**Handout #5**

**Most common interview questions used**

1. **Tell me about yourself**

**What the employer means:** Who do you think you are? And will you know what to leave in and what to leave out?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** Break it down and rehearse it. This question will require the same answer, so this is one that you can prepare and practice to be confident in the delivery.

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:** you’re self-confident, and you have prepared.

**2. What are your weaknesses?**

**What the employer means:** Am I right in thinking x about you? And are you going to give me the same old vague and lame answers that everybody else did, or are you going to level with me?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** If you’ve been invited to interview, chances are that the interviewer is seeking affirmation of predicted weaknesses, not information about new ones.

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:**

To be honest, but answered carefully. Your first answer should always leave the interviewer totally satisfied. Don’t make them ask the question twice!

End your answer, by asking a question to redirect the conversation back to what you can do. Ask them if you have addressed their concerns.

**3. Why did you leave your last job? (If they haven’t worked, carefully planned answer as to why they haven’t worked)**

**What the employer means:** Do you know what this job is? And to be a little paranoid, do you have some murky problem that I can’t see now? Did you get fired.. Employer is thinking get me out of here!

**Your tactic for answering the question:** It’s not about you. Link your answer to what the company needs

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:**

That this question doesn’t need to be a confessional, it may be a warmer. Focus on the question and your answer should be linked to what’s on offer and what’s expected of you.

**4. Tell me about a time when you worked in a team**

**What the employer means:** No one achieves anything on their own and you know that, right?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** Find a recent real-world example, where you’ve played successfully with others

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:**

You can work with others and you can also recognise the importance of others contributions to the success of you work / project. Unless you’re going for a job as a lighthouse keeper, you will always be assessed in an interview for your ability to work with others.

You should use the **STAR** technique to help you structure your answer to this question.

**5. Why do you want this job?**

**What the employer means:** What can you do that we need you to do? Do you even know what we need you to do?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** Think about the job specification in every line of your answer. Talk about their needs before you mention your own.

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:**

“I’m applying because my skills, experience and motivation are the best fit for the job”.

**6. Choose from a selection of STAR questions:**

**Share an example of a time when you had to handle a difficult customer?**

**What the employer means:** Everyone comes across a difficult person to work with or serve. How do you handle such situations?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** You need to be able to show that you can work with anyone and you won’t change your behaviour or the level of customer service you deliver, no matter how difficult or annoying the person is.

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:** you can follow the company policies and procedures and that the customer has left happy with the solution / way you have handled the situation or that you don’t have a problem asking for help (if it turns out that you cannot help solve the issue of the person you are dealing with), being able to ask for help is crucial in any job.

You should use the **STAR** technique to help you structure your answer to this question.

**Handout #6**

**What Questions Should You Be Asking?**

**1. About the role**

* What would success look like? In this job, how will success be judged?
* Why has the position become available?
* Why was the position created? (If it’s a new role)
* Why did they leave or what did they go on to do? (If someone has left the role).
* What does a typical day look like?
* Do you expect the responsibilities of this role to evolve?
* You advertised the vacancy as having the following shift pattern (quote the shift pattern advertised). Is this still the case?
* What sort of person has succeeded in this role in the past?
* Should I get the job, what are the priorities I’d be focusing on?

**2. Questions about the company**

*These sorts of questions are ideal for demonstrating your knowledge about the industry, as well as recent developments at the organisation. This is the place to put that Googling to good use.*

* Are there any plans for expansion?
* What are the most important goals the company is focused on currently?
* How would you describe the company culture?
* What’s the most important feature that distinguishes this company from its competitors?

**3. About the team**

*The following questions help you assess how you’ll fit in with your immediate co-workers and present yourself as a team player who is an ideal fit for the existing culture.*

* What are the top two personality traits someone would need to fit in here?
* How large is the team I will be working with?
* Do you hold team-building events?
* Can you tell me about the team I will be working with?
* Is the team personally close knit? Do members of the team socialise outside the office?
* What other teams work most closely with this one?

**4. About next steps**

*This section offers the types of questions you should absolutely always ask, every time, in every interview. The only exception would be if you have a recruitment consultant, EA or RM following up on your behalf, however, it doesn’t hurt to ask so you are clear on what they have agreed.*

What are the next steps in the interview process?

Can I provide you with anything else that would be helpful?

What happens next?

When do you think you’ll be making a decision?

**5. About the interviewer**

*Not everyone who interviews likes interviewing nor, frankly is everyone good at it. If you sense your interviewer is uncomfortable, asking them for their personal take on professional matters may help to loosen them up and create a personal bond.*

What’s the best thing about working at your company?

What’s different about working here from companies you’ve worked with in the past?

How has the company changed since you joined?

Why do you like working here?

Where do you see the company heading?

How do you see the company evolving in the next 5 years?

(Source: Why You 101 Interview Questions You’ll Never Fear Again, James Reed)

**Can you demonstrate how you solved a problem and what you did to overcome it?**

**What the employer means:** Everyone comes across a difficult person to work with or serve. How do you handle such situations?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** You need to be able to show that you can work with anyone and you won’t change your behaviour or the level of customer service you deliver, no matter how difficult or annoying the person is.

**The employer wants to hear you provide the example / evidence to prove that:** you can follow the company policies and procedures and that the customer has left happy with the solution / way you have handled the situation or that you don’t have a problem asking for help (if it turns out that you cannot help solve the issue of the person you are dealing with), being able to ask for help is crucial in any job.

You should use the **STAR** technique to help you structure your answer to this question.

**Describe a time when you couldn't finish your work on time**

**What the employer means:** How do you prioritise tasks, organise your work and handle time pressure?

**Your tactic for answering the question:** Use the STAR technique – remember to be realistic and human.

**The employer wants to hear you provide an example / evidence to prove that:** You have organisational ability, skill at priority and a cool head under pressure, all jobs have difficulties and they want to see what you would do in such a situation. Don’t shy away from including where you may have failed during the process, it shows that you are human, the most important thing is that you have clearly shown how you have learnt from the whole experience.

**Handout #7**

**Mock Interview Questions – Observer Feedback Sheet**

Name ………………………….. Date…………………………

1. Tell me about yourself?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

1. Tell me your strengths? Also, what are your weaknesses?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

3. Why do you want this job?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

4. Why should we hire you?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

5. What motivates you?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

6. Tell me about a time when you worked in a team

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

7. Do you have any questions for me about the job?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Feedback** |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Overall Feedback** |
| Consider body language, tone of voice etc |

**Handout #8**

**Interviewer: Mock Interview Questions**

Name ………………………….. Date…………………………

1. Tell me about yourself?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

1. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

3. Why do you want this job?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

4. Why should we hire you?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

5. What motivates you?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

6. Tell me about a time when you worked in a team

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

7. Do you have any questions for me about the job?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate answer** | **Ideas for improvement** |
|  |  |

**Handout #9**

|  |
| --- |
| **Self-Reflection** |
| What went well? |
|  |
| What did I learn? |
|  |
| What do I need to improve on? |
|  |