

How to impress in an interview

Most job interviews will involve competency-based questions. Interviewers will often have pre-determined criteria they are looking out for in your answers to assess your knowledge, skills, attitude and experience. This is a great way for you to highlight how you work with others, your understanding of your limitations, how you deal with pressure and other quality traits that aren't necessarily easy to show in your CV.

They may ask you something along the lines of: "Tell me about a time when you overcame a problem" or "Tell me about a time you showed leadership".

One of the best ways to answer these questions is with the STAR method, which stands for

Situation

Situation

Give a brief overview of the circumstances. What was the project you were working on? Who were you working with? When and where did it happen?

Keep this concise. You're aiming to provide context, rather than relay every detail.

Action

This should be a detailed explanation about how you approached and completed the task. How did you assess the situation? What did you do and how did you do it? How did you work with others?

You should dedicate more time to your action than the overviews of the situation and task – this is where you get to display your positive traits to the interviewer.

Task

Task

This is when you talk about the specifics of your role in the situation. What was your responsibility? What did you need to achieve? What were the challenges?

Remember, the interviewer is looking out for signs of your knowledge, skills and attitude.

Result

This is when you promote the impacts your actions had. It should be positive and quantifiable. The more detail you can provide on the results, the better. Don't just say you did a good job, show how that good job actually impacted the situation. E.g. "I exceeded my target by 20%"

This is key information the interviewer is looking for, so it's important not to overlook it.

Action

Result

Our six interview tips

Interviews can be stressful, but not if you prepare effectively. They are also a great time for you to get more understanding on the team you'll be joining and the role you are applying for. Plus, it's always good practice for learning how best to present yourself as you progress through your career. Here's our 6 best pieces of advice for impressing during an interview.

Do your research

Look into the company and what they've been working on. Demonstrating you've researched their ethos and business shows your dedication to the opportunity.

Don't be afraid to pause

It's easy to lose your train of thought. Take a pause before answering a question and speak slowly and purposefully. Your interviewer would rather you collect your thoughts than ramble.

Smile and be yourself

It seems simple, but make sure you smile. Interviewers are looking for someone who will fit the company culture. Smile and show them that you're someone they'd love to work with.

Dress appropriately

It seems common sense, but dress in smart, professional clothing. If your interview is over video, be sure to dress as you would for a face-to-face interview.

Prepare some examples

Think about your past experiences that highlight your knowledge, skills and attitude positively and make notes on how you would explain them. Have stories you can rely upon during the interview.

Ask your own questions

Interviews aren't interrogations; you're both seeing if you would suit the role. When prompted, ask questions about the job and the company, so you feel comfortable about pursuing the opportunity.