

THE STAR FRAMEWORK

- SITUATION**
- S** Set the scene in 1-2 sentences. Give just enough context for the story to make sense
- TASK**
- T** Your specific role and what you were personally accountable for delivering or deciding
- ACTION**
- A** The exact steps YOU took. Use "I" not "we." This is 60% of your answer. Go deep here
- RESULT**
- R** Quantify the outcome. What changed, by how much? Include what you learned or would do differently

CAR VARIANT: MCKINSEY, BAIN, SOME BANKS

- C: Context**
Situation and Task combined. Keep it to 2 tight sentences
- A: Action**
Your specific actions. Most of your answer time goes here
- R: Result**
Quantified outcome plus what you learned

WHAT INTERVIEWERS SCORE YOU ON

- Structure:**
Clear arc. Does it follow STAR well
- Specificity:**
Real numbers, names, context. No vague generalities
- Impact:**
Did it matter? What measurably changed because of you
- Your Role:**
Did YOU do it? Use "I" clearly and consistently throughout
- Reflection:**
What did you learn? What would you change if you did it again

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ✗ Saying "we" instead of "I." They score what you did, not the team
- ✗ Spending too long on Situation/Task. Get to Action quickly
- ✗ No numbers. "Significantly improved" tells the interviewer nothing
- ✗ Not answering the actual question that was asked
- ✗ Picking a story where you were not the key decision-maker
- ✗ Ending without a result or a lesson learned

QUESTION CATEGORIES - 2 STORIES PER CATEGORY

- Leadership:**
Led without authority, drove change, owned decisions
- Problem Solving:**
Ambiguous situation, creative or analytical solution
- Conflict:**
Disagreement with peer or manager and how you resolved it
- Failure:**
Real failure, owned it, what changed afterward
- Influence:**
Persuaded without authority using data and relationships
- Teamwork:**
Collaboration with difficult teammates or across functions
- Pressure:**
Tight deadline or competing priorities and how you managed
- Initiative:**
Went beyond scope, found a gap, drove the solution
- Ambiguity:**
Unclear direction, made judgment calls with incomplete info
- Impact:**
Most meaningful result: specific numbers, lasting change

POWER OPENING PHRASES

- "The situation was [X], and I was specifically responsible for [Y]..."
- "My hypothesis going in was [X]. Here is what I actually found..."
- "I made the call to [X] because my data showed [Y]..."
- "The result was [X% / \$X impact], and looking back I would have [Y]..."
- "I pushed back on [X] because [Y], and ultimately [outcome]..."

ANSWER LENGTH GUIDE

- Target:**
90 sec to 2 min (~150-200 spoken words)
- Situation / Task:**
15-20% of your answer (~25 words)
- Action:**
60-65% of your answer (~100 words)
- Result:**
20-25% of your answer (~35 words)
- Too short:**
Under 60 seconds means not specific enough
- Too long:**
Over 3 minutes and you are losing the interviewer

WHEN THEY DRILL DEEPER

- Pause before answering. "Let me think about that for a second."
- Go one level deeper on your action: what exactly did you say or do?
- If you cannot recall a number, bound it: "At least X, probably closer to Y."
- Never contradict your story. Stay consistent on the facts.