

S&H

Prepare To Ace Your Next Job Interview

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO
INTERVIEWING

Samar Siala

www.sh.ly

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Types of interviews
 - 2.1 Structured interview
 - 2.2 Unstructured interview
 - 2.3 Stress interview
 - 2.4 Behavioural interview
- 3 Informational interview
 - 3.1 Seek a Subject
 - 3.2 Request the Interview
 - 3.3 Prepare for the Big Day
 - 3.4 During the informational interview
 - 3.5 Thank you-letter
- 4 Before the job interview
 - 4.1 Planning, preparation and organization are a winning strategy
 - 4.2 Do your homework and research
 - 4.3 Review the job description
 - 4.4 Meet the organization's requirements
 - 4.5 Your social media presence
 - 4.6 Plan your travel and expect the unexpected
 - 4.7 Culture dimensions research
- 5 At the interview
 - 5.1 Interview Body Language Tips
 - 5.1.1 Give a solid handshake
 - 5.1.2 Make eye contact
 - 5.1.3 Be mindful of your posture
 - 5.1.4 Be careful of fidgeting
 - 5.1.5 Use hand gestures sparingly
 - 5.1.6 Mirror your interviewer and build rapport
 - 5.1.7 Align your words and interview body language
 - 5.2 Creating an Effective Elevator Pitch to answer "tell me about yourself"
 - 5.2.1 Craft your response to "Tell me about yourself"
 - 5.2.2 Prepare
 - 5.2.3 Get on the Elevator
 - 5.2.4 First impressions last

- 5.2.5 Listen carefully before answering questions.
- 5.2.6 Use different examples.
- 5.2.7 Come prepared with questions
- 5.3 Behavioural interview questions STAR approach
 - 5.3.1 STAR Story Tips.
 - 5.3.2 Why Story Telling.
 - 5.3.3 How To Choose A Good Story
 - 5.3.4 STAR Story Example
- 5.4 Famous Interview questions and tips to answer them
- 5.5 General Interview questions
 - 5.5.1 Potential Employer
 - 5.5.2 Career Ambitions
 - 5.5.3 Skills and Requirements
 - 5.5.4 Personality
 - 5.5.5 Questions on Work History
 - 5.5.6 About You
 - 5.5.7 The New Job and Company
 - 5.5.8 The Future
 - 5.5.9 Problem/Sticky Questions
 - 5.5.10 Interview Questions to ask
- 6 After the interview
 - 6.1 Self-reflections
 - 6.2 Alert your references
 - 6.3 Ask the expected employer about their decision
 - 6.4 Thank you email
 - 6.5 Evaluate the offer
 - 6.6 Ask for feedback
- 7 References

1 Introduction

Once you get to the interview stage of the application process, you have succeeded in convincing an employer to invest time in meeting you. When you developed your CV and cover letter, you already analyzed the job description that is required for the specific job you are applying for and identified and conveyed your skills and accomplishments most relevant to the position. You need to research the employer information and ask yourself what attracted you to apply for this specific job and this organization. But there is more to do before the interview, preparation is the key to success and practice makes perfect, so you better be prepared to answer questions on the spot and articulate what makes you a truly compelling candidate.

2 Types of interviews

You can expect a combination of these interviews and styles. It is common for interviews to include business case studies, presentations and have an emphasis on behavioural competencies:



2.1 Structured interview

It is typically formal organized and may include several interviewers, commonly referred to as a panel interview.

2.2 Unstructured interview

There is no specific set of prepared questions, the interviewer has certain topics in mind to cover during the interview. It is like an everyday conversation and tends to be more informal and open-ended.

2.3 Stress interview

The employer put the candidate under great pressure when answering questions. The main purpose of this type of interview is to find out how a candidate handles stress.

2.4 Behavioural interview

It is to understand more about the candidates' KSA (knowledge, skills and abilities), known as competencies, by asking candidates to provide specific examples from past experiences.



Each question is to target a specific skill or competency e.g. Teamwork – Communication – Leadership – Commercial awareness – Career motivation – Decision making.

All these kinds of interviews have different styles, they can be:

- One-on-one: Just you and one interviewer, the most common type of interview
- Panel: You are interviewed by more than one person at the same time
- Group: A group of candidates is interviewed by a panel or one interviewer
- Meal: You are interviewed while eating, usually over lunch
- Phone or Video: Often used as a screening tool before inviting you to an on-site interview
- On-Site or Second Round: After you have made it through a screening interview, this is a more extended interview at the employer site that may include a series of different types of interviews, a site tour, and a meal

Feeling Nervous? That is normal as that might motivates you to prepare more and do your best. But worrying about that will make you more nervous! Try focusing instead on being self-confident, to harness your nervous energy, think about your strengths and focus more on examples that you might bring about your (qualities, skills or experiences), and practice your answers.

No matter how many interviews you have done, the better you are prepared, the bigger chance to be selected. Practice improves your chance

Employers hire based on qualifications and:

- Personality
- Confidence
- Enthusiasm and a positive outlook.

These are the most popular Dutch cultural expectation. Cultural awareness is essential when moving from one country to another because each country has its own traditions, culture, religion, norms etc. Humans have selective attention to the surrounding, this occurs when the brain finds some parts of a scene more relevant or important and these are selected for special processing. Being aware of how to understand this different special processing of information and data from one culture to another would help you to understand how to prepare for your next job interview.

To prepare for your next job interview and build up a network/connection within a desired industry, you need to have a job search strategy.

To plan that well, it is recommended to arrange an informational interview to seek information about that business because this will help you in your job search journey. Organizing an informational interview is one of the most valuable sources of occupational information.

3- Informational interview

3.1 Seek a Subject

An informational interview in most cases is done before applying to the job post. The informational interview is a meeting that consists of an informal conversation in which a potential job seeker seeks advice on their career that's to know about the corporate culture of a potential future workplace and industry. Often the most current and specific information about career information may not be available online. The best information comes from people who are working in that career field.

You'll first need to identify a potential interviewee in a field or at a company of interest, check social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, reach out to alumni from previous schools, universities or professional organizations.

But before asking for an appointment, you need to research information about how long has the targeted company been in business? What is the interviewee's professional and educational background? What are some of the hottest trends in their industry? Seeking answers to these questions help you to determine if your subject is the right person for the job. Then you request a meeting for an informational interview. This is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.



3.2 Request the Interview

To convince someone to take time out of their busy day to speak with you is half the battle. Thus, keep your message simple and clear. In an informational interview email or call, use this formula and state who you are, why you are reaching out, and what action you want the recipient to take. You might reflect a personal touch to your message to emphasize your genuine interest by mentioning e.g. "I was impressed to see that you worked your way up from an entry-level position in your company to become a manager".

If you don't receive a response for an informational interview, move onto another viable contact and avoid being too pushy; another opportunity will arise. Once you have a potential interviewee, be sure to confirm the date and place of your meeting.

3.3 Prepare for the Big Day

Preparing for this day is halfway to succeeding in an informational interview, so prepare informational interview questions based on the information you collected from your research about the company, interviewee's career field, industry, and professional background. That can be done by creating an agenda and listing questions. While you might ask some general questions make sure that you ask open-ended questions about job challenges, their career field and opportunities for advancement, and how their average day looks like. Use informational interview questions to seek advice you can't readily find anywhere else. [Click here for some informational interview questions examples](#), these questions will take your job search from the slow lane to light speed. These interviews give you special knowledge, plus insider allies pulling to get you hired fast. Learn the informational interview questions that break the ice and multiply your network!

You might think that it is just an informational interview and it isn't about selling yourself; however, this is perhaps an opportunity to open job gates for you, dress professionally as first impression last and come prepared with an elevator pitch that describes your experience and what you have to offer. You can bring your CV to use when the opportunity presents itself.



3.4 During the informational interview

You need to gather as much useful information and advice as possible for about 20-30 minutes. Make great use of time and stick to your list of questions. However, going with the flow of the conversation, one response may lead to a new and important topic. Also, maintain a friendly and engaging composure you are looking to build a relationship, not simply rattle off a list of questions.

At the end of the interview, thank your interviewee for her/his time and ask if they can provide some additional networking referrals (it's all about networking).

After this informational interview, you can follow up by sending a thank you email to express how the meeting was very informative.

3.5 Thank you-letter

A formal thank you letter, or email is an important gesture that shows how you appreciate their time after your interview (ideally sent one or two days afterwards). In this email you can express how much you appreciate taking the time to meet with you and refer to a specific topic that impressed or surprised you about her or his career and company, it is a good chance to share how you plan to apply what you learned to jumpstart your job search. Expressing an authentic interest in the information provided will go a long way.

You may also offer to keep in touch with them (hint: add them as a connection on LinkedIn) as you continue your career path.

While the informational interview may not instantly propel you into a new job, it equips you with unique, first-hand knowledge and advice as you search for your perfect career. So, what are you waiting for? Get out there, make some connections, and start building your professional network with informational interviews.

Now let's assume that the informational interview went well, you considered the advice and you applied for a job that suits you and you were successfully selected as a shortlisted candidate for a job interview, you need to prepare before the interview and do your homework as planning, preparation and organization are the keys for success.



4 Before the job interview

4.1 Planning, preparation and organization are a winning strategy

- **Prepare** - Prepare for interview questions, have a few questions to ask the interviewer, dress well. Identify who are you meeting? What are their titles, relationship to the job, are they on LinkedIn? If yes, search their profiles to be familiar with how they look before the interview.
- **Research** - Find out what the job entails. Read the job description and search for a good recruitment agency or university alumni through LinkedIn who will always provide you with a detailed job specification and more information about the organization that you are applying for. Make sure you have all the information.
- **Plan Ahead** - Check location and travel times, have the name of the interviewer and contact telephone numbers, allow yourself a good 30-60 minutes of additional time to arrive, etc.
- **Check Out** - Company website, recent news articles, products, competitors, the company potential, annual report, etc. Most interviewers expect you to have researched their company.

You've impressed them with your CV and covering letter, your CV worked, you have a job interview and you've got through to the next stage in the recruitment process.

An interview is your opportunity to demonstrate how you would be a good fit for the role. You'll be able to discuss your Knowledge, skills and experience in greater detail and, importantly, what you feel you could bring to the company. You will search for information about the employer and the interview is a chance for you to ask about your new role or the company that's to make sure that their values and culture are a good fit for you too.



4.2 Do your homework and research

Visit the company's website, social media pages, read their mission and vision, understand the purpose of the company. Find out about the organization you're applying to; what it does, what it can offer and what it's looking for. Learn about the current and upcoming projects, that will show how you pay attention to their business and gives a good impression about you, so when the interviewer asks a question about what you know about their organization, you are prepared to answer that professionally. Also, they will probably ask why you're applying and it's important that you've considered what you want to gain from working for them.

4.3 Review the job description

Read up on the skills they're looking for and whether you meet those requirements and compare both the job description to your CV and find out the hidden stories in your CV behind each required skill or competency. Then prepare examples you can talk about that demonstrate those skills or behaviours.

4.4 Meet the organization's requirements

Some roles require certain grades, skills and computer programs knowledge, make sure you have these before submitting your application. Companies can quickly reject applications because they don't meet the specific requirements and competencies listed in the job description specification. Once you find that you have equivalent expertise or extenuating circumstances, you can highlight this somewhere on the form.

Find out about the people who will interview you, check their LinkedIn profiles, practice the interview questions, research job and salary range and the annual salary survey report for that particular year.

4.5 Your social media presence

Some employers will use social media to check people's profiles before offering them a job - there are no laws against doing this. So make sure that whatever they find will not put them off. You can help yourself by:

- Privacy settings: Making your profile restricted to be visible to just your friends on sites such as Facebook, Google+, and Instagram.
- There should be no offensive or bad language expressed against others.
- Think about your photographs that might be visible to the public whether they are photos you would mind a potential employer seeing.

Remember that things on social media sites stay on there, and there have been cases where people have lost their jobs over things they posted when they were much younger.

Think of your electronic version which people can view online, If you haven't yet considered setting up a LinkedIn account, you could be missing out on another opportunity to promote your skills and experience. It's used in a very similar way to your CV.

4.6 Plan your travel and expect the unexpected

There's nothing worse than getting lost or missing buses/trams before an interview. Make sure you know the interview location and how to get there. In the Netherlands you can plan your trip in advance by checking this Link (www.9292.nl) which will provide you with the Location, travel times, route, and parking places.

Know the name and how to call the person who will be interviewing you so that you can let them know if you're going to be late. This will give you a general feeling that you are more prepared and composed on arrival.

Preparing for an Interview; don't wait until the interview time to answer the interview questions without prior practising! However; consider the following strategies when preparing:

- Write out answers to questions you think the employer will ask. See examples at the end of this guide.
- Practice saying your responses out loud. Answering potential questions in front of a mirror can make you more aware of your facial expressions and gestures.
- Practice with friends or family or schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor at a Career Center.
- Ask for feedback on the content and organization of your answers (completeness, level of detail, how easy to follow) and your presentation style (pace, voice quality/tone, energy, posture, eye contact, hand gestures).
- Film or record your responses and review your performance. Ask yourself, "Did I look/sound confident, relaxed, and enthusiastic?" "What does my body language say?" "How were my pace and volume?"

4.7 Culture dimensions research

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. It describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members and how these values relate to behaviour, using a structure derived from factor analysis. The cultural dimensions comparison index can be very useful to consider before applying for any job to set up a personal expectation about both the culture of people who are going to interview you and the company that you want to work for.

It is commonly agreed that communication in business is one of the primary concerns for professionals and people who work internationally and interact daily with others from different countries within their company or abroad; Hofstede's model gives insights into other cultures. In fact, cross-cultural communication requires being aware of cultural differences because what may be considered perfectly acceptable and natural in one country might be confusing or even offensive in another. All the levels in communication are affected by cultural dimensions: verbal's (words and language itself), non-verbal's (body language, gestures) and etiquette do's and don'ts (clothing, gift-giving, dining, customs and protocol).





To sum up, while preparing for a job interview this theory enables people to develop knowledge about cultural differences and help to understand and manage the impact that culture has on work and life that's by comparing between your culture and the culture of the country where you are applying for a job.

Below is a graph that explains different dimensions e.g. the power distance differences between Libya and The Netherlands. The Power Distance Index is a useful example to explore before applying for a job in a foreign country. <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>

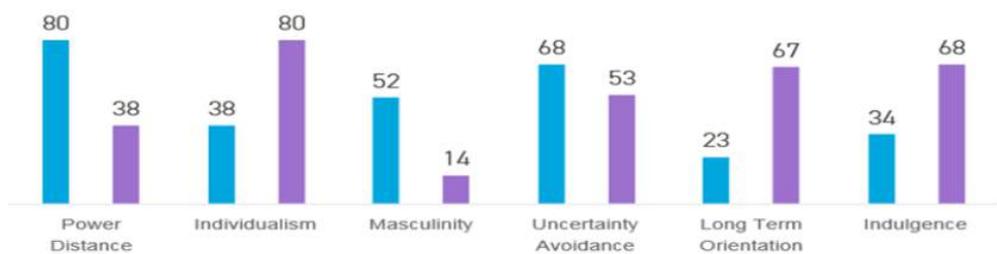
e.g. The power is distributed unequally. People in societies accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place which needs no further justification " in the index Libya is 80% "

In societies with low Power Distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power " in the index the Netherlands is 38% "

COUNTRY COMPARISON

Select one or several countries in the menu below to see the values for the 6 dimensions. To compare your personal preferences to the scores of a country get the *Culture Compass™* from our store.

Libya × Netherlands ×



5 At the interview

Don't panic and be yourself!

It's natural to feel nervous before an interview. But don't panic, take some time to think before you answer questions, and if a question throws you off track, ask for a moment to think and answer. If you're really stressed, let your interviewer know; this will help them understand your situation and make you feel at ease.

It's best to be yourself so give an accurate picture of yourself in the interview. This will help you to reveal your personality and react more comfortable with your answers, and you'll appear much more authentic and relaxed.

Turn off your device!

Checking your phone sends a negative message. It's terribly unprofessional and tells the interviewer that you have more important things to do. Avoid the temptation by turning it off and storing it out of sight.

5.1 Interview Body Language Tips

When under pressure, you tend to play with your hair, fiddle with a pen, bite your nails or anything else, try not to do so during the interview. Body language impacts the way that you are perceived by a potential employer. Instead, look your interviewer in the eye, sit up straight and try not to slouch.

The following are body language tips before you have your next interview.

5.1.2 Give a solid handshake

Your handshake is the first impression you make and can be a great start or a fast ending to your job interview. Make sure that your grip is firm

5.1.3 Make eye contact

Eye contact communicates confidence, likeability, and trustworthiness. But, not to go to the other extreme and stare down your interviewer. In panel interviews with multiple people, remember to make eye contact with each person in the room.

5.1.4 Be mindful of your posture

Your body language should show that you are interested. Changing your posture during the interview is fine and will help you maintain your comfort. Turning your shoulders, and leaning in. Smile, nod and show you're interested in what your interviewer is saying and leave on a positive, a positive posture will help you to feel more confident too. Remember not to cross your arms, as this shows a defensive attitude and put a barrier between you and your interviewer.

5.1.4 Be careful of fidgeting

There are some signs of nervousness like licking your lips, touching your face and hair, and squirming in your seat. This can communicate a lack of confidence and preparation. It can be difficult to control your nerves during an interview. During the interview, gently cross your hands in your lap.

5.1.5 Use hand gestures sparingly

Hand gestures can help you express yourself and emphasize points when responding. Be mindful of your gestures to ensure that they aren't too grand or distracting.

5.1.6 Mirror your interviewer and build rapport

Matching positive body language, posture, and mannerisms will help you establish a rapport that reflects a feeling of similarity between you and will enable your interviewer to connect and feel comfortable with you.

5.1.7 Align your words and interview body language

When your words and body language don't agree with what you say, this may cause a credibility problem, which may result in the loss of the job, because interviewers will pay more attention to your non-verbal cues.

Positive body language will help you make the right impression. It is advised to practice your responses to frequently asked interview questions, this preparation will leave you feeling more confident, which will also impact your non-verbal cues.



5.2 Creating an Effective Elevator Pitch to answer "tell me about yourself"

5.2.1 Craft your response to "Tell me about yourself"

This is the oldest interview question and the most selling one; It is your big chance to make a first lasting impression - your answer will let you lead with your strongest selling points.

You need to prepare a brief summary of the high points of your past and present positions (elevator pitch). Lead with your elevator pitch to quickly and simply define who you are and your professional experience.

Avoid the common mistake of answering this question by reciting your CV from the beginning, so by the time you get to your main points of experience, your interviewer might be thinking about lunch.

The key message is to highlight your relevant experience and proof of performance.

It answers the question of

- WHO you are Professionally?
- WHAT is your EXPERTISE?
- WHY you are INTERESTED in this position?

Before the interview,
The elevator pitch: Tell me about yourself interview question

- It is your big chance to make a first impression.
- It is important to prepare a brief summary of the high points of each of your past positions (elevator pitch)
- Focus on who you are as a professional
- One of the common mistake is to rehash your resume.



This is the formula to answer this question:

Who You Are	Expertise Highlights	Why you're interested in this position
<i>I'm a business consultant who works with one mission in mind only: to maximize business opportunities by connecting every customer with personal support at every step of their life journey</i>	<i>In my current position, I analyse data & translate it to plans, I visualise solutions with clients prior to executing business solutions by using the latest technologies. The business solutions we've provided resulted in a boost in clients' revenues from 69% to 86%</i>	<i>My goal is to translate that expertise into sky-high clients' happiness scores for your company.</i>

There are many different strategies for ways to prepare and presenting your elevator pitch.

An effective elevator pitch is around 40 to 60 second speech that will get the listener's attention and leave them wanting to continue the discussion outside of the elevator.

5.2.2 Prepare

To create an effective elevator pitch, you should shoot for approximately 40–60 seconds in length, which translates to about 100 words or 10 sentences. The first thing to do is to develop a structure or general outline for your speech:

- Begin with who you are (and what you do): Describe yourself and your company, show enthusiasm and develop a “hook” to draw the reader in.
- Tell the listener what you have to offer: Describe situations where you have made significant contributions or solved substantial problems in your career.
- Define the benefits: what contributions and achievements you gained that led to business growth for your current/previous employer.
- Leave the listener wanting more: Just as including a “hook” is an extremely important aspect of an effective elevator pitch, you end the conversation leaving the listener wanting more.

5.2.3 Get on the Elevator

After you have prepared, revised, and practiced your elevator speech, the only thing left to do is to test it out. As you deliver your speech the first few times, try to keep an eye on the listener and gauge their response.

Just as with many job search tactics, the elevator speech is not a magic bullet that will guarantee a job. However, when pairing an effective elevator pitch with a well-written resume and thorough job search strategy, you will significantly increase your chances of being hired.

5.2.4 First impressions last

First impressions count. Make sure you’re wearing something professional and appropriate for the interview. Before the interview day you can pass by the company location and observe how employees are dressed. Avoid clothes that are uncomfortable as you don't want to be worrying about them whilst trying to answer questions. A smile with a firm handshake is important, so look the interviewer in the eye while shaking hands.

5.2.5 Listen carefully before answering questions

Even if you have prepared answers for some questions, listen carefully before you answer any question, and do not answer a question with a response that doesn’t relate to it, make sure you answer appropriately and ask the interviewer to elaborate themselves if you’re unsure.

5.2.6 Use different examples

Incompetencies and behavioural interview questions, the interviewer wants you to demonstrate your communication skills and bring real-life examples about the job required competencies like teamwork talents and business ability. It is better not to use the same example for every question; however, try to think of various ways to highlight your skills, perhaps by talking about things you do outside work or university. This will help to give your experience more context and depth.

5.2.7 Come prepared with questions

Prepare a few questions in advance, as at interviews there is an opportunity for you to ask questions about the role and the company. This will reflect that you are interested and help you to visualize what it would be like to work there.

For example:

- What is the most challenging task in this role?
- How many people are in the team I may be working in/managing?
- What's the best thing about working here?



5.3 Behavioural interview questions STAR approach

In a behavioural interview, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills.

Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you did behave. The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future.

Behavioural interview questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific.

For example:

- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and how you achieved it.
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Describe a situation where you had to explain something complex to a colleague or a client. What problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

Follow-up questions will also be detailed. You may be asked what you did, what you said, how you reacted or how you felt. What's the best way to prepare? It's important to remember that you won't know what type of interview will take place until you are sitting in the interview room.

Since you don't know exactly what situations you will be asked about if it's a behavioural interview, refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on or solved work problems/challenges. So, prepare answers to traditional interview questions.

Review the job description requirements, compare the competencies in the job description with your CV, dive between the lines of your CV to find stories and achievements that are related to the required skills, it's always recommended to practice by writing them down, this will help you to remember them. During the interview, if you are not sure how to answer the question, ask for clarification. Then be sure to include **STAR** approach in your answer:

- A specific **Situation**
- The **Tasks** that needed to be done
- The **Action** you took
- The **Results** i.e. what happened

It's important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. How you respond will determine if there is a fit between your skills and the position the company is seeking to fill. So, listen carefully, be clear and detailed when you respond and, most importantly, be honest. If your answers aren't what the interviewer is looking for, this position may not be the best job for you anyway.

5.3.1 STAR Story Tips

People are much more likely to become engaged with information in the form of a story. People are also much more likely to respond to and remember information when it is presented in the form of a story. Storytelling engages the brain which triggers the imagination and that makes a listener feel like a participant in the narrative and that makes a person much more likely connected and interested to listen to you.

5.3.2 Why Story Telling

The STAR approach has been used for years in many industries to analyse behavioural answers from candidates and it's a useful way to think about structuring your answers. Companies include behavioural questions in the interview process that start with tell me about a time and give me an example, this is where you can use your storytelling skills to stand out from the competition you have to be able to show your accomplishments in the best possible way which means crafting true stories that show you at your best and prove you're qualified for this job.

A little preparation can make such a huge difference behavioural questions are any questions that focus on your past behaviours as indicators of future performance. It is essential to figure out what experiences from your tasks are going to make the best story, the best approach is to start with your greatest hits. That is by coming up with a story for every possible behavioural question and focusing first on your best stories that cover and list your proudest professional accomplishments.

5.3.3 How To Choose A Good Story

- Chose stories that can be used for a variety of different questions
- Think of a situation that leads to promotion. Or maybe a time you tackled a really difficult task and succeeded e.g. negotiations or solving a serious customer problem, and/or you were in a situation to make a tough decision or take an action to solve a problem.
- Prepare stories that reflect your greatest accomplishments because these stories would help you to cover multiple competencies. Think of that story that touches several competencies like leadership- communication - problem-solving - attention to detail.
- Understanding the job description will help you to find which of your past competencies will be required in your story. If the competencies in the job description require problem-solving; thus, prepare a story about that.

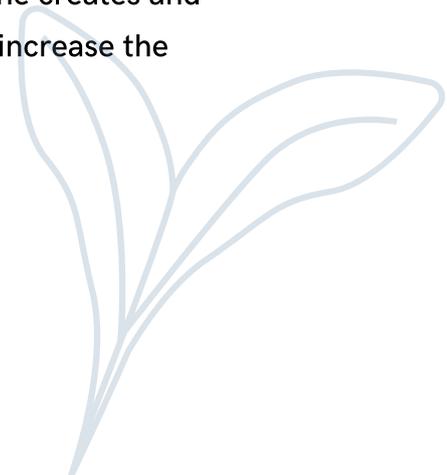
5.3.4 STAR Story Example

- During my last job at I was responsible for managing various events
- I noticed that attendance at these events had dropped by 30% over the past 3 years (**Situation**)and wanted to do something to improve these numbers (**Tasks**)
- I designed a new promotional to go out to the local community businesses (**Action**). I also included a rating sheet to collect feedback on our events and organized internal round table discussions to raise awareness of the issue with our employees.
- We utilised some of the wonderful ideas we received from the community, made our internal systems more efficient and visible and raised attendance by 18% the first year (**Result**).

Notice: The interviewee tells a story of how he solved a problem. During his responses, he used keywords and phrases to indicate what types of skills he can demonstrate and what type of personality traits he possesses.

Leadership: the person guided us through how he solves problems in his respective role

Organisation and planning: the person describes a process in which he creates and implements a marketing strategy that includes a feedback survey to increase the effectiveness of the event.



Research and goal orientation: this person framed the problem and the results from his solution in (dropped by 30% over a year, raised attendance by 18% the first year)

Creative and Innovative: The person created a promotions packet

Situation	Task	Action	Result
Describe a situation where you faced a challenge at work	Describe your role in that situation	Describe what actions you took to respond to that challenge	Explain the outcome or result from your action and use it to illustrate your skills and competencies

5.4 Famous Interview questions and tips to answer them

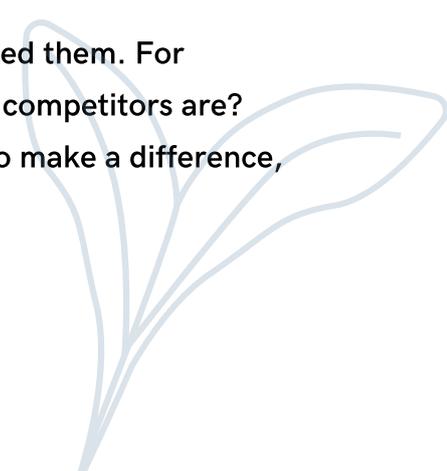
Interviewers will ask you many different questions. The key to answering them successfully is simple: be prepared. Look at the job description advertisement and the organization's website. What are they looking for from their people? Then consider your relevant skills and experience and how you can demonstrate them in the interview. Here are some questions your interviewer may ask.

Why have you applied for this role?

Explain your motivation for applying for the role, what you know about the company and why you think you're suitable for the position. Your answer should reinforce why you are a good fit for the job and convey your enthusiasm for the role. You can mention the good match between your skills and what the job requires - including what you will bring to the company; your interest in the organization's area of business/products; and the job is an exciting challenge for you.

What attracted you to this organization?

Show you're interested in the organization and that you've researched them. For example, do you know the locations they operate in? And who their competitors are? Knowing details like this is important when applying for HR roles. To make a difference, you really need to understand the organization.



Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict in a team

The interviewer wants to know if you can deal with issues within a team. So, describe briefly the structure of the team and your role within it. If there was conflict, did you deal with it or ignore it? What was the outcome?

Can you give me an example of when you've had to give feedback to someone?

They're asking if you can show your coaching skills and ability to develop others. Do you shy away from giving feedback or are you good at tactfully giving positive and developmental responses? How did they take your comments and what was the result?

What are your weaknesses?

Nobody is perfect and everyone can identify areas for improvement. However, when thinking about yours, make sure they are relevant to a professional context. Remember to acknowledge that improving on your 'weaknesses' is important to you and, where possible, show how you are working to develop them. For example, you might be shy, but you purposefully make an effort to talk to people as you recognize this is an issue.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Your interviewer might want to know how the job you are going for fits in with your long-term plans. It's okay if you haven't worked out the next 20 years in your head - very few people have. However, you should have a general idea about what your interests are, what kind of areas you would like to work in and even perhaps where you see yourself in the next few years. Tell the interviewer how the job and their organization fit in with these ideas - perhaps they offer lots of training and development, which in time will help you progress.



5.5 General Interview questions

5.5.1	Potential Employer
•	Why did you apply to us?
•	Where did you hear about the position?
•	What do you know about our organisation?
•	Do you know anyone who works for us?
•	What interests you about the position?
•	What do you think we have to offer you as a company?
5.5.2	Career Ambitions
•	What are your long/short term goals?
•	Tell me about your career aspirations.
•	What are you looking for in a career?
•	Do you have plans to gain further qualifications?
•	Where do you see yourself in 2/5 years time?
•	Describe your ideal employer.
5.5.3	Skills and Requirements
•	Why should we hire you? - Give me three reasons.
•	What have you got to offer the company? - What skills will you bring?
•	How do you work best? - Leading a group, in a team or alone?
•	Are you prepared to travel?
•	Are you looking for a position with training?
•	What has been your main career achievement to date?
•	What was the most difficult problem in your current/previous position - how did you find the solution? You say you have xxx skills...how did you demonstrate these in your previous job?

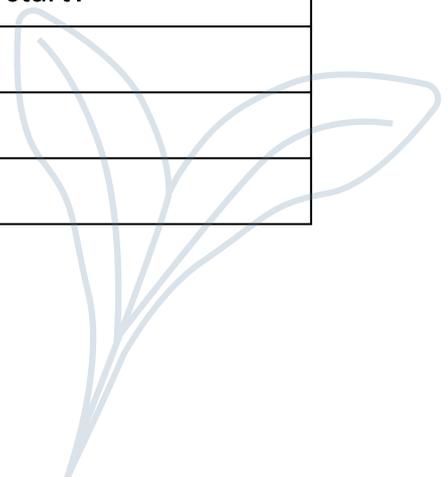


5.5.4	Personality
•	Describe yourself - strengths/weaknesses?
•	How would your friends describe you?
•	What motivates you?
•	What are your strengths/weaknesses?
•	How do you spend your spare time?
5.5.5	Questions on Work History
•	Name of company, position title and description, date of employment
•	What were your expectations for the job and to what extent where they met?
•	What were your starting and final levels of compensation?
•	What were your responsibilities?
•	What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?
•	Which was most/least rewarding?
•	What was the biggest accomplishment/failure in this position?
•	What was it like working for your supervisor? What were his strengths and shortcomings?
•	Why are you leaving?
5.5.6	About You
•	Describe a typical work week
•	How many hours do you normally work?
•	How would you describe the place at which you work?
•	How do you handle stress and pressure?
•	What motivates you?
•	What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make?
•	If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
•	Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?
•	Give some examples of team work.
•	What type of work environment do you prefer?
•	Describe a difficult work situation/project and how you overcame it.
•	How do you evaluate success?

5.5.7	The New Job and Company
•	What interests you about this job?
•	What applicable attributes/experience do you have?
•	Why are you the best person for the job?
•	What do you know about this company?
•	Why do you want to work for this organization?
•	What challenges are you looking for in a position?
•	What can you contribute to this company?
•	Are you willing to travel?
•	Is there anything I haven't told you about the job or company that you would like to know?
5.5.8	The Future
•	What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?
•	What are your goals for the next five years/ten years?
•	How do you plan to achieve those goals?
•	What are your salary requirements - both short-term and long-term?
5.5.9	Problem/Sticky Questions
•	What salary or benefits are you looking for?
•	Why are you changing your career?
•	Explain the gap in your work history.
•	Given your career plans, how long do you expect to stay with our organisation?
•	Can we contact your current employer for references?



5.5.10	Interview questions to ask
•	Why is the position available?
•	What skills are needed to succeed?
•	What are the initial priorities of the position?
•	How does the position fit into the organisational structure?
•	How much scope (autonomy, flexibility, career growth, responsibilities) is there within this position?
•	What is the company's managerial style/culture?
•	Who succeeds in this position? How would you define success for this position?
•	How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?
•	How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
•	Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
•	What is the company's management style?
•	Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her?
•	How many people work in this office/department?
•	How much travel is expected?
•	Is relocation a possibility?
•	What is the typical work week? Is overtime expected?
•	What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
•	How does one advance in the company?
•	Are there any examples?
•	What do you like about working here?
•	Would you like a list of references?
•	If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
•	What can I tell you about my qualifications?
•	When can I expect to hear from you?
•	Are there any other questions I can answer for you?



DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Smile and make eye contact.
- Relax and be friendly.
- Be positive and enthusiastic.
- Think about your body language.
- Don't discuss salary until you're offered the job.

REMEMBER About 10% is what you say, 20% is how you say it, 70% is your image, your body language and the overall impression you create.

Important tips to remember

Tip 1: Do Your Research

Tip 2: Visualize and Rehearse

Tip 3: Prepare for Behavioral Questions

Tip 4: Appearance Matters

Tip 5: Arrive Early (But Not Too Early)

Tip 6: Be Conscious of Body Language - allow good rapport

Tip 7: Take Notes (shows attention to detail)

Tip 8: Be Honest

Tip 9: Ask Questions

Tip 10: "BONUS" Follow up with a thank you email within 24 hours

6 After the interview

Once the interview is over...

Take a deep breath... after all, you have done your best.

6.1 Self-reflections

Write down what went well and what you could have done better. Evaluate the interview, reflect and take notes.

- Which questions did you find difficult?
- So, in case you are invited to a follow up interview, you can search for proper answers for these questions again.
- Practice the areas in which you need improvement.

6.2 Alert your references

Tell your references which kind of job you are applying for and what skills are needed for this job. Alert your references, ask them what they will say.

6.3 Ask the expected employer about their decision

Ask the expected employer when they will announce the decision and inform you about the interview results.

6.4 Thank you email

Send a Thank you email. It enables you to remind the interviewer who you are and mention (BRIEFLY) anything important you missed saying at the interview itself.

BONUS Tip: Send an interview thank you an email.

ü e.g. Thank you for seeing me this morning. I very much enjoyed meeting you and would like to confirm that I am still very interested in the post. I look forward to hearing from you.

ü Maybe bring the interviewer into your LinkedIn network.

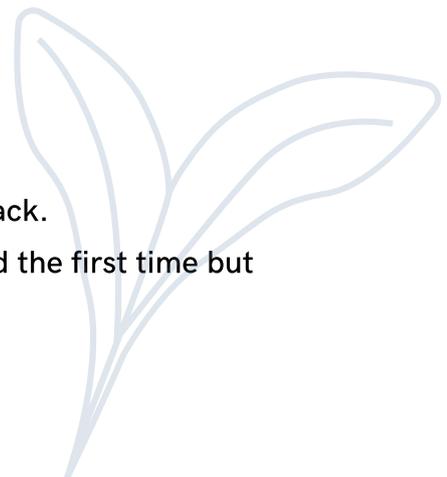
6.5 Evaluate the offer

If successful, evaluate the offer (salary, contract and your values).

6.6 Ask for feedback

Always ask for feedback. If you do not get the job, still ask for feedback.

Good luck with your interviews and don't forget you may not succeed the first time but practice makes perfect.





YOUR CAREER COACH SAMAR SIALA

YOU CAN WORK CLOSELY WITH YOUR COACH SAMAR SIALA WHO WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH UPDATING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE AND HELP YOU ACE YOUR NEW ROLE.

- Working closely with your coach will guide you to know the ins and outs of good LinkedIn content
- Keep your readers/potential employer interested and engaged

7 References

<https://career.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/Guide/Interviewing.pdf>
https://www.shrm.org/LearningAndCareer/learning/Documents/Template_InterviewGuide.pdf
<https://www.ihire.com/careeradvice/pages/thank-you-guidelines>
<https://free-article-spinner.com/>
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>
<http://jonlieffmd.com/blog/how-does-expectation-affect-perception>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hofstede%27s_cultural_dimensions_theory
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH3DaeJSwy4&index=51&list=FLt_o3qx1rtLvOOCKUxQycsw&t=0s
https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/120630/informational_interviewing.pdf

