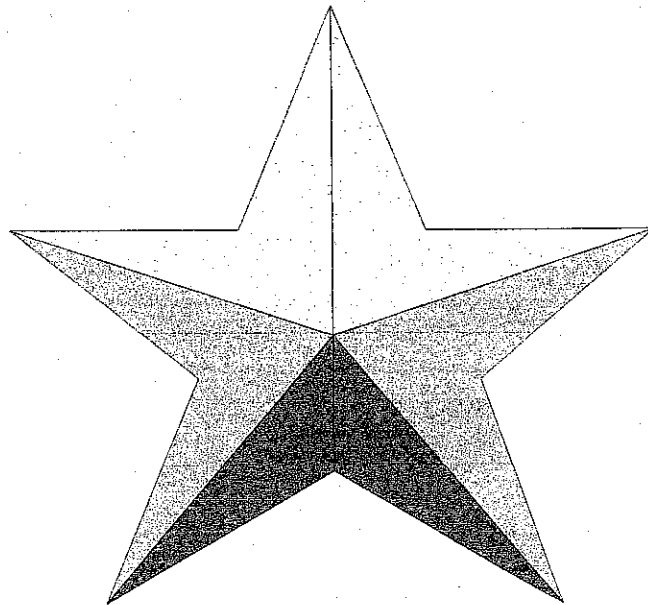


How to
STAR
at the Employment Interview



Presented by
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Elgin Community College

KEY CONCEPTS



- The interview is an invitation to do the job.
- The employer wants to hire you.
- The boss wants one thing from you...
 - s/he wants you to solve a problem profitably.
- You will win the job *by doing it* – that is, by solving the problems in the interview.

THE EMPLOYER'S REAL QUESTIONS...

- Do you understand the job that needs to be done?
- Can you do the job?
- Can you do the job the way the employer wants it done?
- Can you do the job profitably for the company?



TO WIN THE RIGHT JOB...

- Mold your *knowledge* about job/employer's business into a compelling tool to win offer
- Form impressive *attitude* that tells employer you're here to solve problems
- Demonstrate relevant *abilities*

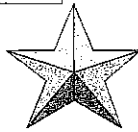


FOUR CATEGORIES OF COMMON QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- What's wrong with you, anyway?
- What are your salary expectations?

Behavioral Interviewing Questions – STAR FORMULA

- **Situation** – Identify the problem.
 - ✓ Who, what, where, why, when?
- **Task** – Define your objective.
 - ✓ What did you have to do?
- **Action** – Describe the steps you took.
 - ✓ What specifically did you do to demonstrate your skills?
 - ✓ How did you execute your plan?
- **Result(s)** – Measure your effectiveness.
 - ✓ What ultimately happened? Quantify!



PREPARING FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

- Identify critical skills for the job.
- Take an inventory of your skills.
- Determine likely behavioral interviewing questions.
- Formulate your STAR responses.
- Practice your stories!

SUMMARY

- Show how your competencies match the employer's needs

PREPARING FOR JOB INTERVIEWS: INFORMATION ABOUT THE EMPLOYER

It isn't necessary that you know all of the below for your interviews, but you should determine what is relevant for the position for which you are interviewing. Consider these topics (and others you may think of) and conduct as much research on these subjects as possible before your interviews.

- Size of the company, number of employees, divisions and subsidiaries
- Location of home office
- Private or publicly owned
- How long in business
- Reputation of the company
- Who is the competition
- Geographical locations of plants, stores, and sales outlets
- Recent items in the news
- Potential growth for the industry
- Percent of annual sales growth the last five years
- Short- and long-term profit picture
- Present price of stock
- Percent of annual growth in earnings per share
- Array of product line or services
- Potential new markets, products, or services
- Various price points in the product or service line
- Organization structure by product line, functional, etc.

Much of the above information can be found in: Moody's Corporate Manuals; Standard and Poor's Register; Dun and Bradstreet: Million Dollar Directory; other specialized employer or industry directories; and, on various corporate or financial web sites (i.e., www.hoovers.com; www.vault.com). You can also research a company by securing a copy of the organization's annual report or by talking with people who work for the company.

Behavioral Interviewing Worksheet

Question: _____

SITUATION • TASK • ACTION • RESULT (S.T.A.R.)

S•I•T•U•A•T•I•O•N – Identify the problem.

Set the stage for your story: who, what, where, why, when?

Your Position: _____

Your Company: _____

The Problem/Assignment: _____

T•A•S•K – Define the objective.

What did you have to do? (Investigate/Analyze/Consult) _____

A•C•T•I•O•N – Describe the steps you took to achieve your objective.

What specifically did you do to demonstrate your skills?

Step-by-Step of HOW you executed your plan:

Step 1 – Planning: _____

Obstacles to Overcome: _____

Step 2 – First Action Taken: _____

Step 3 – Second Action Taken: _____

Step 4 – Third Action Taken: _____

Step 5 – Fourth Action Taken: _____

R•E•S•U•L•T (S) – Measure your effectiveness.

What ultimately happened? Quantify! Did you Increase / Decrease / Save / Profit / Improve \$, %, Ⓢ

(include results at both the departmental/functional level as well as the "big picture" company impact)?

Remember to let the employer know that you can produce the same results for them!

Compliments of Elgin Community College Career Services

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

General Questions

- Have you ever worked with someone that you did not get along with as part of a team? How did you handle that situation?
- Describe how you would handle a deadline project that is given to you at the last minute.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What was the situation? What did you do?
- Give me an example of a major problem you faced and how you solved it.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me an example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to deal successfully with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a difficult decision you have made within the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- 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.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problem and developed preventative measures.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Please tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

Managerial-Level Questions

- Describe the most critical decision you had to make in your last position.
- Describe a recent situation in which you had to quickly establish your credibility and gain the confidence of others. What did you do?
- Describe a situation that demonstrates your leadership abilities and use of authority.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a subordinate who violated a company policy.
- Describe your proudest professional achievement that involved helping improve the performance of someone you supervised.
- Give me an example of your ability to communicate effectively and build relationships with people regardless of cultural differences.
- Tell me about a time when you had to conduct a particularly difficult employee counseling or corrective session.
- Give me an example of when you managed a team that failed to meet its objectives. What could you have done differently?
- As a manager, how did you establish staff rapport? Explain how you motivated others to work more efficiently.
- Tell me about how you communicated your vision within an organization.
- Thinking about when you moved into your last assignment, describe how you evaluated your key people and decided how to build your team.
- Tell me about your biggest surprise in your first General Manager role. How did you handle the situation?
- Give me an example of how you mentored a member of your staff.
- Describe how you keep employees motivated and committed to the company?
- Describe your most significant accomplishment in your career.
- Tell me about your most significant failure as a manager.
- Tell me about a time when you faced a difficult ethical dilemma and how you handled it.
- Give me an example of how you provided leadership and direction under unusually difficult circumstances.
- Give me an example of a time when you helped a subordinate develop managerial-level skills.
- Tell me about a situation in which your integrity was challenged.