

## Video 5.1 STAR

Hi everyone! In this video you are going to see how to answer questions about your competencies and past experiences.

To check whether you have the knowledge and skills necessary for the job, the interviewer will ask questions where you will need to give examples from your life to demonstrate how you used a particular skill or knowledge. You might get questions like *What's your biggest achievement?*, *Tell me about ...*, *Can you describe a situation when ...?* The logic is simple: your past performance shows how successful you may be in the future.

The best way to answer such questions is to tell a story following a STAR framework. STAR means *Situation*, *Task*, *Action*, and *Result*.

Let's have a closer look at how it works. Imagine that an interviewer asks you: *What's your biggest achievement?*

Following the STAR framework, you should start your answer by describing the *Situation*. – *On my last project I was working in a team of six engineers and we were developing a new feature for our core product. At first, we thought we would complete the project on time, but then two team members, including our team leader, fell seriously ill.*

So, basically, in the *SITUATION*, you give the interviewer some information about where and when your story took place.

Then briefly explain the *TASK* you had to complete.

*We had to meet the original deadline, which was in a few days' time and we didn't have a team leader. So, the whole team was under serious pressure.*

When talking about the *Task*, don't forget to speak about any specific challenges you or the team were facing, for example deadlines, costs, and other issues.

By describing the *situation* and *task* you help the interviewer understand the context of your story.

Now it's time to move on to the most important part of your answer - the specific *ACTIONS* that *YOU* took to complete the task.

*I was pretty confident in my programming skills, so I volunteered as a team leader. Due to my technical analysis skills, I managed to find a few mistakes in the initial coding and fixing them allowed the project to move faster. I also motivated my team to work overtime for a couple of days to fix all the problems before the release. When I told the customer about this, they promised a small bonus for the team.*

This is the main part of your answer where you can mention *WHAT* you did, *WHY* you did it and *HOW* you did it. Remember to use *I* rather than *we* or *my team members* here, since it is the time when you should demonstrate *your* skills and knowledge to the interviewer to prove that you're a perfect fit for the job.

Finish off with the *RESULTS* of your actions.

*As a result, the project was successfully finished on time. The customer was extremely satisfied with the product and the team was happy to receive the extra bonus. It was a challenging experience, but I really enjoyed the feeling of achievement. I also learnt a lot about initiative and improved my communication skills.*

In this final stage, describe the positive effect of your actions. *How did the story end? What did you accomplish?* You can speak about the lesson you learnt, experience you gained, or skills you improved.

Before we finish this lesson, please keep in mind that you should not say anything in your answer that might reveal sensitive data about your previous or current project and customer.

So, now you know how to build a STAR story to answer questions about your experience and competencies. Please remember that you should speak about a *specific* situation, structure your response appropriately, emphasize your role, and describe how you developed from that experience. And you're sure to succeed!

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