

EPISODE 52

[INTRODUCTION]

*“**[TG]:** Okay, Ade, that's a terrible intro. She's basically setting herself up to fail. Did you hear that? Her answers sucked, because she's not really selling her skill sets and achievements on why she's the best candidate for the position. I mean, yes, she's got an interview. So she's somewhat proven herself. But an interview is a competition. And Ade needs to put on her best performance.”*

[00:00:28] TG: You're listening to the UI Narrative podcast, the biweekly podcast that shares the stories of people of color interface designers and researchers and their contributions towards creating user-centered experiences. And I'm your host, Tolu Garcia. Let's get started.

Hey, guys. It's Tolu here with a quick word from our sponsor. To design great products, a focus on the user is everything. That's true for me and for the teams at Google. Today's sponsor, Google Design, produces original content, like articles and videos to show how Google's products come to life, and to inspire designers everywhere. For example, on design.google, you can learn how Google Maps streamlined a palette of 700 colors down to 25 major and minor tones, or how an R&D team distilled five years of research into a tiny, intuitive, emotionally intelligent radar chip. How cool is that y'all?

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[EPISODE]

[00:01:44] TG: Hey, everyone, welcome back to another episode of The UI Narrative podcast. This episode is going to be a little different. So I'm going to do a UX mock interview with two characters, and a narrator pointing out all the faults going on within the interview. So you can get a feel for how to correctly answer interview questions. So one character will be the interview candidates. Her name is Ade. And the other character will be Yami, the interviewer. And then

there's Tolu, the narrator. And I'll be doing some country and Nigerian accents this episode. So bear with me, because I'm Nigerian, but born in Texas. So it's not perfect. So why do you think I don't speak Yoruba on this podcast? You all will just – You'll just drag my life on Twitter. So maybe that's the reason, because I don't know this language fluently. But yeah, go ahead and hit the save button and enjoy this special edition episode with two characters going through a UX mock interview.

I got a quick announcement before we begin. I like to give a quick shout out to Love Lacey, who left me a review on Apple podcasts USA. They said, “Absolutely adore this podcast. This podcast has been so helpful, especially for a junior designer like me.” Thank you so much, Love Lacey, for taking time to write me a review.

As a reminder, for all my Apple Podcast listeners, I'd love for you to take at least two minutes to write a review on Apple Podcast. It helps with the discoverability of the podcast. And if you're not on Apple Podcast, please tag UI Narrative CO on Twitter with your review. And also, too, just let me know like what you guys think about the show? What's your favorite episode so far? I'm always checking the reviews, and also on Twitter. So you'll get a personalized response from me either on Twitter or I'll give you a shout out on the podcast. Thanks so much for all of you so far who have left reviews for me, whether it be on the podcast, Twitter, Instagram. I see all of you and I appreciate all of you.

[00:03:51] A: Alright, so let's begin. I'll introduce you to today's guest, me. So hi, my name is Ade. I'm going to my first UX interview for a UX designer position.

[00:04:04] YO: Hello, my name is Yami Okuye, and I will be interviewing Ade for the UX designer position at Wayne Enterprises.

[00:04:13] TG: And hi, I'm Tolu. I'll be the narrator for this episode.

[00:04:17] A: All right, you've met everyone. Let's start this crazy interview.

[00:04:22] YO: Thank you so much, Ade, for taking some time to meet with us today. I'm the Director of UX at Wayne Enterprises. I've been working here for about five years now. I'd love to

learn a little bit about you and what you're looking for in your next role. So please, tell me a little bit about yourself.

[00:04:40] A: Well, I'm a designer with two years' experience. I've worked with various companies doing UX design, prototyping and research. And I'm looking for a new job opportunity because I don't like my current job. I don't have any current growth opportunities there. And I've been working there for about a couple years now. So yeah, I'm just looking for a job with better pay and benefits?

[00:05:04] TG: Okay, Ade, that's a terrible intro. She's basically setting herself up to fail. Did you hear that? Her answers sucked, because she's not really selling her skill sets and achievements on why she's the best candidate for the position. I mean, yes, she's got an interview. So she's somewhat proven herself. But an interview is a competition. And Ade needs to put on her best performance.

So the first question that you'll most likely be asked in an interview is, "Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?" And this question could also sound like, "Tell me why you're the right fit for this job? What experience do you have? What skills do you have? What are you looking for in this role? And why should we choose you?" So how you should frame the answer is give a snapshot of your professional history. Give me like your company name, some title, years in that role and your responsibilities.

So like I started my career at blank where I blank. Also talk about your accomplishments. Did you ever save time? Improve processes? Save money? Improve profitability? So in that role, a major accomplishment that I'm most proud of was blank. I understand that for this position of blank that you're hiring for someone with blank. Just tell them you know why you're the right fit. You can sum it up at the end by, "Overall, due to my strong background and achievements and successfully something around identify like gaps and creating efficiencies, I'm confident I'll be able to succeed in this role you're hiring for."

Alright, let's give Ade another try at her intro.

[00:06:39] YO: So tell me a little bit about yourself.

[00:06:42] A: I've been a UX designer at MoneySync for about two years now where I've worked on the MoneySync company website, and various MoneySync mobile apps doing UX audits, UI design, rapid prototyping, and user research. One of my favorite projects I've worked on at MoneySync was the Hooli systems mobile app. I collaborated with project managers and developers to redesign the Hooli systems mobile app. And I'm so proud of our result, because we had a 3X increase in the number of apps downloaded this year and it improved the usability bookkeeping for small businesses nationwide. So yeah, I'm pretty excited to be talking with you today to learn more about the opportunities available at Wayne Enterprises. Overall, due to my strong background and achievements, and successfully launching profitable products to market, I'm pretty confident I can contribute to the team's business goals.

[00:07:41] YO: I think it's great that you have experience with websites and mobile apps. We're in the process of creating our first mobile app. So we're looking for someone with experience in that avenue. So I'd love to go over one of those projects in a little bit. But for now, I'd love to know what's one of your favorite mobile apps?

[00:08:01] A: Well, I love using Spotify to listen to music and build playlists.

[00:08:06] TG: Really, Ade? That's all you have to say? You got to elaborate a bit more here. They want to know your thought process for deciding why a digital product is good. You need to articulate and justify why you think Spotify is a great app. What features and design choices make you want to use the app? Got it? Alright, give it another try.

[00:08:30] YO: What's one of your favorite mobile apps?

[00:08:34] A: One of my favorite apps is Spotify, a music playlists app? I love the discoverability of find a new music and podcast. It's so easy to find a category when using their global search feature. They keep me engaged with their product because it's easy to share playlists with my friends.

[00:08:53] YO: I love Spotify, too. I use it almost every morning for podcasts. I'd like to also spend about like 15 minutes going over your portfolio, specifically your Hooli systems mobile project. Do you have a link you'd like to share or a presentation you'd like to give?

[00:09:11] A: I only have my portfolio in a PDF format. I can email it to you after I share my screen.

[00:09:17] TG: Like hell you will, Ade. You better share a portfolio link. I ain't playing with you today. Okay, let's try again.

[00:09:23] A: Yes, I have a portfolio link. I'll share that in the chat. I'll also be presenting my portfolio to highlight some key points as I talk through the project.

[00:09:34] YO: Sounds great. Go ahead and begin when you're ready.

[00:09:37] A: So I started this project in February 2021 with one researcher, two developers, one project manager and a bunch of –

[00:09:47] TG: I'm going to jump in here because it seems like Ade was going to give a longwinded answer that will take longer than 15 minutes. So yeah, here's the structure you should use as a layout for this question. Start with the background on the project. Who is this for? Why are you even doing this? The goal of the project? What do the stakeholders want? What are the business goals? Then going into your role? Why did they choose you for this project? What are their needs? And then going into your task? You can get a little detailed here. How did you fulfill those needs of the project? How did you meet stakeholder goals? So what you're not going to do is go through every detail like who was working on it? How many people? What happened? How long?

A big tip I want you to think about is how you can answer many more common questions that they'll most likely have at this part of the interview. So some of those common questions are how you handle multiple stakeholders. So how do you keep the peace? How do you communicate with them and reassure them that the project is making progress? Do you have experience with UX research? What user research methods did you use? If you didn't use any,

explain what restrictions did you face? What research methods would you do if you had the budget and resources? How do you verify your design ideas? Why did you change colors? Did you make any updates to the accessibility of the product? Why did you feel the need to do user research? What worked? What went wrong?

How do you handle feedback? What did you do when users hated everything that you design? What happened when the stakeholders wanted to move in a different direction? That wasn't in the user's interests? How do you handle conflicts and tradeoffs? What did you do when stakeholders said no? It doesn't fit within their budget? What happened when the project picked up gears and you had the less time to get things done? What's your design process like? How do you have success with the products that you create? What is your design thinking process like? How do you come to a decision on what to do next? And what if something goes wrong? How do you adapt? How do you work with engineers? How do your designs turn out? What happens if the developer says there's a technical constraint with your design? How do you improvise for MVP? Can you describe a challenge that you faced and how you handled it? You can highlight a challenge that you had as a UX designer on this project. So how do you handle things not going your way? Can you describe a time when your team did not agree?

They'll want to see how you work well with others. And can you acknowledge a mistake, reassess the situation, and pivot to make things work out? The wrong answer here is that you have never had a conflict. That's impossible with great product design. If you can answer all of those questions swiftly, you will have addressed most concerns the interviewer has about how well you communicate and why you're awesome to work with. I mean, and also to make note that you may not be able to answer all the questions while presenting your project. It just depends on how much time you have. Either way, you should prepare to have an answer to all of those common questions, because you can use that project as an example since it's fresh on their minds. So, yeah, we'll just skip over Ade's answer here. But I've provided you with enough examples of what to expect for project review questions. So let's move on to the next question in this interview.

[BREAK]

[00:13:29] TG: Let's take a short break.

So one of the top questions I get about product design is how do I stay inspired? And the other day I decided to take inventory of what I'm doing routinely. The biggest thing that stood out to me was how I'm always investing time to understand products that are advancing in design and technology. Today's sponsor, Google Design, produces original content like articles and videos to show how Google's products come to life, and to inspire designers everywhere. On Google Design, you'll get to know how the products used by billions actually get made. And hear from designers behind some of your favorite products like Chrome, Google Maps, and Nest. Head over to design.google to get inspired. That's design.google. Or follow them on Twitter and Instagram @GoogleDesign.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:14:26] YO: Thank you, Ade, for sharing your portfolio with me. What are you looking for in a new position?

[00:14:32] A: I want to increase my salary, and I've always wanted to move to California.

[00:14:38] TG: Do you even want this job? No, but like, really, Ade? You can't be that blunt if you need to, I mean, fluff it up with what they want to hear and leave out all those personal logistical reasons. Okay, here's how you do that. Other than money, why are you actually interested in this position? Like what excites you about doing the actual work of the job? Why Wayne Enterprises? Do your research and understand why you want to work there before you even set foot in the interview. Talk about the skillsets you'd love to learn while you're there and the company culture. They want to see if you're a good fit. So talk about the things that they're looking for and how that aligns with their goals. You should have two to three answers ready to tailor to the company interviews that you'll be having.

So, yeah, let's give it another go, Ade.

[00:15:32] YO: What are you looking for in a new position?

[00:15:35] A: I'd love working with companies that are big on innovation and product design. In previous roles, I didn't get to do as much user testing as I would like, and it's something I really feel is important. I noticed that your company values user research, and this is something where I feel like I can bring a lot to your team. I think it's important as designers and researchers that we drive the conversation to meet the business user needs.

[00:16:03] YO: I couldn't agree more with you, Ade. What types of design software do you use?

[00:16:09] A: I only use Figma. I really hate all other design software. So I do not use them.

[00:16:15] TG: Jobless, jobless. Yeah, that's you. Ade, you better change that answer to be more flexible.

[00:16:21] YO: What type of design software do you use?

[00:16:24] A: I enjoy using Figma the most, but I also work well with design software like Sketch and Adobe XD. I'm willing to learn and jump into any design softwares really.

[00:16:34] YO: That's great to hear, because we're currently only using Sketch. But we're considering merging to Figma in the future. How much are you expecting to make from this job?

[00:16:46] A: About 50,000?

[00:16:48] TG: 50 what? Sis. Oh my God. What am I going to do with you? Don't give a number just yet, because you tripin'. I'm going to need you to deflect this question and ask some questions about what the job position duties are. It's still good to have a number in mind before an interview. But Ade, you need to do more research. Two to three years could be about 70 to 100k in the bank minimum. And have you been thought about the perks you want? Like if they can't meet your desired salary range? You can do better. So for now, you can choose to not answer this question. All right.

[00:17:28] YO: How much are you expecting to make from this job?

[00:17:32] A: Before I answer, I'd like to answer more questions to get a better idea of what the position entails. That way I can provide a more realistic expectation.

[00:17:42] YO: Yeah, that's fine. That's all the questions that I have for you for now. Do you have any questions for me?

[00:17:49] A: No, not really. I can't think of any at the moment.

[00:17:52] TG: You better start thinking of some. I swear, you don't want this job. Ask at least five questions.

[00:18:00] A: What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?

[00:18:04] YO: Well, we have the Hooli app I mentioned before. And also we plan on doing a brand redesign towards the end of this year.

[00:18:13] A: Are there opportunities for advancement or professional development?

[00:18:17] YO: Yes, there are. Everyone has monthly one-on-ones with direct reports to track their progress towards professional development goals. And each employee sets their goals quarterly with their manager. There are opportunities for about 5% bonuses at the end of every year.

[00:18:36] A: What's the company and team culture like? How would you describe the work environment here? Is the work typically collaborative or more independent?

[00:18:45] YO: It's a mixture of both. For some periods of time, it will be most independence. You will always be collaborating with your project managers, business managers and other people on the project. When we start the brand redesign that I was speaking about earlier, it will be an all hands on deck type of project. The culture is like an open door atmosphere.

[00:19:11] A: How has the company changed since you've joined?

[00:19:14] YO: We were recently acquired by Wayne Enterprises. We used to be stock industries before the merger. But overall, the people and processes are pretty much still the same. It's just the branding that's the different.

[00:19:30] A: What are the next steps in the interview process?

[00:19:34] YO: We will be interviewing until the end of next week. After that, expect to hear an email from us our next steps in the interview process. Do you have any more questions for us?

[00:19:46] A: Is there anything else I can provide you that would be helpful?

[00:19:51] YO: No, Ade. I think we have all that we need. Thank you so much, Ade, for meeting with me today. You'll be hearing from us soon.

[00:20:00] A: Thank you so much, Yami, for meeting with me today as well. And I look forward to your email in a couple of weeks.

[00:20:07] TG: And that's the end of the mock interview. All right, how did I do? Did y'all like this episode? Y'all, I had so many outtakes from just laughing how crazy this shit – I've never done anything like this before. So it'll be really interesting to see how y'all respond to this. You're going to be like, "Girl, are you stupid? This is terrible." Or you're going to laugh with me? We'll see.

But this is something that I might never do again. It was really hard switching between voices. But yeah, please tag @uinarrativeco on Twitter if you want more narration episodes. And just in general, like if you have any questions about interviews, I'd love to help you out. All right, I'm going to end this episode with a quote, "I'm thankful for my struggle, because without it I wouldn't have stumbled across my strength." That's by Alex Elle, or Elle. I might have said last name wrong.

You can always email me at hello@uinarrative.com or DM me on Instagram at UI Narrative, or Twitter @uinarrativeco if you have any questions about this episode. I really can't wait to hear from you guys.

And hear what you think about this episode, because **[inaudible 00:21:23]** as well. So yeah, I'll talk to you guys in a couple of weeks. Y'all take care. Make sure you are staying warm as the weather starts to cool down drinking your water and taking walks. Just take some time for yourself as things start to slow down towards the end of the year workwise. And see y'all soon. Bye.

[OUTRO]

[00:21:46] TG: Thank you for listening to the UI Narrative podcast. If you like what you hear, make sure to show this podcast in love by commenting and subscribing where you listen. You can find me on Instagram and Facebook @uinarrative, or Twitter @uinarrativeco. I also respond to emails at hello@uinarrative.com. Talk to you later. Bye.

[END]