for out-of-the-box solutions – you may find it useful to brush up on causal inference and impact evaluation ahead of the interview. We suggest the following readings as a means to prepare; however, these readings are not required and entirely optional:

- Past IDinsight client engagements on **our Impact page** and how we balanced rigor with practical constraints to directly inform programmatic and policy decisions
- IDinsight's unique approach to decision-focused evaluation in **this 3ie Working Paper.**
- **Running Randomized Evaluations** by Rachel Glennerster and Kudzai Takavarasha, as well as research studies conducted by professors affiliated with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Innovations for Poverty Action, and similar institutions
- **Field Experiments** by Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green
- **Mastering Metrics** by Joshua D. Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke

Candidates should have a calculator, pencil, and paper ready for the interview. To give you a sense of the type of questions that may come up during the interview, here is an excerpt from last year's case study:

Imagine that you work at IDinsight and that your client is the director of an agriculture NGO in Bihar (India). The director wants to increase crop yields among smallholder rice farmers in Bihar, and she is contemplating expanding a program that distributes fertilizer directly to rice farmers.

Example Question 1:

During your first meeting, the director tells you that her NGO already distributed fertilizer to 100 rice farmers a few months ago. Compared with rice farmers that did not receive fertilizer, the farmers that received fertilizer have approximately the same levels of yields per acre. She is concerned that this evidence suggests that the program is not effective at improving yields, and

so she is considering scrapping the program, but she wants to hear from you first: Is this sufficient evidence for the director to declare that this program is a failure?

Example Question 2:

Suppose that rice farmers were selected to receive fertilizer based on the size of their farm: Any farm smaller than 2 acres received fertilizer, and all farms larger than 2 acres did not receive fertilizer. After some analysis, you find that crop yields increased more on farms right below the 2-acre cutoff than on farms right above the cutoff. How would you interpret these results: Do they tell us anything meaningful about the impact of the program?

Example Question 3:

Suppose that you are analyzing the data from the evaluation, and you learn that 10% of farmers in the control group used fertilizer on their farm. How, if at all, will this affect your ability to estimate the causal impact of the program, and what can you do about it?