

# 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:

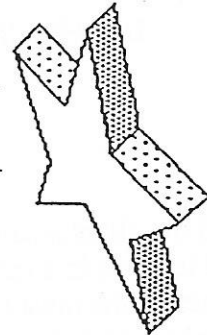
**Behavioral questions:** Tell me about a time when you demonstrated initiative.

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 complemented me for taking the initiative with this customer.

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

## Behavioral Interview Questions

**Behavioral Interview:** A method used by employers to gather information about past behavior work patterns or events to use as an indicator for future performance in the workplace. Use the STAR method to respond to the following behavioral interview questions:

<b>Situation</b>	Set up the scenario, or describe the situation that you were in
<b>Task</b>	Identify the task or the problem that confronted you
<b>Action</b>	Explain the specific action you took
<b>Result</b>	Describe the result(s) of your action

### Sample Questions

1. Tell me about a course, work experience, or extracurricular activity where you had to work in a team. How did it go? How did you overcome any difficulties?
2. Describe the most significant or creative presentation/idea that you developed/implemented.
3. Tell me about a decision you made while under a lot of pressure.
4. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to approach things your way. What level was the person you had to persuade?
5. Describe a particularly stressful time in your life and how you dealt with it.
6. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. How did you handle them? What happened?
7. Tell me about 3 of your accomplishments that have given you the greatest sense of satisfaction. Why are they significant?
8. Tell me about 2 situations in which you did not succeed and why?
9. Tell me about a time when you had to work on a project with little supervision. Describe the experience. How did you get started?
10. Describe a time when you needed to complete a task in a very short time frame. What created the situation? How did you handle it?
11. Describe a time when you had to cope with a difficult situation. What did you do? What did you learn about yourself?
12. Give me an example of a time when your leadership/initiative made the critical difference in completing a task. What did you do?
13. Describe a situation in which you worked on simultaneous projects. How did you handle it? What did you do to get through?
14. Give me a specific example of when you had to deal with an angry customer. What was the problem? What was the outcome?