

# Be The S.T.A.R. of Your Next Job Interview

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For generations Latino families have passed on stories that teach us about our history, culture, values, and life-lessons. It is this gift of storytelling that our parents and abuelos bestowed on us that can make the difference in whether we succeed during our next job interview.

Susan Whitcomb, CEO of Career Masters Institute, explains that employers are looking for candidates who can do the job, will do the job, and fit into the corporate culture, thus adding **value** to the company. Value can be woven into your responses to virtually every interview question. This is your opportunity to create your own *chisme* and land a job offer.

Three methods of conveying value are:

1. Linking your past successes and future solutions to employer's needs.
2. Demonstrating a return on investment (ROI).
3. Emphasizing the benefits (instead of the features) of your qualifications.

Many employers prefer that you deliver your responses via behavioral or competency based interviews that asks you to outline the given problem or challenge, explain how you handled it, and describe the results of your actions. Try using the **S.T.A.R.** story technique – **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esults when answering these questions.

A **S.T.A.R.** story will allow you to craft your responses with a targeted beginning, a brief explanatory middle, and a strong ending that provides the interviewer with details that demonstrate what you can do for them. Using this format allows you to neatly link your response to employer's behavioral or competency question and focus the conversation on how you can do the job.

**S.T.A.R.** stories should be concise and compelling as outlined below.

**SITUATION:** *Define the situation or "set the stage":*

Example: "assigned as an account manager to take over an underperforming sales territory – #92 out of 100 districts."

**TASK:** *Identify the key objective / task performed:*

Example: "To increase sales 20% and boost customer base 10%."

**ACTION:** *Describe the action you took or initiated. This response should illustrate the specific skills you used in completing the task.*

Example: "Conducted a market analysis and customer service survey; developed a business plan that focused on value-added service, sales incentives, and referral bonus program to benefit customers; and rolled out a 3-level marketing strategy to implement the plan."

**RESULT:** *Summarize the outcome.*

Example: District ranking improved to #9 in the region within a year; store sales increased 37%; net profit margin per sale improved 7%; and commercial customer base grew 18%. My business plan was adapted for use by all account managers in the region. Earned Account Manager of the Year Award.

We recommend that you prepare several **S.T.A.R.** stories to address various aspects of the position you are interviewing for. Your inventory of stories can represent everything from simple improvements to major achievements. They can represent individual successes or team contributions. In short, your **S.T.A.R.** stories will not only help you feel more confident and better prepared for interviews, but will improve your perceived value in the eyes of your potential employers.

## S.T.A.R. Story Worksheet

**S** = Situation

**T** = Task

**A** = Actions you took

**R** = Results delivered

### SITUATION:

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Where: \_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Who else was involved from your team? Who was impacted?

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One problem I had to overcome:

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**TASK:**

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One specific issue I addressed was:

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**ACTION:**

To solve the problem, I:

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**RESULTS:**

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The end result was:

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