

Employers often turn to behavioural interviewing - open-ended interview questions relating to your behaviour in past situations. This will allow the interviewer(s) to try to match you with the pre-set requirements of the role. The STAR model an effective way to structure your answer to this type of questioning:

**S – Situation:** Briefly, outline where you were, what was your job?

**T – Task:** Explain the task you encountered, what was the objective?

**A – Action:** What specific actions did you take to meet the objective?

**R – Results:** What were the results and what did you learn?

To help you, here is an example:

Interviewer: “Tell me about a time when you have had to deal with a difficult customer”.

Interviewee:

“When I was working in a local retail store, a customer who was clearly very upset and demanding to see the manager immediately approached me.

I decided to take the customer aside to try to establish exactly what was wrong. I let the customer explain, and listened carefully without interrupting. I made notes of key points and questions. I then clarified that I had understood their complaint fully. The complaint had arisen because the customer’s mother had tried to return a defective purchase earlier in the day. The colleague that dealt with this had refused to take action.

I apologised to the customer but did not blame my colleague. I explained that normal company policy for returned items is if returned with a valid receipt, it is usual practice to offer a replacement or a credit note. I checked the returned item and receipt for the customer and was able to provide a replacement, along with a gift token as a gesture of goodwill. I also offered to call the customers mother and offer my apologies in person.

The customer was very satisfied with the solution. Having completed a quick investigation, I was able to confirm that a new, inexperienced member of the team had seen the customer’s mother. I was able to support the team member with additional training to ensure they will be better prepared for similar situations in the future.”