

Nail That Interview!

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PRESENTED BY

- Kevin Adams, ACS/ALB
- John Creighton, ACS/ALB
- Michael Gregg, DTM
- Urcil Peters, CC/CL



The Interview: What it is

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- A sales call
- A test drive
- Opportunity to probe
- You can control your input but not the outcome
- Two way dialogue



The Interview: What it isn't

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- Simply a conversation with a friend
- Time to monopolize
- Something to fear



5 Questions They Will Ask

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- (1) Tell me about yourself
- (2) What are your strengths & weaknesses?

"Tell me a situation where you achieved a goal and how you did it"

"Tell me about a situation where you were disappointed and did not reach your goal"



5 Questions They Will Ask

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- (3) Why do you want this job?

"Why are you the best person for this job?"

"What do you know about our company, and this role and how you might fit in?"

- (4) Why do you want to leave your current job?



5 Questions They Will Ask

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- (5) What is your management style?

"How do you get along with others?"

"What would your colleagues, subordinates, bosses say about you?"



5 Questions You Can Ask

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- (1) "If I were to be offered this job what do you think my top 3 priorities would be in my first 90 days?"
- (2) "What are the next steps after this interview?"
- (3) "May I have one of your business cards or your email address?"



5 Questions You Can Ask

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- (4) "How long have you been here? What do you love about your job/the company?"
 - o Gain some insight about the company
 - o Build an emotional connection with the interviewer.
- (5) "Is there anything you need to learn about me to help you make a decision?"



Preparing Your Answers

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- ✓ You are trying to win at two levels
 - o Skill level – You have what it takes to do the job
 - o Personal level – Others can count on you to get the job done
- ✓ You need to know what you've accomplished & how
 - o Start with most recent achievements
 - o Identify 1 or 2 major achievements from the past
 - o Did you accomplish these by yourself or with others



Preparing Your Answers

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- ✓ Identify personal stories or anecdotes if they are relevant to the job and to the question asked
 - o Specialized interest good at for long time (science, writing, designing, math...)
 - o If highly relevant to job at hand weave it into response
 - o Do any personal experiences convey leadership, persistence, discipline, teamwork (know stories inside & out)



Setting Goals

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- #1 Primary goal - get the job but can't control outcome
- #2 You can control your responses & make favorable impression
 - o Don't want experience of 'not getting the job & not doing well during interview'



Setting Goals

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- #3 Intermediate goals – you've done your best
 - o 3 – 5 best accomplishments
 - o Keep initial answers under 2 minutes
 - o Arrive 10-15 minutes before interview begins
 - o Remember interviewer's name & title
 - o Get interviewer's business card
 - o Control nervousness



Anxiety & Nervousness

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Prepare

- Learn about company
- Write down answers to typical questions before interview

Be Prompt

- Lateness increases stress

Relax

- Breathe deeply & slow down your mind
- Relax shoulders – area most noticeable



Anxiety & Nervousness

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Role Play (Practice with friends, colleagues, Toastmasters)

Focus on achieving intermediate goals

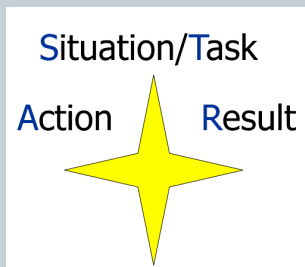
Focus on question asked **not** one wished asked

Smile (When appropriate during interview)



Michael Gregg: STAR Technique

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STAR Technique

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S ituation or T ask	Be Specific Give enough detail Relevant
A ction Taken	Describe Action Taken Tell what you did do, not what you might do
R esults Achieved	What Happened? What was Accomplished? What did You Learn?

Example of STAR Technique

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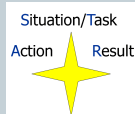
“Tell me about a time that you had to turn around a promotional program.”

(Situation)

During my internship last summer, I was responsible for managing various events.

(Task)

I noticed that attendance at these events had dropped by 30% over the past 3 years and wanted to do something to improve these numbers.



Example of STAR Technique

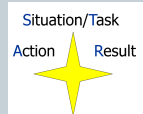
18

“Tell me about a time that you had to turn around a promotional program.”

(Action)

I designed a new promotional packet to go out to the local community businesses.

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.



Example of STAR Technique

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“Tell me about a time that you had to turn around a promotional program.”

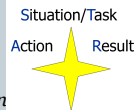
(Result)

We utilized 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)

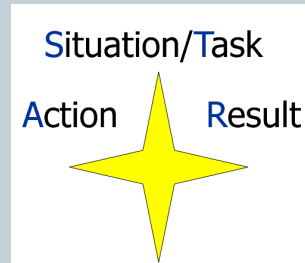
I also learned that the customer is always right, and by listening to what the customer wanted, both the customer & the organization

(Result – Lesson Learned)



Response Time: Less than 1 minute

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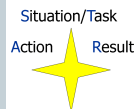
Example of STAR Technique

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“Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.”

(Situation)

My company was considering an upgrade to our Variable Compensation Program. The program ran on a MS Access Database that typically crashed twice a month and became corrupted.



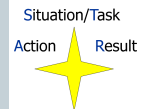
Example of STAR Technique

22

“Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.”

(Task)

I had to work with the Manager of Compensation (MC) to build a requirements document. Previous year attempts to get this project approved had failed. I was also concerned that this project could lead to scope and cost creep, so I had to convince her to be very detailed on our performance specifications and requirements.



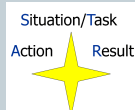
Example of STAR Technique

23

“Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.”

(Action)

After much debating between us, in which many times I continually explained why the in-depth analysis was needed, we did come up with an excellent requirements document.



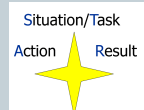
Example of STAR Technique

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“Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.”

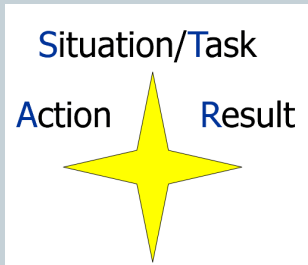
(Result)

The vendor that we planned to use told us that there was no reason to use them as the middleman, so we were able to go directly to the code-writers. The project was approved. It came in on-time and under budget, and we saved over \$150K in mid-tier contractor project management.



Response Time: Just over 1 minute

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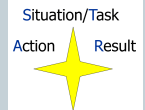
Example of STAR Technique

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“So Michael, tell me what you’re working on these days.”

(Situation)

Well sir, I’m working on several exciting projects, but one stands out. I was asked to lead the efforts of the United Way campaign this year.



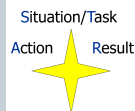
Example of STAR Technique

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“So Michael, tell me what you’re working on these days.”

(Task)

Mostly this involved building a team of leaders from other departments that I normally don’t get to work with. I was determined that we were going to break all past leaders records and have a great time doing it.



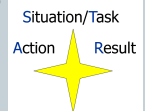
Example of STAR Technique

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“So Michael, tell me what you’re working on these days.”

(Action)

I picked my team, and together we came up with a crazy fashion show idea . We actually built a runway and kicked off the campaign with the most unusual show where we wore the products that our company produced.



Example of STAR Technique

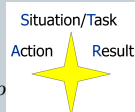
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“So Michael, tell me what you’re working on these days.”

(Result)

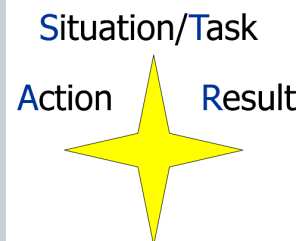
It was a great team building exercise, it set a light and fun mood in a very serious economy, and everyone seeing their leaders able to take such a light-hearted approach gave very generously. We did break every previous record, in every category, so my goal was met.

But what I found of the most personal value to me was the ability to build this adhoc team & work with others that I rarely have interacted with before.



Response Time: Less than 1 minute

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Prepare By Doing the Following

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Select 8 to 10 sample interview questions that:

- ✓ Best represents what you have to offer and explains your transferable skills effectively
- ✓ Are most relevant in your industry or job
- ✓ Could be questions that you may find difficult to answer



Prepare By Doing the Following

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Write a 2 to 3 minute speech on each question by:

- ✓ Creating a clear beginning, body with 2 to 3 main points and a strong summarizing summary
- ✓ Use the STAR Method and be concise
- ✓ Get advice on your responses and rewrite as necessary



Prepare By Doing the Following

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Practice Delivering these Short Speeches

- ✓ Use your Toastmaster Club as an opportunity for practice and feedback
- ✓ Get advice on how to improve delivery

Ask a Fellow Toastmaster for Advice

