

CANDIDATE GUIDE

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

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TIPS ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Know yourself and the role

Review your skills, accomplishments and capabilities then align them with the requirements in the job description. This will help you to articulate your suitability for the role in a concise and confident way.

First impressions count

Arrive on time, dress smart (if in doubt best to overdress than underdress) and have a firm handshake when introducing yourself.

Research and ask questions

Research the company and prepare questions to ask the interviewer. By asking informed questions you will demonstrate your interest in the role and that you've done your research too.

Stay positive

Try to steer clear of dwelling on past negative experiences at work. Instead, if you've faced challenges in the past, focus on the lessons learnt from your experiences and how that will help you in the future.

Listen and be poised

Listen and pay attention to the non-verbal behaviour you display in your interview. Have eye contact with the interviewer, sit up straight with both feet on the floor and control nervous habits. Take a deep breath, ask for clarification of the question if you need to and try to speak clearly and calmly.

Be prepared

Prepare for general questions you know the interviewer will ask e.g. tell me about yourself, what are your strengths and weaknesses.

Most importantly prepare recent examples from your past professional experience that will highlight the desired behaviours and skills. Have a selection of positive examples, such as achievements, as well as, examples of situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome.

Practice makes perfect

Practice tailoring the examples to respond to a number of different behavioural questions. Use the **STAR approach** as a guide (see page 2) to illustrate your examples of your achievements and skills. Practicing will help settle nerves and minimise the time taken to think of examples or waffling.

Talk to your consultant

If you have any doubts don't hesitate to contact your consultant.

BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES – THE STAR APPROACH

Behavioural interviewing is based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. Interviewers will have predetermined the skill sets they require for a particular role and ask for specific examples or situations where you have demonstrated a particular competency in the past.

The **STAR approach** will help structure your response to ensure that you provide specific details and concrete evidence to highlight your competencies whilst keeping your interviewer engaged.

Situation Describe in detail the specific situation.

Task What was required of you?

Action Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did – not the efforts of the team.

Results What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Wherever possible, quantify your results.

Example: Tell me about a time when you came up with a solution to a challenge your company was facing.



Situation When I first joined XYZ Company, there was no media policy in place preventing employees speaking to the media. This created problems such as inconsistent messaging to the public, inaccurate and untimely information release and an array of other undesirable consequences for the company's image.

Task As the Media & PR Manager, it was my role to build, maintain and protect a positive corporate image. So I decided that we needed a policy to enable this.

Action I designed and implemented a policy whereby only four nominated executives had the authority to deal with the media and that all media and PR activity initiated outside my team was to be signed off by me. I took the time to gain the buy-in of management and then all employees so that everyone was happy to adhere to the new policies.

Result As a result, I was able to protect the company's corporate image and create a 30% increase in the positive attitude to our brand as evidenced by a recent independent survey.



EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS:

Critical thinking skills

- Describe a time you were successful in delivering the company message to a target audience. What was the key to its success?
- Tell me about a time a campaign didn't perform as well as you expected. What could you have done differently?

Results orientation

- Tell me about a time when you improved the way things were typically done.
- Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a goal.

Communication

- Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information.
- Give an example of a difficult or sensitive situation that required extensive communication.

Decision making

- Describe a specific problem you solved for your employer. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time you had to make a difficult decision.

Initiative

- Give me an example of a situation that could not have happened successfully without you being there.
- Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your company was facing. What was the challenge? What role did others play?

Planning and organisation

- Describe a situation when you had many projects due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give me an example.

Client focus

- Give an example of how you provided a service to a client/stakeholder beyond their expectations. How did you identify the need? How did you respond?
- Recall a time you had to deal with a difficult external stakeholder. How did you manage?