

# What is the STAR Method for answering tough interview Questions?

**S** – Situation, background set the scene

**T** – Task or Target, specifics of what's required, when, where, who

**A** – Action, what you did, skills used, behaviours, characteristics

**R** – Result – Outcome, what happened?

We cannot stress how valuable learning this question answering technique will be for you.

**Life changing** may sound like an exaggeration, but if you don't know it..

Yes, we feel life changing is an accurate description of what this can do for you.

The STAR method technique will enable you to answer tough work related questions (not limited to job interviews) in a subtly, compelling and powerful manner.

People like hearing stories, facts are easier to remember if wrapped in a story, stories tend not to get interrupted; basically stories are an ancient proven method of getting a message across!

Listeners will remember more of your answers, and the messages within them, yet your message will be delivered in a friendly likable style.

As far as job interviewing is concerned, your success ratio will go off the scale.

## How to build a STAR method Story

A Star story should be about 2 minutes long, and delivered with energy and enthusiasm about a real experience you have had (it does not have to be a work experience, as long as it describes a relevant skill or behaviour).

Time for an example:

*Question: Have you ever lead a team before?*

This is another reason why the STAR method is so powerful. The above question is a terrible closed question.

You could answer "yes" or "yes" on three separate occasions" and move quickly onto the next question.

But Leadership is an important skill, and you **must** not miss this chance to shine.

A lot of folks would give the easy answer here, you have a great chance to impress, and basically do all the interviewers work for them.

Let's build a STAR method story answer

**(Situation)** "Yes; a relevant example being at my last company, where I was initially a software developer, in a team of 6 developing a new finance module for our core accounting product."

**(Task)** "The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of sales and marketing investment riding on the product being ready. However the project was behind schedule, when our team leader unfortunately became ill, and had to leave."

**(Action)** "I had been sports team captain at school, where I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership. So I volunteered to stand in, and by using my technical analysis skills, spotted a few small mistakes made in the initial coding, that were causing the sporadic errors, and slowing us down. I then negotiated with our product director a small bonus incentive for the team, and budget for two pizza evenings, so we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the coding and catch up with the critical project landmarks."

**(Result)** "Though this took us 1.5% over budget the software was delivered on time with a better than target fault tolerance. The project was seen as a great success as the additional project cost was minimal compared to the costs of delaying the launch, and the negative affect on our product branding. The team where delighted with the extra bonus and I have now been officially promoted to team leader as a result."

You need to practice your answers out loud, to ensure its continuity and that you don't go over 2 minutes.

The example above not only answers the leadership question asked, but also conveys that you have other skills and behaviours any interviewer would be interested in.

Answering tough interview questions like this will work wonders, but answering poorly worded questions will really set you apart.