

Career Center

The STAR Method

STAR is formula for creating your best response to behavioral-based questions. Interviewers expect you to present your thoughts and experience in this manner. Don't worry, however. You'll see that the STAR method is no different than the basics of any story composition.

Question:

Tell me about a time when you had to provide difficult feedback to a team member?

S

Situation

Set the scenario for your example.

"Last semester I took a psychology course that required a group project to examine motivation. The professor assigned each student to a 4-person group. My group decided to look at what motivates college students to participate in community service activities."

T

Task

Describe the specific challenge or task that relates to the question.

"As a group, we developed a plan to distribute the work between us. However, after the first few weeks, it became apparent that one of our team members was not completing her part of the project and she missed one of our group meetings. The rest of the team decided that we needed to reengage her."

A

Action

Talk about the actions that you took to accomplish the task.

"I took the initiative to set up a meeting with her where we discussed our interest in the project as well as the other academic responsibilities. After talking with her, it was clear that if we changed her contributions to tasks that better fit her skills and interests, she would most likely contribute at a higher level."

R

Result

Present the results that followed because of the chosen action.

"It turned out that the team could redistribute tasks without compromising so every member got to work on the pieces of the project that were of most interest to them. In the end, we completed the project and received positive feedback from our professor."

A few important tips:

- A strong STAR response will last one to two minutes.
- Be brief in your set-up. Give just enough background or contextual information for your story to make sense.
- The result is critical. Everything in your example builds towards this component.
- Use the structure of the acronym for direction if you forget what you were saying. If all else fails, skill to the R, result.

Organizing Your Experience

Apply the STAR Method by using this chart to recall specific experiences that will better support your responses in an interview.

Skill, Experience or Characteristic	Name of Story	Situation	Task	Action	Result
Leadership					
Ability to Work in Teams					
Analytical Skills					
Adaptability					