



## Preparing for your Amazon Interview

Thank you for the time you've invested so far in the Amazon interview process. Below are some tips we hope you'll find helpful in preparing for your in-person interview.

### What to expect on your interview day:

- You will meet with 4-7 Amazonians. However, interview schedules can change often, so we appreciate your flexibility. This mix of interviewers may include managers and peers that make up the team and colleagues from other teams.
- Each interview session will last approximately 45 minutes. These in-depth conversations will be around work experiences from your background; possibly specific to the job description.
- You will be provided lunch if the interview is scheduled during the lunch hour. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.
- You may notice that the Amazon campus is a dog-friendly work place. Please let us know if you need special accommodations or have allergies, as we do have dog-free zones at Amazon.
- Our dress code is casual. We encourage you to dress comfortably. We are interested in what you have to say, not what you are wearing.

### Interview tips:

- Know what interests you about Amazon and the team or teams you will be interviewing with.
- It may also help to spend some time researching our specific products and features as well as competitors relevant to the job description. Knowing about our product groups and how they all interact with each other will give you more context around the role and will likely prompt deeper conversations and provide a richer interview experience.
- Please ask questions if you need clarification. We want the interview process to be collaborative. We also want to learn what it would be like to work with you on a day-to-day basis in our open environment. If you are asked a question, but not given enough information to solve the problem, drill down to get the information that you need. If that information isn't available, focus on how you would attempt to solve the problem given the limited information you have. Often times at Amazon, we have to make quick decisions in the absence of all of the relevant data.
- When answering questions, be as concise and detailed in your response as possible. We realize it's hard to gauge how much information is too much versus not sufficient enough; an effective litmus test is pausing after your succinct response to ask if you've provided enough detail, or if the interviewer would like you to go into more depth.
- We want to hire smart, passionate people. Please reflect on what motivated you to pursue a career with Amazon and be prepared to speak to it. Although "Why Amazon?" is a standard type of question, it's not a check-the-box type of formality for us. We genuinely want to understand what inspired you to explore an opportunity with us, so we get a better sense of who you are. It's also appreciated when a candidate has put thought into a few questions for the interviewer. It goes a long way when you've taken the initiative to research the company prior to your interview.

## Onsite Interview Highlights – The STAR Method

Amazon is a data and metric driven company. You should keep your focus on the question asked and make sure your answer is tangible. We suggest the STAR Method.

**The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.**

**Situation:** 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.

**Task:** What goal were you working toward?

**Action:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

**Result:** Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

Make sure that you follow all parts of the STAR method. Be as specific as possible at all times, without rambling or including too much information. Also, eliminate any examples that do not paint you in a positive light. However, keep in mind that some examples that have a negative result (such as "lost the game") can highlight your strengths in the face of adversity.

## How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview:

Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.

- Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- Be sure each story has a beginning, middle, and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, including the task at hand, your action, and the outcome or result.
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.
- Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.

## Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:

*Practice using the STAR Method on these common behavioral interviewing questions incorporating examples from the Amazon Leadership Principles:*

- Tell me about a time when you have been faced with a challenge where the best way forward or strategy to adopt was not “clear cut” (i.e. there were a number of possible solutions). How did you decide the best way forward?
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.

## Our Leadership Principles

**Amazon’s Leadership Principles are the specific characteristics necessary for successful leadership at Amazon. These Principles work hard, just like we do. Amazonians use them, every day, whether they’re discussing ideas for new projects, deciding on the best solution for a customer’s problem, or interviewing candidates. It’s just one of those things that make Amazon peculiar.**

### Customer Obsession

Leaders start with the customer and work backwards. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they *obsess* over customers.

### Ownership

Leaders are owners. They think long term and don’t sacrifice long-term value for short-term results. They act on behalf of the entire company, beyond just their own team. They never say “that’s not my job.”

### Invent and Simplify

Leaders expect and require innovation and invention from their teams and always find ways to simplify. They are externally aware, look for new ideas from everywhere, and are not limited by “not invented here.” As we do new things, we accept that we may be misunderstood for long periods of time.

### Are Right, A Lot

Leaders are right a lot. They have strong business judgment and good instincts. They seek diverse perspectives and work to disconfirm their beliefs.

### Hire and Develop the Best

Leaders raise the performance bar with every hire and promotion. They recognize exceptional talent, and willingly move them throughout the organization. Leaders develop leaders and take seriously their role in coaching others. We work on behalf of our people to invent mechanisms for development like Career Choice

## **Insist on the Highest Standards**

Leaders have relentlessly high standards—many people may think these standards are unreasonably high. Leaders are continually raising the bar and drive their teams to deliver high quality products, services and processes. Leaders ensure that defects do not get sent down the line and that problems are fixed so they stay fixed.

## **Think Big**

Thinking small is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Leaders create and communicate a bold direction that inspires results. They think differently and look around corners for ways to serve customers.

## **Bias for Action**

Speed matters in business. Many decisions and actions are reversible and do not need extensive study. We value calculated risk taking.

## **Frugality**

Accomplish more with less. Constraints breed resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and invention. There are no extra points for growing headcount, budget size or fixed expense.

## **Learn and Be Curious**

Leaders are never done learning and always seek to improve themselves. They are curious about new possibilities and act to explore them.

## **Earn Trust of Others**

Leaders listen attentively, speak candidly, and treat others respectfully. They are vocally self-critical, even when doing so is awkward or embarrassing. Leaders do not believe their or their team's body odor smells of perfume. They benchmark themselves and their teams against the best.

## **Dive Deep**

Leaders operate at all levels, stay connected to the details, audit frequently, and are skeptical when metrics and anecdote differ. No task is beneath them.

## **Have Backbone; Disagree and Commit**

Leaders are obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Leaders have conviction and are tenacious. They do not compromise for the sake of social cohesion. Once a decision is determined, they commit wholly.

## **Deliver Results**

Leaders focus on the key inputs for their business and deliver them with the right quality and in a timely fashion. Despite setbacks, they rise to the occasion and never settle.

**We appreciate your interest in Amazon and we're looking forward to meeting and learning more about you. Good luck with your interviews!**