**The Interview Answer Planning Workbook**

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In addition to researching the company before an interview, this workbook has been designed to help you plan and structure answers to the kinds of questions you can expect in your interview. The workbook has been divided into four sections.

**The Workbook Structure**

**Part 1** is for General Questions. Most interviews tend to start with these in order to help ‘break the ice’ and get the interview started.

**Part 2** is an introduction to the STAR technique guide that will prepare you for competency/behavioural questions. These require you to provide examples of how you meet particular competencies related to the role.

Also make sure to read through the 50 example competency questions to give you some more ideas of the questions you might be asked.

**Part 3** is for you to prepare for closing questions during the final stages of your interview. This is when interviewers might ask you things about the role itself.

**Part 4** is related to you turning the tables on the Interviewers with End of Interview questions and the Do's and Dont's.

**Part 1**

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**General Questions**

**Typically, these questions are asked at the beginning of an interview**

**CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?**

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**WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE COMPANY?**

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**WHY HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR THIS POSITION?**

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**WHY ARE YOU THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THIS POSITION?**

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**WHAT SKILLS & EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE RELEVANT FOR THIS ROLE?**

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**Part 2**

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**Using the STAR technique to answer competency / behavioural interview questions**

**This guide will introduce you to the STAR technique**

**What is the STAR Technique?**

The STAR technique is a simple framework to structure your answers when responding to competency/behavioural based interview questions. These typically start with ‘Tell me about a time when you...’ or ‘Describe a time when...’ These questions are incredibly popular and encourage you to talk about examples from previous experiences/jobs to evidence a particular skill or competency.

**How do I identify competencies the employer is looking for?**

The competencies an employer is looking for can usually be found in the job description and/or person specification of the position (this is often an additional section of the job description). If you can’t find a ‘Person Specification’ heading it doesn’t mean the competencies aren’t listed. They could appear under a statement like “We are looking for candidates with…” or the employer might have split their requirements into ‘Essential’ or ‘Desirable’ competencies.

**Introducing the STAR technique**

**Situation:** What was your role? Who were you working for?

**Task:** What needed to be done? What was the projects’ goal? What were you aiming for?, What was the objective?

**Action**: What did You do? How did you do it? What were your actions? How did you work towards the task?

**Result:** What was the outcome? How did you know your had been successful? What did you learn from the experience?

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**Competency Questions**

**These questions are asked to assess how well you meet the competencies for the role.**

**Use the S.T.A.R. Technique to plan you’re answers.**

* **RECALL A TIME YOU SOLVED A COMPLEX PROBLEM?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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| **Task** |  |
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| **Action** |  |
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| **Result** |  |
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* **GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOU HAVE SHOWEN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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| **Task** |  |
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| **Result** |  |
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* **RECALL A TIME YOU SOLVED A COMPLEX PROBLEM?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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* **PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOU HAD TO MEET A STRICT, CHALLENGING DEADLINE?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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**Competency Questions**

**These questions are asked to assess how well you meet the competencies for the role.**

**Use the S.T.A.R. Technique to plan you’re answers.**

* **DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU HAD TO MAKE A DIFFICULT DECISION?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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* **GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A TIME WHEN YOU DEMONSTRATED INITIATIVE?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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| **Task** |  |
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| **Result** |  |
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**Competency Questions**

**These questions are asked to assess how well you meet the competencies for the role.**

**Use the S.T.A.R. Technique to plan you’re answers.**

* **GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOU DEALT WITH A DIFFICULT CUSTOMER OR CLIENT?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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| **Action** |  |
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| **Result** |  |
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* **DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU HAD TO PERSUADE SOMEONE TO YOUR WAY OF THINKING?**

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| **Situation** |  |
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| **Task** |  |
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| **Action** |  |
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| **Result** |  |
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**Part 3**

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**Closing Questions**

**The questions below are quite commonly asked towards the end of an interview.**

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS?**

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**WHAT ARE YOUR AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT?**

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**WHAT NEW SKILLS HAVE YOU GAINED IN THE LAST 3 YEARS?**

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**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR STRENGTHS TO BE?**

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**WHAT IS YOUR SALARY EXPECTATION?**

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**Part 4**

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**End of Interview questions for you to ask the Interviewer**

Nearly every interview ends with the same exact question. And yet many candidates make the same mistake when answering it**. “Do you have any questions for me?”**

This may be the most important interview question you answer. And you’d be surprised at the number of people who reply, “Nope!”

That’s a huge missed opportunity. You should never reply “no” to this question. It’s your last chance to make a good impression, and it’s the interviewer’s way of gauging your level of interest in the job. If you don’t have any good questions, it shows a lack of curiosity and engagement. After all, there’s no way you could know everything there is to know about a new company and job opportunity after only one interview.

On the other hand, if you do have a few well-thought-out queries, you end the interview looking great. It lets them know you’ve done your research. Additionally, it gives the interviewer a chance to get to know you because the types of questions you ask can reveal a lot.

So, don’t disappoint them. It’s time to get asking.

**Ask about the role**

First of all, don’t ask anything that was already addressed in the original job description or any introductory phone calls. That being said, the job description can help you come up with more detailed questions for the interview.

**Ask about the company**

Don’t just assume you know the company. Read about its history. Check out its financials. Are there any press releases related to leadership changes, new products, litigation, or community service? The most you know, the more educated questions you can ask. **(You can also review our guide to Researching a Company before an interview)**

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**End of Interview questions for you to ask the Interviewer.**

**Here are a few sample questions to get you started.**

**Questions about the role**

* What would I be expected to accomplish in the first six months? The first year?
* What’s the biggest opportunity/challenge I’d face in this role?
* Can you tell me what a typical day looks like?
* How will this role best serve [your specific function]?
* Can you describe your/the supervisor’s leadership style?
* Based on the current team, what skills or traits are most important in order to excel in this role?
* Who would I be interacting with regularly?

**Questions about the company**

* What will the onboarding and training process look like?
* What sort of development and/or learning opportunities does the company offer?
* Where does [company] see itself five years from now?
* What are some of the department’s long-term goals?
* Tell me about the biggest challenges facing the company/department.
* What’s your favourite part about working here?

**There are a lot a great questions to ask but here are some topics you should avoid building you questions around:**

* Salary & Benefits
* Time Off
* Promotions
* Home Working
* Any question that starts with "Why"