



STAR Technique

Using STAR to structure good answers and for tackling competency based interview questions

The **STAR** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) format is a technique used to gather all the relevant information about a specific competency, or skill, that a job requires. The candidate describes a previous experience to demonstrate the specific capability.



- **Situation:** Describe a recent challenge and situation in which you found yourself
- **Task:** What were you aiming to achieve? The recruiter will be looking to see what you were trying to achieve from the situation
- **Action:** What did you do? The recruiter will be looking for information on what you did, why you did it and what the alternatives were
- **Results:** What was the outcome of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives? What did you learn from this experience and have you used this learning since?

This is a universally recognised communication technique designed to enable you to provide meaningful and complete answers to questions asking for examples. At the same time, it has the advantage of being simple enough to be applied easily and allows information to be given in a structured manner.

SITUATION

Describe the situation you were confronted with. With the STAR approach, you need to set the context. Make it concise and informative, concentrating solely on what is relevant to the situation. For example, if the question is asking you to describe a situation where you had to deal with a difficult person, explain how you came to meet that person and why they were being difficult.

TASK

Describe the high level strategy that you took to deal with the situation you have outlined. Explain the task or tasks that needed to be accomplished as a result of the situation.

ACTION

This is the most important section of the STAR approach as it is where you will need to demonstrate and highlight the skills and personal attributes that the question is exploring. Now that you have set the context, you need to explain what you did. To explain what you did, you will need to remember the following:

- Be personal – talk about what YOU did, not the rest of the team
- Go into some detail. Do not assume that they will guess what you mean (imagine explaining how a toaster works to an alien).
- Explain WHAT you did, HOW you did it and WHY you did it

RESULT

This is a crucial part of your answer. Explain what happened eventually – what was the outcome? Also, use the opportunity to describe what you accomplished and what you learned from the situation. This helps you make the answer personal and enables you to highlight further details.

In summary, using the STAR approach will assist you to demonstrate the competencies being tested and will allow you to articulate your personal examples in a clear and concise manner.