



FROM SKILLS TO STORIES: YOUR KEY TO INTERVIEW SUCCESS

When hiring teams write interview questions, they review the job description to identify the critical skills that the employee needs to be successful in this role. They then take those skills and create their questions in an effort to find the best candidate for their role.

In this 3-step exercise, you are going to “reverse-engineer” your job description (that you either have from the online job posting, your recruiter, or the hiring manager) and identify these skills for yourself.

Then, you’ll brainstorm some stories to tell that highlight that this is a skill of yours.

In doing so, you’re now prepared to provide an example for any question that is about the skills that are specific to your target job.

This is a more effective way of preparing for an interview than trying to memorize your answers to hundreds of interview questions because you are focusing on the exact skills that your employer is looking for.

Here are the 3-steps:

1. Read your job description all the way through, noting or highlighting anytime a word that relates to a certain skill is used. This may take some critical thinking! (See page 2 for an example).
2. Make a list of all of these skills and enter each skill into the left column (“Skill”) on pages 3-6.
3. In the right column, (“Stories”), brainstorm as many stories as you can that highlight that skill as a strength of yours.

Note: This is just brainstorming for now, you’ll prepare these stories in the “STAR” format in another exercise.



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HOW TO PULL OUT SKILLS FROM THE JOB DESCRIPTION:

EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION:

Summary

We are looking for a **trustworthy** Billing coordinator to ensure the company tracks and collects debts consistently and correctly.

Billing coordinators are equipped with knowledge of billing procedures and **great attention to detail**. Their **analytical ability** is a valuable asset, while **their communication skills** can make a difference for customer relationships.

Responsibilities

- Collaborate with finance and sales professionals to maintain accounts receivable
- Compile and process information such as prices and discounts
- Communicate with customers to answer questions
- Resolve disagreements between the company and its creditors
- Request payment of pending debts in a firm yet considerate manner
- Negotiate payment arrangements when needed
- Keep accurate records (customer information, received payments etc.)

Requirements and Skills

- Understanding of relevant laws and best practices
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Confidentiality and trustworthiness
- Excellent ability to organize and coordinate tasks

The top skills from this job description are:

- Trustworthiness
- Attention to Detail
- Analysis
- Effective Communication
- Collaboration
- Conflict Resolution
- Negotiation
- Organization

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT EVALUATING JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

It can be difficult to discern the difference between a skill and a qualification.

Pay special attention when doing this exercise that you are focusing on the **SKILLS** rather than the qualifications.



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