



Behavioral Interviewing

The core principle behind behavioral interviewing is this: the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. It focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. So instead of asking how you **would** behave, interviewers will ask how you **did** behave

In this style of interviewing, an employer will predetermine which skills are most important to being successful in a particular role. The questions during the interview will then be very specific to those skills, giving you an opportunity to show your suitability.

To assess which skills an employer is seeking, use sources such as the job description, job advertisement, company website and literature, recruitment agency, and knowledge of the client. Your responses need to be very specific and detailed. We recommend following the **STAR Method** as an easy way to ensure you are answering the question fully.

Situation: Give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome.

Task: Describe the task goal of the situation.

Action: Tell specific actions which you took, steps you followed, obstacles you had to overcome, etc.

Results: Highlight outcomes, goals achieved, and accomplishments. If it was a negative outcome, discuss what you learned from the experience.

The best way to prepare for behavioral interviews is:

- Identify 4 or 5 of your top selling points that are related to the job description and decide what examples you can give to get these points across (use STAR Method).
- Try and frame your answer as a story and be prepared for further probing questions from the interviewer around your story e.g. lead me through your decision process.
- Whenever you can, quantify your results.
- Be prepared to provide examples that didn't have the results you had hoped or planned. Frame it in a positive manner.
- Choose examples from a variety of places in your life.

Examples of Behavioral Questions

- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
- Describe a situation where you have had to manage a multicultural environment and the challenges you had?
- Tell me about a time when you have worked in a remote location or situation which is totally foreign?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?



- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

Follow-up questions will also be detailed. You may be asked what you did, what you said, how you reacted or how you felt.

Sample Behavioral Question:

Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.

Sample STAR Response:

Situation (S): Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, The Review, and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

Task (T): My goal was to generate new ideas, materials and incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.

Action (A): I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of The Review circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a School of Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

Result (R): We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year

Sample Behavioral Skill Sets and Behavioral Questions

1. Analytical/Problem Solving

- A. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information, and make a recommendation.
- B. Give me an example of when you identified potential problems and resolved the situation.

2. Communication

- A. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- B. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get a point across.
- C. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- D. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to handle an irate customer.

3. Creativity/Innovation

- A. Tell me about a problem that you have solved in a unique or unusual way.
- B. Describe the most significant or creative presentation/idea that you developed/implemented.
- C. Tell me about a time when you created a new process or program that was considered risky.



4. Decision making

- A. Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make within the past year.
- B. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed.
- C. Discuss a time when you had to make a quick decision.

5. Goal Setting

- A. Give me an example of an important goal that you have set and tell me how you reached it.
- B. Tell me about a goal that you set and did not reach.

6. Flexibility/Adaptability

- A. Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control.
- B. Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a classmate's or colleague's working style in order to complete a project.
- C. Tell me about a situation when you had to be tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.

7. Integrity/Honesty

- A. Tell me about a time when you challenged the status quo to do what you felt was right.
- B. Tell me about a time when you had to handle a tough problem that challenged fairness or ethical issues.

8. Interpersonal

- A. Give me an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with.
- B. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual and how you dealt with it.

9. Leadership/Initiative

- A. Tell me about a time when you were able to provide a co-worker with recognition for the work they performed.
- B. Describe a leadership situation that you would handle differently if you had to do it over again.
- C. Tell me about a time when you were in a leadership role and you were faced with resistance.
- D. Tell me about a time when you showed initiative and took the lead in a team project.

10. Organization/Time Management

- A. Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time.
- B. Give me a specific example of a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
- C. Give me an example of a recent assignment that required the greatest amount of effort with regard to organization.



11. Strengths/Weaknesses

- A. Describe for me a time when you failed at something and how you responded.
- B. Tell me about a time when you did not live up to your full potential.

12. Teamwork

- A. Tell me about a time when you worked on a team and a member was not doing his share of the work.
- B. Tell me about a time when you had to work in a team in which the members did not get along.

Content gathered from the University of South Carolina's Career Center Website. Originally from Michigan State University and University of Maryland.