

# Ace the Interview



Brian Bilski  
Military Recruiting Manager  
Northrop Grumman Aerospace Sector  
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# Agenda

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- What's the purpose?
- Know the Job
- What's in it for *THEM*?
- Interviewing Basics
- Before & During the Interview
- Interview Tips and More Interview Tips
- After the Interview
- How to Answer Different Types of Questions



## Purpose of the Interview

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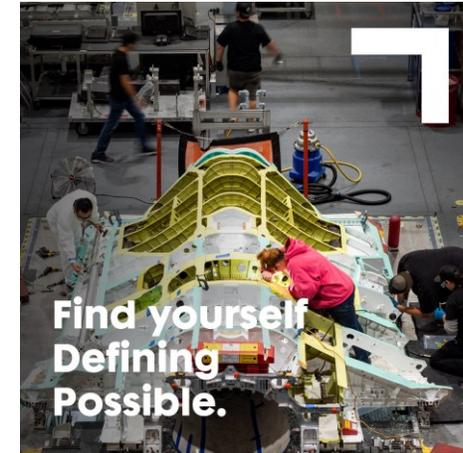
- The purpose of interviewing, from the perspective of the interviewer, is to filter out all the possible candidates to find the best fit for the job
- The fact you have been called for an interview means you are qualified for the position—so this is an opportunity to present why you are the best candidate for the job!



## Know the Job

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- Read every single word in the job description, including:
  1. Company overview
  2. Job summary
  3. Responsibilities
  4. Knowledge, skills and abilities required
  5. Make note of what you have and what you don't have
  6. How could you get the missing skills, experience, etc.?
  7. Look for specific verbiage
  8. Customize all your communications to the specific job
  9. Copy the job description into a new document to create your cover letter or message to the company from scratch
- Resume, cover letter and application must be **ERROR FREE!**



## What's in it for THEM?

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- Always keep in mind what the company needs and what the interviewers are looking for
- **Don't decline interviews** (as long as it could be a mutual fit between you and the company). These will give you opportunities to practice. If you are invited, take them seriously and do your best. You may wind up surprised.
- Get the job offer, then decide if you want the job or not
- Always answer questions with experiences that are **relevant to the job** you are discussing
- If this is not the right job for you, might they have **other openings** which you will be a better fit?
- Flatter them – great company, great opportunity, great question...

Virtual Interview Tips

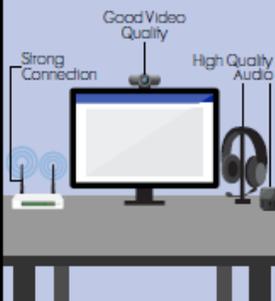
How to Succeed in an **Online Interview**



Make the most of your remote interview experience

**PREPARE**

**Test Your Equipment**



**Practice speaking into the camera**



**Check the lighting, angles and background**



**Wear Business Attire**



- Have questions ready
- Show up early



**SHINE LIKE A STAR**

- Look** into the camera
- Speak** clearly
- Ask** questions

**USE THE STAR METHOD TO SHOWCASE YOUR SUCCESS**

- Situation** – Describe an event or situation where you succeeded
- Task** – Explain the task you completed
- Action** – Describe the specific actions you took
- Result** – Close with the result of your efforts

**FOLLOW UP**

- Thank the interviewer for their time
- Soon afterwards, thank them again in a note in email
- Reiterate why you'd be a good fit for the job

## In Person Interview Basics

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- Arrive 15 minutes early
- Know the exact time and location of your interview, how long it takes to get there (with traffic), where you should park, etc.
- Dress appropriately. (For the position) Wear a suit ... unless they specifically tell you not to wear a suit when you ask.
- Treat everyone you encounter with courtesy and respect. For example, the Receptionist might be asked for feedback during the hiring process.
- Make your personal grooming and cleanliness impeccable, including your hair, hands and fingernails
- Wear minimal cologne or perfume
- Eye contact, good posture, a firm handshake, a smile and a friendly greeting go a long way



## Before & During the Interview

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- Prepare to **be relevant** during your interview
  - How does your experience apply to what is required for this job?
  - For example, 15 years of Accounting experience alone doesn't qualify you as a Finance Manager. Talk about your Finance and Management experience, even you have much less of it
- **Learn everything** you can about the organization (just Google it and read)
  - Impress them with your research and preparation skills
  - Determine how you will enjoy working at this company
  - Demonstrate how and why you will be a great employee there
- **Research your interviewers** – LinkedIn, Google, background, job history, etc.
  - If you don't have their names, ask for them before the interview
  - Get contact information at the end of your interview to send follow up



## Interview Tips

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- Be prepared to give answers that showcase what the company could gain by hiring you and how you will solve their challenges.
- Don't oversell yourself though; they should need to sell you a little too. Tell them you are going on other interviews and looking for the best role.
- Don't treat the interview casually, as if you are just shopping around or doing the interview for practice. This is insulting to the interviewer.
- Don't make negative comments about previous companies, managers, etc.
- Don't give the impression you are only interested in salary.
- Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate.
- Don't chew gum or smell like smoke.
- Don't take cell phone calls during an interview. If you carry a cell phone, turn it off during the interview.



## More Interview Tips

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- Relax – deep breaths, it’s just a conversation
- Smile and be friendly and genuine (even on the phone)
- Don’t be funny! Don’t make jokes or be sarcastic. It can do more harm than good.
- Take time to think
- Silence is golden! Pauses are better than um’s, uhs and filler words
- If you want a few seconds to think, say “That’s a great question...” which doubles as a compliment, and flattering your interviewer (genuinely) helps
- When in doubt, ask clarifying questions
- After an answer, ask “Did that sufficiently answer your question?” (not every time)
- Be realistic! Know your qualifications and limitations. Wanting a job does not necessarily mean you are qualified for it, and they will appreciate your honesty.



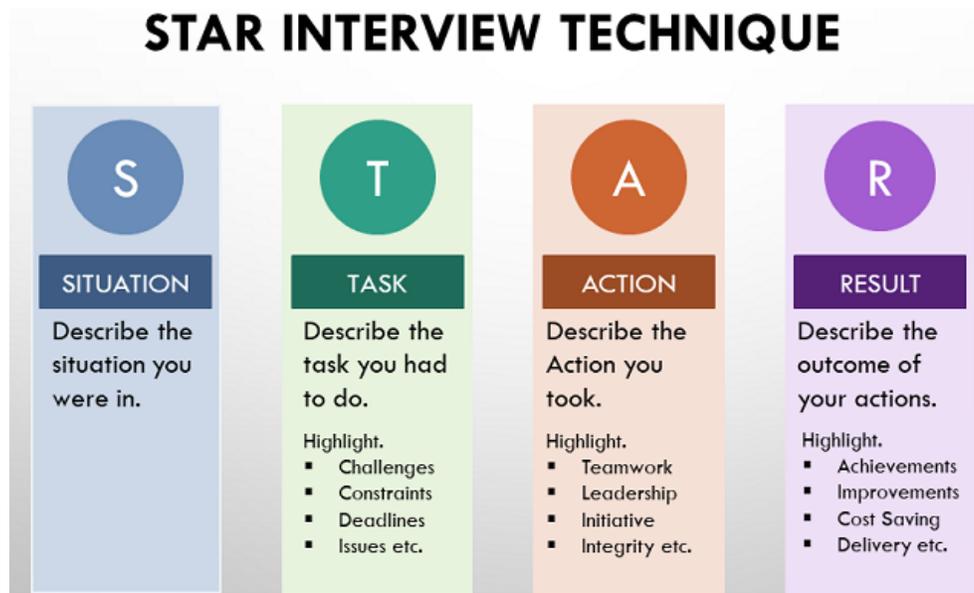
## After the Interview

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- Email a thank you note immediately to everyone you interviewed with
  - Be specific but brief – include insights from the interview and relevant details from your background
  - If you don't have contact info, ask for it to be forwarded on to the right person
  
- Follow up with your point of contact every Friday.
  - Hi, since it's Friday, I am following up on all my pending job opportunities. I wanted to touch base with you to see if there has been any progress. I understand that these decisions take time, so I am in no way rushing, but would love to know that I have been selected for the next round of interviews. Let me know if you have any further questions about the value I can provide. Thank you.



# STAR Technique & Example Interview Questions



- What are the most important values you are looking for in a company?
- How would you respond to a conversation between co-workers that was clearly offensive to others?
- Have you ever been in a situation where your opinion differed from a colleague? How was that handled and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond.
- Tell me about a time when you took on something significant outside your area of responsibility. Why was it important? What was the outcome?
- Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was or potentially implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?

# How to Answer Different Types of questions

## Tell me about yourself

- One sentence about your professional history
- One sentence about your present and
- One sentence about your professional future

**Behavioral Based questions** ask you to describe a time when you experienced something specific.

- Try to understand the underlying skills they are looking for (i.e. learning quickly, technical ability, collaboration)
- Give an honest answer that is also relevant to the job

**Hypothetical questions** ask how you would handle a specific situation.

- Ask clarifying questions
- Think about what they are looking for someone to solve
- Answer to the best of your ability

## Strengths and Weaknesses

- Know yourself and your genuine strengths and weaknesses
- Provide specific examples of strengths
- State the weakness (or opportunity for improvement) and then what you have learned or done to improve this skill in yourself

Why have you been out of work for the past 2 years (if out of work)?

- I left \_\_\_\_\_ company in (month, year)
- After that I took a break from looking for a job
- Now I am ready to ...

**Questions ?**