



## successful executive

Building Enduring Capability

As a recruiter it is our job to prepare our candidates for the interview. It is not that we do not have confidence in them it is simply whoever interviews the best gets the job! It is a fact. Below is a great interview technique I suggest to people when they ask for tips on interviewing. The STAR method helps you really learn and know your resume and have examples to it up without blanking. Preparation is half the battle.

### **STAR INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE**

Interviewers ask **STAR** questions for a couple of different reasons:

- They want to know whether you've actually had the experiences that prove you can handle this new position. For example, if you can't think of a single story for dealing with a difficult customer, and you are interviewing for a customer service job, then the interviewer can quickly cut you from the list.
- They want to understand how you think. For instance, how you approach and solve problems, as well as how you apply certain required skills. A past experience allows the interviewer to see how you already applied those skills.
- The standard STAR structure makes it very easy for an interviewer to compare all job candidates' responses. The STAR interview approach helps them find out if the abilities you describe in your resume are real, and not just a bunch of exaggerated experiences or fluff.

How can you answer each portion of a STAR interview effectively in order to land a job? Let's break it down:

#### **Situation:**

This is the back story - the who, what, where, and when. Your response would typically sound something like this: "When I was working as a UX Designer at XYZ International, there was a situation where I had to design a brand new Web page in less than five hours." This can show what sorts of situations you've been in, as well as the limitations of the situation.

#### **Task:**

The task portion of the STAR interview stems from the previous question. What was your exact part to play in this situation? What was your assigned role? How were you able to turn this situation into an opportunity?

To answer effectively, start with something like this: "On the project, I was assigned to design graphics for the new Web page. I saw it as an opportunity to create more eye-catching content which would not only help the organization, but also our customers to see the value in our product." This response shows your exact role in the task, in addition to your plans to solve the problem.

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**Actions:**

The action portion of the STAR approach may require you to answer the following questions: What were the steps you took to solve this challenge? How did you think about any problems? How did you overcome roadblocks and follow the situation through to get results? Was there anything unique about your actions or your method worth mentioning?

Often, the hardest part of the entire four-part process is describing the actions you took. Explaining the sequence of actions and the thought process for each step can be challenging. However, it's essential that you do this effectively. If we continue with the UX designer example, you can explain your actions step-by-step in a high level of detail to make the story feel credible. This can help paint a picture of the task for your interviewer and showcase your contributions to it.

**Results:**

Finally, the results portion of the STAR interview method is used to sum up the tangible results of your work. For instance, how were things better off because of what you did? What lessons did you learn? Your efforts may have brought in 10 percent more Web traffic, resulting in more customers. Or, your graphic could have been referred to in articles or blogs. Either way, you need to show what your work resulted in.

High level of detail is also necessary in the results step. You need to use as many quantifiable metrics and specifics as you can to prove that you had an impact. So, if your response is along the lines of, "We made fewer mistakes" or "Projects got done faster," it may not be good enough. Percentages, before and after comparisons, and even client feedback are all helpful to prove the value of your work.

The STAR interview approach is an effective way for a hiring manager to find out who you are and what you have done in order to achieve success. If you are faced with a STAR interview, think about the questions that are most likely for your position and then focus your time and energy preparing stories for those. You'll find that painting a clearer picture will help your chances at landing the job.

**Situation or Task**

Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

**Action you took**

Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.

**Results you achieved**

What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

**SHARE Model**

A similar method to the STAR Method is the SHARE Model for responding to behavioral-based job interview questions:

S -- Situation; describe a specific situation;

H -- Hindrances; identify any hindrances or challenges faced;

A -- Action; explain the action(s) you took in response;

R -- Results; discuss the results or outcomes from your action(s);

E -- Evaluate; explain and evaluate what you learned from the experience.

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