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STAR QUESTIONS

STAR questions are popular in interviews where the interviewer is looking to judge behaviour traits for a specific role or where the normal Company process is competency-based interviewing.

The interviewer looks to understand the candidate's previous experiences, obstacles handled, leadership skills, performance under pressure and other such factors.

The whole STAR answer should take no more than a minute or so to explain – the key is achieving a balance in your answer. You need to be succinct, to the point and **engage** the interviewer retaining their interest and attention; *however*, you need to ensure that you don't skimp on relevant specific details and facts that affect the validity and quality of your answer!

Maybe think of it as an interesting story that engages you, doesn't bore you, and gives you a positive learning outcome about the person telling it. Keep it first person singular for the most part, using 'I' – not 'the Company' or 'We'.

- **Situation**
You should give a detailed description of a challenging situation where you overcame difficulties to achieve a specific goal. Provide good detail so the interviewer can judge your **objection/problem identification** ability.
 - **Task**
What was the goal you wanted to achieve? Explain your role and your interactions you felt would be required to handle the situation. This helps the interviewer decide if you are a good fit for the Company, its culture and the targets/goals you would be set in the role.
 - **Action**
What actions were taken to complete the task. Steps taken to solve problems while trying to achieve the goals, your contribution as a team member, how you ensured you would finish before deadline. These details can help the interviewer understand your organisation ability, teamworking, **objection/problem solving** ability drives and motivations.
 - **Result**
Explain the outcome of the actions. Use this opportunity to sell yourself and the work you've done to achieve the goal!
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The Interview

A successful interview is an indispensable step toward achieving your professional goals. The following guidelines can increase your chances of making a strong first impression. Included are tips on how you can [Be Prepared](#), have a [Successful Interview](#), how to [Close the Interview](#) and [What to Avoid](#).

Be Prepared

- Know the exact time and place of the meeting, the interviewer's full name (including correct pronunciation) and his or her title.
- Research the company to learn relevant facts such as annual sales revenue and principal lines of business and locations. Information can be gained by checking out the company's website and phoning up the company to request brochures, company reports, etc.
- If it's an unusual journey for you to take, you can research travel time using a route finder site. Alternately you can make a dummy run of the journey, at a similar time of day, a few days before the interview.
- Look your professional best. Make sure you have showered and shaved. Wear business attire in neutral colours (A dark suit and light shirt is best). Be conservative in use of fragrance, cosmetics and jewellery.
- Have your clothing, briefcase and portfolio ready, and be careful of the foods you eat, the night before your interview. Get a good night's rest.
- Re-read your resume before the interview.
- Be poised and confident. Bring a list of references. Offer a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile.

Be Prepared to Answer Questions Such As:

- Tell me about your background, accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses.
- How would you describe your most recent job performance?
- What interests you about our company?
- Who was your most difficult boss and why?
- What outside activities are most significant to your personal development?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? In ten years?

Successful Interviewing

Your goal in the interview is to sell yourself for the position. Here are some tips:

- Arrive about 10 minutes early. Having a few extra minutes to gain your composure can prove invaluable. However, arriving too early can make the interviewer feel uncomfortable.
- Switch off your mobile phone when you arrive. Dispose of all chewing gum, open drinks, food, etc before greeting the interviewer.
- Greet the interviewer by name if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not, check with us before the interview!
- Project energy and enthusiasm. Smile and shake hands firmly. Remember to stand well before the interviewer reaches you.
- Wait until you're offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright and look alert at all times. Listen carefully and respond succinctly and articulately.
- Look the interviewer in the eye and throughout the interview maintain composure.

- Early in the meeting, try to get the interviewer to describe the job and the duties so you can focus your responses on your background, skills and accomplishments related to the position. Treat the interview like a sales- call, and then instead of your normal product or service...sell yourself!
- Be sincere and truthful while communicating your specific professional achievements that relate to the opening.

Closing the Interview

- Be proactive. Reiterate your interest in the position and the Company by asking about the next step in the process. Close for a second interview or job offer if you feel the opportunity is there.
- Ask, "Are there any concerns you have about my background?" This is your opportunity to re-address any objections before you leave.
- Be enthusiastic about the position and the Company. The people you meet during your job search and at your interviews can become valuable networking sources, even if you don't get the job.
- Call us as soon as you come out of the interview. We can then contact the client and move things forward more quickly.

What to Avoid in an Interview

During an interview, the interviewer will be assessing your negative as well as positive qualities. Here are negative factors frequently identified during interviews which most often lead to rejection of a candidate:

- Unprofessional appearance.
- Overbearing, overaggressive or egotistical behaviour.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm; passivity or indifference.
- Lack of confidence and poise; nervousness.
- Over-emphasis on compensation.
- Evasiveness; making excuses for unfavourable factors in work history.
- Lack of tact, maturity and courtesy.
- Condemnation of past employers, managers, projects or technologies.
- Inability to maintain a conversation. Only answering yes or no to questions.
- Lack of commitment to the position at hand.
- Failure to ask questions about the position, company, etc.
- Persistent attitude of "What can you do for me?", when the employer is looking for you to show "What you can do for them!".