

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

The employer's goal in an interview is to evaluate successfully your skills, experiences, and personal characteristics. One way to do this is through a process of behavioral interviewing. Behavior-based interviewing is a method of asking questions which focuses on specific examples of past behavior as a means of predicting future behavior. For example:

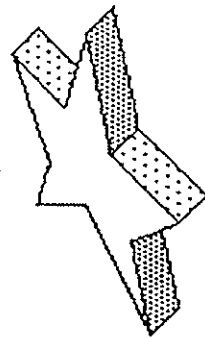
Behavioral questions: Tell me about a time when you demonstrated initiative.

Describe a time when you had to work with others on a project. What did you do?

Non-behavioral questions: What are your long range career goals? What's your ideal job?

What's the best way
to answer
behavior-based
questions?

Use the STAR
Method!



Think about a Situation you were in, the Task or problem that confronted you, the specific Action you took, and the Results of your actions. This is called the STAR method. You need to address each part of the STAR to answer behavior-based questions fully. Here's an example:

Tell me about a time when you feel you gave exceptional customer service.

Situation: When I was working for the university's catering office, I was responsible for booking reception rooms for special events. A woman called two weeks before her daughter's wedding to cancel her reservation for the reception room. A death had occurred in the family, and the wedding was being postponed until further notice.

Task: This customer was obviously very upset about these unfortunate circumstances, and I decided to do as much as I could to put her mind at ease about the reception arrangements.

Action: I knew that it wasn't too late to book another party for that room, so I checked with the manager regarding the possibility of refunding her deposit. We were able to return her full deposit, and I assured her that we could book another room for her when the family was ready to make plans.

Results: The customer wasn't expecting to get any money back and was pleasantly surprised, as well as relieved that cancelling the reception plans wasn't a hassle. My manager complimented me for taking the initiative with this customer.

From: Larry Beck, (1995). Behavior-based Interviewing Handout.

Here is one list of sample behavioral-based interview questions:

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).