

Interview SNIPER

ALL organisations are looking to either **MAKE MONEY** or **SAVE MONEY** (increase efficiencies); what we have to do is DEMONSTRATE in a likeable way how **YOU** will either **MAKE** them, or **SAVE them more money than it COSTS** to hire you.

This guide will show you how **YOU** can do this.

Even if you don't think **YOUR** role is important enough on it's own, the process shows you how to build a **COMPELLING PROPOSITION** to hire **YOU**.

I promise everyone can do this.

All you have to do is pick your target (future employer) wisely and understand your strengths.

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Why This Stuff Works

If I were you, before I start getting into thick of it I would like a little more convincing - Why does this stuff **WORK?**

To explain this, may I briefly cover my background, and why I am building this resource.

Briefly I recruit business consultants for large consultancy firms, folks who I would expect to be brilliant at presenting themselves through the hiring process (It's pretty close to what they do every day of their working lives)

Some are! but through no **LACK of TALENT** the majority are **NOT!**

And it all boils down to the fact that though they have the talent, and communication skills, they often **PICK THE WRONG MESSAGE**.

This course **WILL GUARANTEE YOU PICK THE RIGHT MESSAGE**, and give you the communications framework as a by product.

CRITICAL CONCEPT before we start

Choosing to hire **YOU** is a form of **BUYING DECISION**, justified by both **LOGIC** and **EMOTION**, and weighed on the scales of **RISK**.

LOGIC - They think you have what it takes to do the Job.

EMOTION - They think you'll fit in, I call this **LIKEABILITY**.

RISK – What chances of this not working out?



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Marketing is the science of compelling people to take the action **YOU WANT** through the power of your message.

So were going to build you the most **POWERFULL** laser guided **MESSAGE, TARGETED** on your **SPECIFIC** career **ROLE**.

In a book by marketing guru Mark Joyner, Mark describes one of the most powerful concepts created in marketing history, and as we're marketing **YOU**; were going to borrow it !

Thanks Mark.

The book by the way is "The Irresistible Offer" and as an example Mark uses Domino's Pizza which grew from a single store to a \$4 billion chain because of the irresistible offer they gave their customers - "thirty minutes or less" or the pizza was free.

Irresistible, in a sea of competition, **for their TARGET market** of hungry, impatient, pizza lovers.

YOUR irresistible offer is going to take the form of your **OBJECTIVE STATEMENT** which will form the cornerstone of all your marketing arsenal **for EACH** specific **TARGET** role you **AIM** at.

Yes; If your target is worth it, make the effort, general statements just **DON'T CUT IT**.

Before we start building your "irresistible" Objective Statement let's make sure we have **YOUR** target centered in our sights.

If your thinking an Objective Statement is something that only goes on a CV / Resume; and I'm way past that stage, so don't need it.

MAY I PLEASE STOP YOU!!

You're right an Objective Statement does go on your CV / Resume, **BUT this is not just an Objective Statement.**

THIS IS YOUR IRRESISTIBLE OFFER, this is the cornerstone to ALL your marketing efforts.

Once you have completed this everything else will fall into place.

This will be central to all your marketing efforts, written communications and verbal communications, throughout the whole application to acceptance; hiring life cycle. and will form the backbone to your most important STAR STORIES (more on these later)

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BIT!

[Your First Action: FILL IN YOUR OBJECTIVE STATEMENT BUILDER FORM](#)

You can get it from the back of this guide or [download a blank one from here.](#)

The objective at this point is to ensure we have **YOUR TARGET LOCKED IN YOUR SIGHTS.**

If you've already done a load of research on your target, simply fill in the details on the left hand side of the form under the heading TARGET / Spec / Advert .

You're simple listing **THEIR MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA**

This done jump forward to the next chapter.

Or if you want to check that you've extracted all the key criteria carry on reading this section.

For various reasons it's not always easy to interpret job descriptions or job adverts. Changes to legislation have meant that often the real message is hidden or softened to conform to legal requirements.

But you have to be clear on your **TARGETS** needs in order to evaluate if you should pursue the role, and if so, how you then go about building your marketing materials.

So you have to really deeply read the advert or job description, or do detailed homework if we're targeting an unadvertised or speculative position.

You **MUST** read between the lines, and flush out any hidden or left out needs.

The stuff that often gets left out is the personality requirements or behaviour traits that suit the role. Its not always easy to articulate what personality type works best in a role, or maybe the specification has been written by someone who does not deeply understand the role.

Point being it's **vitaly important to identify at least three or four behaviour / personality traits** that suit the role even if the 're not listed!

So if you have to do further research to identify these characteristics, this is a great opportunity. Because when it comes to interview (and it will), you will effortlessly demonstrate these traits embedded within **YOUR** Star stories and in all your marketing material.

Right lets read the advert or Job specification.

Print out the advert or job specification, grab a beverage of your choice, and a notepad and pen.

A quiet place where you can really absorb the information without interruption.

Simply read the job specification or Ad 2 or 3 times **SLOWLY** – not the usual skim reading

we all tend to do. The idea is you **relax and deeply absorb the information.**

Highlight or underline what you consider to be the critical skills, experiences and behaviours required by the role. Some Ads and descriptions will leave you in little doubt by using words like critical, mandatory, or “must have” to describe key elements, others use vague wording such as “some knowledge of” or “experience of”.

Anyway don't get stuck with this just highlight or underline everything you feel they are interested in, even the vague stuff.

Example Job add (posted on a job board)

SAP Project Manager Required for Global End User- UK + Travel

My client is a multinational leading end user who are in the process of moving their Finance systems on to a new European SAP Platform.

They have a need for an experienced SAP Finance Project Manager with the following skills and experience:

A MUST is for this person to have already managed a similar project. I would prefer someone with strong project management and with finance expertise.

Location: can be Manchester, London, Brussels. The person will work on-site at a client office. Travel % will be very high anyway (up to 50%), with a lot of time spent in Europe.

Roles and responsibilities: * Responsible to coordinate the different work streams (IS, Finance, etc.) of the project, making sure they remain aligned. * Responsible to structure, organize, lead, and control all the aspects of the project until completion. * He/she represents the program at the steering committee meetings. * Will pro-actively assess and manage the project issues and risks and serve as a point of escalation for issues related to the program. * Will develop partnership with all stakeholders * Will be responsible for the official communications with all stakeholders of the project, in particular interactions with senior Management. * Will ensure alignment with the clients global processes, templates and policies. * Will track and control project budget and achievement versus business case.

Profile: * MUST: * Good project management skills * Has worked previously on similar projects dealing with Finance /migration to SAP * Excellent communication skills, able to communicate effectively with different audiences, including senior Management, CFOs * ASSET (nice to have): *

After careful reading I would highlight the following:-

SAP Project Manager Required for Global End User- UK + Travel

My client is a multinational leading end user who are in the process of **moving their Finance systems on to a new European SAP Platform.**

They have a need for an **experienced SAP Finance Project Manager** with the following skills and experience:

A **MUST** is for this person to have already managed a **similar project**. I would prefer someone with **strong project management and with finance expertise.**

Location: can be Manchester, London, Brussels. The person will work on-site at a client office. **Travel % will be very high anyway .**

Roles and responsibilities: * Responsible to coordinate the different work streams (IS, Finance, etc.) of the project, making sure they remain aligned. * Responsible to structure, organize, lead, and control all the aspects of the project until completion. * He/she represents the program at the steering committee meetings. * Will pro-actively assess and manage the project issues and risks and serve as a point of escalation for issues related to the program. * Will develop partnership with all stakeholders * Will be responsible for the official communications with all stakeholders of the project, in particular interactions with senior Management. * Will ensure alignment with the clients global processes, templates and policies. * Will track and control project budget and achievement versus business case.

Profile: * **MUST:** * Good **project management** skills * Has worked previously on similar projects dealing with **Finance /migration to SAP * , able to communicate effectively with different audiences, including senior Management, CFOs* ASSET (nice to have):***

The colour coding represents:

Red are critical to the business, though no measures are included in the advert.

Green are must have skills. A lot of the responsibilities are must have; but as they are all part of being a project manager I have left them. I will need to be ready to answer questions on how I have managed these aspects, but these are **not the headline makers.**

Blue noticeable for its absence! The advert is missing and behavioural / personality traits that are valued in a project manager, **I will add these as we progress.**

The way the advert is worded suggest the spec has been written by the recruiter, and that there may well be things missing (not intentionally).

Next step is to transfer their key needs onto the [Objective Statement Builder](#)

The example below shows the form with the critical requirements transferred from the job advert.

The boldened text represents requirements That your knowledge and research would suggest should also be added to the requirements.

| HEADING | TARGET Job add / Spec | YOU |
|--|--|-----|
| Job Title | SAP Project Manager | |
| Business Objectives of Role Go beyond the responsibilities, ask yourself how this role will help the organisation make or save money. When you record your experience to the form try and show how you have helped make or save money, through the efficiency you bring. | Global - UK + Travel European SAP Platform (Travel 50%), with a lot of time spent in Europe YOU can add that the business objective of implementing SAP Financial systems is to save money, through standardising systems and process. And improving vital management reporting (decision making), and possibly legal governance improvements as well. | |
| Skills / Competency required Don't be afraid to add any that you believe may have been overlooked from the spec. | Project Management SAP Financial Finance experience International A MUST - similar project Excellent communication skills with different audiences, including senior Management, CFOs* ASSET (nice to have): | |
| Sector / Market Experience | | |
| Behaviour / Personality (soft skills) These traits or soft skills are often left out of job specs, but are vital to the overall marketing message you need to build. Even if you have to research further ensure you have at least 3 or 4 personality traits that are honest (use your MAPP assessment) and relevant to the role. | The spec fails to add any other traits, but as a project manager you know that, Attention to detail, calm under pressure, motivator of staff, are valuable traits. And demonstrating your self motivation for continuous self development through training and learning is always valued. As is being "goal driven", showing that you measure and refine your actions until you achieve your objectives, is another powerful attribute. | |
| Work Area | | |

By adding criteria, you can further differentiate yourself from competitors as you progress through the assessment stages. Though you have to be careful to only add skills, behaviour or experience that will definitely be of value to the role.

You should also undertake general research on the market the company operates in, some of its key competitors, and key issues facing the market.

I would also dig into a little more detail on your target company such as:-

- History
- Directors
- Operations and number of Offices
- Turnover and Profits
- Products
- Growth

Next stage we're going to add all **YOUR RELEVANT** information

Learn How To Honestly Play To YOUR Strengths

Having listed most of the behaviour and competencies that **YOUR TARGET** employer is looking for in the Form.

We are soon going to add all your skills and experience.

But first.

Let's make sure we're properly prepared and take advantage of the great free personal assessment services that are available on the Internet to help **align your key motivations and competencies with the desired role.**

Take the [MAPP personal motivation test](#), and the [Peoplemaps personality test](#).

The MAPP test (Motivational Aptitude and Personal Performance) is 71 questions where you pick the most relevant answers.

This is done on line, and will take you between 20 to 40 minutes.

You can start and save your test, for completion later, if you don't have a clear time period.

No study is required, the questions don't have a right or wrong answer, simply pick the answer that resonates strongest with you.

Once you have completed the free test you get a 12 page report which you can print out or leave on the site, and return to via your own password whenever you want.

The report highlights your motivation in 9 key areas

- Job Content - *tasks you want to perform*
- Temperament - *how you prefer to perform tasks*
- Aptitude - *how you like to express your performance of tasks*
- People - *how you relate to people*
- Things - *how you relate to things, materials, processes etc*
- Data - *how you relate to data and information in your work*
- Reasoning - *how you relate to reasoning and decision making*
- Math - *how you relate and apply the use of math*

- Language Capacity - *How you use language*

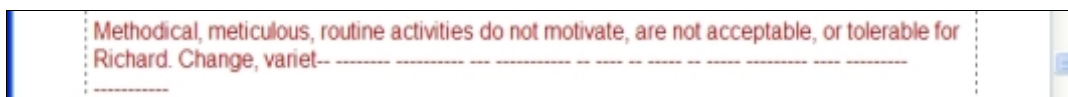
And gives you a summary and breakdown against each of the above 9 areas

The screen shot below shows a clip of my report as a brief example.



The report further suggests your top career areas, and graphical feedback of you most motivational career content.

The reports also highlight areas that are extremely low in motivational value as my extract below highlights.



This helped me restructure my working day, to complete this type of important but dull work (unfortunately I cannot avoid some of this work), when I'm fresh.

This small insight has given me huge benefits in productivity.

The free MAPP reports gives you a great deal of insightful, powerful information, well worth the 20 or so minutes required to complete the questions.

However if you want to uncover all the information (you can see the above extract obscures some of the information) you can pay \$20 to reveal all.

We'll be using some of these extracts to add **HONEST** and **COMPELLING PERSONALITY** into **all your Marketing materials**.

- Focused on motivational tasks
- Focused on motivational skills
- Motivational behaviour

You now **have a better knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses**, and can **prepare your answers for those tough interview questions** you know are coming!

I would also suggest taking the free Peplemaps personality test, though I doubt it will provide the same level of unexpected feedback, it will highlight your personality traits, in a positive way, that can be used in building your CV / Resume and interview preparation.

My recommendation would be to do both the [Peplemaps](#) personality and [MAPP tests](#) both are free, and available on-line.

It will take you about 45 minutes in total to complete them, you get password access to them so you can do them a few questions at a time if you wish, save your work and come back to them later.

Both companies offer a paid in-depth report as well, which is great, but only pay the extra if you want the additional insight.

Right lets get back to our form, and add our experience and relevant personality and motivational preferences into the form.

I've added an example person (Jane) underneath the YOU column.

| HEADING | TARGET Job add / Spec | YOU |
|---|--|---|
| Job Title | SAP Project Manager | |
| <p>Business Objectives of Role Go beyond the responsibilities, ask yourself how this role will help the organisation make or save money.</p> <p>When you record your experience to the form try and show how you have helped make or save money, through the efficiency you bring.</p> | <p>Global - UK + Travel</p> <p>European SAP Platform</p> <p>experienced SAP Finance Project Manager</p> <p>A MUST - similar project finance expertise</p> <p>(Travel 50%), with a lot of time spent in Europe</p> <p>YOU can add that the business objective of implementing SAP Financial systems is to save money, through standardising systems and process. And improving vital management reporting (decision making), and possibly legal governance improvements as well.</p> | <p>5 years management accountant. Fully qualified.</p> <p>10 years and 8 major SAP implementations.</p> <p>Previous project implemented on time and to budget, had realised business savings of 7% or £45Million. Have testimonial from Finance Director to this effect.</p> <p>Largest project 4 direct reports 30 indirect £7Million budget responsibility.</p> <p>Must Demonstrate capability to move into multi country implementation.</p> |
| <p>Skills / Competency required Don't be afraid to add any that you believe may have been overlooked from the spec.</p> | <p>Project Management</p> <p>SAP Financial</p> <p>Finance experience</p> <p>International</p> <p>Excellent communication skills with different audiences, including senior Management, CFOs* ASSET (nice to have):</p> | <p>Prince 2 and PMP project Management certified.</p> <p>CIMA qualified management accountant.</p> <p>10 Years SAP financials</p> <p>Want SAP European experience with cross boarder financial reporting component.</p> |
| Sector / Market Experience | | |
| <p>Behaviour / Personality (soft skills)</p> <p>These traits or soft skills are often left out of job specs, but are vital to the overall marketing message you need to build.</p> <p>Even if you have to research further ensure you have at least 3 or 4 personality traits that are honest (use your MAPP assessment) and relevant to the role.</p> | <p>The spec fails to add any other traits, but as a project manager you know that, Attention to detail, calm under pressure, motivator of staff, are valuable traits. And demonstrating your self motivation for continuous self development through training and learning is always valued.</p> <p>As is being "goal driven", showing that you measure and refine your actions until you achieve your objectives, is another powerful attribute.</p> | <p>Add in relevant information from self assessment work, to show attention to detail communication skills especially at CFO</p> <p>Motivator</p> <p>Calm under pressure</p> <p>Goal orientated and committed to continuous self development</p> |
| Work Area | | |

Next; having taken clear aim and **reviewed YOUR abilities and YOUR TARGETS NEEDS** do you pull the trigger?

Decision time on your TARGET

You are now looking at a form that gives you a helicopter view of what **YOUR TARGET WANTS** and **WHAT YOU OFFER**.

So you can **see possible gaps that may need covering**.

In our example above, Jane's missing the cross border or multi country accounting project experience.

Don't be put off if you don't have everything you think your target wants, its perfectly normal to want to "step up" or advance into a role that will challenge you.

Though I would be wary of any role that has a high number of critical tasks that your MAPP test scores you as "unmotivated" by.

Not because you can't do them, simply that you'll probably hate any job that repeatedly asks you to do stuff that doesn't motivate you.

Anyway DECIDE to carry on or pick another target.

Objective Statement Builder

This is the **CORNERSTONE** of the whole process, and may take longer to get right than the time it takes to do all the other work!

We **DON'T** have to get it perfect straight off the bat, if we can get it to 70 - 80%, we can leave it to polish to perfection later.

Its one of those things that's often better slept upon.

But once we've got this close to where we want it all the other VITAL marketing tools become simple to put together.

Right lets build one

Another reminder - We know what **organisations want - people who can help them save or make money...**

by doing the tasks they do.

Your objective statement has to:-

SHOW them that you have successfully saved or make money in the past (or at least have the potential to)

convey your skills / transferable skills to compensate for any lack of specific experience (especially important if your a career changer)

TELL them what **YOU WANT** (the job title usually), how **THEY want to here it.**

Note for career changers-

Your objective has to persuade the reader that your generic transitional / transferable skills and personality **ARE** relevant to the role they are offering.

People often forget the many great transferable skills they have, and for a career changer its these skills you need focus on.

For example being a good communicator or manager of people, are skills that are valuable in any sector, though don't lose focus on what the reader wants (don't mention manager of people if your target role doesn't need it).

An objective statement **MUST** be concise and no more than 4 lines, It's a short powerful statement that tells the reader that **YOU OFFER** what **THEY want!**

It's a recipe of the following content ingredients.

- The exact job title used on the advert / description – be as specific as possible.
- Function of the role. Include the business objectives of your target role.
- Critical skills required these are your skills and transferable skills (for career changers) recorded on your sniper target career form.
- Relevant experience in tangible terms (x years, x number of projects etc).
- Personal behaviour traits appropriate to the role. This adds your unique personality.

Note: When I say **tangible terms** I mean **use measures to convey your performance**. It's not enough to say managed a team and improved sales.

You **MUST** say how many in the team, the target, and by how much you improved sales, by amount, or percentage – **HARD Facts – business language.**

Mix the above ingredients, **edit, polish and edit some more**, and you will get your Objective.

Right back to our Objective builder form to start building our objective.

The bottom of the form has room for working, so let's start adding the ingredients and see how we get on.

This next section of polishing and editing would take place in the working area of your Objective Statement builder form.

I want to clearly show how the statement may develop, **Its not easy so take your time.**

“Qualified Management Accountant turned specialist SAP financial Project Manager. Prince qualified with 10 years and over 8 major SAP financial implementations under my belt, looking for my next challenge across International operations”.

Getting there, though lacking personality.

“Qualified Management Accountant turned dedicated SAP financial Project Manager. Prince qualified with 8 successful SAP implementations. A commercially savvy, positive and motivational leader now looking to deliver further SAP enabled efficiencies and savings across International Operations”.

This is better, though I feel a little too long.

Carry on fine tuning, take your time, maybe even sleep on it, to get it to a point you're delighted with it.

Its really is that important.

An objective statement properly aligned with the readers requirements WILL get you the interview.

*“£45 Million / 7% realised savings from latest successful SAP implementation!
Ex Management Accountant Turned SAP Project Management Specialist, looking for cross border SAP project”*

BINGO!

I like this one, true I've removed the personality wording, but it has **such a strong headline**, I believe a results orientated, over-achiever is communicated without saying it!

It could be better though

I have a testimonial from the previous project.

*“£45 Million / 7% realised savings from latest successful SAP implementation!
Ex management Accountant Turned SAP project Management specialist looking for cross border SAP project”.*

“An expert Project Manager Jane delivered a tough SAP implementation on time and budget. Delivering major savings. A pleasure to work with” Peter Doe Finance Director
ABC Company

Wow! If I add this to my CV / Resume, or other marketing materials, I had better clear my diary; for interviews are certain to follow.

The **use of testimonials is one of the most powerful CV / Resume writing tips**, and I hope the example shows their value. Put underneath a super bold (that some may question as B.S.) objective, you **effortlessly add credibility to your objective statement**.

Would anyone wanting to hire a SAP project manager not want to interview Jane?

If you've done this successfully you have the cornerstone of all your marketing messages, **STAR stories (covered next)** or an elevator pitch.

In case your wondering what's an elevator pitch?

Its a response to a "what attracts you to this role?" type of question that is often asked by the interviewer on your journey to the interview room (Often via an elevator!).

Its tough because up till this point you maybe engaged in weather related small talk, and then **BAM!**

A tricky question?

Your Elevator pitch is your Objective Statement simply expanded again to suit natural conversation using the STAR story format.

So the question becomes easy for you, because you've prepared your STAR story elevator pitch for exactly this moment.

Let them have it.

You're now off to a FANTASTIC start!

Note1:

I realise it's not always easy to demonstrate how your contribution may have saved or made the organisation money.

But ALL roles are created because they help or “add Value” to the organisation in some way.

For example if you work in the staff canteen you may feel that this does not directly affect organisational performance... But ask yourself

Do you save money on meal production through ingredient sourcing?

Is the food so good that top execs entertain clients in, rather than go out to expensive restaurants?

Does it affect staff moral and have a impact on productivity?

Try and find out the answers to this type of question, carry on be creative, show how much you care about what you do and how it supports the high level objective of the organisation.

I've yet to come across a role that cannot; show how it supports either saving or making money.

Just keep with it.

Note 2: You don't have to **add a Testimonial after your objective, it's just super powerful if you can.**

Why IS The STAR Method So Important?

Next you're going to use the **STAR method** for framing critical information into STAR Stories the most POWERFUL "under the radar" way of getting YOUR MESSAGE across.

HITTING your targets LOGICAL & LIKEABLE BULLSEYE!

And dissolving the RISK in hiring YOU.

STAR is an acronym that stands for:-

S – Situation, background, set the scene

T – Task or Target, specifics of what's required, when, where, who etc. Use **specific quantifiable business language where possible. values, percentages, budgets etc.**

A – Action, **what you did**, skills used, behaviours, characteristics, **how you did it.**

R – Result – Outcome, what happened, again using specific quantifiable business language. (If you can quote specific amounts, or percentages, your speaking in business language, which will elevate you above most others)

This should form the basis or framework for how you communicate ALL of your KEY skills and experiences to any potential employer, through all your marketing materials (Cover letter, CV / Resume, Brag file, Elevator Pitch, Interview, and any others you can think of).

Why is it so Important?

Once learnt it's a simple but super powerful way of communicating your most valuable information to potential employers; in a way that is targeted specifically for what THEY want, will be easily remembered by both you (through the rigours of interview) and critically them, long after you have left!

This method works for all self promotional communication you will undertake (not just interviews), and done correctly will never come across as arrogant or obviously self serving.

The banner features the text "sentient-recruitment.com" in a bold, italicized, white font with a black outline. The background is a dark blue grid pattern that appears to be a wireframe or mesh, with some glowing blue lines and a faint, abstract shape in the center.

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Its a brilliant technique.

With this under your belt, your success ratio will go off the scale!

How To Build STAR Stories

A STAR story should be up to 3 minutes long, and **delivered with energy and enthusiasm** about a real experience you have had (it does not have to be a work experience, as long as it describes a relevant skill, behaviour, experience).

Question: *"Have you ever lead a team before"?*

This is **another reason why the STAR method is so powerful**. The above question is a terrible closed question.

You could answer "Yes" or "No" or "Yes, on three separate occasions" and move quickly onto the next question.

But **Leadership is an important skill**, and you **MUST not miss this great chance to shine.**

A lot of folks would give the easy answer here; but you have a great chance to impress, and basically **do all the interviewers work for them.**

(Situation) *"Yes; for example at my last company, where I was initially a software developer, in a team of 6 developing a new finance module for our core accounting product."*

(Task) *"The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of sales and marketing investment riding on the product being ready. However the project was behind schedule, when our team leader unfortunately became ill, and had to leave."*

(Action) *"I had been sports team captain at school, where I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership. So I volunteered to stand in, and by using my technical analysis skills, spotted a few small mistakes made in the initial coding, that were causing sporadic errors, and slowing us down. I then negotiated with our product director a small bonus incentive for the team, and budget for two pizza evenings, so we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the coding and catch up with the critical project landmarks."*

(Result) *"Though this took us £7000 over budget (not just the cost of the pizza!) the software was delivered on time with a 20% better than target fault tolerance. The project was seen as a great success as the additional project cost was minimal compared to the*

The logo for Sentient Recruitment features the text "sentient-recruitment.com" in a bold, italicized, white sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark blue background with a complex, glowing wireframe pattern that resembles a human brain or a network of neural connections. A thin, light blue horizontal line runs across the bottom of the logo area.

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costs of delaying the launch, and the negative affect on branding. The team were delighted with the extra bonus (and the pizza!) and, I have now been officially promoted to team leader as a result."

You need to **practice your answers out loud**, to ensure their continuity and that you don't go far over 2 minutes.

The example above not only answers the leadership question asked, **but also conveys that you have other skills and behaviours any interviewer would be interested in.**

Answering tough interview questions like this will work wonders, **but answering poorly worded questions will really set you apart!**

You will get a lot more of your message across to less experienced interviewers, while your competitors won't.

It's a great technique that **should be practiced and perfected, It'll be well worth your while.**

How many STAR stories will I need?

Before answering this question, let's quickly recap.

Organisations want to hire people who will help them save or make money, through doing the tasks they've been hired for.

The decision on whether to hire is a “buying decision” based on LOGIC and EMOTION or

Can you do the job and will you fit with the team?

For most humans the **emotional driver is stronger than the logical.** In hiring the emotion is whether they **LIKE YOU.**

So the interview or assessment process you're about to enter is looking to form an opinion of your logical, likable, suitability balanced, against the RISK of hiring you, and it not working out.

So you're going to need as many STAR stories as necessary to DEMONSTRATE your the logical, likable, lowest risk choice.

So how many is that then?

Let's first look at how organisations assess people in general.

As you may notice from the MAPP report, there are many levels of individual assessment (and I understand that MAPP out of the millions completed have never had two filled in the same!).

And organisations use different and changing techniques to try and more accurately understand, how potential hires will likely work out, before committing to hire them.

I'll cover the different types and format of interview used later, but for now we are going to use what we know.

You have a detailed assessment of **YOUR TARGETS needs** through the Objective Builder Form you have completed. We will have to build stories to hit the key needs identified there.

We can also **generalise on “traits” or “types” of people that organisations like to employ.**

In fact there are 8 “types” or “traits”:-

1. The **BOSS**
2. The **EXPERT**
3. The **JUGGLER**
4. The **GOOD CITIZEN**
5. The **STAR**
6. The **TEAM PLAYER**
7. The **PROBLEM SOLVER**
8. The **SELF DEVELOPER**

And through your STAR stories you will demonstrate your abilities within as many of the above types as you **HONESTLY CAN.**

I say honestly, because the trick is to **play to your strengths**, not try and be someone you're not.

For each type or trait, there are no hard and fast rules as to what size, shape, gender, or personality works best.

For example a great boss, could be bold, motivational and statesman like, alternatively quiet, considered, but great at empowering their staff.

To explain the types in more detail.

The Boss – Is about leadership, ability to hire wisely, motivate and develop staff, demonstrate vision, inspire, manage change or conflict, and improve profit, shareholder value, efficiency.

The Expert – Is demonstrating that you, are an expert in either a hard or technical skill (accountant, plumber, salesman etc) or even a soft skill, such as listening or persuasion.

The Juggler or multi-tasker – It's increasingly important in modern organisations to demonstrate an ability to manage more than one task at a time.

The Good Citizen – Integrity, respect, support and helping others, likability. Being the sort

of person that everyone likes to work with.

The Star – Achievement, accomplishment, being recognised as the person who has made a significant contribution to the objective.

The Team Player – Work well with others, supportive, mentoring, able to put the team objective above your personal objectives.

The Problem Solver – All organisations have problems and challenges, and need people who can construct solutions for these problems.

The Self Developer – Another highly compelling trait, is to show that you set yourself targets measurable, timely, targets, and take action towards their attainment. Combined with the ability to review your results, and if necessary fine tune your PERSISTENT actions until you HIT YOUR TARGET.

NOTE: The Self Developer should be used to help compensate for any shortcomings or gaps in skill set, and to distract from other areas you may want to hide such as any long gaps between employment.

The idea being you fill the gap or address the missing skill by taking some form of educational course, this will demonstrate your motivation to self develop and depending on what you choose will also support the development of one or more of the above desired personality types.

I've added a chapter at the back to go into a little more detail, and list some helpful resources.

When you build your STAR stories the objective is to build in the above traits into your real life experience stories, not forgetting to tie this into how the activity supports the overall objective of the organisation (make money or increase efficiency wherever possible).

Let's now look at the **9 categories of question** you are going to face

Most questions you face will be:-

1. Directly relating to you and the role and their company.

Why do you think you're qualified?

Why do you want to work for us?

What can you do for us?

If we give you the job what would you do first?

What would you expect to achieve in your first 3 months with us?

So if we were to use Jane as our example from the Objective Statement builder being asked on the way to the lift; “So Jane what attracts you to this role then”?

Jane could then answer using her prepared extended objective statement; her “elevator pitch,” along the lines of...

*“I have been researching international cross border accounting processes (**Self Developer**), with view to taking my expertise into an International project, so you can imagine my excitement when a friend mentioned your position, requiring both accounting skills, combined with proven SAP project management experience (**Expert**). Having just managed (**Boss**) a project that has delivered SAP, and with it a £45M savings contribution (**Star**) to my current company, I am keen to see how I can help deliver further SAP enabled efficiencies to your International operations.”*

Jane answers the question, demonstrating at the same time her expertise and experience in the key required areas, as well as her results focused mentality, drive for self development, and enthusiastically why she is interested in the role.

Touching on **Boss, Expert, Self Improver and STAR personality types**, and ripe for development as the interview progresses.

2. Directly relating to specific skills appropriate to the role. These skills may be technical skills such as accountancy or plumbing or soft skills such as listening or communication.

Describe a time when you demonstrated excellent listening skills?

What skill would you most like to develop?

As a project manager what's been your greatest triumph?

What do you think is the most important quality for a consultant?

3. Reasoning type questions. Employers really want to understand how you think, what suits you what doesn't. Weather your left or right brained (whatever that tells them).

These could be in the form of:-

How did you overcome a disagreement with a boss or colleague, and get them to come

around to your point of view?

Or as are becoming ever more popular the unsolvable maths question such as, *how many cream crackers can you get in the cab of a combine harvester?*

Not designed to get an specific answer (apparently it depends whether the crackers are buttered), but to see how you go about estimating, your logic and thought process.

4. Strengths & Weaknesses questions. The strengths ones are great opportunities (though pick your most relevant for the role).

But don't for the weakness question dish out the usual strength dressed up as a weakness answer that most people do. Many people go with the *"I'm a bit of a perfectionist, and this used to cause problems with colleagues, until I learnt to be more patient"*. **Interviewers have heard this so many times.**

Take a real weakness that you've worked to improve or are currently working on, clearly nothing too dramatic like suggesting your having counseling for anger management issues.

For example you may pick something like time management, saying that you'd get so wrapped up in what you're doing that you had even missed meetings!. But that you had bought and studied a course on the subject and now have a strict system, which uses timed alerts, to ensure you allocate your time in the most efficient way. A perfect lead into a **STAR story which shows how you have learnt to manage your weakness, to great affect.**

5. What you have learned from a problem or mistake, or what would you do different next time type questions. Again take the time to pick a real experience, and create a story to demonstrate how you gained from the experience. This type of question is designed to show them how you react to problems or adversity, your reasoning, and approach to resolving issues.

6. Greatest achievement or worst failure questions. Again the failure version of the question offers great potential, as most people opt out of these type of questions. So pick a real life experience where your chosen actions were not working out – failing, filling out a story that **demonstrates how you quickly spotted the failure, your approach and reasoning behind, the corrective action you took, and how maybe with persistence you were able to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat!**

7. Where do you see yourself in 5 years time type question. The where will you be in a variable time-frame type question, can be tough, many people don't plan their careers and

struggle with this. But you need to construct a story around **your clear vision of your short-term target (which is the role you aiming at)**, and then demonstrates your ambition and self development trait, for career development that is true to your personality. You don't have to say you want to become a manager or CEO, if thats not your driver, you could say you'd like to become the recognised expert in what you do, before moving into teaching your subject as your career progresses. Its perfectly OK to be less certain about the specifics as you move further into the future, but its **important to show you have targets and will take action to hit them.**

8. Specific questions around gaps in career, or why you may have changed jobs or career paths. These again can be tough questions, especially if you feel they highlight some terrible mistakes you have made in the past. Best course of action is to stick as close to the truth as you can. Interviewers will spot B.S., and you definitely don't want to cast any shadows over your integrity. Everyone has made mistakes, most try and paper over them, this question gives you a chance to **show honesty, and a story about how you have learned from these errors.**

9. Finally direct questions designed to test your ability to think under pressure, either due to their abstract nature, or by the directness, or intent to add stress.

These questions don't all require a STAR story, but need to planned for. Remember a hiring decision can represent a significant risk for organisations, and clearly the higher the role the greater the risk. **The interview process is their only chance to assess you, before you actually join**, so its only natural that they are going to want to see how you perform outside your comfort zone. Therefore **don't take these questions personally, stay calm and take your time.**

How long have you been looking for a job? This one does require a STAR story if you have been looking for a while, as its **important that you show you have used your time wisely, self improvement, travel, personal projects are all good** topics for a STAR story that can **turn this question into a platform for your positive personality types or traits.**

You may also get questions bordering unacceptable. This is a good sign, because they would not bother asking unless they felt you are doing well. For example.

We often have to work over 8 hour days, and sometimes over weekends, would you be able to do this? For many roles its standard practice to do whatever you have to to hit deadlines, so a **STAR story showing how you do whatever is required to hit targets** would work well, though you may want to include how your intention would be to work smarter rather than harder.

For other roles its unusual to work over standard hours, but a great opportunity to confirm your commitment, by maybe saying you'd happily work extra hours when required, but would need some notice time, to make arrangements for instance; for family commitments to be re-arranged.

What salary are you looking for?

From a negotiating point of view its better to be the one responding to the initial offer, so if you can avoid saying a specific number it's best.

You may take the tack that you have researched the industry rates for the type of role, and concluding that your skills, and experience are ideal, restating your top 3 benefits, you feel you'd be great value at the top end of that range.

And if need be put that range into figures for them.

For example using our example Jane; Jane could also add a little humour to proceeding by saying something along the lines of, *"In my last project, the savings to my company were £45M as testified to by my CEO, I'm really looking forward to seeing the saving I can help make you, which I wager will make my salary look really good value"*.

A good natured answer, that asks the interviewer to visualise the savings, restates Jane's headline benefit and draws the favourable comparison of salary to potential saving.

Finally you may have the delightful problem of the next type of question.

We really like what we've seen today, and are in a hurry to get moving; want to make you an offer. As this is so pressing we really need you to confirm your acceptance today?

In all probability this is going to be great news, but you may feel overly pressured, to which you may reply with something along the lines of.

"Thank You – Its a great offer, which I'm sure I will accept, however I've made it a personal rule of mine to always sleep on any major decision I intend to take"

A courteous delay, should you feel the need to take a little longer with your thoughts.

How Many Star Stories will I need in my Library?

I would suggest 2 ideally 3 for as many of the 8 personality types or traits you feel you can hit, many of your stories will highlight more than 1 trait, so this is not as daunting as it may

at first sound.

You **MUST have stories that demonstrate your fit with the key hiring criteria** you identified on your objective statement builder, and if you don't have a key pieces of skill or experience, have stories to compensate this – your Self Developer stories.

Ideally drawing from at least 3 different experiences, and again ideally at least one outside of work experience (a great way of showing another perspective of you).

I believe a minimum of **20 STAR stories should be easily possible**, but would suggest you have at least 2 / 3 for every situation:-

8 people types or traits.

9 category of Question.

With your most sale able personality / behaviour traits embedded in the above stories, or even with dedicated stories if you feel its a critical point to make.

As many of your stories become interchangeable I think a Library of around 30 – 35 would be perfect.

I don't mean these have to be 35 totally unique situations, the 35 could be drawn from 10 unique experiences, simply tailoring your story to to highlight whatever key point needs covering.

Example STAR Library

Lets use Jane again as our example. Her chosen target had the following critical needs as highlighted through research or job advert / description, and **compiled on her Objective Builder Form:-**

SAP Project Manager proven experience
Certified Project Manager
Understanding of corporate finance processes
SAP Finance modules
International experience
Relationship with CEO senior staff members.

I would suggest Jane picks 2 of her most recent SAP Project Management roles from which to build STAR stories answering all of the above points with the exception of International experience. 4 stories here

And Jane builds at least 1 story from her time as a management accountant (Expert trait) to show her expertise in accounting practices, and develop this story to demonstrate her research into International cross border accounting (Self Developer trait). Required to compensate for lack of International project experience.

Add the 8 personality types / traits. A project manager has to exhibit a broad range of skills, and so it's important for Jane's stories to hit on all 8.

Showing the Boss trait may be more strategically important for a project manager than for example the Self Developer, but in Jane's example she does not have any cross border experience, and **therefore MUST compensate for this by showing how she has researched this as part of her chosen self development.**

Jane may also want another strong Self Developer Story to really hammer home, what a fast learner she is, and dissolve any perceived risk in the interviewers eyes of Jane's ability to quickly master new skills.

And 1 out of work experience to show how Jane is not all work and no play.

All roles are different, so **don't worry if you cannot show all eight types**, but hit as many as possible, and when looking to step up in responsibility, use the Self Developer to help compensate for areas that you may be lacking.

As you flesh out your STAR stories you'll notice that each story can include demonstration

of 1 or more of the personality types, and that **some experiences will form the basis for more detailed variations.**

For example Jane used her latest project as her main achievement and foundation for her irresistible objective statement, and which she unleashed as her elevator pitch prior to the formal interview starting. But she may be asked about her team leadership style.

And again may choose to dip into this project again.

So Jane could introduce this by saying that she has been described as a “*focused yet supportive manager*” by team members and then give the interviewer an example. This example would be her STAR story, possibly identifying a staffing problem overcome, by Jane creating a solution (**Problem Solver**), that involved providing existing project staff additional training, even though this meant Jane had to make up for the staff shortfall during training, by herself dropping back into a team member position (**Team Player, Good Citizen, and Juggler**). Jane could explain how the staff benefit through becoming more valuable following the training, and though this took longer, lost time was made up later in the project, but her reasoning was based on the fact that retraining saved (£9000) project budget over bringing in expensive trained consultants. Jane can then re-emphasize her leadership credentials by providing more detail on the headline savings the project produced (£45M) and her testimonial from the CEO (**Boss**).

This would answer the team leadership question, but also make, and re-emphasize ALL of the other critical points Jane wanted to make.

It's not a good idea to draw all your stories from one project or experience, as you want to show variety and consistency across all your recent career if you can.

Stories can also be crafted from non work experiences; which has to be the case if you have little or no work experience, **as long as they demonstrate a trait that your target will value.**

Ideally you should build 2 or 3 STAR stories to demonstrate EACH key skill and behaviour specifically for your target role.

Modern Interviewing is moving towards asking **competency (skills) and behavioural interview questions.** This challenging style of question / interview format is proving to be the most successful way for organisations to find their best candidates.

Behavioural questions can be difficult if you are not ready for them. Listed below are some examples:-

“Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done”.

“Describe a time when you used persuasion to convince someone to do things your way”.

“Tell me about a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem”.

“Convince me that you can work successfully with a wide variety of people, situations and environments”.

“Tell me about a time on any job where you faced problems that you doubted you could manage”.

“Give me an example of you making a quick decision”.

“Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communications skills in order to get an important point across”.

“Give me an example of a target that you had set yourself, and how you reached it”.

“Describe when you had to think on your feet to get yourself out of a difficult situation”.

Your stories should blend all the elements you want to promote, for example if you had an objective that you'd worked very hard to achieve, you can **build the story to include the skills you used as well as your characteristics of patience and persistence** (if appropriate for the role).

There is no definitive number of stories that Jane should have, and many of the stories will be much shorter than some we have compiled in the guide. But I would suggest you aim to **develop at least 20 stories drawn from both work and non-work experiences** if possible.

This may seem a lot of work, but as you get through your first couple you'll get quicker and find it easier, and easier.

As you practice these techniques, your library will grow, and **it will become easier to deliver the right story at the right time.**



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And imagine when you've finished. This level of preparation will **boost your confidence massively**, because you know that you can answer questions, brilliantly, exactly the way your targets wants to hear them, using business language in a friendly, memorable story format.

You will immediately be in top 2% of ALL interview candidates, and even my maths tells me that this will blow your offer to interview ratio through the roof.

Questions to Ask at Interview

The questions you ask at interview are almost as important as the ones you answer.

And should be prepared in advance with your STAR stories to serve the following purpose:

1. To demonstrate you've done extensive research on the company and the role.
2. To demonstrate that you're clear and focused on what YOU WANT.
3. And to determine IF there is a good FIT between all parties.

Note: You also need to confirm the interview process for hiring with each role. It's vital you know where you are in the process and what the next step will be.

If this information has been given to you prior to your interview, by a recruiter or someone other than the interviewer, it's right to confirm your understanding of the process.

You need to know this because at the end of each interview you should (if still interested in the role) confirm your interest and ask to progress to the next stage or ask for the job if at the final stage.

You must also follow up after interview, by phone, letter or email, or combination of.

You should take your time and prepare a list of questions you would like answered, and should take these with you to the interview.

DO NOT ask about salary and holiday at first interview, or possibly even second interview, that stuff should be covered after you have SOLD yourself thoroughly.

You should **prepare questions starting at high level, market wide type questions** such as how is the company affected by current economic pressures for example.

Questions about its position in the market.

Strategic level business questions.

Before moving into very ROLE / JOB specific type of questions.

Also don't lose sight of the fact that your STAR story answers have been designed to demonstrate some of those 8 desirable people types or traits that all companies are looking for.

1. The BOSS
2. The EXPERT
3. The JUGGLER
4. The GOOD CITIZEN
5. The STAR
6. The TEAM PLAYER
7. The PROBLEM SOLVER
8. The SELF DEVELOPER

So structure your questions around reinforcing these traits in your interviewers mind.

So to pick a less obvious example, you may want to show a softer side to your personality (a Good Citizen). And therefore may ask what the company's stand point is on mentoring, as you used to do a lot of mentoring in your last company and would very much like to do more.

Or

You may ask about charitable or social projects that the company may support, as you would like the opportunity "give something back"

This approach should give you no end of questions which will serve both purposes of helping you determine if this is the right company for you whilst also cementing YOUR valuable personality traits into the mind of your interviewer.

The next big tip concerns; at what point you ask your questions.

Many interviews run along the lines of the interviewer has first "go" and asks all their questions, which you answer, before towards the end of the interview you get your "go" to ask your questions.

Now I'm not suggesting you trample all over conventional interview etiquette, but this can be quite a draining format for interviewers, so why not **stand out from the crowd by asking questions from far earlier in the interview.**

You can ask permission to ask a question, giving the interviewer the option to hold your questions back if they have to stick to a very structured questioning format.

But my advice is to let the interviewer start proceedings. Answer a few questions to build rapport, and get a feel for the interviewers style.

But once your comfortable follow some of your well answered questions with a question of your own.

Again if we use Jane as our example; going for her project management role, she may have just answered a question on her team leadership style with her prepared STAR story. But rather than waiting for the next question to be served at her.

Jane asks permission to ask a question. Given permission, Jane goes on to explain that her decision as covered in her previous STAR story answer to pay for additional training for key project team members, rather than take the conventional route of bringing in more expensive external consultants. Was fully her decision because in that role as project manager Jane had both responsibility and authority to make key decisions.

Jane's question *"as a new hire in the company would I be given authority to make key decisions I feels are necessary"*?

This is a very important question to Jane, who does not want a role with responsibility but no authority, but is also a question that will highlight Jane's, self confidence and leadership potential (Boss and Problem Solver personality traits) with the interviewer. And is therefore a very positive question to ask.

It's a highly relevant question to the role and management style preferable to the company, and will help to **subtly change the interview into being more of a shared business discussion around the business needs of the company with somebody who is clearly focused and capable of helping (Jane).**

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I hope the above example demonstrates the power of following up a good STAR story answer, with an immediate relevant question that both cements the benefits raised in your answer and demonstrates your focus and attention to solving the needs of the role.

This is a super powerful tactic.

Though be careful not to overdo it, by following up all your answers with further questions.

Close Your Interview & Follow UP!

Having both asked and answered tough interview questions, you are going to need to finish on a high note.

This means preparing a few “closing” interview questions.

Basically “ask for the Job”, or the next interview if you know you are part way through the process.

If the interviewer starts to wrap up and you haven't yet asked, I would suggest asking something along the lines of

“Before we wrap up [insert the interviewers name], I just wanted to confirm how much I've enjoyed meeting you and hearing all about [insert the exact job title]. Thank you personally (people like to be thanked) for answering all my questions in such detail, I feel very positive that I can contribute significantly to the organisation, and hope you feel the same; and can confirm who I will be meeting at the next stage ?(said with a warm smile).

A nice assertive close ideally with some flattery, a warm and courteous thank you, and a good natured assertive close.

You may want to line up a few that suit your personality.

You may be more comfortable with a softer type of question, such as, “How do you rate my skills and experience for the this role?”

If theres any hesitation, you can then always ask a recovery type question. Along the lines of do you have any reservations regarding my fit for this role, and if so what are they?

This give the opportunity to introduce another one of your stories, if a subject hadn't been covered in the detail the interviewer was after.

Next step YOU MUST FOLLOW UP.

Following up after the interview is both simple and important.

You can follow up by letter email or telephone. A letter obviously requires more effort on your part, and for that reason is the strongest form of follow up.

It works because following up will reinforce the good things you said and did in the interview, another reason to remember you -- and hire you.

Only about 10-20% of applicants follow up after the interview. So making the effort to follow up gives you an instant advantage over other applicants who don't follow up.

Or put another way, a chance to leapfrog over 80-90% of other job seekers!

Follow up right after the job interview

You must, **MUST** mail a thank-you letter to every person you meet at every interview. Writing or typing (if handwriting isn't that good) on quality paper and posting through the mail, is an effort, but if the jobs worth it, it's a simple effort that carries far more weight with employers than you may imagine.

In your letter, summarise what you discussed in the interview and re-emphasise the skills you have that would benefit the employer. Thank them for their time and ask if it's all right to call later in the week to see how their search for a new employee is going. That new employee may well be you!

Types of Interview

There are many different ways of interviewing and assessing people the most common types are listed below.

Behavioural / Competency Based - By far and away the most popular form of interview, based on the very human assumption that what you have done in your past you'll likely do again in your future.

So its all about the interviewer learning about you from your explanation of your past experiences.

Perfect for STAR story answers!

Group or Assessment Center – Some companies like to use this approach when hiring a number of people for similar types of role, or if team working is a critical component with the role.

The objective with this is to complete as a team a set objective, with a team of behavioural experts watching the exercise noting individuals performance.

Because you don't know the people your working with, these can be interesting and challenging assignments.

In my opinion the best advice is to try and forget about the assessors watching, and focus all your effort on completing the task.

Its vital that you contribute to the team, but don't feel you have to compete to be the leader, being supportive of your colleagues, communicative, focused on the task, counts for more than being overly assertive.

Informal unstructured or casual – Less experienced interviewers tend to use this technique, again **perfect for your STAR stories**, as you'll help the interviewer do their job for them.

They'll remember far more about you than anyone else they interview, which **will give you a massive advantage.**

Telephone Interview – Your Star Story preparation again is perfect for this type of interview, just listen carefully, and relax.

The case interview – **Primarily** used by consulting firms the case study type interview is a very popular approach. Its based on giving you a real life business issue to overcome. A highly interactive style of interview, as you will need to question your interviewer beyond the initial case study you have been given to identify further details, before you start to build your proposed solution.

Again this is about demonstrating your communication skills, problem solving and reasoning, before you start to suggest resolution frameworks. Often there is no wrong or right answer, what they are looking for is your ability to identify key issues, from the ambiguity, and “fit” your suggestions to the specifics of the case given.

Many of the major strategy and consulting firms offer test cases and an excellent source of information regarding this specialist type of interview can be found [here](#).

Stress Interview - A vary rare type of interview used for roles that contain a high degree of stress, pressure and challenge. The key to surviving stress interviews is to remain calm, keep a sense of humor, and avoid getting angry or defensive.

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Its not personal.

Requests that accompany interview process include:-

Psychometric / Personality / Motivational testing – one of the reasons its such a good idea to have completed the MAPP assessment as a minimum.

No rules to these techniques, relax and be yourself. If your aiming at roles that suit your motivations and personality your on safe ground.

The questioning that may follow will again suit your STAR stories.

Some form of presentation – You may be asked to prepare a timed presentation on a given subject. Pick one of your stories, and just make sure you hit the time allocated. If they ask for 10 minutes don't do 5 or 20 minutes.

Interview Practice / Rehearsal

Up till now you've done a ton of solid preparation work for your interview, and you should be congratulated.

It was the great South African golfer Gary Player who said “ *the more I practice the luckier I seem to get*”, and with the **work you've done you deserve all the interview luck there is.**

But you wont need luck.

However there is still one more piece that should be done.

You've got the theory, and you've prepared your STAR stories that demonstrate the appropriate skills and behaviour for the job your aiming at; you've done the personality and motivational tests, which will add true personality into your answers (both on your CV / Resume, and at interview), and you've practiced saying them out loud, so they trip off your tongue, naturally and enthusiastically.

What more can be done?

It's simply more practice, trying to add the realistic pressure that you'll encounter at interview.

What I mean is to actually rehearse your interview in front of a friend, colleague or family member. I realise this is not always easy, and I must confess when I'd tried this myself many years ago it would often end in giggles, and silliness. I'm such a big kid that I gave up with this method and stuck to practicing my answers out loud on my own.

But If you can keep it together, **these rehearsals will really pay off.**

You can also hire a interview coach, who will sit down and interview you against the brief for the job your going for. This is a great way to go, but is going to cost a

bit, hiring a trained professional for 1 – 2 hours doesn't come cheap, **but if the prize at the end is worth it this is a good option.**

Other's recommend going on more interviews for jobs your not interested in, just for the practice. Not sure I'd be happy knowingly wasting peoples time, so I'll let you decide on this one.

Or you could use one of the new on-line interview training programs, a candidate of mine used a program called Interview Gold to practice with. It complimented her STAR story preparation because you can program in exactly what industry and type of job your going for.

And as Jenny preferred to practice on her own worked brilliantly for her.



Interview Gold is an on-line interactive system to help you improve and rehearse your interview skills.

It's been featured in The Guardian and Mirror national newspapers, Personnel Today, and on National Television (the BBC).

It cost's around £50.00, (about \$69 or 53 EUR approx) but you'll get a full 7 day's to try it out, and make sure that it's going to help you pass your interviews, which seems pretty fair.

You can go to our website for a [full review of Interview Gold](#) or go to [Interview Gold directly](#)

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Another training resource you may wish to consider is “The Expert's Guide Interview Skills” DVD, CD and guide book.

This is another great resource and I have done a [detailed review of Experts Guide Interview Skills on our website.](#)

[The review also contains clips from the DVD to demonstrate the quality.](#)

Or click the picture to the right to go to the Experts Guide website.



Update April 09.

Stephen has now added a number of additional free bonuses to the DVD including

- Interview Experts Audio Book / CD
- Immediate Unlimited Access to Online DVD
- How to Survive Redundancy
- Winning at Assessment Centers
- Top Interview Answers to Tough Questions
- Succeeding at Interview Tests
- Interview Experts Work Book

This is now a great learning package, as the DVD is inspiring, and the support resources allow for detailed breakdown of the techniques.

Interview Basics

Before sending you off to interview, I just want to cover some of the interview basics, that can trip you up if not careful.

I'm going to keep this as brief as possible because, if you've got this far you've done great. And I'm hoping with this much preparation done; your feeling confident.

Because you should be.

But though what you say is VITAL the way you say it is CRITICAL.

So the final piece in the puzzle is to ensure you arrive on time, dressed appropriately, in a positive confident mood.

In terms of timing arrive in reception 5 minutes early NO MORE.

Dress in line with everyone else that works in the organisation, but on the conservative side of what seems normal. If in doubt ring and ask what is the appropriate dress.

If the organisation is local, take a look and see how people dress as they go in or out of work, your objective is to look like you already work there.

Make an effort with grooming and appearance first impressions are vital, and all the great STAR stories in the world won't undo an appearance that suggests you don't care.

Again make up, perfume / cologne, jewelery should all be kept to a minimum, its your answers, personality and enthusiasm that you want remembered.

Body language is also important, if you slouch and mumble, fail to smile and look the interviewer in the eye, the great stuff you say will be undermined by the way that you say it.

So its army drill straight back, shoulders back, smile and maintain eye contact (vital on greeting). Don't worry about feeling nervous; nerves are your body's way of telling you, your alert and ready for action.

If you have followed the guide up to now, **you are better prepared than 99% of other applicants.**

So relax and let your confidence build as your answers and questions take affect.

Offer Negotiation

Please expect to get a lot more offers!

So as we move to the close, I must pass on some sound advice regarding evaluating offers.

An offer can tell you a lot about an employer, how they value the role, and how professional they are. This final stage should be handled in a supportive, helpful manner.

The organisation or any agents for the organisation, should be able to answer all questions you may have.

Be very wary of any organisation that wants to brush over the detail at this stage.

Do not accept any offer until you have all the correct paperwork and are entirely happy.

Most offers are usually made in person or over the phone, with most organisations looking to get gain verbal acceptance before putting a full offer pack together.

Some organisations offer on a non negotiable basis, but usually there is a margin for negotiation, and it is perfectly acceptable to request the full offer pack to fully understand all of the compensation package before negotiating.

However if the main salary is lower than you would want, I would recommend raising this point at the verbal stage.

The stats show that it is often

easier to negotiate a better starting package than to look to negotiate a pay rise later through the performance review stages after you have joined.

Be aware that playing an overly hard ball negotiating game, can result in the offer being canceled, you have to weigh up what is most important to you.

Again stats prove salary has far less bearing on job satisfaction, than most people believe.

Most offers detail a window of time for you to consider, accept or decline, and again be cautious of any organisation that applies too much pressure for a immediate acceptance.

If you are in employment NEVER resign until you have the physical written paperwork, and have concluded all negotiation.

When you are entirely happy accept your offer and GOOD LUCK!

Conclusion

Well; MASSIVE congratulations you've completed the Guide.

I hope it wasn't too difficult to navigate, and that you've found it useful.

The objective of the guide is to help you form and then deliver a clear message to your target employer, that will get you the offer. The next chapter gives you links to free resources to help you put together cover letters and CV / Resumes.

Just want to wish you all the best in your ongoing career endeavours and to ask for feedback on our [resources](#) page(don't hold back!) or email.

Thanks

Richard.

To contact me please [email](#)

Useful Resources

Job Search

The missing ingredient in these challenging times.

[The Simple Job Search System is a paid course on finding unadvertised roles in tough conditions.](#)

I am in the process of reviewing it, but it offers a free [Job Search Manifesto which is 67 pages of great advice. And a MUST have if your struggling to find roles to apply for.](#)

Follow the above link which will take you to one of those really long sales pages, to get the free book add your name and email at the box near the top of the page.

I will add a full review of the product once I've worked through it, and email you a link to it.

If you are tempted to buy it. The 60 day money back guarantee is safe. The product is sold through a third party called Clickbank. Clickbank is a massive company that sell digital products for independent publishers, their reputation is everything and so the guarantee is safe. I've bought many products through Clickbank, and been delighted with most, but have been refunded on two, no questions asked, nothing to return.

Self Assessment and Tests

[MAPP test as covered in the guide. Free and paid detailed motivational assessments](#)

[Peoplemap personality assessment. Again free and paid options](#)

[University of Kent offers many free types of test available on-line](#). Covering numeracy, verbal reasoning, all manner of free tests to practice with.

Cover Letters

[The World's Greatest Cover Letter](#) is a free guide by Jimmy Sweeney a pro copywriter.

Add your unique marketing messages that you have assembled through this guide together with Jimmy's expertise on cover letters, and **clear your diary**, because you're getting interviewed!

CV / Resume

Great free CV / Resume resource <http://www.emurse.com/> Where once you've logged in you can write or add your CV / Resume and basically chop it and change it anyway you like. They have various template styles, so you can pick the one you like best.

Once done you can save it in all the Relevant formats (MS Word, Pdf, Text, HTML), print it or download it.

[The site offers lots of other useful stuff, but I really liked the ease of CV / Resume creation.](#)

Killer Interview Secrets

Is a book I like a lot I think it's about \$27 with a 60 day money back guarantee.

Warning it covers a lot of the same ground as this guide, my reason for recommending it for consideration (60 day assessment period). Is that I think it simplifies some of the story bases interview answers.

And in providing MP3 based example answers adds a level of explanation not available in text alone. [Check it out Here](#).

Interview Practice

[Interview Gold offer a paid on-line rehearsal system which you can try before deciding upon.](#)

[Experts Guide DVD](#)

Self Development

I mentioned in the guide the high value organisations place on hiring folks with a natural tendency to continue to improve themselves.

It's a great personality trait to get across, and the STAR stories you use to demonstrate it will help you address:-

- Skill Shortcomings
- Experience gaps
- Employment gaps
- Overcoming problems

It's just so important to show that when you face some form of issue, you're the type of person that takes a POSITIVE ACTION, rather than one that just looks to kill time and wait for something to happen.

You don't have to sign up for further education, you may have decided to take a career break to travel, or run a project to improve your home, but you MUST turn these experiences into positive STAR stories that demonstrate not only self development but ideally one of the other desirable personality traits (Boss, Expert, Juggler, Good Citizen, Star, Team Player, Problem Solver).

Clearly taking some form of education or learning course is an excellent choice, so the rest of this chapter is to provide links to useful resources.

Home Study

[Open Study College is an Fast Growing International College providing a wide range of accredited courses. UK Based.](#)



sentient-recruitment.com

[Open University](#)

US Resources

[Penn Forster one of the best respected covering US and Canada.](#)

Career Management

[JibberJobber.com another great free resource for managing job search, networking and career development activity](#)

Interview Sniper Target CV / Resume Objective Builder

Your objective is going to align with that of the reader. Or career change roles where you have to link generic transitional skills and a crystal clear focus on your target role.

Remember **YOUR OBJECTIVE is for the benefit of the reader** not you.

The Objective statement should be concise and no more than 4 lines. It's a short powerful statement that tells the reader that **you WANT**, and offer **what THEY need**.

Review and then delete the red example text first, replacing it with:

Step 1 – Under the **TARGET** column fill in the requirements of your target role, from the advert / job spec or your research if you're aiming at an unadvertised role.

Step 2 – Fill in your **RELEVANT** skills, experience and behaviour under the **YOU** column **after you have completed the self assessment stage** within the guide.

Step 3 – **Follow the guide to start constructing your Objective Statement.**

| HEADING | TARGET Job add / Spec | YOU |
|--|------------------------------|------------|
| Job Title | | |
| Business Objectives of Role Go beyond the responsibilities, ask yourself how this role will help the organisation make or save money. When you record your experience to the form try and show how you have helped make or save money, through the efficiency you bring. | | |
| Skills / Competency required Don't be afraid to add any that you believe may have been overlooked | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| from the spec. | | |
| Sector / Market Experience | | |
| Behaviour / Personality (soft skills) These traits or soft skills are often left out of job specs, but are vital to the overall marketing message you need to build. Even if you have to research further ensure you have at least 3 or 4 personality traits that are honest (use your MAPP assessment) and relevant to the role. | | |
| Work Area | | |



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