

A photograph of four people in professional attire (three men and one woman) seated around a white conference table, looking towards the left side of the frame. The background is a bright, slightly overexposed office environment.

**TELL ME  
ABOUT A  
TIME YOU  
FAILED?**

# THIS IS WHAT I WILL COVER

- ✓ **Why the interviewer is asking YOU this question.**
- ✓ **2 IMPORTANT TIPS** for answering it with confidence.
- ✓ **3 BRILLIANT EXAMPLE ANSWERS!**

# Why Is The Interviewer Asking You The Question...

**1. If you haven't yet failed at anything, you may not have the necessary experience to do the job properly!**

**“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**



**2. How you RESPOND TO FAILURE** is a clear indication of your **tenacity**, your *determination* and your **willingness to improve.**

**“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**



**3 ESSENTIAL TIPS for  
answering this question  
with confidence**

# #1. Use the STAR technique...

S

Explain the **SITUATION** you were in.

T

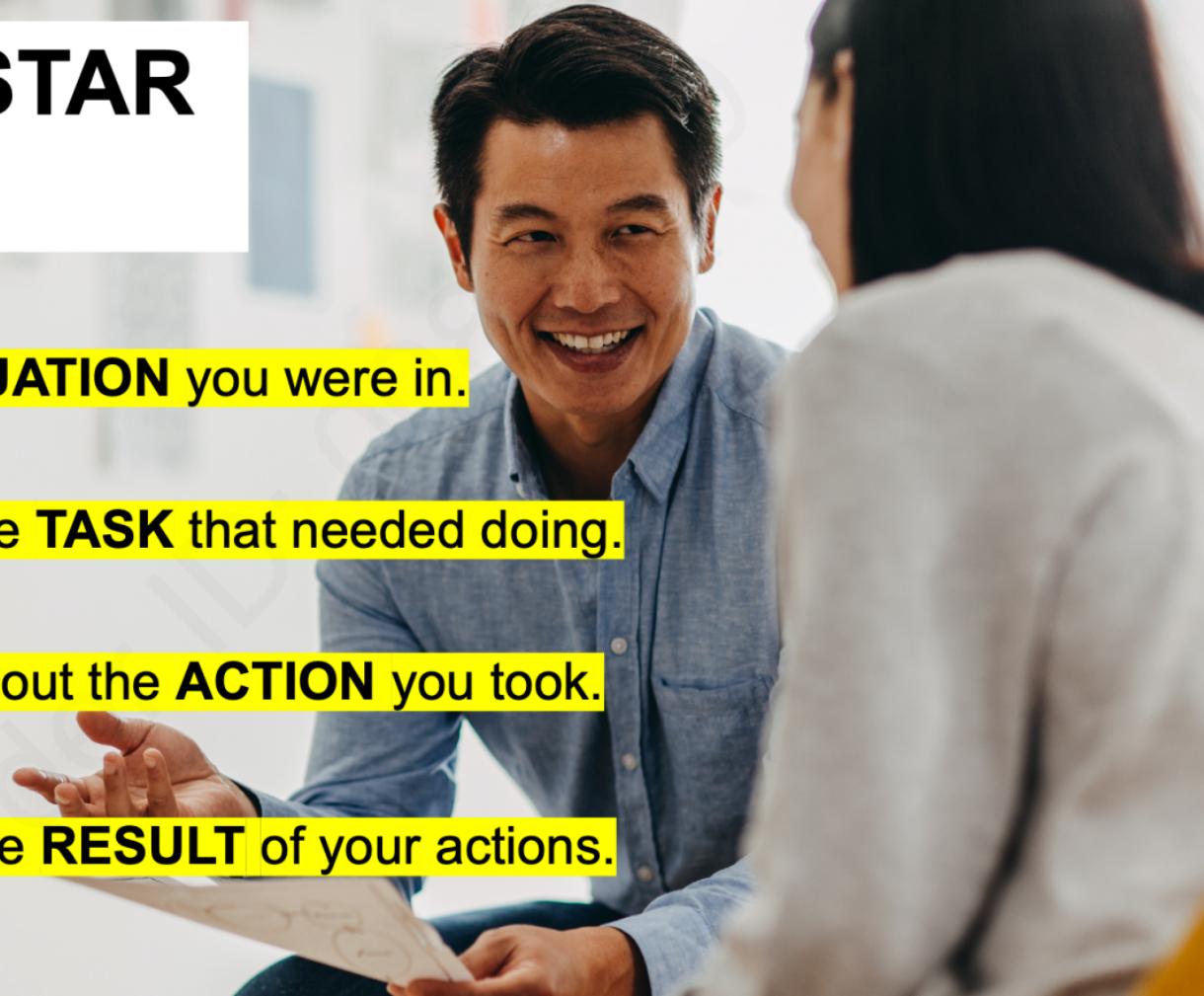
Briefly outline the **TASK** that needed doing.

A

Go into detail about the **ACTION** you took.

R

Finish off with the **RESULT** of your actions.



## #2. Give a specific example that includes:

- The REASON why you failed. (Don't blame others!)
- What YOU DID to put things right.
- What you LEARNT from the experience.



**#3. Be HONEST  
and take  
responsibility  
for what  
happened.**



**“Tell Me About A Time  
You Failed?”**

**ANSWER NUMBER 1**

## **“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**

**SITUATION:** In my previous job, I was managing a project for one of the company's most valuable clients. I promised the client that the project would be completed within 21 days.

**TASK:** It was my responsibility to make sure everything would be completed both on time, and to the right standard.

## **“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**

**ACTION:** I started work on the project and within a week of commencing I realized it was not going to be possible to get everything finished on time. In fact, it was going to take 28 days to complete instead of 21.

I felt awful because I had effectively failed the client. I immediately contacted them, I apologized for misleading them and I explained why I had got the schedule wrong. Basically, I had miscalculated the amount of work involved.

**RESULT:** The client thanked me for my honesty, and they said the 28-day completion timeframe was fine.

I learnt a lot from that situation, and moving forward, I always ensured I estimated completion times accurately.

**“Tell Me About A Time  
You Failed?”**

**ANSWER NUMBER 2**

## **“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**

**“When I first started work in my previous role, the manager gave me a task to complete that involved carrying out a stock check of all company goods that we had available.**

In my hastiness to do a good job, I failed to listen to his brief properly and I ended up included items in the stock check that I should've excluded.

**As soon as I noticed my error, I informed my manager and I explained to him the reason why I had made the mistake. I then went away and put things right.**

I learnt a lot from that situation, especially in respect of making sure I took notes when a brief was given to me. If I ever do fail at something, I will admit to it before putting things right and making sure I learn from the experience, so it does not happen again.”

**“Tell Me About A Time  
You Failed?”**

**ANSWER NUMBER 3**

## **“Tell Me About A Time You Failed?”**

**“After being in my last job for a few months, my supervisor called me in to speak to her about my performance in respect of customer service call handling targets.**

I was failing to answer the required number of calls each day because I was spending too much time speaking to the customers instead of getting to the root of their problem quickly so I could move on to the next call.

**I was trying make polite conversation, but I could understand why I was failing because the business needs to be as efficient as possible.**  
After the conversation with my supervisor I decided to undertake an online course that enabled me to deal with customer calls faster whilst still providing a high level of service.

**Following the course, my call handling skills improved significantly, and my supervisor praised me for listening to her feedback and taking positive steps to improve.”**