**STAR Interview Method**

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From the editor: Bobbi is a member of the National Federation of the Blind Employment Committee.

With the unemployment rate for the blind hovering around 70 percent, the National Federation of the Blind Employment Committee is dedicated to providing resources and information to help the blind become gainfully employed. One of the primary ways employment-related information is shared is through the jobs email listserv. Job openings, relevant news articles, and the sharing of personal experiences are just a few examples of what you can expect to find on this list. Recently, a job seeker posed a question about how to ensure that their personal attributes and professional qualifications are not overshadowed by conversation about their blindness. Utilizing the STAR method when answering interview questions is an excellent way to do just that.

The STAR technique allows you to tell your story during an interview and is commonly used to answer behavioral/competency based questions. Potential employers use your answers to these questions to gage your abilities by looking at how you have handled prior situations. This ensures that you possess the skills desired for the position.

So what is the STAR technique, and how exactly is it used? STAR stands for situation, task, action, and result. When answering a question, you tell a story about a past experience and use each component of STAR in your response. Here is how it works:

1.Situation – Set the scene. Describe the context within which you performed a job or faced a challenge at work.

2.Task – Next, explain your role and responsibilities in the situation.

3.Action – Then explain what you did. Describe how you completed the task or endeavored to meet the challenge. Focus on what you did, not what your team, boss, or coworker did.

4.Result – Conclude by stating how everything panned out. Include the outcomes or results generated by your actions. You might emphasize what you accomplished or what you learned.

By following these four steps when answering an interview question, you will be able to showcase your unique talents in a clear, concise, and organized fashion.

Here’s an example:

An employer asks, "How will you be able to create and organize files and documents required for your position?"

You say: "In my past positions, I have found the use of cloud services such as Dropbox and Google Docs extremely helpful. For example, I and several co-workers were required to collaborate on a presentation (Situation).

“I was responsible for compiling research on one section and reviewing the final presentation for spelling and grammatical errors once everyone had submitted their portions (Task).

“To do so, I use what is called a screen reader to utilize a computer. Screen readers simply convert text and other things on the computer screen into speech. From there I explored scholarly articles to complete my research and compile my findings and bibliography in a Google Docs file where the team was combining our portions. Once everyone submitted their parts, I read the entire file for errors and made the necessary revisions (Action).

“By using a screen reader to access the computer, I was able to do my portion of the project and ensure our presentation was a success. At the conclusion of our presentation, our supervisor commended us all on our hard work (Result).”

By answering this way, you have shown you possess professional skills like researching, writing, and collaborating. And you simultaneously address any concerns that the interviewer may have about how you will operate a computer as a blind person. This proactive approach will put them at ease and remove any doubts they may have before they can take root.

When preparing to interview:

•Study the job description,

•Pinpoint the skills the employer is seeking,

•Identify prior experiences that exhibit those skills,

•Practice describing the experience using the STAR technique.

You may also wish to research common behavioral questions and practice answering them.

In mastering the STAR technique, you will be able to confidently and eloquently articulate your qualifications and abilities. As Federationists we know that the blind are able to compete on equal terms with our sighted counterparts in the workforce. By the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer will share in this philosophy and realize that blindness is merely a characteristic and does not impact one’s potential for success.

To learn more about the STAR technique, and have the opportunity to practice using it, be sure to join us at the 2017 Job Seeker’s Seminar on Monday, July 10, during national convention. The STAR technique is just one of many gems that will be shared during the seminar, and all who attend are one step closer to reaching their employment goals and living the lives they want.

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