SHINE IN YOUR INTERVIEW WITH THE STAR TECHNIQUE

NETBOX Recruitment

INTRODUCTION

Most of us have been asked a competency-based question in a job interview.

These questions (sometimes also called 'behavioural'-based questions) will typically ask you to provide an overview of a previous work situation, project or task where you used your skills and talents to achieve success! These types of questions are very commonplace in the modern job interview... they might be scattered around the end of an interview or even comprise the entirety of the interview itself! Either way, you'll need to make sure you're 100% prepared and not left floundering for the perfect answer.

Luckily, we're on hand to guide you through the fantastic 'STAR' system for answering these questions. Once you've mastered this approach, competency based questions can become your biggest advantage in your next job interview, giving you the chance to provide perfectly crafted answers that wonderfully demonstrate your unique experience and skills and showcase your seamless suitability for the role in question.

WHAT IS THE STAR SYSTEM?

'STAR' is an acronym for 'Situation, Tasks, Action and Results'. If your answer addresses each one of these points in turn then you're guaranteed to cover each area the interviewer is looking for.

SITUATION

It's tempting to launch into the details but taking the time to describe the surrounding context will ensure the rest of your story achieves full impact. For example, "*I was tasked with taking on a large marketing project which I needed to devote a large amount of time to. This caused an issue in being able to successfully maintain my usual, smaller projects*".

TASK

It's important to explicitly outline how this situation affected your role and what fell under your responsibility. This could be in-line with the requirements of your role or it could be aspirational in outlining what you hoped to achieve by wanting to go above and beyond.
For example, "*I wanted to ensure that the smaller marketing tasks didn't get neglected in favour of the larger project. It was my aim to ensure that the full collection of work could be processed as efficiently as possible*".

ACTIVITY

We've discussed what you needed to achieve. Now you'll need to say what you actually did to achieve this. You'll need to strike the right balance here between giving enough detail to paint an accurate picture but not giving so much detail that you lose focus from the core message.
For example, "*To ensure all tasks could continue, I requested a series of meetings with senior management. Through these meetings, we achieved full transparency over the various timescales and requirements for each task. The criteria for lesser priority tasks were adjusted. Additionally, a few core elements of the larger project were assigned to others who worked collaboratively towards to the same goal*".

RESULT

You've shown your solution to a problem. Now you need to say how well that solution worked. This should go beyond simply saying "it worked". It's always effective too be able to give facts and figures that can quantity the level of success your actions achieved.
For example "*By delegating select components of the larger marketing project, the completion date was able to be moved ahead by two weeks. In turn, this lead to a revised project planning approach that was adopted across the marketing department for the following 18 months*".

FINDING THE PATTERN

Competency interview questions are often after the same thing.

They are looking for examples of how you overcame conflict and turned it into resolution and success. 'Conflict' in this sense just means any challenge or difficulty in your work. This could involve working to daunting deadlines, managing difficult employees etc.

HOW TO PREPARE

Employers favour competency-based questions because it helps them visualise you within their business.

They want to understand how you might deal with familiar challenges in your new role. So how can you prepare for these questions? Well, it's always good practice to draft potential questions you might be asked that you can apply the star technique to. These can be relatively generic such as "*tell me about a time you showed initiative*", or "*outline an occasion where you had to work effectively as part of a team*" etc.

It's also a good idea to draft potential questions that are more likely given the role you're being interviewed for. For example, for a client-facing sales role, you should prepare for question such as "*tell me about a time when you achieved beyond your targets*" or "*describe a situation where you were able to quickly build rapport with a client*" etc. It's about how skilfully you can predict and prepare for the types of competency questions you're likely to be asked. You'll also need to ensure your answers flow and sound natural. While the STAR system is a fanatic reference point, you don't want you answers to sound like a series of bullet points.

FURTHER TIPS

Competency based questions are of course just one element of preparing for the perfect job interview.

You will also need to be an expert in the company's history and services, have thoroughly researches their website and online persence, have fantastic questions to ask, be appropriately dressed and convey confident body language amongst other factors!

The team at Netbox Recruitment are all to provide extra interview preparation tips and advice for all the candidates we represent. You can also uncover some of our main tips on the candidate area of our website at www.netboxrecruitment.com/candidates.htm.

For more infomration speak to one of the team at Netbox Recruitment at 01732 671 121 - option 2 or email info@netboxrecruitment.com.

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Unit 5, The Courtyard Business Centre,
Birling Road, Ryarsh, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5AA
Email: info@netboxrecruitment.com
For advice & information call 01732 671 121 - option 2

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