

INTERVIEW PREPARATION



**A Workshop Presented by
Mount Saint Vincent University
Career Services**

Prepared by MSVU Career Services

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Goals of an interview
- First Impressions
- Types of Interviews
- Focus on Behavioural Questions
- Other Tough Questions
- Questions to ask the Interviewer
- After the Interview



Goals of an Interview

- **Employers** – to gather information about you, assess your qualifications, and impress you
- **You** – present relevant information positively, assess whether the job is a good fit for you



First Impressions

- ✿ Arrive early
- ✿ Be courteous to all you meet
- ✿ Be confident, but not arrogant
- ✿ Take your time and think before speaking
- ✿ Dress appropriately - wear what is industry standard, but go up a notch



Non-Verbal Communication

Don't



- Fold arms
- Clench fists
- Clench jaw
- Squint eyes
- Fidget
- Sit on edge of chair

Prepared by MSVU Career Services



Do



- Smile
- Offer a firm handshake
- Make eye contact
- Sit with an open posture, leaning slightly toward interviewer

Types of Interviews



- ✿ **Screening Interview** – often conducted by larger companies as a first interview. Interviewer is often from HR department.
- ✿ **One to One Interview** – often conducted by direct supervisor who may not be trained in interview techniques
- ✿ **Panel Interview** – More than one interviewer meant to reduce individual bias in the selection process
- ✿ **Sequential Interview** – More than one interview with a company



Trait vs. Behavioural

- Interviews can be conducted using a **trait** approach or a **behavioural** approach
- **Trait** – looks only at your stated qualifications without looking for evidence
- **Behavioural** – looks for evidence of skills you have demonstrated in the past in order to predict your future job performance

Trait vs. Behavioural

Trait

- I am reliable
- I am good with people
- I am a good leader

Behavioural

- I have only missed one day of work in 10 years
- Last week I settled a dispute between two co-workers
- I was elected president of the student's union

Focus on Behavioural Interviews

- Interviewer will ask for specific examples from your past experience in order to determine if you can provide evidence of certain skills
- Past behaviour is a powerful predictor of future performance
- The more recent the behaviour the better its predictive power
- Research probable skill areas that the employer will be interested in

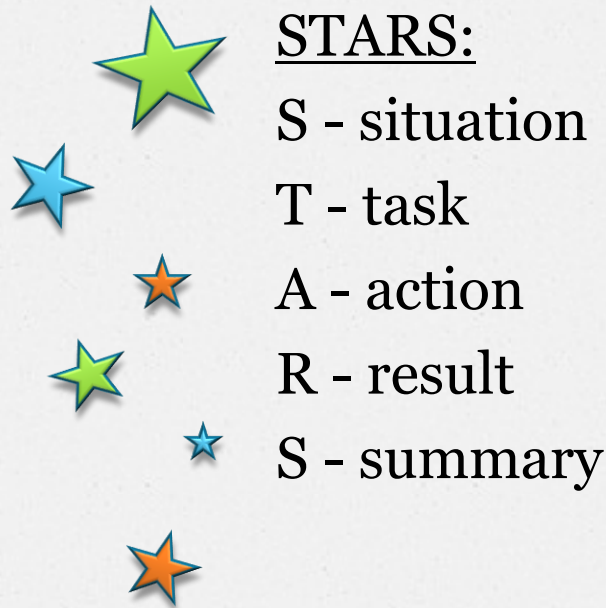
Common Skills Sought by Employers

- o Communication
- o Flexibility
- o Interpersonal/team work
- o Self knowledge
- o Initiative
- o Leadership
- o Goal Achievement
- o High energy
- o Direction



Answering Behavioural Questions

- Structure your response by telling a story based on the following acronym:



Tell Stories Based On....

- o Work experiences
- o Volunteer experiences
- o Participation in school or community activities
- o Study, work, travel
- o Internships
- o School projects





Example using STARS



- **What did you do in your last job to contribute to a team environment?**



S – In my last job I was on a team where one member did not do his part and this was causing us to fall behind schedule.



T/A – I decided to take this member aside to talk about the situation and how important his contribution to the project was.



R – The result of this talk was evident by our next meeting. He had done his share and we were able to complete the project on time.

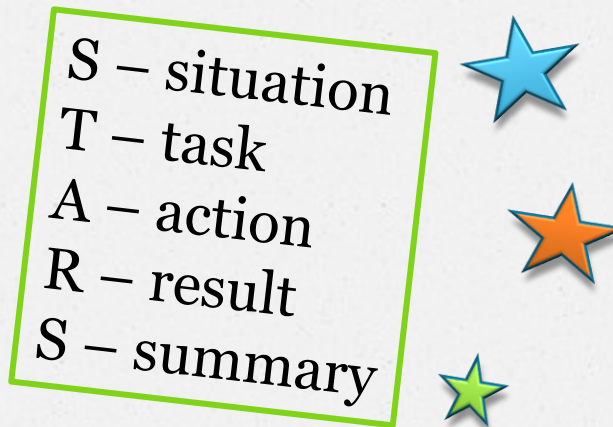


S – I am certain that the way I approached this member had a positive effect on his efforts. This example demonstrates that I would be a valuable member to any team.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

- With a partner, answer one of the interview questions on the handout provided using the STARS acronym.



- Take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee.



Other Tough Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What is your greatest weakness?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?



Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- Can you describe a typical day on this job?
- What is your organization's policy on training and professional development?
- I saw on your website that you have X program. I did some research related to this topic and I am wondering if you can tell me some of your results?

Think-Pair-Share:
What is another effective question you could ask?



After the Interview

- ✚ Evaluate your performance – take notes on questions you answered well and those you had difficulty with
- ✚ Always send a thank-you letter to each person who interviewed you
- ✚ If you do not hear anything within a week (or the timeframe they give you), phone them to follow-up and restate your interest in the position



Practice Interview Skills

Set up a recorded mock interview with a career counsellor !

- o Career Services, McCain 306
- o Book appt. by calling: 457-6139
- o Book appt. early - at least 1 week prior to your desired appt. date
- o Drop off your resume and a job posting you are interested in at least 2 days prior to your appt.
- o Dress as you would for a real interview