Behavioural Interview Questions: STAR Model

The STAR model can be used to answer behavioural questions in written applications or in interviews. It provides a framework for talking about an experience which illustrates the competency being assessed by a particular behavioural question (note - the terms are not used in the response).

STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and Result.

A behavioural question typically asks for ONE example of a time when you demonstrated a particular skill or competency. The example needs to be described in detail – for written examples, 150-250 words are common. You need to use a real-life example to explain how you have actually demonstrated the skill. The employer wants to know what you have done in the past, not what you think you would do in the future. Keep the responses recent and relevant – ideally use examples within past 1-2 years. If you are answering a number of behavioural questions, try to use a range of examples.

While the story in itself is important, it is critical to show you understand the processes involved (for example – in effective teamwork) so the employer knows that you would bring that understanding and apply to similar situations in their workplace.

STAR Model:

Situation Describe the situation / environment you were in. Include context, details and time.

Task Describe the event/task that required resolution or accomplishment.

Action Describe what happened including particular focus on the actions YOU took. Focus on the 'why' as well as the 'what'

Result What happened? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Think about relationship outcomes as well as task outcomes.