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# ***INTERVIEW PREP***

*Brittany's Tips to Nail Behavioral / Technical Interviews*

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## ***Elevator Pitch***

*"Tell me about yourself"*

- 1. What is your Background in?*
- 2. What are some of your personal accomplishments?*
- 3. What are your career goals / aspirations?*

*My past experience in Sales and Management has given me a broad understanding of team dynamics and effective communication strategies. I believe that good communication is the bedrock upon which any team-oriented environment is built.*

*After shifting gears into Software Development, I found a passion for the creative problem solving it offers, and enjoy expressing my own personal creativity in my applications. As a Full Stack Developer I feel I excel in applications that allow me to contribute equally to both sides of that process.*

*At Codeworks, we worked with CSS / SCSS, Javascript / Vue3, and Node / C#, and I developed several Full Stack Applications during my time there, both individually and as part of a Development Team. I am excited to learn and grow as a Developer, and am eager to learn all I can to better contribute my own share to your company.*

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# ***STAR Responses***

***S**ituation || **T**ask || **A**ction || **R**esolution*

*Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.*

**S:** *While working for Golden Coast, I frequently managed tasting events at beer festivals. Often, we would be supplied volunteers from the festival staff to help manage our booths, and one year at the Del Mar Fair I was saddled with an especially... enthusiastic volunteer.*

**T:** *I sold Honey Wine, which requires a bit of a pitch to get customers up to speed. Usually, this simply meant that I would handle customer interactions while the volunteer would pour samples as needed. This volunteer, however, took it upon themselves to... "educate" customers on our products, confidently delivering terribly wrong information. Apparently, he liked our stuff and considered himself quite the expert!*

**A:** *After this initial instance, I briefly took him aside and asked him to hold off on pitching until he got a feel for today's "unique" product selection, as we wouldn't want to accidentally misinform our customers. I slipped him an info card - meant as a shorthand reference for customers - and asked him to look it over while assisting me with pouring.*

**R:** *Fast forward a couple hours, and we'd fallen into a great rhythm: I'd start a pitch, suggest a sample, then pass it off to my volunteer. He'd pour the customer their sample, and give them a brief overview, then see that customer off as I moved on to the next! By the end of it, I'd managed to turn my volunteer's enthusiasm from a nuisance into an asset!*

*Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult client. What was the situation, and how did you handle it?*

**S:** *While the head of Sales for Golden Coast, I frequently held face-to-face meetings with potential buyers throughout San Diego county. This involved driving the length and breadth of the county to pre-scheduled meetings, and occasionally wrangling a meeting on the fly if I was in the area. We had been trying to land an account at a popular Gastropub in downtown San Diego, but the head of purchasing was notoriously difficult to contact.*

**T:** *As orchestrating appointments over the phone had proved fruitless, I made a point of asking general management what the best time would be to find him there, and scheduled my weekly routes to bring me around that location around that time. I finally managed to meet up with him one day in between accounts, and managed to secure an impromptu meeting later that afternoon.*

**A:** *After finally sitting down with him, I went through my standard tasting procedure, and brought out a round of several varieties of product that we believed would do well in that establishment. After tasting them and discussing potential fit, he settled on an initial buy of 2 varieties, under the condition that he would move forward with recurring purchases if they met his sales quotas after two weeks.*

**R:** *One week goes by, and I receive a call from the purchasing manager. His trial stock had run dry ahead of schedule, and he requested an additional month's supply of both varieties on the spot. That establishment became one of our more reliable accounts in the following months, and that relationship was well-fought-for!*

*Describe a time when your team or company was undergoing some change. How did that impact you, and how did you adapt?*

**S:** During my time with Menu North America, we experienced a shift in our managerial structure right around the advent of Coronavirus. Our General Manager installed a Department Head for the Warehouse Department as the direct supervisor for the Warehouse Manager, and myself as the Assistant Warehouse Manager.

**T:** This sudden shakeup proved disconcerting for most of the general Warehouse employees, as it was preceded by several key layoffs within our branch. Our Warehouse Manager was the only higher-level Department Manager that came out unscathed, with every other key Department Manager being laid off. This fostered uncertainty and concern among the Warehouse staff, as not only were their positions in an uncertain state, but our new Department Head was asking them to perform duties outside of their original job description.

**A:** Realizing the issues this presented, and uncertain if higher level management was aware of the problem, I took the liberty to, along with my direct supervisor, go around and ask our subordinates for their thoughts and concerns on the matter, writing down all noteworthy comments anonymously. We both then presented this information to our new Department Head, as well as to our General Manager, in the hopes we could foster an open dialogue about these abrupt changes to our company structure.

**R:** The following week, the entire Warehouse Department sat down with the General Manager and Department Head as a group. They went over the anonymous concerns we had posed and assured us that the rocky transition was an unintentional byproduct of directives from corporate, above their heads. They assured all of us that our jobs were secure, and passed our official job descriptions along to the new Department Head to ensure that the tasks we were being assigned remained in line with our contracted duties. After a brief transition, things began to operate much smoother as our branch regained its footing and welcomed our new Department Head to our team.

*Give me an example of a time you managed numerous responsibilities.*

**S:** During my time at Golden Coast, I frequently wore several hats. Not only did I manage Business-to-Business sales for the county, but I also organized three Farmers Market Stalls throughout the work week. These events ran for eight hours, and were generally staffed by a single employee at a time. More often than not, I would take on two a week.

**T:** These stalls required a deft hand, as you needed to balance person-to-person sales, active product samples, product counts, and personal sales accounting. You would set up and tear down, perform product quality checks, on-the-spot technical troubleshooting, and end-of-day cash counts all on an individual basis. Throughout the day, you would need to continually ensure your stall was operating effectively, your product remained chilled and in good condition, and your equipment remained top performance; all while shooting for ever-growing sales goals.

**A:** I eventually fell into a rhythm with these markets. You would have your setup flow, where you got your stall in working condition. This included aesthetic and technical setup, and ensuring your sales terminal was running, able to accept new orders, and able to dispense change appropriately. Next, you would have your initial push. You'd draft up special boards for the day's sales, get the word out to the passing crowds, and set yourself up for... The rush. Generally my booth would remain static for the first couple hours of the day. I sold alcohol at 8AM, it was to be expected. However, once word got out and people had been milling about the market, they'd generally all hit the stall from 10AM up until market close at 4PM, often with very little downtime.

**R:** This workflow allowed me to streamline a lot of my technical processes, and consistently prepare myself for the inevitable rush week after week. As a result, I was able to continually set and surpass my weekly sales goals, eventually setting the market standard for all our stalls throughout San Diego. Because of my consistent performance, we were able to continually open up more stalls in more markets throughout the county to try new regions, and we were able to consistently deliver four-figure daily sales goals at each one.

*Describe a time when you were the resident technical expert. What did you do to make sure everyone was able to understand you?*

**S:** Frequently at Menu North America, my supervisory duties required me to train new hires on some of our more technical tasks. As a custom furniture distributor, we would frequently get mass shipments of parts on containers that would be assembled to-order at a later date. My particular specialty was chairs, of which there were several varieties: each with their own product SKUs and assembly instructions.

**T:** After training two new hires back-to-back on this process, I was frustrated by the redundancies inherently built into this training process. There was just too much information to effectively train somebody to reliably fulfill these duties without devoting weeks to the process. Invariably, these new hires would reach out to me throughout the work day with technical questions, which detracted from my other duties that day.

**A:** I brought my frustrations to my Department Head, and together we devised a solution: I would take the week to write up individual SOPs for each and every build I would need to train my subordinates on. They would be as descriptive as I could make them, with diagrams and pictures of individual parts, tools, and required materials for each build. These would be laminated and made readily accessible as reference materials, so that I could offer them as a reference both during the training process and afterward when the trainees eventually had technical questions.

**R:** After implementing this SOP procedure, the required training time for this duties was reduced noticeably, and the new hires were far less likely to bring technical questions to my attention, as they had a useful reference for any build they would be tasked with. It also improved their personal confidence in their abilities, as these reference materials solidified that knowledge much more concretely than standard training procedures had up to that point.

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## ***How To Prepare?***

1. Review the Job Description
2. Research the Company's Values
3. Prepare Additional Follow-Up Questions

- How fast is your company growing, and what opportunities does this present for potential upward mobility?
- What are some of the initial problems you see new hires experiencing in this role?
- How often are employees promoted internally, and on what timeline?
- What would success look like in 90 days?
- What qualities are you most prioritizing in potential candidates for this position?

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## ***WhiteBoard Practice***

1. ISpy with Justin & Jonesy: Definitely a fun one, and not terribly complicated. Truth be told, we talked through this problem last Wednesday as the Juniors were attempting it, but it was still a good opportunity for review.
2. BattleShips with Veronica: This has to be my favorite Whiteboard challenge I've done yet. It looks intimidating at first, but as you think it through and talk it out the solution just unfolds in front of you. Definitely one to remember!