Drafting A STAR Story

Linshu Li
McDougal Career Fellow, OCS

March 22, 2018
Agenda

- Behavioral questions and the STAR format.
- Group practice with facilitators
- Sharing and Reflection
What is a behavioral interview?

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- Behavioral questions
- Situational/prospective questions
- General questions
What is a behavioral interview?

-“Tell me about yourself.”
-Behavioral questions (STAR comes here)
-Situational/prospective questions
-General questions
Behavioral Questions

-Often in the approximate format of “Tell me about a time when…”, “Tell me more about this experience.”

   Ex1: Tell about some of your teamwork experience
   Ex2: Describe how you’ve handled a sudden interruption to your schedule.

-Why do interviewers ask behavioral questions?

   A good predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations

   Qualities to find out: Teamwork, Leadership, Handling Conflict, Problem Solving, Failure, Accomplishments

   Clarity in presentation
STAR Format

STAR: A structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question, by specifying the following 4 aspects:

-Situation: Describe the situation that you were in.

-Task: Describe the challenge and expectations/goals.

-Action: Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. Keep the focus on YOU.

-Results: Describe the outcome of your actions. Don’t be shy about taking credit for your endeavor.
Group practice with facilitators

Dr. Ethan Sarnoski, GSAS’18
Joining McKinsey, Pittsburgh

Dr. Sara Katrancha, GSAS’18
Joining McKinsey, Pittsburgh
Group Practice

- Each group picks a behavioral question

- Each member has 3 min to answer the question. The next one comments on the answer (2 min) and then gives his/her answer, and so on.

- The facilitator will comment after each answer as well as after every has finished.
Useful Formats

Situation:
- When I was working as / serving the XYZ role at ABC company/organization…
- Just last month I had a situation where…

Task:
- The goal we had to achieve was…so we needed to…
- In order to fix…we had to…

Action:
- What I did was…A/B/C…[and why]

Result:
- In the end we…[achieved great result as measured by]
- We met the deadline and…
- I received an award/recognition for…
- …reduced / increased XYZ by X [be as quantitative as you can]
Sharing and Reflection
Thank You!
preparation materials

1. **STAR Interview Introduction Video**: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nN7Q7DrI6Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nN7Q7DrI6Q) (6 min).

2. **Review your past experiences** (20 min): review situations (especially those listed in your resume) where you highlighted your skills and good qualities, or achieved noticeable results. The following questions might help:

   - Have you ever helped someone get through a problem?
   - Have you ever helped meet a tight deadline?
   - Have you ever received an award or recognition for your efforts?
   - Have you ever over-achieved a target of some kind?
   - Have you ever made a significant impact on someone?

3. **STAR Interview Questions** (20 min): Some sample questions that can be answered using a STAR format are attached. Start to think of how you would answer them.