

SEAL THE DEAL — ANSWERS TO TOP QUESTIONS

REMEMBER, the interview is not about **you**, it's about how well you will solve **the company's problems**. The goal of the recruiter / hiring manager is to **find the best candidate** to meet the needs of the role that is available. It is your job as a candidate to understand the needs and the sell the decision-makers on the fact that the best fit is **YOU!**

UNDERSTAND THEIR WANTS:

- Gather pre-interview intelligence
 - *Job descriptions, website, recruiter, hiring manager*
- What are the Top 10 essential items for a candidate to possess for success?
 - *For the role / company / team*
- Which items do you possess and which do you not?
- Who is the interviewer and how will that impact the interview?



PREPARE YOUR SALES STRATEGY

- How will you connect with the interviewer?
- What are the Top 3-5 reasons you are the best fit for this role?
- How will you mitigate any gaps in your skills or experiences?
- Be prepared with at least 5-7 “adaptable” STAR examples



What makes you the best candidate?

Which STAR examples do you need to prepare? (i.e. detail orientation / fiscal responsibility / handling conflict / etc.)

STEER THE NEGOTIATION

- Not everyone is an experienced buyer so you have to be a “strategic” seller
 - *Many interviewers do not know how to interview*
 - *You may have to lead the interviewer to the questions you want them to ask*
- It is your responsibility to ensure the interviewer has all of the relevant information needed
- Use the fine art of TACT
 - *Subliminal vs. Hostile Take-over*
 - *Be polite not aggressive*



REFINE YOUR PITCH – Top Question Types & Helpful Hints

WHO I AM

INTERVIEWER : SO, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

ME : I'D RATHER NOT..I KINDA WANT THIS JOB.
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- Introductory questions – get to know you
 - Most interviews start with this type of question
 - Illustrates level of preparedness and confidence vs. pretentiousness
- **KEY TO SUCCESS:** Personal brand elevator speech plus 2-3 sentences about your career path and how you ended up in this interview
- **TOP QUESTIONS ASKED:**
 - Tell me about yourself
 - Walk me through your resume
 - Why do you want to work for this company

HELPFUL HINTS

- Skip the personal history
- Focus on key highlights that best illustrate your skillset / experiences / accomplishments that are most relevant based on your research
- No need to be too detailed . . . Plenty more questions to come
- Use power words to generate interest by the interviewer to want to probe further
- Highlight key learning / growth from earlier position that led to success in a later role
- Illustrate your knowledge of the company and passion about the work they do
- Use the opportunity to connect why you are motivated to work for them – how it connects to your brand values
- If you know someone in the company, slip it in as you answer if appropriate

WHAT I BRING TO THE TABLE

At a job interview: "What are your strengths?"

"I'm an optimist and a positive thinker."

"Can you give me an example?"

"Yes, when do I start?"

- Depends on the Interviewer what they are looking for in the answer . . . No one way to answer on "future you"
- **KEY TO SUCCESS:** Honest and focused on how you want to contribute to the businesses success
- **TOP QUESTIONS ASKED:**
 - What is your dream job?
 - Where do you see yourself in 5 years
 - What would the first 30 days in this position look like for you

HELPFUL HINTS

- Focus on the attributes that qualify you for that role
- Don't give vague / generic answers
- Be specific, summarize your work history and achievements, and use numbers when possible.
- Have 5 – 7 keys STAR examples that you can "slant" to answer multiple questions – AND PRACTICE
- Illustrate your ability to self-evaluate (positive and opportunities for enhancement)
- Opportunity to emphasize your evolution of skills / ability to adapt
- Highlight key accomplishments and how you will use those same skills to make an impact in this role
- Remember – this is your chance to sell yourself . . . Don't be (too) modest

WHAT I COULD DO FOR YOU

INTERVIEWER: WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS?

ME: NOT LOOKING AT THE PRICE TAG WHEN I'M SHOPPING

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HELPFUL HINTS

- Be prepared based on your research
- Keep answers focused on what is the short-term impact you hope to make on the company
- Great opportunity to inject a passion for continued growth and development
- Connect how your skills will help the company
- Potentially highlight your agility / adaptability to flex with the ever changing environment
- Honest does not mean sharing all . . . Only relevant – do not focus on your personal goals, keep it to career goals
- Balance ambition with realistic goal setting
- Reinforce how this role fits into your "future self" plans

SEAL THE DEAL

CRAFTING YOUR QUESTIONS

THE DO'S

- Prep questions BEFORE the interview
- Be ready to edit/delete/add questions based on the discussion
- Always ask at least 2-3 questions when time allows
- Be STRATEGIC
 - *Opportunity to gain insight to company / department culture, day to day of the job, leader effectiveness*

THE DONT'S

- What does this company do?
- Can I take these days off?
- So, did I get the job?
- How long do I have to be in the job before I can transfer / be promoted?
- Multi-part questions
- Yes or no questions

TOP 10 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What skills and experiences would make an ideal candidate?
2. What is the single largest problem facing your staff and would I be in a position to help you solve this problem?
3. What have you enjoyed most about working here?
4. What constitutes success at this position and this firm/nonprofit?
5. Do you have any hesitations about my qualifications?
6. Do you offer continuing education and professional training?
7. Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
8. What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?
9. Who previously held this position?
10. What is the next step in the process?

THE CLOSING STATEMENT

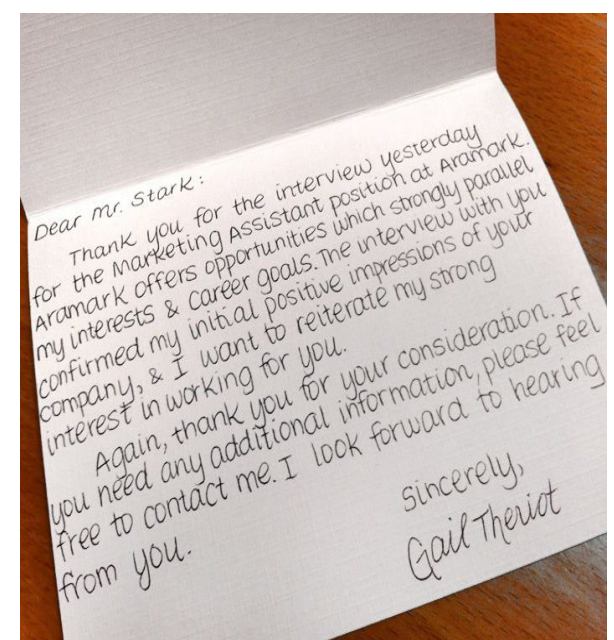
- Prepare ahead of time
 - *Look back at your Personal Brand work to help craft key components*
 - *Tailor specifics to the role and organization where possible*
 - *No more than 2 minutes (elevator speech)*
- Adjust as appropriate to meet the needs of the interview
- Your final exclamation mark on the interview

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR CLOSING STATEMENT:

THE FOLLOW- UP

- As soon as possible after discussion (but not immediate!)
- Can be handwritten or electronic
- Include specifics from the discussion
- Remind the decision maker of a key strength / skill that makes you the perfect fit
- Flattery gets you everywhere

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:



BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Teamwork: *For questions like these, you want a story that illustrates your ability to work with others under challenging circumstances. Think team conflict, difficult project constraints, or clashing personalities.*

1. Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.
2. Give me an example of a time you faced a conflict while working on a team. How did you handle that?
3. Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important. How did you overcome that?
4. We all make mistakes we wish we could take back. Tell me about a time you wish you'd handled a situation differently with a colleague.
5. Tell me about a time you needed to get information from someone who wasn't very responsive. What did you do?

Client-facing skills: *If the role you're interviewing for works with clients, definitely be ready for one of these. Find an example of a time where you successfully represented your company or team and delivered exceptional customer service.*

1. Describe a time when it was especially important to make a good impression. How did you go about doing so?
2. Give me an example of a time when you did not meet a client's expectation. What happened, and how did you attempt to rectify the situation?
3. Tell me about a time when you made sure a customer was pleased with your service.
4. Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult client. What was the situation, and how did you handle it?
5. When you're working with a large number of customers, it's tricky to deliver excellent service to them all. How do you go about prioritizing your customers' needs?

Ability to Adapt: *Times of turmoil are finally good for something! Think of a recent work crisis you successfully navigated. Even if your navigation didn't feel successful at the time, find a lesson or silver lining you took from the situation.*

1. Tell me about a time you were under a lot of pressure. What was going on, and how did you get through it?
2. Describe a time when your team or company was undergoing some change. How did that impact you, and how did you adapt?
3. Tell me about the first job you've ever had. What did you do to learn the ropes?
4. Give me an example of a time when you had to think on your feet in order to delicately extricate yourself from a difficult or awkward situation.
5. Tell me about a time you failed. How did you deal with the situation?

Time Management Skills: *In other words, get ready to talk about a time you juggled multiple responsibilities, organized it all (perfectly), and completed everything before the deadline.*

1. Tell me about a time you had to be very strategic in order to meet all your top priorities.
2. Describe a long-term project that you managed. How did you keep everything moving along in a timely manner?
3. Sometimes it's just not possible to get everything on your to-do list done. Tell me about a time your responsibilities got a little overwhelming. What did you do?
4. Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself. How did you go about ensuring that you would meet your objective?
5. Give me an example of a time you managed numerous responsibilities. How did you handle that?

Communication Skills: *You probably won't have any trouble thinking of a story for communication questions, since it's not only part of most jobs; it's part of everyday life. However, the thing to remember here is to also talk about your thought process or preparation.*

1. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way at work.
2. Describe a time when you were the resident technical expert. What did you do to make sure everyone was able to understand you?
3. Tell me about a time when you had to rely on written communication to get your ideas across to your team.
4. Give me an example of a time when you had to explain something fairly complex to a frustrated client. How did you handle this delicate situation?
5. Tell me about a successful presentation you gave and why you think it was a hit.