

EPISODE 4 – Handling Interview Questions: Tips & Tools

Slide 1:

Mini-Series: Own Your Selection Process. Episode 4: Handling Interview Questions: Tips & Tools

Slide 2:

In this episode, we will be focussing on How to handle interview questions? Questions to expect based on the job description, and an overview and example using the STAR technique.

Slide 3:

How to handle interview questions?

It's impossible to know the exact questions you will be asked, but there are some common questions that you should be prepared for...questions about:

- **You** – you will need to be comfortable giving the interviewer an overview of who you are and what skills & experience you have that meet the requirements of the job, as well as to why you are interested in the position. Be confident in the unique skills and capabilities that you can offer and practice how you would articulate them to speak to job.
- **Job** – understand the job description and be prepared to motivate how you meet the competencies required with solid examples.
- **Employer** – know who you are meeting with – by ensuring thorough knowledge of the company and what they do. The company will ask questions to ascertain your understanding of their business and where this position fits in.
- **Sector or Industry** – When doing research, formulate your own opinions and questions that demonstrate your interest and knowledge about the industry. Be prepared to be probed on your opinions – therefore ensure that you are confident and that can justify your thinking with logical reasoning.

Slide 4: Question to expect based on the Job Description

For an **Assistant Brand Manager**, graduate role –

These are the required competencies: Trained in Marketing Research, an understanding of Brand Optimization, Able to present and execute creative ideas and marketing activities, Thorough understanding of marketing campaigns (from promotion to launch), Stakeholder management, understanding of budgeting and proficient in analyzing google analytics.

Question examples:

- *Can you give me an example of a **brand promotion and activation campaign** that has stood out to you, and why?*
- *If we asked you to prepare benchmark analysis, how would you start your **research**?*
- *Can you give me an example of a time when you had to deliver a project that required dealing with many **different stakeholders**?*

- **For digital marketing:** What *metrics* would you monitor why? What *reports* would you create to keep track of them?

Slide 6: continued...

You can therefore clearly see which questions are testing which competencies...

Slide 5: Which brings us to The Star Technique

In order to help you answer these type of questions – there is a very useful technique called the STAR technique. It is a technique that helps you structure and answer situational/competency-based questions in an organized manner.

When answering, use the acronym STAR to structure your answer:

- **Situation** – CONTEXT - Provide Context. What was going on? Who was involved? What was at stake?
- **Task** – the task or project that you were working on, What needed to be achieved or accomplished? What were the expected outcomes?
- **Action** – What did YOU do? What action did YOU take? How did YOU do what YOU did?
- **Result** – What was the outcome? Positive - Share it. Negative – Still share, what did you learn from it? Or, how you would handle the situation differently next time?

Here is an example...

Slide 6:

Question: **Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision that impacted other people?**

Situation:

- Last year, I was the Chairperson of the InvestSoc Committee and we had a networking event with various directors from XY Bank.
- It was a prestigious event and attendees had to go through an application process to attend.
- We had invested lots of funds and time into the event and so it was really stressful when the main speaker of the event cancelled the day before the event.

Task:

- I needed to make a decision regarding what to do.
- All of the marketing material had this individuals name on it & many attendees were coming just to listen to her.
- I therefore had to make a very quick, but tough decision that impacted all of the attendees, as well as the society and corporate partners.
- Do we go ahead or cancel the event?

Action:

- I called an urgent committee meeting as soon as I found out.
- I lead a brainstorm session to quickly identify what the best solution was to mitigate the risks associated with this cancelation.

- We decided it was best not to cancel and to instead ask one of our other high-level corporate attendees to fill in.
- I got onto the phone immediately and tried to find an appropriate replacement speaker.

Result:

- We managed to secure another female speaker to speak with really great credentials.
- As soon as her attendance was confirmed, I got marketing to send out comms to all attendees regarding the change.
- The event was a huge success and we had full attendance.

Even though this result was positive, you would not shy away from using an example that didn't have the expected/a positive outcome – but always ensure to share a learning or how you would do it differently next time.

Slide 7: Thank you for tuning in to episode 4 of Mini-series: Own Your Selection Process, brought to you by the UCT Careers Service. Be sure to tune in to episode 5 where we will be focusing on Virtual Interviews.