

STARBUCKS Interview Guide

From Mathew Arnolds, former STARBUCKS Manager and Interviewer

STARBUCKS employs more than 150,000 people around the world. If we add one hundred thousand part time workers, and consider the high job hopping rates in retail, there is no wonder **STARBUCKS hires 80,000 new employees annually.**

It is easy to get a job with them though?

Statistics will help us to find the answer again: **More than 1,000,000 people submit their job application** for various job openings at STARBUCKS around the world each year. One million applications, but only eighty thousand new hires—you should do the math. The chances of getting a job at Starbucks are less than ten percent—for an average job seeker.

But for those who understand how to proceed with their online application, how to answer the phone call from STARBUCKS manager, what to bring to the interview with them, how to make a good impression on their managers, and most importantly—how to answer their interview questions, will have a much better chance.

And that's exactly why I wrote this book—to help you to understand these things, and to significantly improve your chances of getting hired at STARBUCKS.

Let me tell you a few things:

- I worked as a shift manager and later as a store manager at STARBUCKS for more than four years. I interviewed people for jobs ranging from baristas to assistant managers. Actually, **I led more than three hundred job interviews at STARBUCKS**, working at three different locations, leading various teams.

- I will show you what the interviewers are searching for in job candidates, and **what they want to hear from them.**
- I will show you **how to present yourself in an interview**, what to say and what to do, and how to answer the most common questions they ask in STARBUCKS interviews.

A few questions to answer:

Why am I doing this?

The situation on the employment market is not fair. Just look around you. There are thousands of recruiting companies and consultancies that help corporations, such as STARBUCKS, to hire the best people on the market. But **there are just very few organizations, or individuals, that help job seekers to get a job of their dreams.** I try to change the situation. I do my best to help the job seekers to achieve what I have achieved once – to get a job at STARBUCKS, or at other company where I interviewed people for jobs before. (I have interviewed more than two thousand people in my life)

Doesn't the interview differ in every store? Don't they change their recruitment procedures constantly?

Frankly, they do not change it often. First of all, **things do not change very fast in big corporations.** On the top of that, store managers are trained for everything, including leading the interviews. Though they may add something here and there, the main interview template is the same for every store.

Who should read this book? Is it suitable for all job openings at STARBUCKS?

The book was originally designed to help people applying for jobs of baristas, shift managers and assistant managers, but it helped some people to get mid-level corporate positions as well. Some attitudes and skills they look for at STARBUCKS are the same for every position, and therefore the book will help you even if you do not apply for one of the most typical roles. But primarily it is designed for future baristas and shift managers.

Okay, enough of an introduction. Let's learn together how to impress the interviewers, and how to land the job at STARBUCKS!

Mathew Arnolds,

Your personal interview coach

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1. Online job application

(Note: If you are already invited for an interview, you can skip this part and continue reading from the “phone interview” section, starting on page 11.)

In most countries it is not possible anymore to apply for a job at STARBUCKS directly in a store. **Job seekers have to apply online**, and we will have a look at some things you need to know when filling your online job application with STARBUCKS.

As we have mentioned already, more than ten people apply for every single job opening at STARBUCKS in average. In some big cities, however, the number of applications can reach hundreds, for every single job opening (I experienced this a few times).

Many people apply, but only a few will be invited for an interview. And **it is the online application that will decide who will be invited**.

Tips for your online job application at STARBUCKS

Write as much as possible

Completing the online application is tiring, and it can take a lot of time. One may find some sections on the application **unrelated to the job, or even pointless**. However, trying to show your strong desire to work at STARBUCKS, you should read and complete every single part of an application. Try to write as much information as possible, without repeating the same thing twice (unless you talk about one of your strengths, and want to ensure that the people who read your application will not skip the information).

The things you write there reflect who you are, and it is the only information their manager will know about you. **The more relevant things you write, the better picture of you can they create, and the better your chances of getting an invitation will be.**

Print the application

When you will talk about your experience, availability, or education in a face to face interview, your words should correspond with the information you entered on the online application. If they did not correspond, they would not hire you.

While I do not suggest anyone to tell lies on their online application, you may **have a tendency to say something in a slightly different way, in one that is better for your chances of getting accepted.**

It is not the end of the world if you write something untrue—all of us lie sometimes, and the truth is subjective after all, especially if we speak about things such as one's abilities and weaknesses.

But the key is **to keep the same profile from the start of your job search to the moment of signing a job contract with them.** And to do so, you should print your online application and remember exactly what you wrote there.

One position, four localities

You have an option to choose several positions you would accept with STARBUCKS, and to pick localities you would prefer for your place of work. I suggest you to **always pick just one position** (e.g. barista), not two or more jobs. That shows that you clearly know what you want to do, **what position suits your personality and experience.** Later you can say in an interview that you would accept also another role, if the primary one was not available.

On the other hand, **you should show some flexibility** when choosing the location of your store. The best thing is to choose four localities that have some jobs available, ideally the four that are near to your apartment.

All four store managers will be notified about your job application, hence choosing four localities automatically improves your chances of getting a call from one of the managers.

Open your heart

You may find some questions rather **personal**, such as questions about your previous salary; about the reason for leaving last job, and similar. However, the details in your answers are not as important as **the simple fact that you answer each question**.

Managers at STARBUCKS want to hire people who are honest, talkative, and optimistic. Therefore you should write something to every field; even if your answer looked not that good. For example if they fired you from your last job, you should say so. But don't forget to explain why it happened, and that you learned a lesson from the experience.

Specific fields to pay attention to when applying online

Your availability

They ask you to describe your availability in one step of the online application process.

If you are looking for a full time job, you should **choose seven days in a week, and all possible working hours**. Full time workers need to be flexible at STARBUCKS.

If you apply for a part time job, however, I suggest you to choose the exact hours when you can work at the store. Managers at STARBUCKS typically build shifts from a mixture of part time and full time workers. The more flexibility you show, the better your chances of getting an invitation will be.

Work history

You should always **add at least one job to your work history**.

If you have no real working experience, you can **mention any kind of volunteering, summer job, or anything else you did and gained basic working habits**. In the worst possible case, make something up, writing that you worked in a family restaurant during the

summer. You should include a name of someone they can contact to verify the information, so pick someone who will back up your experience (you can contact them in advance, telling them to expect a call from STARBUCKS).

On the other hand, if you have a lot of working experience, I suggest you to choose only two or three most relevant jobs. Customer service, sales, and manual labor are your best choices and if you apply for a managerial job, go for any supervising, team leading, or managerial experience. **The key is to not look overqualified** for the job you are trying to get with STARBUCKS.

Please list any skills relevant to the position(s) you are applying for:

They will provide you a great training at STARBUCKS. You do not need ten years of barista experience. They will show you how to handle the job. However, your skills and personality are important for the store managers. While everyone can learn to work at STARBUCKS, **they need the right personality to enjoy doing the job**, and to do it well for a long period of time.

Job description should help you to understand what skills to include on this section of your online application. However, **you should not simply retype** the skills from a job description. You **should describe it in other words**. Let me show you an example.

Job description for barista position at STARBUCKS says:

Required Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Ability to learn quickly
- Ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions and request clarification when needed
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to build relationships

Physical Requirements

- Constant standing/walking
- Occasional stooping, kneeling or crawling
- Occasional pushing, pulling, lifting or carrying up to 40 lbs
- Occasional ascending or descending ladders, stairs, ramps
- Constant computer/POS Register and bar equipment usage
- Frequent, continual, intermittent flexing or rotation of the wrist(s) and spine
- Constant reaching, turning, and performing precision work around bar area
- Constant receiving detailed information through oral communication
- Constant talking, expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word
- Occasional Distinguishing, with a degree of accuracy, differences or similarities in intensity or quality of flavors and/or odors
- Constant clarity of vision at near and/or far distances

Every person has some of these skills/abilities, or we can at least write that we have them, in order **to improve our chances of getting an interview invitation**. But you should use different words to describe them. Let me show you an example, talking about the job of a barista:

Instruction from the online application:

Please list any skills relevant to the position(s) you are applying for:

Your answer:

- Like to learn new things
- Excellent listening skills
- Good understanding of the needs of other people
- Friendly, community-oriented personality
- Stress resistant
- Good physical condition
- Ability to work with POS

- Enthusiastic personality
- Good observation skills

I wrote about the same things, but I used different wording to describe the desired skills and abilities. For example “good physical condition” stands for constant standing/walking, occasional stooping, kneeling or crawling, occasional pushing, pulling, lifting or carrying up to 40 lbs, occasional ascending or descending ladders, stairs, ramps.

And similarly, friendly, community-oriented personality stands for ability to work as part of a team, ability to build relationships.

Applicants who follow my example will have a great chance of being invited for a face to face interview....

Description of your responsibilities

This field is a part of Work History section on your online application.

When filling it, you should **think like someone with a great personality for STARBUCKS.**

Let me show you an example. Let’s say you have an experience of a call center operator. You were responsible for the following tasks:

- To obtain client information by answering telephone calls; interviewing clients; verifying information.
- To establish policies by entering client information; confirming pricing.
- To inform clients by explaining procedures; answering questions; providing information.

(Responsibilities listed on a job description for a typical call center operator job.)

From a point of view of someone who focuses on their customers (what is great to know for STARBUCKS), you should describe your responsibilities in a different way.

- *Helping clients to solve their problems on the phone*

- *Providing information to clients, to help them make right purchasing decisions*
- *Maintaining good relationships with the clients of the company, while offering valuable information*

Describing your responsibilities in this way, **you give a manager at STARBUCKS a clear sign that satisfaction of customers is your first priority**. If they get this feeling, they will invite you for an interview in a store.

Similar approach can be applied to every other job you had in the past, and decide to include on the work history section of the online application with STARBUCKS.

These are the main points to remember when applying online. **If you follow my guidance, you should get an invitation for an interview after submitting your online application.**

2. Phone interview (phone call with a store manager or with an assistant manager)

When a manager from STARBUCKS calls you, it is typically just to fix a time for a face to face interview. Nevertheless, you should not underestimate the phone call.

If you make a good impression while talking to them over the phone, the manager will wait for you in a store having good expectations, hoping to hire you, if everything goes well in your interview. On the contrary, if you make a bad impression on the phone, you will face an uphill battle in your interview.

How to make a good impression on them while they are calling?

- **Show them (or even tell them) that you expected their call.** They should get an impression that you eagerly anticipated the moment of hearing from them.
- **Show enthusiasm.** Listen carefully to their questions and answer them with enthusiasm. They should get a feeling that you are really happy for getting a chance to present yourself in an interview with them.
- **Thank for the invitation** and accept the date they suggest. However, if it is not possible, give a clear reason why you need to schedule the interview on another day.
- **Smile.** They can not see your smile, but it makes a huge difference in the way you sound on the call.

Doing these things on the phone, you will ensure **the best possible starting position in your interview.**

3. Interview in a store

Before talking about the details of the face to face interview, you should learn what awaits you once you enter the store.

The manager will not be waiting for you in front of a store—they will work on other things while waiting for you inside. You should arrive at least five minutes before your interview and inform one of the employees about the purpose of your visit. They will call the manager.

You should know that the managers often discuss the results of the interviews with other staff members, including baristas. **Community is very important at STARBUCKS**, and managers try to ensure that the members of the team are happy about the choice of a new colleague.

Knowing this, you should be nice to everyone you meet in a store, from the very first moment of entering it.

Rushing to the place and approaching the very first person saying that you have an interview with Mr. X., scheduled at 3pm, and asking them to call the manager would be a mistake. You should use other words, if you want to ensure they will introduce you to the manager in a good way. For example:

“Hi, my name is Anita. I am trying to become your new colleague. I should have an interview with Mr. X at 3pm. Could you please let them know I am here, when you have a minute to do so? Thank you very much.”

Feel free to approach baristas and other workers at STARBUCKS, especially if they have time to give you their attention. After all, you need someone to call a manager, so why not to use this chance to build relationships with new colleagues, and to improve your chances in an interview?

Complimentary drink

They will offer you a free drink in your interview at most STARBUCKS stores. While it seems a nice and natural way of treating job seekers, **there is more behind that**. It is also a test of **your knowledge of STARBUCKS Menu**, of **your preferences**, of your **attitude to coffee, their core product**.

One can not become a good salesman of a product which they do not like. If they feel that you do not like the menu at STARBUCKS, they will not hire you.

Therefore you should always accept the complimentary drink. What is more, **you should choose something special.** I suggest you to have a look at <http://www.STARBUCKS.com/menu/drinks>, browse it and find a drink or two you may want to try in your interview.

Say that you would like to have hazelnut macchiato, or vanilla latte, just to show them that you know what STARBUCKS offers, and actually have your own preference, enjoying the different tastes of their coffee products.

What is more, **you should really enjoy your coffee.** Smell it, taste it, enjoy it, compliment it. That's the best way how to show that you are a right person to sell and serve drinks at STARBUCKS, because only people who like the product can sell it well.

Once you get a job, you do not have to drink coffee or anything else at STARBUCKS. You can drink water all the time if you prefer. But in an interview, **you should show them that you like what they sell, and that you know something about it.**

Casual behaviour

Interviews at STARBUCKS are not exactly formal—I would rather call them casual. Most managers are easy going, and you should stay relaxed as well, especially if you see that they are relaxed. Try to enjoy the time with the manager, ask them questions, listen with interest, and enjoy the drink. Try to show them that you have a friendly and upbeat personality, something they seek in every employee at STARBUCKS.

Exception proves the rule—you can meet a very serious interviewer at STARBUCKS. In such a case, you should tune on their wavelength, and approach the meeting in the same way. This happens rarely though....

Waiting times - make the best of them

If you wait for the start of your interview (or between two parts of it), try to make the most of it. I suggest you to take a seat near the bar, and **interact with other baristas** (if they are not busy).

Remember, they watch you all time. A great employee at STARBUCKS is **someone talkative, upbeat, someone who enjoys their time in the environment of the store**. Such a person will not sit far away silently while waiting for their interview....

Try to show them that you have the right personality. Talk to people, enjoy your time, have something to drink if you have to wait. It will not only improve your chances of getting the job, but **it will also help you to get rid of stress**.

4. Be the one prepared for an interview at STARBUCKS, not at another company

Choosing your interview attire

When applying for a job at STARBUCKS, you should **dress like the employees dress in their daily job** (same style of clothes, similar, or neutral colors).

You should **belong to the community** already in your interview.

Do not wear an expensive coat, to look more important than you are. Do not wear a mini skirt, to look more attractive than you are. They do not want such people at STARBUCKS. **In this company, you should not stand out from the crowd. You should belong to the group.** I suggest clean dark pants and well ironed shirt or t-shirt without any big picture or symbol. Green color will help. No excessive necklaces, rings, or piercing. Leave them at home, at least for your interview.

Please, do not underestimate the importance of your interview attire. A scientific study showed that once job seekers adhered to the dress code of the institution where they applied for a job, the interviewers had better feeling about them. They saw someone as a good adept to join the company, **just because the colors and style of their dress matched the dress code of the company, the colors and style that belonged to their corporate identity.** Clever job seekers know that our decisions are from 80% emotional, and they use this simple trick to their advantage.

Don't forget to do your homework

You should visit the website of STARBUCKS and check their news. I suggest you to read especially this section: <http://www.starbucks.com/responsibility>, to learn **more about their values, goals, and things they do for the community.** Anyway, you should spend some time reading about them, and you should research about the particular store as well (think social media, Google reviews, etc), trying to find out as much information as possible.

The information will help you not only to find good answers to some questions, but also to **calm down before your interview** (since it is always easy if the place feels familiar), and to ask right questions, once there is an opportunity (or an obligation) to ask something. Once you know a lot about them, it will be easy for you to come up with a good question.

What to bring with you?

You should bring a copy of your resume and a list of personal references, or recommendations (if you have any).

Though the meeting is typically semi-casual, and managers won't study your resume there (they will likely know everything from your online application anyway), it is still good to have some documents with you.

Most applicants bring only their resume, or they bring nothing. Try to be better, **try to do more**. Interviewers will always appreciate the "do more" attitude, and it doesn't matter if you apply for a job of a shift manager, or a barista.

Act as an ideal STARBUCKS employee would act in their daily job

This is a magical sentence. If you follow this single advice, it will win you many job interviews in your life, not only at STARBUCKS.

In fact, most job seekers believe that their answers to interview questions decide about success or failure. But this is just partially true... If you know any interviewers or HR managers personally, ask them about **the real decisive factors in an interview**. They would tell you exactly the same thing I am going to tell you right now:

Your presence, non-verbal communication, as well as your overall demeanor is even more important than your answers to interview questions.

Let's have a look at barista position, to understand this principle better:

A great barista is responsible and cheerful individual, motivated to do their job. They like to interact with all kinds of people. Pleasant behavior and excellent communication skills are amongst their strengths. At the same time, a good barista is an excellent listener and can work quickly. They have excellent knowledge of drinks and snacks the store offers. They do not get bored or distracted by anything in their job, and their observation skills are great.

And you should act in the same way in your interview for barista position at STARBUCKS. What does it mean?

You definitely should:

- Keep an eye contact with your interviewer.
- Be friendly, open, and cheerful to all people you meet before and during your interview.
- Give a lot of questions to the interviewers.
- Listen carefully to each their question, talk to the point.
- Speak about your previous jobs, as well as about this working opportunity, with enthusiasm and love.
- Notice something in a store (something that caught your eye) and mention it in an interview (to demonstrate good observation skills).
- Demonstrate knowledge of STARBUCKS Menu in your answers, and in your choice of a drink.
- Respond quickly, not thinking much about your interview answers.
- Enjoy the time with the interviewer

If you follow this advice in an interview, STARBUCKS manager will get the feeling that you have **a great personality for barista**. And that is priceless information for them...

Managers realize that you can always be trained to work with the cash counter, or to tell one type of coffee from another.

However, once you do not have the right personality for the job, you will never become a great barista, either at STARBUCKS or anywhere else in the world.

Please, keep it on your mind and **try to present yourself as an ideal employee in every moment of the interviewing process.**

5. Behavioural questions – how to answer them

Interviewers will ask you about your behavior in various work related situations from the past, trying to foresee your behavior in their store.

The logic is simple: If you acted in Situation A in a certain way, you will likely do the same in a similar situation in the future. Let's have a look at one behavioral question they typically ask at STARBUCKS:

Give an example of good customer service you provided in the past.

I have heard many job seekers giving one of the following answers:

- *I do not have such an experience.*
- *This is my first job application.*
- *I can not recall that situation at the moment.*

These people could hardly get any points for their answers, **because they did not answer our question at all.**

We will analyze and answer specific behavioral questions for STARBUCKS in the next chapter. However, there is one rule you should remember: **Never say that you can not answer a question.**

If you really haven't experienced certain situation yet, I suggest you to use one of the following formulations, depending on the question:

- *I have not been in such a situation before. However, if it happened to me, I would do the following:*
- *I have never done that before, but I understand the importance of [excellent customer service] and I would always....*

6. Eighteen most common interview questions at STARBUCKS

Based on my experience with interviewing candidates for various positions at STARBUCKS stores, and the interview template I knew, I chose and analyzed eighteen most common interview questions they use at STARBUCKS.

We will have a look at **some personal, behavioral and technical interview questions.**

There is a short hint for every question. The hint explains **why the interviewers ask you the question, and what you should focus on when answering.** Several **excellent answers** follow every hint. Feel free to use them as an inspiration for your own interview answers.

The following questions are analyzed in this book:

- 1. Why would you like to work at STARBUCKS, and not somewhere else?**
- 2. Why this position?**
- 3. This job is repetitive. What would motivate you to do it well every day?**
- 4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?**
- 5. Tell me a little about your working experience.**
- 6. If another co-worker were gossiping about someone else something which was untrue, how would you react?**
- 7. What would your former colleagues say about you?**
- 8. How long do you want to work at STARBUCKS?**
- 9. What would you do if you were late for a shift?**
- 10. What have you learned in the last year?**
- 11. What was a goal for yourself within the last year, and how did you accomplish it?**
- 12. Describe a time when a customer was not satisfied with your service. What did you do to fix the problem?**
- 13. How comfortable are you in such close quarters with up to five co-workers?**
- 14. What do you like about coffee?**
- 15. Give an example of best customer service you provided.**

16.What would you do if you saw someone stealing from the register drawer?

17.When are you able to start?

18.Do you have any questions?

1. Why would you like to work at STARBUCKS, and not somewhere else?

Hint: Most people talk about the advantages of the job, when we compare it to other, similar job openings with other coffee retailers (flexible working hours, lot of part time opportunities, great brand, always having customers, job security, relaxed night shifts, etc).

While it is not a bad answer, you can do even better. You can think about the question **from the perspective of an employer** – why it is good for them that you want to work at STARBUCKS, and what they do like about the company.

In this answer, you can focus on the culture and values of the company, on **something that distinguishes STARBUCKS from their competitors, something their managers are proud of**. And you can focus on the value you can bring to their team, since their goals, values, and working environment resonates with your values.

Good Answers:

- I like the working environment here, how perfectly organized everything is, and at the same time, how good and easygoing one can feel at this store. I also like the quality of STARBUCKS coffee, the variety you offer, and the attitude of the employees to each other. The friendly working environment is just amazing, and that's the reason why I would prefer to work here, and not somewhere else. .

- I meet the job requirements, and I believe I am a good match for the team working here. On the top of that, your part time offer really suits my schedule on the college, so it's a perfect match for me. That is why I want to work here and not somewhere else. I have submitted also other job applications, but STARBUCKS is definitely my first choice.

2. Why this position?

Hint: Try to show them that you know why you are applying. You can say that you believe your strengths match perfectly with the job description for the particular position.

Alternatively you can say you like the nature of the job, or, if you have no other reason, mention location, past experience, or working hours as a reason for your preferences.

Good answers:

- *I have been working as a team leader before, and I believe I can organize people well, and they enjoy my supervision. Therefore I applied for a position of a shift manager, since I can utilize my skills, strengths, and past experience on the position.*
- *I just like the nature of the job, being active, working manually, talking to people—it seems like a natural choice of a job for someone like me. That's why I applied for barista position. On the top of that, it is a great location, close to my dormitory.*

3. This job is repetitive. What would motivate you to do it well every day?

Hint: Daily job of a typical STARBUCKS employee is repetitive, especially if we talk about baristas. Therefore you should **focus on your preference to routine jobs**. A good feeling from a well-done job can also resonate in your answer.

Or you can say that from your point of view **the job is not repetitive, if one has the right attitude in work**.

Good answers:

- *To be honest, I prefer routine jobs. Once I learn to do things, I do my job well and have good feeling about doing them.*

- *Relationships matter for me the most. If I enjoy the time I spent with my colleagues, if I feel like a member of a hard-working team, it makes me happy and motivated to work hard all time. It does not matter if the job is repetitive or not.*
- *From my point of view, this job is not repetitive. I know that baristas carry out the same tasks every day. But new people come to the store, you talk to them, there are problems you need to solve operatively, and a shift is never the same. From my point of view, this job is fun to do, and I would not call it repetitive.*

4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Hint: This is one of the **most typical interview questions**. Sometimes I have the feeling that interviewers use it just because everybody else does so.

However, **it is not as difficult as many job seekers believe**. In a good answer you should talk about strengths that are related to the job at STARBUCKS, and about weaknesses that are not related (or at least not much) to it.

One can even talk about a weakness that may be considered strength by some employers and HR managers, for example being overfriendly to customers.

Anyway, you should not claim to have no weaknesses. We are human. We have weaknesses. Pick one that is not important for the job, and follow with your efforts to improve on the weakness.

Sample answers:

- *I have a tendency to be overfriendly to people. Customers may understand my behavior in a wrong way. I know about this weakness, and I try to be careful in the job, to avoid stupid situations. I consider good computing skills, and an ability to*

understand the needs of different people, my greatest strengths. I believe they are useful for a job here.

- *My language skills are not as good as they should be. However, I attend evening courses and practice a lot at home in order to improve on my language skills. People say that I am responsible and it has never happened to me that I did not finish my work in time, or came late to the shift. This is likely my greatest strength as an employee.*

5. Tell us a little about your working experience.

Hint: This question is not as easy as it seems. The managers at STARBUCKS ask you to tell them **a little** about your experience, which is a test to see if you listen carefully, and talk to the point.

To prove it, you should mention only relevant experience, **one or two roles**, which basically means **any customer service, sales, supervisory or manual job** you had in the past.

They have seen your experience on the online application, so it makes no sense to extensively talk about your past jobs, unless they ask you about particular details. But you should try to **talk about your experience with enthusiasm, positively**, because they definitely do not want to hire someone who will complain about their job.

If you have no previous working experience, you can talk about volunteering, summer job, or anything else. The key is to simply **show them that you know what it means to have a job, to have some responsibility**, and a place you go to work day after day.

Good answers:

- *I worked at Wells Fargo for two years, on a position of teller. It was a part time job. It was great, I learned how to talk to people, how to uncover their needs, which I believe will help me to do a good job at STARBUCKS.*

- *I've had only summer jobs before. I worked as a manual worker on construction for about two months; I picked strawberries and volunteered in a research center. I believe that I learned what it means to have a routine job, and to deal with pressure. Now I am looking for something different, and hope to start my career here at STARBUCKS..*

6. If another co-worker were gossiping about someone else something which was untrue, how would you react?

Hint: Managers at STARBUCKS **do not want you to solve the problems of other employees.** They want to hear that you focus on your job, and that you **do not care about gossips at the workplace.** They also prefer to hire employees who do not gossip, people with a strong sense of community and team work.

Good answers:

- *I would simply answer it was not true and continue working. Gossips will always be present, and we have to accept them. However, I need to focus on my own job, and have no time to think about the gossips of the others. I try my best to help maintaining a good and friendly relationship on the workplace, but sometimes you can do nothing about the gossips.*
- *It is their opinion. I always try to have good relationship with my colleagues, and do not care about the gossips. I try to be friendly to everyone, but if other people can not get along each other, it is likely for the manager to talk to them.*

7. What would your former colleagues/teachers say about you?

Hint: Interviewers ask you this question for several reasons. First of all, they try to find out **what you would say about your former colleagues**. Many times I heard job applicants answer: *“My colleagues? They were not qualified for their job, so I do not know if their feedback would be relevant.”*

Each STARBUCKS store is a team. People who talk badly about their colleagues are not welcome, and would not remain long with STARBUCKS. It is a bad idea to say anything bad about your past colleagues, as it suggests you may do the same thing in your job at STARBUCKS....

The managers may call your former colleagues before having an interview with you, trying to get some feedback on your work and personality. This question helps them to compare the opinion of your former colleagues with your own view.

Knowing that, I suggest you to stay humble in your answer, perhaps mentioning one or two strengths, **or saying you do not know what they would say.**

Sample answers:

- *My former colleagues were nice people, and they did a good job. I do not know if they had enough time to think about my work, because they were focused on their own jobs. But maybe they would say that I was a responsible colleague, never started conflicts with anyone. I believe they would say we had good relationship.*
- *Each of us is different and has their view of the world. Therefore it is tough to say what my former colleagues would tell you about me. I hope I helped them to enjoy their time in job, since I always tried to create a good atmosphere on the workplace.*

8. How long would you like to work at STARBUCKS?

Hint: Recruiting new hires costs both time and money (think interviews, training, etc). Anytime possible, STARBUCKS managers want to hire people who will either stay long, or come repeatedly (e.g. each summer).

The key is to convince them that you want to start a long term employment relationship with STARBUCKS, coming back whenever you can.

Good answers:

- *If I get a job here, if you are satisfied with my work, and if my colleagues enjoy their time with me, I'll be glad to stay for many years to come. This is my dream job, so I can't see a reason to leave anytime soon.*
- *I am planning to have this job for about one year time. However, I would like to stay with STARBUCKS as long as there are career growth options for me.*
- *I consider this a summer job, to be honest. However, I would like to have the same job also next summer and the next one, as long as I study at the University. I understand it takes some time to learn to do this job well, and to understand how things work at STARBUCKS, so once we both invested time into this process, it would make no sense for me to look for another job, the next summer.*

9. What would you do if you were late for a shift?

Hint: You should start your answer emphasizing that you are never late, **trying your best to not create problems for your colleagues**. Then you should say that if you were late, you would notify shift manager (or your direct superior) as soon as you knew you were late.

Good answers:

- *I have never been late to school or work. I understand that my absence causes problems for other colleagues, and because of that I always prefer to come fifteen minutes earlier, or even more, not relying on the last bus. However, if something extraordinary happened, I would notify my manager as soon as I knew I would not make it in time. Later I would apologize to my colleague for coming late.*

- *It is my priority to arrive in time, as I understand the workload at SB is heavy, and each employee has their role on the shift. However, if I was late, I would notify both my colleagues and the manager, in order to ensure that someone would take care of my duties until I arrived.*

10. What have you learned in the last year?

Hint: The school of life never stops. The exact lessons life taught you in the last year are not as important as your attitude. **Do you have a positive outlook on life? Do you consider your setbacks the lessons to learn from?** Do you constantly try to improve on your strengths and weaknesses? That's what the STARBUCKS managers want to hear in your answer....

Good Answers

- *I believe I have matured in the last year. My experience of working with the others – both colleagues and customers – has contributed to my communication skills, as well as to better understanding of how other people see the world around them.*
- *I spent time in various communities from the fringe of society, trying to get rid of prejudice. This experience helped me to see something good in every person, and also to appreciate my own life, everything that I have been given.*
- *I learned that people you believe the most can disappoint you at the end. Last year was tough for me in personal life. However, life goes on, and everything is just a lesson for us.*

11. What was a goal for yourself within the last year and how did you accomplish it?

Hint: Every responsible person has some goals. **These should motivate them in their daily job and life.** If you can, talk about goals that are at least somehow related to the job at

STARBUCKS, such as improving your communication skills, learning to make good coffee, or even getting your first job.

Alternatively you can speak about goals from your personal life, especially if trying to achieve them speaks for your motivation, determination, and will.

Good answers:

- *To graduate from school was my main goal, and I did what I could in my free time to achieve it, and to graduate with good marks. Now I set a new goal—to get my first job, and to be good at it.*
- *My main goal was to become a better person, a better worker, a better friend. I worked on my communication skills, and I organized some events for friends. I simply tried to talk on the others more as I had done before. I believe it worked, and now I want to keep it up.*

12. Describe a time when a customer was not satisfied with your service. What did you do to fix the problem?

Hint: While most customers at STARBUCKS are nice and friendly, there will always be someone who complains—sometimes for no real reason.

Customer is always right though, even if they are wrong. Therefore you should speak about the situation openly, and said you apologized, and tried your best.

If you do not have previous experience, you can say what you would do if someone complained. Most important thing is to convince the hiring managers that you count with such a behavior in a store, that it won't affect you negatively in job, and that you know what to do when it happens.

Good answers:

- *This is my first job application, so I do not have such an experience. But if it happened to me, I would apologize, ask them what I did wrong, and try to make them happy with*

my service. Anyway, I know such things happen in a store, and believe that each situation will make me prepared better for the next one.

- *One time I mixed a couple of orders and brought tea to customer who wanted cappuccino. They started to shout on me, and apparently were not happy with the waiting time. I apologized for my mistake and brought them double sized cappuccino, together with a cake, which I paid for myself. They were shocked to see that, and actually apologized for their bad words.*

13. How comfortable are you in such close quarters with up to five co-workers?

Hint: You should say that you are perfectly all right to share a small place with five co-workers. You can use this chance to **compliment the manager**, saying that you observed the baristas at work while waiting for your interview, and that they had a great system of serving the customers, not hindering each other in close quarters.

Good answers:

- *I have visited STARBUCKS many times. I really like the people here. I feel very comfortable being around them and actually I am happy that we can help each other in work, and interact with each other. It makes the job enjoyable, at least in my eyes.*
- *It is not a problem at all. I can see that your colleagues follow a great system of work, helping each other, and everyone knows their duties. At the end everything falls into place, and customers are happy. I believe I can become a part of this team, and feel comfortable in close quarters.*

14. What do you like about coffee?

Hint: You do not need to be a coffee-lover to get a job at STARBUCKS. However, to succeed in this interview, **you should see coffee as something positive**, something that helps people to boost their energy levels, or to relax, or even something that brings them together. Managers at STARBUCKS should get a feeling that you see something more in your job, a good reason why you should be proud of the work you do.

Good Answers:

- *I love everything about coffee. Each cup tastes differently. It is an art to prepare a good coffee, it fascinates me how many variations one can drink, and there is always something new to discover. I enjoy every cup I drink, and hope to have a chance to help the others to enjoy their cups.*
- *It brings people together. People talk about things over coffee, people talk about things because of coffee.... I believe that thousands of relationships all around the world start daily over a cup of coffee. That's fascinating, isn't it?*
- *It can give you energy, it can give you inspiration. It's something I look forward to on a busy day. I love to relax for a while and have a good cup of coffee, especially at STARBUCKS.*
- *I do not drink coffee, but I see the importance it has in our society. Coffee brings people together. It helps them to get rid of stress and to find energy to continue their everyday battle. It's great that companies like STARBUCKS bring high quality coffee to people all around the world.*

15. Give an example of the best customer service you provided.

Hint: If you deliver exceptional customer service on an ongoing basis, you will have great professional career, regardless of your job choice.

In an interview you should say that you **try to exceed the expectations of the customer** every time, and elaborate on that with a particular situation when you delivered a great customer service.

If you have no previous working experience, stress that you understand the importance of excellent customer service at STARBUCKS, and say what you would do to deliver it.

Good answers:

- *I consider it my duty to always do my best for every customer. For example in my last job in retail, I called a friend, expert in the area of electronics, to ask for an advice when a customer asked me a specific question about a computer we were selling. The customer really appreciated what I did and I was happy to help them. Such moments make me proud of my work.*
- *I have never gone above and beyond with customer service, as this is my first job application. However, I understand the importance of customer satisfaction in retail, and I will always look for opportunities to deliver exceptional service. I believe that with every passing week in job I will understand better what works with the customers here at STARBUCKS, and soon enough it will become easy for me to meet and exceed their expectations.*
- *One time a customer asked me for a nearest pay-station, because his mobile phone had run out of battery and he needed to make an urgent phone call. I offered him an option to make a call from my personal phone. He accepted it and was very happy about the service. He came to our store many times after that.*

16. What would you do if you saw someone stealing from the register drawer?

Hint: You should simply report it to the manager. While community at STARBUCKS is important, and you should not report every little problem you have with your colleagues, everything has limits, and stealing is way beyond the limits.

Good answers:

- *I believe that stealing occurs rarely at STARBUCKS, considering how nice the people working in your stores behave. However, if I saw anyone stealing, colleague or a customer, I would report it to the shift manager immediately.*
- *I would report it to the shift manager, or to a store manager. Stealing is not acceptable, and if we did not find a guilty person, all people on the shift would suffer the consequences. Therefore it is crucial to report it.*

17. When are you able to start?

Hint: Trying to show **your strong determination** to have the job, you should say that you are able to **start as soon they want**, and that STARBUCKS is your first choice.

If you can not start soon, however, bearing in mind the notice period terms with your current employer, or any other commitment you have, can still give a good answer, presenting yourself as a responsible employee, who do not want to leave their current job from day to day.

Good answers:

- *I can start immediately. I really want to have this job, and I will be happy to start my training and work as soon as possible. I have had also some other interviews, but STARBUCKS is my first choice. If you want, we can sign the contract right now.*
- *I do not have any other occupation at the moment. I am ready to start here as soon as you need me.*

- *I would love to start soon, but it would be unprofessional and irresponsible to leave my present job right now. I need one or two months to finish the work, and I also need to try to negotiate the notice period terms with my boss. But I will do my best to start here as soon as possible.*

18. Do you have any questions?

Hint: You should ask questions in an interview. Asking a question shows that you care about the job opportunity, want to know more, are motivated to get the job.

However, you should not ask about something that was clearly described on the job description, or already said in an interview. Good things to inquire about are the **next steps of recruitment process, the company culture, working environment and similar things.**

Anyway, the interview at STARBUCKS is a dialogue, and anytime you feel like asking something, something logical, you should do so.

Good answers:

- *Can you tell me something about the people working in this store? How long do they work here together? They were so nice to me.*
- *How many guests typically come here every day? What is the favorite coffee of your customers?*
- *What about the training program? How do you ensure the baristas are ready to deliver exceptional customer service from their first day in work?*

Right preparation for interview questions

We tried to cover all important subjects in our short selection of most common STARBUCKS interview questions, following the **most updated information** we could get our hands on, and the latest interview templates the company uses. But at the end of the day, interviewers can use **different wording**, or completely different questions, to **assess the same capacities of the job applicants**. And some behavioral questions will vary for various jobs.

However, it is impossible to list, and to prepare for, all questions you could possibly get. If you tried to do so, it would only stress you out, and at the end of the day, you would hardly remember a single answer you prepared upfront.

The key to job interview success lies in **mastering the right principles and attitudes, those STARBUCKS managers seek in the best applicant for the job (and in their answers)**. We outlined it in detail in our answers to the most common interview questions they ask the applicants, as well as in other sections of this eBook.

Mastering this principles and attitudes, and applying them in your interview, is the only possible way **to prepare for everything that can happen there**, because after all, nobody can tell the exact questions they will ask you.

7. Last impression and interview follow up

Most job applicants at STARBUCKS do not use their chance to leave a good last impression. It is a pity.

Once your interview is finished, you should **thank the interviewer** for their time, **praise them for their efforts** and simply **leave a store in a positive and friendly manner**. (If they do not offer you a job immediately in an interview, of course.)

That is called *leaving a good last impression*.

Even if you do not have a good feeling from the interview, you should still do it. You should take control of your emotions and leave a room with a smile on your face.

Last look into the eyes, firm hand shake and good impression can do a lot, especially if the interview is narrow and interviewers undecided. In such a case personal preferences may decide it for you.

What's more, I suggest you **to send a follow up letter, ideally** one day after your interview, if there was no response from an employer.

You can inspire yourself with a following letter:

Dear Mr. Abc,

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to present myself in the interview at STARBUCKS.

After the interview with you, I am really motivated to work on this position. I like your vision, and goals, as well as the working environment in the store where we met.

I hope you will make a right decision and wish you all the best in your job.

Best Regards

Your name

Your phone number

Your email

It is always good **to send at least a short thank you note** (you can find countless examples online), in order to demonstrate your interest for the job which lasts after the interview.

Follow up letter can not win you a job contract. But it can help you to get one, or to open doors that lead to other job openings. It is easy to send a letter and you should do it after every interview. Please, do not be like the majority of job seekers.... The majority is screened out, but you want to get a job. **Build bridges, not fences.**

Final Word

Job interview at STARBUCKS is not easy. Everything seems semi-casual, which can **create a false impression of an unprofessionally led interview, or of a one that is easy to ace.** However, everything is a test—your first interaction with the employees, the complimentary drink, casual questions, and everything else that happens in the store.

It is not because the managers do not like you. They just do their job, following the guidelines and their own intuition, trying to understand if you can become a valuable member of their team, and if you are better than the other job applicants.

At the end of the day, managers working at STARBUCKS are only people, like I and you... They have their desires, like to be praised for their work, and they can not resist hiring an applicant who presents themselves as an ideal applicant for the job.

If you use the knowledge from this eBook, present yourself in a right way in an interview, and give brilliant answers to their questions, **they will have no other option to giving you a job.**

I recommend you to read the entire book once again, trying to remember and master the most important principles and lessons, and to mock the answers to the most common interview questions. Then you should also check the two bonus materials you got for free with your purchase. Doing all of that, you can be sure you did your very best to succeed in an interview, and get a job at STARBUCKS.

Thank you for reading this book, and see you in an interview!

Mathew Arnolds,

Your Personal Job Interview Coach