

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Hospitality, Sport & Recreation Management



7-Step Interview Prep Plan & STAR Technique

1. Research the organization.

This will help you answer questions — and stand out from less-prepared candidates.

- **Seek background information.**
 - Use tools like Handshake and LinkedIn for an overview of the organization and its industry profile.
 - Visit the organization's website to ensure that you understand the breadth of what they do.
 - Review the organization's background and mission statement.
 - Assess their products, services and client-base.
 - Read recent press releases for insight on projected growth and stability.
- **Get perspective.** Review trade or business publications. Seek perspective and a glimpse into their industry standing.
- **Develop a question list.** Prepare to ask about the company/position based on your research.

2. Compare your skills and qualifications to the job requirements.

- **Analyze the job description.** Outline the knowledge, skills and abilities required.
- **Examine the hierarchy.** Determine where the position fits within the organization.
- **Look side-by-side.** Compare what the employer is seeking to your qualifications.

3. Prepare responses.

Most interviews involve a combination of resume-based, behavioral and case questions. We encourage you to meet with us to practice telling your story in the best possible way. *See STAR technique on page two.*

4. Plan what to wear.

- **Neutral.** Conservative business attire (neutral-colored suit and professional shoes) is best.
- **Err formal.** If instructed to dress "business casual," use good judgment.
- **Plug in that iron.** Make sure your clothes are neat and wrinkle-free.
- **Dress to impress.** Be sure that your overall appearance is neat and clean.

5. Plan what to bring.

- Extra copies of your resume on quality paper
- A notepad or professional binder and pen
- A list of references
- Information you might need to complete an application
- A portfolio with samples of your work, if relevant

6. Pay attention to non-verbal communication.

- **Be mindful.** Nonverbal communication speaks volumes.
- **Start ahead.** Remember that waiting room behaviors may be reported.
- **Project confidence.** Smile, establish eye contact and use a firm handshake.
- **Posture counts.** Sit up straight yet comfortably. Be aware of nervous gestures (i.e. hand gestures and/or foot-tapping).
- **Be attentive.** Don't stare, but maintain good eye contact, while addressing all aspects of an interviewer's questions.
- **Respect their space.** Do not place anything on their desk.
- **Manage reactions.** Facial expressions provide clues to your feelings. Manage how you react, and project a positive image.

7. Follow up.

Many interviews end with “Do you have any questions?”

- **Bring a list.** You may say, “In preparing for today's meeting, I took some time to jot down a few questions. Please allow me to review my notes.”
- **Be strategic.** Cover information not discussed OR clarify a previous topic — do not ask for information that can be found on the organization's website.
 - In your opinion, what makes this organization a great place to work?
 - What do you consider the most important criteria for success in this job?
 - Tell me about the organization's culture.
 - How will my performance be evaluated?
 - What are the opportunities for advancement?
 - What are the next steps in the hiring process?

STAR Technique for Answering Interview Questions

→ **STAR** stands for:

- **Situation** - describe the past situation
- **Task** - describe task you needed to accomplish
- **Action** - describe the action you took
- **Results** - what did you accomplish or learn?

→ For example, if an interviewer said, “**Tell me about a project you initiated,**” you could answer:

- **Situation/Task** - During my internship last summer I was responsible for managing “ABC” events ... I noticed that attendance at these events had dropped by 30% over the past 3 years.
- **Action** - I designed a new promotional packet to go out to the local community businesses... collected feedback on our events... organized internal discussions to raise awareness.
- **Result** - We utilized ideas from the community, made our internal systems more efficient and visible and raised attendance by 25% the first year.

→ With each behavioral question asked, think through what information is being sought – and provide an example from your own experience.

→ Don't ramble; take a moment to collect your thoughts and organize your answer before replying. Try not to say 'we' too often – the interviewer wants to know specifically what **YOU** accomplished.