

# Ventura County Community College District Human Resources Department



## Success in Interviews

Preparation, Presentation, Structure of Response

*Presented to the Classified Employees of the  
Ventura County Community College District on  
May 22, 2012*



# AGENDA



## Preparation

Knowledge of the interview process  
Knowledge of the job



## Presentation

Professionalism  
Strategies to diffuse anxiety



## Structuring your response

The STAR Technique



# Preparation

## Part 1 (A) *Interview Process:*

*What the questions are designed to measure and how to respond best*



*“By failing to prepare, you are  
preparing to fail.”*

-Benjamin Franklin





# Interview Process: Preview

1. Types of questions typically used in an interview
2. How structured interview questions are scored at VCCCD



# Interview Process: Goals

After learning the information in this section, you will have...

1. The ability to identify the types of questions typically presented in an interview
2. General knowledge of how structured interviews are scored





# Interview Process: Questions

All interview questions fall into one of two categories.

A. Unstructured

B. Structured



- Situational interview questions
- Experience based interview questions
- Technical interview questions



# Interview Process: Situational Questions

Candidates are interviewed about what actions they would take in job-related situations.







# Sample Situational Question

Say you were presented with a customer who became very angry and started to insult you. How would you handle that situation?



# Interview Process: Experience-based Interviews

This technique involves asking all candidates questions about how they handled past situations that were similar to situations they may face on the job.

This is based upon the premise that “*The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior*”





## Sample Experience-based Question

Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very angry or upset customer or co-worker.





# Interview Process: Technical Questions

Candidates are asked questions in which answers require the demonstration of job knowledge.





# Sample Technical Question

Suppose you are a college nurse and a student enters the health center in a panic. They indicate they have just been stung by a bee and are allergic to bees. How would you address this situation?





# Sample Rating Scales

Limited		Average		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5
<p>1.The limited candidate does not present an effective strategy to address the task at hand.</p> <p>2.The candidate may take action without conducting the proper diagnoses or assessment or may propose an incorrect solution.</p> <p>3.The limited candidate's response may be vague and lack sufficient detail to make an accurate assessment.</p>	<p>This candidate falls in between the "limited" and "average" candidate.</p>	<p>1.The average candidate presents an effective strategy to address the task at hand.</p> <p>2.The candidate explains they would provide the student with an epinephrine shot and monitor the student to ensure the symptoms of the reaction are not serious.</p> <p>3.The average candidate's response was effective, articulate, and easy to understand.</p>	<p>This candidate falls in between the "average" and "outstanding" candidate.</p>	<p>1.The outstanding candidate presents an effective strategy to address the task at hand . The strategy is detailed, well thought out, and includes an effective method of assessment.</p> <p>2.The candidate inquires as to whether or not the student carries epinephrine and asks questions to determine the severity of the reaction such as "<i>Is your throat swollen?</i>"</p> <p>3.This candidate takes into consideration the severity of the reaction. The resolution may include providing epinephrine or other common treatments.</p> <p>4.In comparison to the average candidate, the outstanding candidate's response had more depth and detail.</p>



# Preparation

## Part 1 (B) *Knowledge of the Job*





# Knowledge of the Job: Preview

1. Law behind job examinations used by the District
2. Important literature to review and resources to utilize





# Knowledge of the Job: Goals

After learning the information to this section, you will have...

1. The ability to identify, recognize, and utilize all the necessary information that interview questions are based on.



# Knowledge of the Job

“Examinations shall be administered objectively, and shall consist of test parts that relate to job performance” (E.C. #45273;88091)

Job performance is NOT randomly-determined

The majority of the elements of job performance for any given job are contained within the class description (AKA job specification)





## Knowledge of the Job (cont.)

In order to comply with the law questions are based on the specifications of the job, often outlined in the class description.

ALL interview questions are based on the information gathered during a job analysis.

Let's try to anticipate some questions.



# Knowledge of the Job (cont.)

Important resources to review include the following:

1. Class Specification - Try to predict the questions. The more crucial the duty, the more likely the panel will ask about it.
2. Review the Job Bulletin.
3. Find out as much as you can about the department or agency that has granted interview.





# Part 2:

## **Presentation**

### *Professionalism*





# Professionalism: Preview

1. First Impressions
2. Establishing Credibility & Trust
3. Managing anxiety







# Professionalism: Goals

After learning the information in this section, you will have...

1. The ability to recognize and be attentive to effective interview presentation behaviors
2. Knowledge of strategies to deal with anxiety



# Professionalism: First Impressions

1. Dress Professionally
2. Be early, be nice....
3. How's your handshake?
4. What's my name?







# Professionalism: Establish Credibility & Trust

1. Sit up straight
2. Maintain eye contact
3. Tell the truth!
4. Stay positive!





# Professionalism: But I'm *Nervous!!*

## Manage your nervousness:

1. Be well prepared
2. Breathe deeply
3. Visualize success
4. Put it into perspective





Part 3:  
Structuring Your Response  
*The STAR Technique*





# The STAR Technique: Preview

1. The importance of a structured response
2. Definition of the STAR Technique
3. Selecting experiences to discuss
4. Applying Steps of STAR to an example
5. Practice activity





# STAR - Goals

After learning the information in this section, you will be able to...

1. Identify the correct usage of the STAR technique for experience based interview questions.



# STAR: Why To Structure Your Response

1. The quality and completeness of your responses has an enormous impact on the success of your interview
2. The STAR technique helps you to shape your responses with quality and completeness
3. With organized responses, you appear more competent and will feel more confident





# STAR - The Basics

1. Situation - the circumstance
2. Task - your responsibility
3. Action - what you did
4. Result - positive outcome





# STAR in Action

Question: What is one of your greatest accomplishments?

1. **Situation** - When I was a senior in High School...
2. **Task** - I was put in charge of fundraising for an annual charity drive.
3. **Action** - I organized a benefit concert and charity basketball game.
4. **Result** - In the end, we raised a record amount of money for the benefit.







# STAR: When to use it

1. Following a Procedure
  - describing a process
2. Working with People
  - organizing / motivating coworkers
  - working in a group or team.
3. Problem Solving
  - coming up with a solution
  - new way of doing something.





# STAR: What can you use?

- Where can past experiences come from?

1. Previous jobs
2. School
3. Volunteer activities
4. Family events
5. Peer interactions







# Step 1: Situation and Task

In response to an interview question

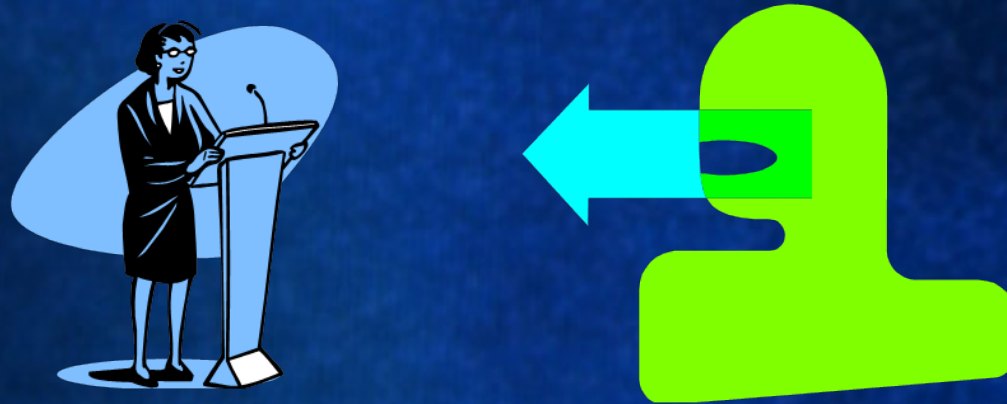
- Describe a relevant *situation* that you were in
- Describe the *task* that you needed to accomplish
  - Be specific and detailed.





## Step 2: Action you took

- Describe the *action* you took
  1. Be specific about what your contribution was in the situation
  2. In a group project, focus on what you did







## Step 3: Results you achieved

1. Did you achieve your goal?
  - If not, what did you learn?
2. What did you accomplish?
  - Or, how did the event end?
3. Highlight Success!



STAR:  
Your Turn to practice...





# Example of the STAR Technique

## Example Interview Question 1

“Tell me about a time when you provided customer service to an upset client.”



# Example of the STAR Technique

## (Situation/Task)

- *I was an office assistant in a payroll department.*
- *An angry employee came to the counter and explained that his check amount was too low and that he wasn't able to pay rent on time because of the mistake.*





# Example of the STAR Technique

## (Action)

1. *I informed the man that I would figure out what happened and what could be done.*
2. *I compared the payroll records logbook with the computer payroll database.*
3. *I discovered a data error, which explained the incorrect amount.*
4. *I explained what had happened and took action to give the man a check for his missing balance.*



# Example of the STAR Technique

## (Result)

- *The employee thanked me and even asked to speak with my supervisor about how helpful I was.*





# Example of the STAR Technique

Example Question 2 (Experience-based): “Tell me about a time when you were primarily responsible for completing an important task or assignment.”

1. **Situation**
2. **Task**
3. **Action**
4. **Result**





# RECAP

Hopefully, you are walking away with some of the following:

1. The ability to identify the types of questions typically presented in an interview
2. General knowledge of how structured interviews are scored
3. The ability to identify, recognize, and utilize all the necessary information that interview questions are based on.
4. The ability to recognize and be attentive to effective interview presentation behaviors
5. Knowledge of strategies to deal with anxiety
6. The ability to identify the correct usage of the STAR technique



# Questions?

Thank You!



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