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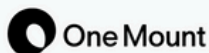


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Chị Nguyễn Xuân Thi

- UFLP Supply Chain Non-Make 2024 tại Unilever VN
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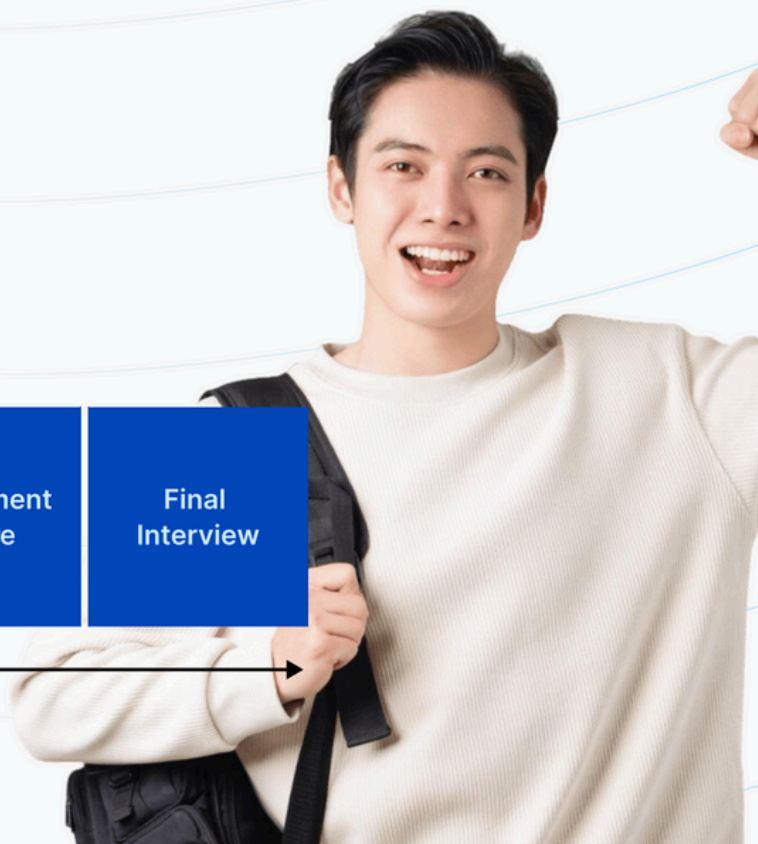
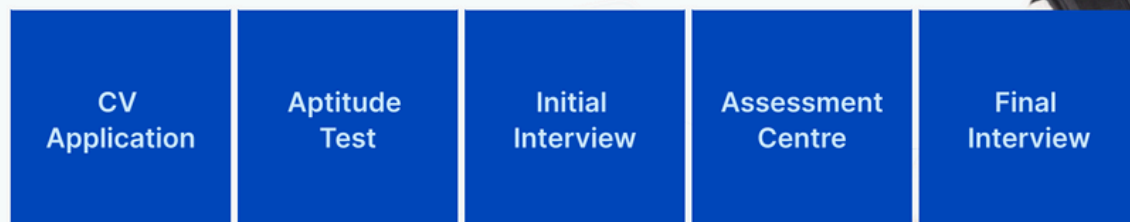
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KHOÁ HỌC ROAD TO MANAGEMENT TRAINEE DÀNH CHO

Sinh viên năm 2-4 muốn tìm hiểu và chuẩn bị cho các chương trình Management Trainee hoặc các chương trình tài năng trẻ khác của các tập đoàn lớn.



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01

Khoá học bao quát 100% các **vòng thi ứng tuyển vào tập đoàn lớn** bao gồm CV, Aptitude Test, Interview và Assessment Center

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Thực hành sau mỗi buổi học với bộ đề luyện tập được xây dựng sát với trên các đề thi thực tế của các tập đoàn, 100% bài làm của học viên được chấm chữa chi tiết

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Job Interviews

Use the STAR Interview Method to Land Your Next Job

by Marlo Lyons

February 27, 2025



cienpies/Getty Images

Summary. Hiring managers often ask behavioral questions during job interviews, and it can be hard to know how best to answer them. Which details should you include when you describe one of your previous work experiences? And what should you leave... [more](#)

Do you get nervous and ramble during interviews? Or do you worry about what details to include and what to leave out when explaining your experience? Understanding and applying the STAR interview method can be the deciding factor between landing an offer or continuing your [job search](#).

This guide covers everything you need to know about the STAR method—what it is, when to use it, and how to craft responses

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that showcase your capabilities with clear, compelling, and memorable examples that will engage your interviewer and help you stand out as the only choice for the job.

What Is the STAR Interview Method?

The **STAR** acronym stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. I always recommend adding a T at the end for Takeaways to connect the dots between your past experience and the job you're hoping to land.

- **Situation** describes the circumstance or challenge you faced (one to two sentences).
- **Task** explains the objective you were responsible for achieving (one sentence).
- **Action** details the hard and soft skills you used to accomplish the task and resolve the situation (three to five sentences).
- **Result** is the outcome and impact your actions had on the situation (one to two sentences).
- **(Takeaways)** is an add-on to the STAR method to remind you to include what you learned from the experience.

Expect at least one STAR interview question in every interview. They generally start with:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Have you ever had to deal with....
- Give me an example of...
- Describe a situation where...



Common STAR interview questions such as, “Tell me about a time you failed,” help interviewers learn about your humility, self-awareness, and resilience. But it’s not just what is said in the answer; *how* it is said tells a potential employer about your problem-solving, collaboration, and communication skills.

Here’s an example of an answer to the question, “Tell me about a time you failed”:

Situation: As a sales representative, I was tasked with closing a major deal with a potential client. I had been working on this deal for several months and was confident that I had built a strong rapport with the client.

Task: My goal was to secure the deal, which would ensure that I met and exceeded my quarterly sales quota.

Action: I prepared a detailed proposal outlining the benefits of our product and tailored it to the client’s specific needs. Then, I met with the client’s decision-makers. During the meeting and presentation, the client raised several challenges that I didn’t anticipate and was unable to overcome.

Result: Despite my best efforts to follow up with the client after the meeting and provide answers to their challenges, I was unable to close the deal. It was a major setback, but I learned valuable lessons about negotiation and overcoming objections.

(Takeaways): I also learned that sales is a team effort. Since then, I have always presented my pitch to my colleagues and manager first and asked them to poke holes in it to help me anticipate and overcome any challenges. I hope to find the same level of collaboration on your team because I truly believe one person’s win is a team win.

The Benefits of Using the STAR Interview Method

The STAR framework offers numerous benefits when answering behavioral interview questions:

- It provides a clear and structured approach which will help you organize your thoughts and focus on sharing relevant impactful details, while omitting unnecessary information.
- It creates a direct link between past achievements and future job responsibilities, ensuring the interviewer understands your qualifications without ambiguity.
- It enables you to highlight your capability to deliver tangible and measurable results.
- It showcases self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and professional growth by illustrating how you have learned to navigate complex situations.

How to Use the STAR Framework in Your Next Interview

Follow these five steps to put the STAR interview method into action:

1. Review common STAR interview questions and prepare at least two answers for each one.

Since you will most likely be interviewing with multiple people, it is important not to tell the same story to each interviewer. Prepare at least two answers for these 10 common STAR interview questions, highlighting both your hard and soft skills.

10 common STAR interview questions:

1. Tell me about a high-pressure situation that you had to de-escalate.



2. Tell me about a time when you had to align stakeholders with varying opinions toward one goal.
3. Discuss a big change you were implementing to meet the needs of your customers, cross-functional stakeholders, or the business, and how you went about implementing it.
4. What is the greatest accomplishment of your career?
5. Tell me about a time you failed, how you dealt with it, and whether you turned it into a success later on.
6. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a conflict with your team members or between your team and another cross-functional team.
7. Tell me about the top strategic issues you had to face in a previous role.
8. Tell me about a time when you used data to make a decision.
9. What feedback was given to you on your last performance evaluation and how did you incorporate it?
10. Have you ever had to... (perform a specific task necessary for success in the job)?
 - For example: Technical interviews may include questions such as “Have you used AI to solve customer problems?” or “How have you optimized an SQL query for performance?”

If you're interviewing for a management position, prepare to answer these additional questions:

1. Have you ever had to develop a product or business model from scratch or dramatically change a business model in a turnaround situation?
2. How do you inspire your team to produce desired results?



3. Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult decision that was not popular with the senior management team.
4. Give me an example of someone who was promoted on your team and how you directly contributed to their development.
5. How do you stay connected to the details while focusing on the bigger picture?

2. When preparing your answers, be sure to align your accomplishments with the job description.

As you think about how you'll answer common STAR interview questions, be sure to use specific keywords from the job responsibilities listed in the job description in your response. For example, a question for a SaaS app developer might be, "Can you tell me about a time when you had to solve a coding problem?" The job description might list specific job responsibilities or required skills such as "analytical thinking," "strong collaboration skills," "technical expertise in developing and optimizing algorithms," or "ability to meet project deadlines." Here's an example of a response:

Situation: Our team was facing a critical performance issue with a complex algorithm in our new app and the launch deadline was approaching fast.

Task: I had to figure out how to optimize the algorithm to improve the app's performance and ensure it was ready for release.

Action: I first consulted with the team to understand the analysis which was completed on the current algorithm. Together, we whiteboarded and broke down the problem into smaller components to visualize the underlying logic of the code. I then used profiling tools to identify specific parts of the algorithm that consumed the most resources. I

experimented with different data structures and replaced the inefficient ones, such as arrays, with more suitable ones like hash maps or balance trees. I implemented techniques like memorization and dynamic programming to optimize and speed up the algorithm. Finally, I cleaned up the code and removed unnecessary complexities to improve readability and maintainability.

Result: I was able to reduce the algorithm's execution time by 70% and we were able to meet the deadline and deliver a high-performing app for the business.

(Takeaway): I learned that many of the issues we discovered could have been avoided by spending more time on the front-end whiteboarding with the team. Now I always spend more time on analysis and understanding the complexities, because the solution comes quickly from that. That is what I would bring to this role—deep analytical thinking, technical expertise, and an ability to collaborate well with a team to resolve any challenges in the development of your app.

By telling a story about a challenge with an app and connecting the dots at the end to the company's business needs as listed in the job description, you would demonstrate the technical, analytical, and collaboration capabilities that would make you stand out as a strong candidate.

3. Highlight your unique knowledge, experience, and expertise.

As you prepare your answers, also consider what you bring to the position that no other candidate can bring. Your unique value could be skills from previous jobs, your educational background, or your individual experience.

Here's an example of how unique value can be incorporated into the STAR method to answer the question, "Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict."



Situation: As a global project manager for a multinational corporation, I lead a cross-functional team of engineers, designers, and marketers from diverse cultural backgrounds. We were facing a significant communication breakdown during the testing and quality assurance phase of our app, which was compromising our delivery timeline.

Task: I had to resolve the conflict and ensure that the project remained on track.

Action: I actively listened to each team member's concerns, understood their perspectives, and translated complex ideas into language everyone could understand. I realized everyone was using the term "platform," but it had different meanings in different countries and, therefore, the work wasn't consistent. I was able to leverage my unique strength of being proficient in six languages to bridge the communication gap. Further, my unique understanding of the cultural nuances of each team member allowed me to build trust and foster a collaborative environment.

Result: Through effective communication and cultural understanding, I successfully resolved the conflict and helped the team regain momentum quickly. The project was completed on time and within budget, while also demonstrating the value of diversity and inclusion in global teamwork.

(Takeaway): Most conflicts result from a lack of understanding regarding another person's perspective. But when you add cultural differences that are also not understood, it throws in an added layer of complexity. The unique value I would bring to your company is that I not only speak multiple languages, but I have immersed myself in those cultures and understand cultural nuances, which

gives me the ability to resolve conflict quickly and drive successful outcomes in a global context.

If you're interviewing virtually, consider writing a bulleted list to serve as a quick reference of the skills and expertise you most want to highlight in your responses, aligned to the job description requirements, so you can be sure to touch on these points in your responses. Your bulleted list might look like this:

- Team player: Actively listen to team members' concerns
- Problem solver: Resolving conflicts, keeping projects on track
- Solid communication skills: Bridging communication gaps on your team
- Technical expertise: Project management and coding skills
- Analytical thinking: Breaking big problems down into smaller components
- Strategic thinker: Understanding the business strategy behind product development
- Results-oriented: Successfully got project back on track, delivered on time, and within budget
- Emotional intelligence: Being able to align cultures and different perspectives

4. Write your answers down and practice them out loud.

One of the most effective ways to boost your confidence and increase your chances of success in an interview is to practice answering common interview questions out loud. By writing down your responses beforehand, you can ensure that you are prepared to articulate your skills and experiences fluently, clearly, and concisely—but also in a way that will be memorable and engage your interviewer.



Remember, the goal is not to memorize scripted answers, but rather to develop a strong foundation of responses that you can adapt to different questions and interviewers.

5. Know your talking points and use them for unexpected questions.

Since you've prepared and practiced for common STAR interview questions ahead of time, you'll no doubt walk into your interview feeling confident that you can present yourself in the best light. But what happens if you encounter a question you haven't prepared for? Don't panic. You can still fall back on your prepared responses by modifying them a bit to tailor your answer to the unexpected question. For example, the same answer to the question above, "Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict," could apply to questions such as, "Tell me about a time when you had to align the team toward a goal" or "Tell me about a time you were concerned a project would fail" or "Have you worked with teams around the world?" By adapting and tailoring your responses to match the specific question or situation, you can demonstrate your problem-solving skills and your ability to think spontaneously.

The Do's and Don'ts of Using the STAR Interview Method

Do:

- **Determine what type of question is being asked:** Is it really a STAR interview question? If you aren't sure whether the answer calls for a story, answer the question without one and the interviewer will likely follow up and ask for an example.
- **Be memorable:** Use vivid language with specific examples.
- **Quantify your results:** Use numbers and metrics to demonstrate impact whenever possible.
- **Use "I":** Talk about the specific tasks you did in a group project or cross-functional team project and the specific competencies

you used to accomplish the goal, such as stakeholder alignment and proactive communication.

- **Incorporate unique value:** Talk about how your unique skill brought an added value to your previous or current role.
- **Include soft skills:** Mention soft skills (such as creativity, empathy, or communication skills) in your answers just as much as hard skills (such as data analysis, coding languages, or project management skills).
- **Connect the dots:** Highlight transferable skills learned from real-life examples or through different responsibilities and connect the dots on how they can be applied to the new job. Don't expect interviewers to connect them!
- **Be authentic:** Share genuine experiences and lessons learned in a "Takeaway," making it STAR(T).
- **Have bullet-point notes:** Keep keyword notes near you if you're interviewing virtually, with key responsibilities of the job and your related skills listed side-by-side.
- **Time yourself:** Aim to answer every question in under two minutes—even when answering interview questions that don't require the STAR method.

Don't:

- **Use the STAR method to answer every question.** Some questions don't require outlining a specific circumstance or challenge such as "Can you walk me through your resume?" and "Why do you want to work here?"
- **Ramble:** Keep your answers concise and focused without tangents or too much backstory. If the interviewer wants greater detail, they will ask for it.
- **Ignore the question:** Ensure that your story directly addresses the prompt instead of just telling a prepared story.

- **Focus solely on positive outcomes:** It's okay to share challenges and how you overcame them. This shows resilience, perseverance, and self-awareness.
- **Tell the same stories:** Don't tell the same stories to every interviewer. Ensure that you have more than one story for each potential question.
- **Tell irrelevant stories:** Tell stories that are directly relevant to the new job. If you are in sales and want to move into marketing, all STAR format stories must be about your marketing work experience, even if it is only 1% of your current job or previous experience.
- **Exaggerate the situation:** Be truthful and avoid embellishing your accomplishments or a challenging problem.
- **Use "we" in every story:** Interviewers want to know what you did. A better approach would be to briefly mention the team on the project, which shows you understand teamwork, and include your specific actions within the teamwork.
- **Focus on me, me, me:** It's not about how great you are. Instead, talk about how your work brought value to the company.
- **Memorize scripts:** Don't read notes or reply in a way that sounds robotic or unnatural—this can be detrimental to your success.

...

Mastering the STAR framework is an ongoing learning process. By practicing and refining your responses, you can become a more confident and effective communicator, which will increase your chances of landing your next job opportunity.

More Resources

- [10 Common Job Interview Questions and How to Answer Them](#)

- [38 Smart Questions to Ask in a Job Interview](#)
- [HBR Guide to Your Job Search Toolkit](#) (from the HBR Store)
- [How to Write a Thank You Email After an Interview \(with Examples\)](#)
- [How to Answer What Are Your Strengths and Weaknesses?](#)



Marlo Lyons is an executive, team, and career coach, as well as the host of *Work Unscripted*. You can reach her at marlolyonscoaching.com.



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