



growing
your career

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Mastering the Interview: Informal and Formal

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Agenda

- Informal Interviews
 - Steps to requesting Informational Interviews
- Formal Interviews
- Behavioral-based interviewing
 - STAR Framework
 - Partial & False STARs
- Preparing for an Interview
- Activities
 - Prepare a STAR Answer
 - Peer Practice Interviews
- Key Takeaways



Informal Interviews

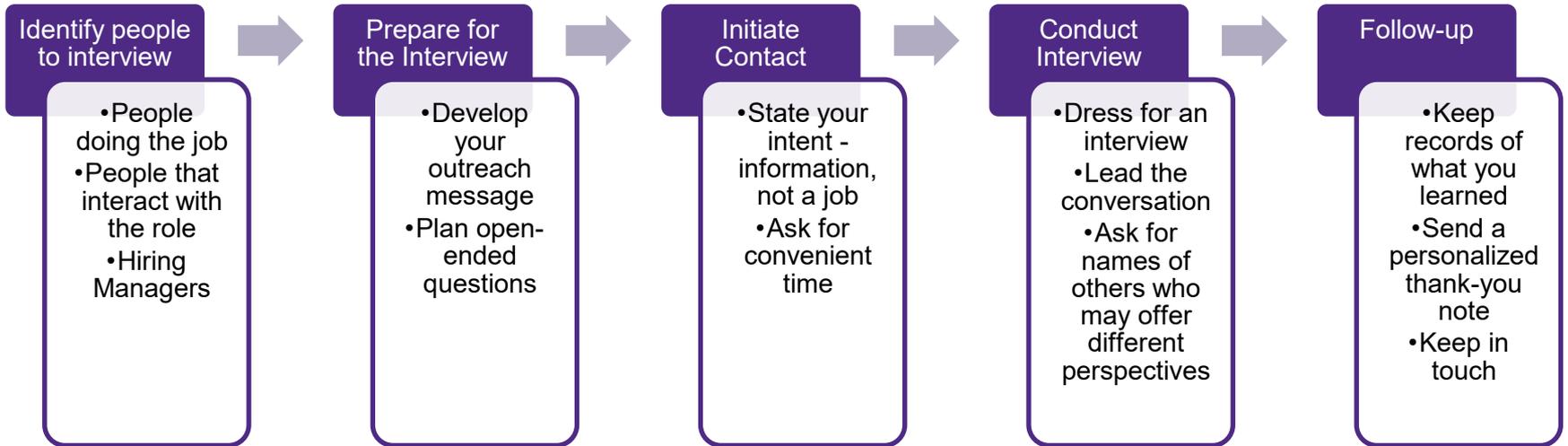
Also known as Informational Interviewing

Benefits:

- Get firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a particular field, industry or position. This kind of information is not always available online.
- Find out about career paths you did not know existed.
- Get tips and insider knowledge about how to prepare for your next career move.
- Learn what it's like to work at a specific organization or in a specific department.
- Initiate a professional relationship and expand your network of contacts in a specific career field; meet people who may forward job leads to you in the future.



Request Informational Interviews



Requesting Information Interview Templates



Template #1: Emailing Someone You Know

Subject: Catching Up and Collecting Information

Hi [friend's first name],

Hope all is going well in your world!

I am considering a career change and exploring career alternatives. Working as a [what you do] at [where you work] for [number of years] has been great, but I'd like to grow my skill set and expand my horizons.

So, I'm exploring opportunities with [or in a new field/industry -- name of field/industry, or working with customers you want], hoping to learn more about [skill set(s) you want, industry you want, customers you want, or whatever your goal is]. Given your wide experience and network, I would love to get your take on [whatever you specified earlier in this paragraph].

If you have some time to spare in the next 3 weeks, it would be great to get together for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, even lunch or dinner (my treat!). Give me a couple of date/time options that would work best for you, and we'll find a time to connect.

If you're too busy to get together now, a short (15 or 20 minutes) phone call would be a great, too. Just let me know the best time and phone number for you.

I'd love to catch up on what's happening in your world and also have an opportunity to pick your brain about this topic.

Thank you so much for your assistance on this. Please let me know how I can help you.

Regards,

[Your name]

Template #2: Emailing Someone with a Referral

Subject: Informational Interview Request Referred by (Referral Name)

Dear Ms. Denison,

We have a shared contact in Dr. David Friend, CEO of Biomedical XYZ. He suggested that I contact you for additional information regarding the latest trends in the field of biomedical sciences. I would like the opportunity to meet or speak with you to discuss your insight on the range of careers to pursue within the biomedical field. I understand that you are on a strict schedule and would appreciate any time that you could spare to meet with me in person or by phone. Any suggestions you could offer would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Your full name]

[Your current job title]

[Your phone number]

[Your LinkedIn Profile's URL]

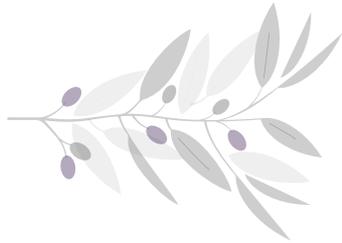


Formal Interviews

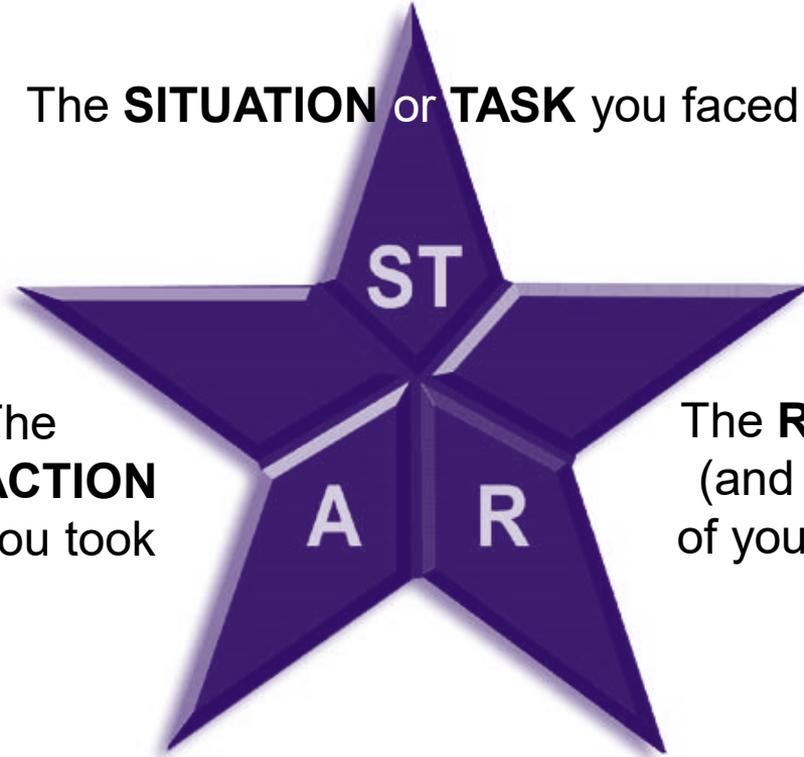
- Behavioral-Based Interviewing
 - Popular method of interviewing based on the premise that:

Past behavior predicts future behavior

Tell me about a time when...



The **SITUATION** or **TASK** you faced



The **ACTION**
you took

The **RESULT**
(and impact)
of your action



STAR Method





Partial STARS

- Missing one or more elements of a STAR
 - When the rush order came in, our team leader offered each of us overtime to get it out. I turned it down because I already had agreed to play golf with some friends. **Missing RESULT**
 - I was part of the negotiating team for my department when we negotiated our last contract. Let me tell you, the bargaining on this one was tough; no one wanted to give an inch. But, in the end we got them to agree to most of our demands.
Missing ACTION



False STARs

- Vague statements
- Opinions
- Theoretical or future orientated statements
 - I think coaching is the most important skill a leader can have. It separates great leaders from average ones.
 - I was responsible for getting proposals through the system and out to the client.
 - The next time I get that kind of resistance, I'll know how to handle it.



Preparing for an Interview

- Research the organization to be knowledgeable about what they do
 - Organization or department website
- Research the individuals you are meeting with
 - LinkedIn profiles, website bios
- Identify behavioral and technical competencies important for the job or organization
 - Job description, website
 - What do they value most in people?

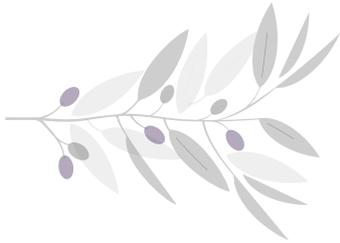


Preparing for an Interview

- Prepare two stories for each competency using the STAR framework
 - Stories should be concise (60 to 90 seconds)
 - Both positive and challenging situations
 - Expect follow-up questions
 - What did you learn from this experience?
 - What would you do differently next time?
- Prepare for general requests for information
 - Tell me about yourself
 - Take me through your resume

Preparing for an Interview

- Prepare questions to ask the interviewers
 - Tailor the question to the person's role and level
- Practice with family, friends, colleagues



Prepare a STAR Answer



Peer Practice Interviews



Debrief

A piece of white, slightly crumpled paper is pinned to a textured, light-colored surface. The paper has the words "PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT" written on it in a bold, black, hand-drawn font. The text is arranged in three lines: "PRACTICE" on the top line, "MAKES" on the middle line, and "PERFECT" on the bottom line. The paper is held in place by several clear adhesive tabs.

PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT



Key Takeaways

- **S**ituation/**T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult
- Prepare your stories
 - Be specific
 - Be concise
- Practice... and practice some more

Questions?

