



## STAR Method and Behavioural Style Questions

### Why do we use behavioural style interview questions?

A behavioural based interview focuses on behaviours and attitudes rather than just skills and expertise. These questions help the interviewers to draw out how you have applied the skills, knowledge and experience required for the position in previous situations and positions. The reason we do this is that past behaviour is the best indicator of future behaviour

### What is the STAR Method?

Following the Star Method will enable you to provide detailed, specific examples when answering behavioural style questions in job interviews, to demonstrate your actual experience, skills and knowledge.

<b>S</b> Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Detail the background</li><li>▪ Set the scene</li><li>▪ Provide a Context for the situation.</li><li>▪ Where? When?</li></ul>
<b>T</b> Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Describe the challenge and expectations.</li><li>▪ What needed to be done?</li><li>▪ Why?</li><li>▪ Specifics of what's required, when, where, who</li></ul>
<b>A</b> Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Elaborate your specific action – what did you do?</li><li>▪ How?</li><li>▪ What tools did you use?</li><li>▪ Skills used, behaviours demonstrated</li></ul>
<b>R</b> Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Explain the results or changes caused by these actions: accomplishments, recognition, savings</li><li>▪ Quantify – were they effective or not?</li><li>▪ What did you learn from the results?</li><li>▪ Outcome, what happened</li></ul>

### What to avoid when responding to interview questions using the STAR Method?

<b>ST</b> Situation / Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Making vague statements that have no specific detail about what you actually did</li><li>▪ Giving opinions: "I think I would do"; "I believe I have"</li><li>▪ Providing theoretical responses such as "next time I would"; "I would like to"</li><li>▪ Describing what your team did such as "we did" – your examples need to be "I did"</li></ul>
<b>A</b> Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Not providing the full process you undertook</li><li>▪ Not giving your actual part in the process</li></ul>
<b>R</b> Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Don't miss how the situation ended – make sure the interviewer is clear on how it concluded – if it was positive, why? If it wasn't positive, why?</li><li>▪ Don't try to make every example positive. It's just as important to know what you learned from an experience when things didn't go well or to plan</li></ul>



## Tips on answering behavioural interview questions

- Do your research. Find out what skills and behaviours the interviewer is looking for by reading the Position Description or from speaking to the hiring manager for more detail. Go through your resume to find examples that you think will demonstrate a good match for the role. Write these examples down.
- Practise the STAR method out loud in advance. If you remind yourself of the STAR acronym whilst giving your example will help you to stay on point.
- Try not to keep referring to the same experience. Come to the interview with a few different examples that you can adapt according to the different questions asked. For example, have a few team work examples, a few customer service examples.

## How to build a STAR method example

Your answer to a behavioural style question should be about 2-5 minutes long and should be 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). See the examples below.

### Example 1 – Behavioural Question

Describe a time when you used effective communication skills to provide a positive customer service experience for a customer.

#### Example 1 - Response using STAR Method

<b>Situation</b>	In my work experience at Readers' Bookstore I was dealing with customers and suppliers in the store and over the phone. I had a customer come into the store and he wanted a book that we didn't have in stock.
<b>Task</b>	One of my duties was to help customers with their enquiries about books. Usually they were enquiring about books that were out of print or are very rare, and I need to source from a supplier to get it for them. These are books that you can't get at Big W or Kmart etc.
<b>Action</b>	I explained to the customer that we didn't have the book but that I could order it for him. Initially he was upset that we didn't have the book as he needed it for his Uni course that had already started and he hadn't been able to buy it anywhere. He said we were his last hope. I apologised to him and explained that it was out of print, but after I checked the system I could see that the one of our suppliers in the UK had 2 copies available. I explained that I could order it for him and that usually it takes 7-14 days for us to receive stock from this supplier as they are in the UK. He became more agitated, but I offered to send them an email and explain his situation and see if they could send it faster. I explained that this might cost more but I would see what I could do. He calmed down a bit and told me to get it as soon as I could and that he would pay whatever it cost. I immediately placed an order with the supplier and sent them an email to explain the customer's situation. I have a good relationship with the supplier and don't usually ask for special favours, but I asked if they could send it faster at no extra cost because the customer is a Uni student and doesn't have much money.
<b>Result</b>	The supplier emailed me back overnight and advised that they had shipped it via special delivery at no extra cost and that it would arrive within 3-5 days. We received it within 3 days. I emailed the supplier back to thank them and called the customer to let him know it had arrived. He was very relieved and brought in some cupcakes as a thank you when he collected the book.

### Example 2 – Behavioural Question

Outline a time when you needed to plan an event or project and had limited resources. What action did you take? What was the outcome?

#### Example 2 - Response using STAR Method

<b>Situation</b>	In my part-time job as an Event Assistant at Acme Events, I am responsible for booking staff to set up marquees at private functions.
<b>Task</b>	In my role I need to identify all jobs booked for that day; calculate how many staff will be needed to set up each event and ensure that there is sufficient time to set up by the time required.
<b>Action</b>	Recently, I had a problem with 2 staff members reporting in sick on the day of a big event. Fortunately, I had developed a back-up plan to cater for unexpected situations and I was able to call on un-rostered staff to come into work. I started making calls and was able to find
<b>Result</b>	As a result, the setting up for the event was completed on time and the customer was really happy with how the marquee looked. My manager was also happy and praised me for responding to the situation promptly and efficiently. I felt very proud of my achievement.