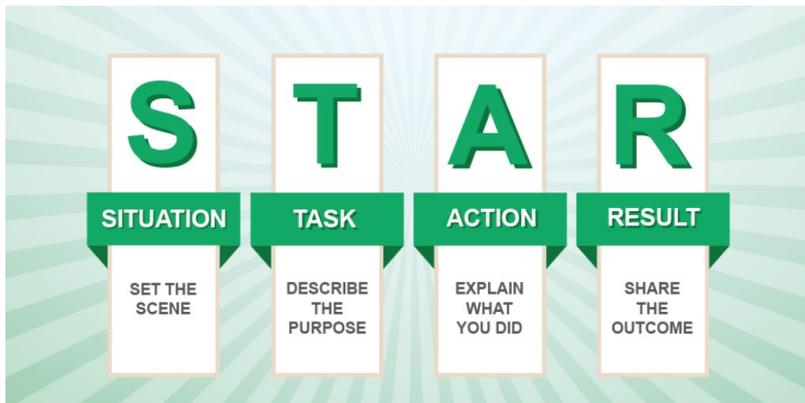


# The Interview Preparation Guide



To prepare for an interview, first review the job description carefully and identify the skills and traits likely to be assessed. Next, identify the situations and experiences that you can refer to in the interview to demonstrate previous use of these skills and traits. Competency focussed, well-structured answers are extremely powerful and will win you interview points!

The STAR model will provide a structure to your answers:



**Situation** - describe a situation or problem that you have encountered

**Task** - describe the tasks associated with the problem and what needed to be done to reach a successful conclusion

**Action** – after establishing the above what actions did you take to achieve the end result.

**Results** - highlight outcomes achieved

## Key Candidate Evaluation Areas to prepare for:

### Interpersonal and Team Skills

Employers need people who are socially competent. The desire to build and maintain relationships in and beyond the workplace is critical. Many workplaces function on the basis of project teams. These teams are task oriented and short lived. Those who are highly collaborative and co-operative are most likely to thrive in this type of environment.

- What experience have you had working on a team?
- What kinds of people frustrate you?
- What qualities do you admire most in others?

### Influencing or Persuading Others

You may have strong verbal skills but can you influence another person to change their thinking or take some action – perhaps a colleague follows your advice or a client decides to buy a service or product. At management level have you the skills to persuade and involve rather than coerce and punish? Are you ethical in your dealings with people?

- Tell me about a time when you were able to change someone's viewpoint significantly.
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you disagreed with.
- Tell me about a person or event that has been influential in your personal development.

### Communication Skills

The key to successful communications is being able to listen to all types of communication in an open way. Are you an active listener, do you really listen and do you hear what is actually said. Are you able to read the non-verbal messages that others communicate? Do you communicate in an engaging and convincing way?

- Tell me about a time when you were successful in getting crucial information from another?
- Tell me about a time when someone misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate to them?

### Self-management, Self-motivation and Self-knowledge

Do you always strive to achieve a standard of excellence, use initiative at the appropriate time, and show persistence in pursuing goals? Accurate self-assessment skills will allow you to be objective and critical in evaluating your strengths and weaknesses. How will your personality and temperament affect the existing team or work group?

- Tell me about a time when you acted over and above the expectations of your role.
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- What are the two most significant accomplishments in your career so far?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- What are your interests outside work?

# The Interview Preparation Guide



## Key Candidate Evaluation Areas to prepare for:

### Administrative Skills

Generally checking that you have effective work habits, and the knowledge of workplace routines and some experience of common office administration systems.

Tell me how you organise your work and schedule your time.

Tell me about computer software packages you are familiar with and your experience in using them.

### Problem Solving and Decision Making

What's your problem-solving style? Do you manage your activities to minimise or avoid them? How do you behave in a crisis?

Tell me about a difficult decision that you have made. How do you work under pressure?

Tell me about a situation where you achieved a satisfactory outcome to a problem that others thought couldn't be solved. What did you do and what was the outcome?

Tell me about a time when you had conflicting priorities and what you did to resolve them.

### Personal and Career Objectives

Employers are likely to invest money in your training and development and will want to ensure that your objectives don't conflict with theirs.

When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?

What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?

Why do you want this position?

### Knowledge of the Organisation and Role

What are your motives in applying to this organisation: Were they well thought out? Do you know enough about this work area and this organisation to be clear about how your skills fit into it?

What skills and personal qualities are essential for success in this role?

What would you like to know about this organisation or industry?

Why are you interested in working for our organisation?

What interests you about our product/services? How would you improve them?

### Work Experience

Do you take responsibility for your own learning and career development? Do you have an understanding of the type of environments in which you are most effective?

Tell me about the best job you've ever had.

What did you enjoy most or least about your last job?

What kind of office equipment/technical equipment have you used?

Have you ever been the leader of a team? What did you like and dislike about the role?

### Academic Experience

An opportunity to find out about you as a person and encourage you to discuss two subjects that you are the authority on, YOU and your studies. If continuing study for professional qualifications or certification is expected then the employer may check that you have effective work and study habits.

Tell me about your academic programme at university.

How did you reach the decision to study at X?

Do you have plans for continued study?

### Stress Questions

Designed to test your resilience in the work environment.

Are you able to maintain appropriate behaviour in the face of what may seem inappropriate behaviour in others? Are you able to keep inappropriate emotions in check and take responsibility for your own performance?

How do you react to criticism?

Can you accept criticism for poor work?

Describe a time you failed.

Why have you changed jobs frequently?



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