

STAR Method for SELLING YOURSELF IN INTERVIEWS

An important part of your interview will involve answering questions posed by the interviewer. Your ability to clearly and concisely respond to questions in an informed manner that relates your background to the question posed will set you apart from others that stumble over questions.

The **STAR method** simply provides a logical approach to answering any question by providing a guided approach to using one of your past successes in responding to the question.

The **four steps** are:

- 1. S = Situation** (Describe the situation: general/specific)
- 2. T = Technique** (What approach did you use?)
- 3. A = Action** (What action did you take?)
- 4. R = Result** (What was the result of your action?)

KEEP IT POSITIVE!

Plan to develop a comprehensive list of your many successes, especially those that relate to non-classroom activities such as:

- Related experience
- Technical interests
- Leadership examples
- Teaming activities
- Communication skills
- Work experiences

Develop short examples that illustrate your successes in these areas.

Situation or Task	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
Action you took	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
Results you achieved	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Sample Interviewing Stories

#1

Situation/Task (ST):

Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, *the California Tech*, and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

Action (A):

I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of *Tech* circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with an economics/marketing professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

Result (R):

We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent [quantities are always good] over the same period last year.

#2

Situation/Task (ST):

Several local parents requested tutoring for disadvantaged students, but our Creative Connections Tutoring program did not have enough Caltech volunteers.

Action (A):

I organized a brainstorming session for increasing Caltech student participation with three other students in my house. We prioritized the ideas, looked for budget resources, and then I eventually settled on beginning a new program called Friends and Neighbors that matched Caltech freshmen with tutorees. We were able to get free Disneyland tickets and funding for after school pizza.

Result (R):

We increased the tutor pool by 20 freshmen, doubled the tutoring hours available for 50 local school kids and had a great time at Disneyland with the 12 high school tutorees. The program has continued for the last two years and now has an organization president and vice-president and a budget from the Alumni Association that should guarantee that the program continues.

Practice:

Write at least two answers to the interview question: “Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it”.

**Situation or
Task #1**

Action you took

Results you achieved

**Situation or
Task #2**

Action you took

Results you achieved