

FACE-to-FACE INTERVIEW SUCCESS GUIDELINES

The interview process is a sales cycle process. It starts with the initial seconds of contact. You are the seller, the interviewer the buyer. You must grow in the interviewer's assessment of your value from the first contact to the point of job offer. **You must close assertively on each step** of the interview process to the point of offer. **You must distinguish yourself from the competition** by your demonstrated, provable greater value and enthusiastic passion for the opportunity the job offer represents.

Most professional sales organizations utilize a behavioral based selection process called "TSR", Targeted Selection Recruiting. They look to hire the "target candidate" who possesses, and can demonstrate by their past behaviors/actions, the competencies, skills, experiences, attributes, etc. needed for success in the job. The premise is past behaviors/performance are predictive of future behaviors/performance. Minimally, you will be measured for the following types of competencies.

- *Sales Ability/Skills/Persuasiveness
- *Persistence/Tenacity/Consistency
- *Initiative
- *Work Ethic/Typical Day in Your Life
- *Problem-Solving Ability
- *Professional Demeanor/Presence
- *Motivation/Enthusiasm/Attitude
- *Judgment/Thought Process
- *Oral Communication Skills
- *Practical Learning Ability
- *Client Service Care/Empathy
- *Integrity/Values/Dependability

TSR hiring managers typically use a **behavioral interviewing method called "STAR"**, an acronym for **Situation, Task, Action, Result**. This enables them to see how you have performed in the past in situations you will likely encounter in the position you are interviewing for. It goes like this.

- >Interviewer asks probing open ended question. (See accompanying sample interview questions.)
- *Situation** >Candidate states situation they experienced which corresponds to the question.
- *Task** >Candidate states task that the situation presented.
- *Action** >Candidate relates actions they took to complete task including detailed specifics of names, dates, event sequences, circumstances, etc. along the time-line they took place.
- *Result** >Candidate relates specifics of results/outcomes of actions, what was achieved, learned, etc.

Your examples provide the interviewer with demonstrations of your abilities and the path to measuring you against the core competencies. **Paint vivid mental pictures with your words, examples and presentation ! Think of yourself as a radio sports play-by-play announcer describing a basketball game to listeners. Just like the announcer's job is to make the listener mentally see and feel the game like they are sitting front row, center court at the game, you must strive to make the interviewer feel like they witnessed and shared your experiences.**

You must demonstrate a consistent track record of above average leadership and achievement. You must document it for the interviewer as comprehensively as possible with proof sources. (Sales rankings, performance appraisals, reference letters, W-2s, college transcripts, pay stubs, plaques, trophies, photos, press clippings, etc.) **Prepare a presentation book of your achievement documentation**, typically called a brag book, and make several copies to present to the interviewer for them to keep.

To win the job you must aggressively and intelligently pursue it. **Research the company thoroughly. Be able to present a concise executive briefing of your findings and why you want to work for them.** Know their history, financials, top executives, structure, products, competitors and future prospects.

The interview process is a single elimination tournament like the Super Bowl or auditioning for a part in a play. YOU must win at every step/interview. Do this and the job offer is yours!

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Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

These questions are only a small sampling. Be aware that during the typical 3-6 step interview process you will be measured on the breadth, depth, forthrightness, presentation, consistency and truthfulness of your responses. **Fabrication, falsehoods and plagiarism of experiences are not condoned and will only destroy your candidacy.**

- Tell me in detail about a typical day and week in your job.
- Share with me the details of several of your biggest sales/achievements.
- Give me an example of the biggest disappointment or failure you've had to deal with.
- Tell me about your direct boss and your relationship. What would your boss tell me about you?
- What experiences best demonstrate your persuasiveness?
- Give me an example of your competitiveness.
- Tell me about something you've done that required creativity.
- Tell me about an idea for improvement at work that you initiated.
- What do you feel are your best sales skills and why?
- Describe an instance when you resolved a customer complaint.
- What are the biggest challenges you've had to overcome in life?
- Tell me about something you accomplished primarily due to your tenacity.
- Tell me about your teamwork and a time when you provided help to teammate.
- What 5 adjectives would your current and past bosses use to describe you and why?
- Tell me about your adaptability.
- What are your specific career and personal goals 1, 3, 5 and 10 years down the road?
- Why do you like sales?

Interview Dress Expectations & Standards

-For men wear a dark (blue/gray) conservative business suit, white/blue solid shirt, conservative tie, polished shoes, neatly groomed hair, dress watch, minimal jewelry (no earrings) no cologne.

-For women conservative business attire, minimal jewelry (1 earring/ear, not dangling), low heels or flats, conservative makeup, light fragrance, neatly groomed hair (not flowing).

-Traditionally this is known as the Fortune 500 corporate look.

-Do Not Make Your Appearance an issue distracting from your qualifications. There is plenty of time once you win the job to express yourself with fashion.

Body Language & Oral/Non-Verbal Communications

-High contagious, confident, courteous energy growing throughout the interview is wanted.

-DO NOT Undermine your qualifications with body language incongruent with your spoken words.

-To exhibit the eagerness and slight butterflies of any big event is expected at the outset.

-Good, natural eye contact with all interviewers is a must.

-Let your body movements speak of your enthusiasm for the career opportunity at hand and your forthrightness.

-Start out with a firm, friendly professional handshake and build rapport from there. **You only get one chance to make a first impression!**

-Do Not use foul language or slang. The tools of a salesperson are words and their presentation and you are being measured.

-Do Not be thrown off by an interviewer that adopts a clinical, analytical interview demeanor. Remember that you are selling so seek to engage and engross them to draw their personality out.

-The Interview is a sales call, not a deposition or interrogation. You are a sales professional, make it a fun, valuable, enriching meeting for all parties.

-NO Negative body gestures like covering your mouth when you talk, crossing of arms on your chest, chewing gum, smoking or wandering eyes that may impart the sense of a lack of truthfulness. **For men, do not cross your legs,** sit upright on the edge of your seat letting it appear that you are ready to spring into action on the interviewer's behalf.

-Remember, actions speak louder than words! Let both say, hire me and I'll make you proud!

Questions to Ask & Etiquette Pointers

-Ask well thought-out questions which demonstrate your interest in the position; the company; the industry; the interviewer's experiences, needs and expectations; career advancement; future growth of the company; how the interviewer rates your qualifications against the best hires they've ever made; and your selectivity about the next position you take. **DO NOT** ask about benefits, compensation, cars, perks, etc. until you've earned the right to.

-DO CLOSE ASSERTIVELY & PROFESSIONALLY on the next step to getting the offer!

-Send a well prepared, spell-checked, grammatically correct thank you note.