



The Tough Interview Questions

Felician College
Career Development Center

Interview Questions

- Two questions every interviewer will ask you
 1. Tell me about yourself...
 2. Describe a situation/time/specific example when... (also called Behavioral Questions)
- How do you answer these questions
 1. The Elevator Pitch
 2. The STAR Method



What Is An Elevator Pitch?

- Also called “Elevator Speech”
 - 30 second speech
- Summarizes who you are, what you do and why you would be an ideal candidate
- Recite at any time; job interview, cocktail party, etc.



9 Steps To A Successful Elevator Pitch

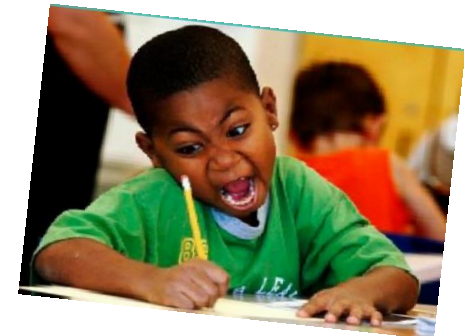
- 1.) Clarify your target
- 2.) Put it on paper
- 3.) Format it
- 4.) Tailor the pitch to them, not you
- 5.) Eliminate industry jargon
- 6.) Read your pitch out loud
- 7.) Practice, practice, practice
- 8.) Prepare a few variations
- 9.) Nail it with confidence

1.) Clarify Your Job Target

- “You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there” – Yogi Berra.
- Begin planning your elevator pitch by specifying
 - the best way to describe your field and
 - the type of job you are pursuing.

2.) Put It On Paper

- Write down everything; skills, accomplishments, relevant work experience, etc.
- Grab a pen and start deleting
- Delete and edit until you have a few key bullet points or sentences
- GOAL: interest the listener, do not tell your whole life story



3.) Format It

- Answer 3 critical question
 - a) Who are you?
 - b) What do you do?
 - c) What are you looking for?
- After those questions are answered you can add...
 - Details about your specific skill set and ways you can help your potential employer

4.) Tailor The Pitch To Them, Not You

- Those people listening to your speech are only thinking “what’s in it for me?” (WIIFM)
- Research your audience
- Use benefit-focused terminology
 - **Don’t say** = I am a human resources professional with 10 years experience working for talent companies
 - **Do say** = I am a human resources professional with a strong track record in helping to identify and recruit top-level talent into management



6.) Read Your Pitch Out Loud

- Writing is more formal and structured than speaking
- Make it sound more like a conversation
- Make it authentic

7.) Practice, Practice, Practice

- Rehearse in front of a mirror
- Use recording capabilities on your phone or computer to hear how you sound
- Practice until it doesn't sound rehearsed
- Try it on a few friends and ask for feedback.
- Might be awkward, but the more you practice, the smoother your delivery will be.



8.) Prepare A Few Variations

- Sometimes you will only get 15 seconds, other times you may get two or three minutes
- Master a few key talking points
- Work up ways to customize your speech; either elaborate on those key points or simplify them
- 150 words in one minute

9.) Nail It With Confidence

- Convey your speech well
- Look the person in the eye
- Smile
- Deliver your speech with a confident, upbeat attitude



Elevator Pitch Example

- “Hi, my name is Mary Jones. I am currently a junior level student attending ABC college. My major is in business with a minor in art. I have volunteered with the student credit union throughout my first three years of college. Last summer I completed an internship with The Museum of Modern Art, and I’m hoping to find an job in finance this summer in the Boston area. I have always had an interest in art and I found that I have a real knack for business. In the future I’m hoping to combine these two very different disciplines and find myself a career that includes them both.”

What is the STAR Method

- Structured response to behavioral-based interview questions
- Discuss the
 - Situation
 - Task
 - Action
 - Result



Examples of Behavior Interview Q's

- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it
 - Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low)
 - Give me an example of a time when you motivated others

The STAR Method

1. Situation

- Describe the situation you were in
- Must be a specific event not generalized
- Give enough detail for interviewer to understand

2. Task

- What goal were you working toward?



The STAR Method

3. Action

- Describe the actions you took to address the situation with appropriate amount of detail
- Keep the focus on YOU

4. Result

- Describe the outcome of your actions
- Don't be shy about taking credit
- What did you accomplish?

How To Prepare For A Behavior-Based Question

- Recall recent situations (course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, etc.) that show favorable behaviors and actions
- Prepare short descriptions of each event be ready to provide detail if necessary
 - Each story has a beginning, middle and end
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you
 - Be honest and specific; avoid embellishing and generalization
- Vary your examples; don't take them all from one area of your life

STAR Method Example

- Advertise profits was decreasing for my college newspaper, *The Review*, and a large number of long-term advertisers were not renewing their contracts. My goal was to generate new ideas, materials and incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers, compared to the year before. I designed a new promotional packet that compared the benefits of *The Review* circulation with other media in the area. I also set up a special training session for the account executives with a School of Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies. We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.