Interview with Confidence Worksheet

Two types of questions you are almost guaranteed to be asked in a job/internship interview: "Tell me about yourself," and a behavioral question, such as "Tell me about a time you worked on a team." With the former question, the employer wants you to articulate your interest in the position and industry and to offer information about relevant skills and experience you bring to the position. With the latter question, the employer wants to know how you behaved in or handled a specific situation with the idea that past behavior predicts future behavior. In preparing to answer both questions, it is important to spend time reflecting on your experiences and be able to articulate not only what you did, but also how your experiences influenced you and shaped your thinking about your career direction or workplace behavior and attitudes.

Tell me about yourself.

For this question, consider an answer that provides some relevant background information about your interest in the field and position in addition to your relevant experience. It is a brief story about what has shaped your interest and motivation to pursue the opportunity for which you are interviewing. Draw upon your answers to all or some of the questions below to craft your answer.

How did you become interested in this industry/job function? What experiences piqued your interest in this field (classes, internships/jobs, books, etc.)?

What have you done in this field to pursue/explore this interest or that has confirmed your interest?

What experiences/accomplishments have given you the skills the employer is looking for (activities/leadership, internships/jobs, volunteering)?

Why is this position of interest to you now?

Behavioral Questions

Behavioral questions usually start with "Tell me about a time when" or "Give me an example of a time/experience when". The interviewer is looking for a concrete example that demonstrates a specific skill or quality that will make you an asset to their team. It is very important to give a specific example rather than to speak in generalities.

It is also useful to think of the answer to this question as a story with a specific structure that relays not only the experience but also what you learned from the experience. One way to structure your story is captured by the mnemonic **"STAR,"** which stands for: Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

> **Situation:** What was the situation/problem/conflict you were facing?
>
> **Task:** What task(s) did you identify to respond to in this situation/to solve the problem?
>
> **Action:** What action did you take?
>
> **Results:** What lessons did you learn, what skills did you gain, and/or what qualities did you develop through this experience that will help you contribute to the prospective employer's team in the position for which you are interviewing?

Remember that the employer wants to know if you have certain transferable skills and qualities that will help you be effective in the job.

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Activity: Read through the job description of a position you are interviewing for/interested in and identify all the skills and qualities they are seeking (usually in the responsibilities and qualifications sections). For each skill and quality you list, think of two concrete examples from your past experience that demonstrate those skills and qualities. Examples can come from internships, school activities, volunteer work, and even personal hobbies. Using the worksheet below, construct your stories/answers according to the STAR structure.

Situation • Task • Action • Results

Job competency you want to demonstrate: _____

Situation: _____

_____

_____

_____

Task: _____

_____

_____

_____

Action(s):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Specific verbs/phrases you can use to pinpoint your job competencies:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Result(s): _____

_____

_____

_____

Application (what did you learn from this experience?): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there any relevant quantifiable details? Are there any relevant contextual details? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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