

# Interview Prep Strategies

## *Before the Interview*

### Do your company research:

- **Why?** Demonstrate passion, business acumen, and knowledge of the company by enabling yourself to ask educated questions
- **How?** Industry news/annual reports/ impact on the industry and customers
- **Where?** Organization website/social media accounts

### Prepare Your Stories: Methods for determining success in an interview answer

- Overview of the STAR Method: Utilize this method to craft each story which could be applied to a multitude of questions.

**EFFECTIVE STORY TELLING:** Direct, logical, meaningful and personalized

#### Prepare

- THINK of a related story or experience
- ORGANIZE your story in 5 to 8 seconds

Start with a one-sentence summary

#### Situation

- PROVIDE story background

“Public safety was compromised...”

#### Task

- DESCRIBE challenges

“We had to inspect facility for safety concerns...”

#### Action

- EXPLAIN what you did & how

“I educated...”  
“We enforced...”

#### Results

- INDICATE outcomes

“New safety protocols increased public safety measures”

Keep story on track to indicate outcomes. SAY what you had planned for & END.

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### Practice your stories

- Utilize the interview question bank to practice your stories. Practice in a mirror, with a friend or co-worker, etc.

### Interview Question Bank

#### Common Character-Based Questions –STAR not applied to these questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose MDARD?
- Why did you choose your field of work?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your greatest achievement?
- What motivates you?

#### Behavioral Based Questions (STAR method applied)

##### Teamwork

- Tell me about a time when you worked with a difficult team member. What role did you take?
- Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.
- Tell me about a time you

were able to successfully persuade a team to see something your way.

**OR**

- Tell me about a time you used organizational savvy to push through an idea you truly cared about?
- Tell me about a time you needed to get information from someone who was not very responsive. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time you wish you would have handled a situation differently with a colleague.
- Tell me about a time you went to the source to address a conflict?

##### Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you stepped up into a leadership position?
- Tell me about a time you

delegated responsibilities to others?

- Tell me about a time you took the lead on a difficult project?
- Describe your leadership style.
- Tell me about a time you took on additional responsibilities?
- Tell me about a time you created a new process or program that was considered too risky?

##### Handling Conflict

- How do you respond to negative feedback?
- Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with someone, how did you handle it?
- Describe a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time you had to respond to an unhappy manager/customer/colleague?

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### Interview Question Bank

- Tell me about a time you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when your team or company was undergoing some change. How did that impact you, and how did you adapt?
- Give me an example of a time you managed numerous responsibilities. How did you handle that?
- Tell me about a time you came up with a new approach or solution to a problem?
- Tell me about a time you used time management?
- Tell me about a time where innovation was required to solve a problem?
- Tell me about a time you were unable to meet a deadline?
- Tell me about a time you had to say “no” to a customer, co-worker or supervisor because you didn’t think saying “yes” would be the right thing to do?
- Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself. How did you go about ensuring that you would meet your objective?
- Tell me about a time your responsibilities got a little overwhelming. What did you do?

### Time Management

### Problem-Solving

- Tell me about a time when you had to be a problem solver?
- What was the most challenging aspect of your previous job and how did you overcome it?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to think on your feet to delicately extricate yourself from a difficult or awkward situation.
- Tell me about a time when you worked under close supervision or extremely loose supervision. How did you handle that?

# Interview Prep Strategies

## *During the Interview*

- **Consider your body language and tone:**

- **Body Language**

- Shake their hand
  - Smile
  - Lean slightly toward the interviewer
  - Make eye contact
  - Don't create barriers
  - Relax, and be yourself!

- **Tone of Voice**

- Use confident words
  - Silence is okay
  - Try to avoid fillers
  - Don't apologize for being nervous

- **Answering interview questions:**

- Consider "why" the interviewer is asking THIS question when preparing your answer

- **Types of questions:**

- **Character Based:** These questions are used for the interviewer to learn basic knowledge about a candidate. Answer these strategically to leverage your unique experiences and goals. Focus on what makes you unique!:

- **Examples of character based questions**

- Tell me about yourself. (This is your pitch!)
  - What is your greatest accomplishment?
  - Why do you want to work for our company? (Did you do your research?)
  - Why did you pick your major? (Your chance to tell them who you are...)
  - What are your goals? (Short and long term)
  - What are your strengths? (Think about what the company is looking for!)
  - What are your weaknesses? (Think about an actual weakness and how you have worked to overcome it)
  - Why are you the right person for the job? (Think about what the company is looking for!)
  - Is there anything else I should know about you?

- **Behavioral Based:** These questions are aimed at what you have done in the past as this is the best indicator of future behavior

- **Examples of behavioral based questions**

- Tell me about a time...
    - When you took the

initiative on a project.

- When you had to make a decision under pressure.
- When you handled a difficult situation with a coworker.
- When you were unable to meet a deadline.

- **Tips in Answering Questions**

- Keep each STAR concise, roughly 2-4 minutes long
- Results and lessons are most important
- There will likely be follow-up questions
- Make sure you answer the question that was asked
- It is okay to ask, "Does that answer your question?"
- Sound authentic, not robotic
- It is okay to pause and gather your thoughts!
- Remember - think about what makes you different/unique

- **Ask questions!**

- Ask your prepared questions about the company
- Don't be afraid to ask questions that were not prepared
- Ask questions that you are genuinely interested in
- Ask what the next steps are



# Interview Prep Strategies

## *After the Interview*

- **Thank the interviewer**
  - Thanking the interviewer is a great way to stay on their radar, make a good impression, and show your appreciation
  - Send an e-mail within 24 hours of the interview - but not between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am
  - Write an authentic thank you with information gleaned from your interview
  - Reiterate why you are a great fit for the job