

Interview Preparation

1. Introduction: Remember - Good eye contact
Firm handshake
Relaxed manner
SMILE

2. Opening Company question: Normally a broad question such as “tell me about yourself”
Identify what they would like to know
Concentrate on the areas they mention
Be factual and concise in your answers

3. Further Questioning: You are being interviewed because the employer wants to hire people – not because they want to trip you up or embarrass you. They will be searching out your strong and weak points, evaluating you on your qualifications, skills and intellectual qualities, and the employer will probably probe to determine your attitudes, aptitudes, stability, motivation and maturity.

Make sure you get your good points across in a factual, logical, sincere manner. Stress achievements , for example: sales records, processes developed, savings achieved, systems installed etc.

Don't ever make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers or companies.

4. Your questions: Ask some pre-prepared, pertinent questions to show your interest:

About the company - Now, in the past, in the future
What do they do?
How do they do it?
Who do they do it for?

About the position - What will I be doing?
Training programme
Career Prospects

Don't inquire about salary, vacations, bonuses, retirement etc. on the initial interview unless you are positive the employer is interested in hiring you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, indicate what you've earned but you're more interested in the opportunity.

Take any examples of your work with you to showcase

5. The Close: Why should they offer me the job?

Technical Skills
Communication Skills
Motivation / Attitude

Be positive – tell them you want the job and why.

Ask about their reservations / concerns and try to overcome

Convince them you are right for the job

Suggested Questions to Ask

What is the most successful campaign they have run

Describe the career development of a couple of people who joined the company 3 years ago

What do they look for in their employees (skills and culture fit)

What are their plans for future growth

Ask about training programmes

Be Prepared to Answer Questions Like...

Why did you choose this particular vocation?

Why do you think you might like to work for our company?

What do you know about our company?

What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?

What is your major weakness?

How do you spend your spare time?

What jobs have you enjoyed the most / the least – why?

What are your strengths?

What types of people rub you up the wrong way?

What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?

What do you feel are the most important qualities you have to offer in respect of this position?

The STAR method

To get your point across effectively, this is a helpful method of answering questions which will help the interviewer understand your relevant experience and way of working. This can really make a difference to your interview technique so well worth getting to grips with!

The STAR method is :-

S – Situation, background set the scene

T – Task or Target, specifics of what's required, when, where, who

A – Action, what you did, skills used, behaviours, characteristics

R – Result – Outcome, what happened

How to build a STAR method Story

A Star story should be about 2 minutes long, and delivered with energy and enthusiasm about a real experience you have had (it does not have to be a work experience, as long as it describes a relevant skill or behaviour).

Time for an example:

Question: Have you ever lead a team before?

This is another reason why the STAR method is so powerful. The above question is a terrible closed question.

You could answer “yes” or “yes” on three separate occasions” and move quickly onto the next question. But Leadership is an important skill, and you **must** not miss this chance to shine. A lot of people would give the easy answer here, you have a great chance to impress, and basically do all the interviewers work for them.

An example of a STAR method story answer:

(Situation) “Yes; a relevant example being at my last company, where I was initially a software developer, In a team of 6 developing a new finance module for our core accounting product.”

(Task) “The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of sales and marketing investment riding on the product being ready. However the project was behind schedule, when our team leader unfortunately became ill, and had to leave.”

(Action) “I had been sports team captain at school, where I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership. So I volunteered to stand in, and by using my technical analysis skills, spotted a few small mistakes made in the initial coding, that were causing the sporadic errors, and slowing us down. I then negotiated with our product director a small bonus incentive for the team, and budget for two pizza evenings, so we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the coding and catch up with the critical project landmarks.”

(Result) “Though this took us 1.5% over budget the software was delivered on time with a better than target fault tolerance. The project was seen as a great success as the additional project cost was minimal compared to the costs of delaying the launch, and the negative affect on our product branding. The team where delighted with the extra bonus and I have now been officially promoted to team leader as a result.”

The example above not only answers the leadership question asked, but also conveys that you have other skills and behaviours any interviewer would be interested in.

Post Interview

Please call as soon as possible after the interview with your feed-back, to enable us to liaise with the company on your behalf.