ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: STAR

Looking for guidance regarding your next interview? Let's talk STAR - an easy way to answer difficult behavioral interview questions.

WHAT IS THE STAR METHOD?

The STAR interview technique offers a straightforward format you can use to answer behavioral interview questions—those prompts that ask you to provide a real-life example of how you handled a certain kind of situation (tell me about a time when, what do you do when, etc.).

STAR STANDS FOR:

- **Situation**: Set the scene and give the necessary details of your example.
- **Task**: Describe what your responsibility was in that situation.
- **Action**: Explain exactly what steps you took to address it.
- **Result**: Share what outcomes your actions achieved.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1) **FIND A SUITABLE EXAMPLE**

A crucial starting point is to find an appropriate scenario or story you can expand on. While there’s no way to know what exact questions an interviewer will ask you, it’s smart to have a few examples ready to go that you can tweak and adapt for different questions.

2) **LAY OUT THE SITUATION**

Now is the time to paint a clear picture of the situation you were in and emphasize its complexities so the result you touch on later seems more profound. Keep things concise and focus on what’s undeniably relevant to your story.
3) HIGHLIGHT THE TASK

You’re telling this story for a reason—because you had some sort of core involvement in it. This is the part of your answer where you make the interviewer understand exactly how you fit the position, job, company, etc. This is dedicated to giving the specifics of what your responsibilities were in that particular scenario, as well as any objective that was set for you, before you dive into what you did.

4) SHARE HOW YOU TOOK ACTION

Now, explain what you did. What steps did you take to reach that goal or solve that problem? This is your chance to really showcase your contribution, and it’s worthy of some specifics. Did you work with a certain team? Use a particular piece of software? Form a detailed plan? Those are the things your interviewer wants to know.

5) DISH OUT THE RESULT

The final portion of your response should share the results of the action you took. Interviewers don’t only care about what you did—they also want to know why it mattered. Hammer home the point about achieved results and quantify them when you can.

EXAMPLE

Your interviewer asks: "Tell me about a time when you had to be very strategic in order to meet all of your top priorities."

- **(SITUATION)** "In my previous role, I was put in charge of implementing an entirely new customer relationship management system."
- **(TASK)** "The goal was to migrate the new database by Q3, without letting any of my own sales numbers slip below my targets."
- **(ACTION)** "In order to do that, I had to be careful about how I managed my time. I blocked off an hour each day on my calendar to dedicate solely to the migration. During that time, I worked on transferring the data as well as cleaning out old contacts and updating outdated information."
- **(RESULT)** "As a result, the transfer was completed two weeks ahead of schedule, and I finished the quarter 10% ahead of my sales goal."