

USING THE STAR METHOD IN INTERVIEWS

Determining how to structure interview answers can be tricky, especially for behavioral questions (tell me about a time when...) used to understand not just your actions but the context of your work. Candidates can get a little lost in their story telling, ramble too long, or leave out key details. To help you deliver focused and powerful answers, use the STAR method.

SITUATION: Describe the situation to provide context and set the stage for the story

TASK: Share the task you were working on

ACTION: Explain the steps you took to accomplish the assigned task

RESULT: Let them know the results of your work and, if the results didn't meet expectations, explain what you learned from not hitting the mark so you can do better in the future

Example: Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.

S During the summer between junior and senior year at Westfield State University, I completed an internship at Shuttle Film in their production management department. I was the organization's first intern, and they decided they wanted to continue hosting more interns in the future.

T My supervisor asked me to create a training curriculum and manual for the future interns.

A To complete this task, first I researched examples of other internship manuals and trainings to get a sense of best practices. I then outlined all the procedures the new interns would need to learn about like the different departments and services offered, client and project management procedures, Asana (their project management software), and reviewing the client tracking system. I also included information on the culture and processes of the department, including dress expectations, communication procedures, key partners and collaborators, and frequently used acronyms. Next, I created a three-day training agenda covering these topics. Finally, I collaborated with my supervisor to onboard and train three new interns.

R The training and manual were very successful. On the feedback survey, all three interns rated the program a 5 out of 5 in the areas of usefulness and creativity, and rated themselves as "Very Confident" to begin their internships. I received positive feedback from my supervisor on the materials created as well as my performance.

PRACTICE YOUR STAR STORIES

Describe a time when you worked with an angry customer to deescalate and resolve the situation. (If you haven't experienced the situation before, be sure to tell them how you would handle a situation.)

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Tell me about a time when you accomplished something as part of a team? (Remember: Include information on your specific role on the team.)

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Tell us about a time you experienced a conflict with a coworker. How did you resolve the situation? (If you haven't worked before, you can use an example from a group project for a class or maybe a fellow volunteer.)

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Describe a time when you failed. What happened and what did you learn from that situation? (We all fail from time to time so don't let this throw you. Be sure to emphasize what you learned so that it doesn't happen again.)

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result: