S.T.A.R QUESTION

What is the STAR interview method?

The STAR interview method is a technique you can use to prepare for behavioral and situational interview questions. STAR stands for: **situation, task, action** and **result**. This method will help you prepare clear and concise responses using real-life examples.

Hiring managers ask behavioral interview questions to determine whether you are the right fit for a job. By using the STAR strategy, you can make sure you're fully addressing the interviewer's question while also demonstrating how you were able to overcome previous challenges and be successful.

How does the star method works?

The STAR method helps you create an easy-to-follow story with a clear conflict and resolution. Here's what each part of the technique means:

Situation

Set the stage for the story by sharing context around the situation or challenge you faced. In most cases, it's best to describe relevant work situations but depending on the amount of directly transferable experience you have, it might also be appropriate to discuss academic projects or volunteer work. It's also imperative to talk about a specific instance rather than your general responsibilities.

You should spend the least amount of time on this part of your answer as interviewers are more concerned with the actions you took and results you got. Share the right amount of relevant detail by identifying the two or three most important pieces of information necessary to give the interviewer enough context about the situation.

Example: *"In my last role as lead designer, there was a point in time when my team was short-staffed and facing a significant backlog of work. The account managers were setting unrealistic deadlines, which was causing stress for my team and affecting morale."*

Task

Describe your responsibility or role in the situation or challenge. In other words, discuss the goal or task set out for you. This section requires a minimal amount of time similar to the situation component. Again, consider just one or two points that best illustrate the task you needed to complete.

Example: *"As a team leader, it was my role not only to ensure my team met our deadlines but also to communicate bandwidth to other departments and keep my team motivated."*

Action

Explain the specific actions you took to handle the situation or overcome the challenge. This part of your answer requires the most in depth description as this is what largely indicates your fitness for a role. Identify and discuss a few of the most impactful steps you took to find success.

Often, workplace challenges are addressed by a team; however, it's a common pitfall to use the word "we" to describe how you achieved your goals during an interview. In any case, it's important to focus on what you did in the situation. It can be helpful to remember that the employer's intention is to hire you for the role rather than your team, so you should use the word "I" to highlight your particular contributions.

Example: *"I set up a formal creative request process including project timeline estimates to set better expectations. I scheduled weekly meetings with account managers to discuss my team's bandwidth and share progress updates. I also kept my team informed of the new processes, so they could have some peace of mind knowing the issues were being addressed."*

Result

What was the outcome you reached through your actions? This is also an important part of your response to focus on. You should spend only slightly less time discussing the results than your actions. Decide what the two to three most impressive results were and talk about these.

Quantify your success or provide concrete examples of the effects of your efforts if possible. In addition, discuss what you learned, how you grew and why you're a stronger employee because of the experience.

Example: *"By providing more transparency into my team's processes and setting better expectations with the account managers, we were able to re-prioritize the design team's to-do list and complete everything in our backlog. I took these learnings, continued to apply this structure and as a result, in the following quarter, we shortened our average project timeline by two days. I also learned just how important it is to communicate clearly across teams."*

How to use the STAR method to prepare for an interview

While you won't know the interview questions ahead of time, most behavioral interviews will focus on various work-related challenges that demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving, and situations that showcase leadership skills, conflict resolution and performance under pressure. Here's some additional background on behavioral questions and a few tips to help you leverage the STAR method when answering them.

What are behavioral interview questions?

Interviewers ask behavioral interview questions to learn how you have behaved in previous work situations. In your answers, employers are looking for examples of your past actions that may be predictors of how you'll act when you face these situations again. These questions are more open-ended than a "yes-or-no" question and usually ask you to share stories or examples from your previous jobs.

EXAMPLES

- Share an example of a time when you faced a difficult problem at work. How did you solve this problem?

- Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision? How did you handle it?

- Describe a time when you were under a lot of pressure at work. How did you react?

- Tell me about a mistake you've made. How did you handle it?

- Share an example of a time you had to make a difficult decision. What did you do?

- Explain a situation where you used data or logic to make a recommendation.

- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss. How did you resolve it?

- Tell me about a time you worked with other departments to complete a project.

- Share an example of a time when you failed. What did you learn from the experience?

- Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a specific goal.

- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade someone to do something.

- Describe a time when you had a conflict with a colleague. How did you handle it?

- Have you ever had to motivate others? How did you do it?

- Tell me about the last time your workday ended before you were able to get everything done.