

CAREER SKILLS

Interview Preparation





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before your INTERVIEW



- **Your application and CV:** highlight areas that will be of interest to your interviewer, based on the role they are looking to fill.
- **The job description and the person specification:** highlight important areas that the interviewer will be looking for you to demonstrate. Make sure you have some strong scenarios to demonstrate these requirements.



- **The salary band/benefits package:** what are your expectations and why? Do your expectations fit in with similar roles that you've researched?
- **The company you're interviewing with:** look at their website and other social media pages. These are valuable sources of information about the business' ethos, values, and culture.



- **Have some questions prepared for the interviewer:** what do you want to know about the role or the company that you haven't already discovered?
- **Dress the part:** make sure you have taken the time to dress appropriately for the interview - first impressions count.



the importance of **EXAMPLES**

Anyone can claim to be something they're not, so it's important to always give strong examples of your skills when you're talking to a potential employer.

Here are some key things to consider when it comes to examples.

Think of examples in advance of your interview: for each skill on your CV and each requirement on the job description, prepare an example to show how you've demonstrated that particular attribute. The interviewer is looking for practical examples of how you've performed tasks or displayed behaviour that is relevant to the job. If you say you're good at digital marketing, give an example of a campaign you've run and why it was so successful. Be ready to illustrate every claim you make.

Don't just talk about your last job: they don't just want to know about your most recent role – they want to know about you, about the way you deal with things. Don't be afraid to use examples from a previous job, education or even extracurricular activities. You'd be surprised at how often a situation from your everyday life – juggling different responsibilities, dealing with conflict, using social media to promote a particular cause – can demonstrate how you handle things at work.

Even when you're not asked for an example, give an example: if the interviewer asks what you're good at or what you love doing, don't just answer the question – tell them about a time when you showed how good you are. Make your skills come alive with real-life illustrations.



competency-based INTERVIEWS

Competency based interviews, where each question targets a specific skill or competency, are designed to enable the interviewer to have a brief insight into how you operate in a working environment. The ideal response to a competency based interview is to use the S-T-A-R technique.

So what does that mean?

S

Situation: Describe the situation or challenge that you found yourself in. With the STAR technique you need to set the context. Make it concise and informative, concentrating solely on what is useful to the story of which you are looking to provide an overview.

T

Task: Describe the task/s that needed to be accomplished. The interviewer will be looking to see what you were trying to achieve from the situation.

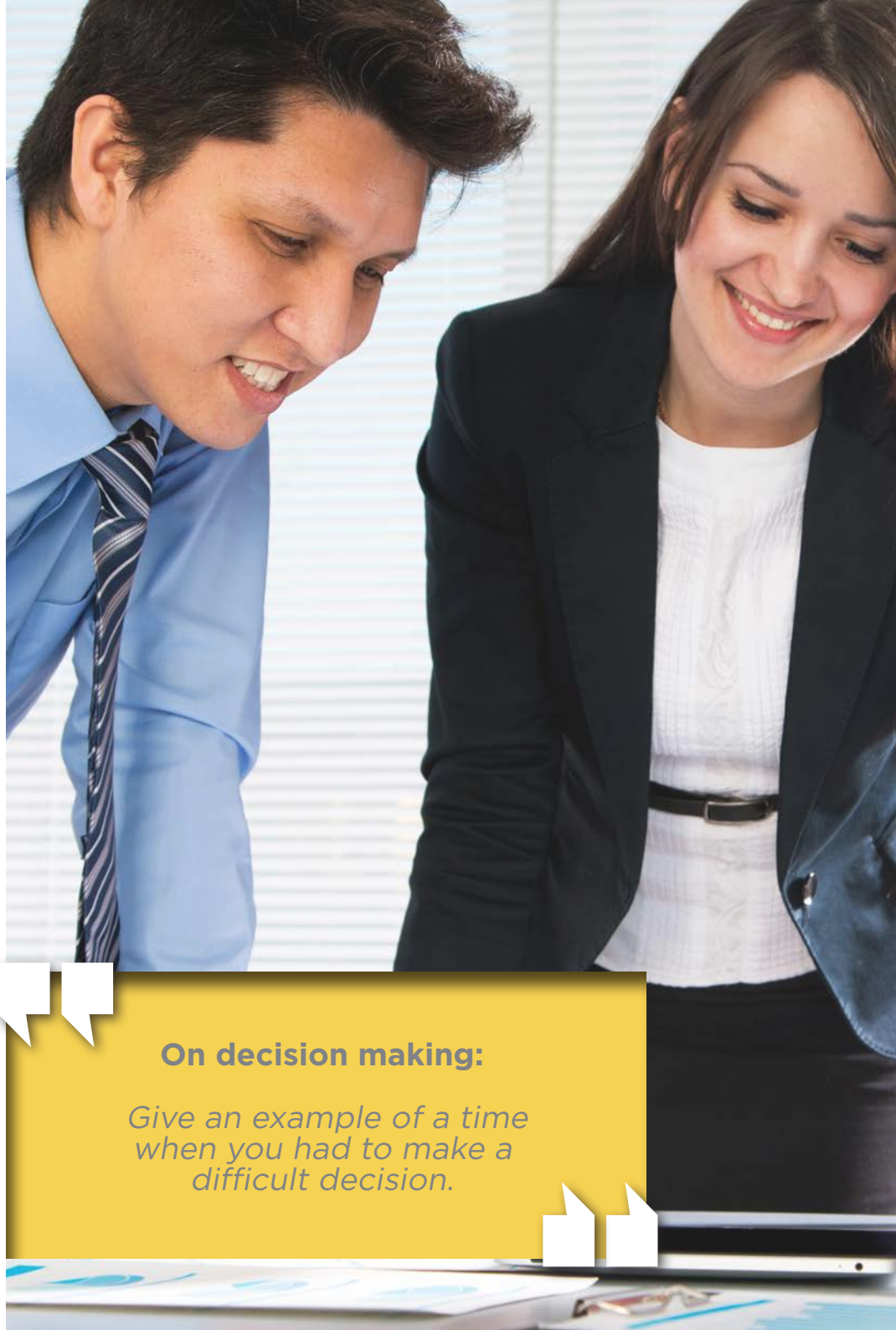
A

Action: This is the most important section of the STAR approach as you will need to demonstrate and highlight what you did, why you did it and what the alternatives were. You will need to remember the following:

- They want to know what *you* did, so talk about yourself, not the rest of the team.
- Go into some detail. Do not assume that they will know what you mean or know how you did it.
- Be clear – explain what you did, how you did it, and why you did it.

R

Result: What was the outcome of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives? What did you learn from this experience, and have you used this learning since?



On decision making:

Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision.

Here are just a few examples of questions that a potential employer may choose to ask you during an interview.

Try to practice answering these questions using the S-T-A-R technique.

On communication: *Tell me about a time you had to adjust your communication approach to suit a particular audience.*

On leadership: *Describe a situation when you assumed the role of leader. Were there any challenges, and how did you address them?*

On results orientation: *Give me an example of a time when you were particularly successful.*

On teamwork: *Describe a situation in which you were working as part of a team. How did you make a contribution?*

On trustworthiness: *Give me an example of a time when you were deceptive.*

during the INTERVIEW

During the interview, there are a few key things that you should keep in mind.

These tips will come in handy in any interview situation as they touch on positive body language, as well as practical issues like note-taking.

- **Introduce yourself** and thank the interviewer for taking the time to see you.
- **Actively listen** to what the interviewer is talking about.
- **Be yourself** and allow the interviewer to see your personality. This will help to build rapport, and be useful for them to picture working with you.
- **Feel free to take notes** and ask questions at relevant intervals.
- **Seek clarification** if you are unsure what the interviewer is asking you.
- **Take your time** to think of the best example to the interview questions. You do not need to rush your response.
- **Keep the focus on you** as opposed to the team - what specifically *you* did!
- **Show passion and enthusiasm** - they want to know that you want the job.



Maintain eye contact,

and ensure your body language is positive and open.



questions you **MAY HAVE**

During the interview, it is important to ask questions at appropriate intervals, both to show your interest and to make sure you learn everything you'd like to know about the role.

If you feel that the following topics haven't been covered in the interview, you may want to ask about them, as well as thinking of your own questions:

- *What are the main skill set requirements?*
- *What are the challenges of the role?*
- *What is the culture/behaviour like at the company?*
- *What challenges, if any, is the department experiencing?*
- *What career path could this role lead to?*
- *Who would my peers be?*

closing the INTERVIEW

Closing an interview is like closing a meeting - you should ensure you have all the information you need before you leave.



Ask any additional questions that you feel you need answering at this stage.



Ask if there is anything else you can clarify for the interviewer.



Ask what are the next steps of the recruitment process and the expected timeline.



Confirm if you are interested in progressing your application and thank the interviewer for their time.



And finally, don't forget to smile! Your final impression can be just as important as your first.

