Behavioral Interview Questions:
What Recruiters Look For

The following sections provide examples of competencies that recruiters look for and the questions they use to assess candidate’s regarding these competencies. This worksheet was developed from a form used by a corporate recruiter from a financial services company.

**Emphasis on Service**
Seeing service as a priority and continuously striving to meet and exceed clients’ needs, requests and expectations.
- Describe a situation where you exceeded a customers’ or colleague’s expectations.
- Tell me about a time you couldn’t handle a customer’s request. How did you handle that situation?
- Think of a time when you had to handle an unreasonable request. What did you do? What was the result?

**Adaptability**
Trying innovative approaches to adjust to changes in the market, client needs or the situation.
- Describe a situation when you had to use a different approach or style to be effective with a certain person. What were you thinking? What was the result?
- You’ve heard the expression, “You can’t change horses in midstream.” Tell me about a time you had to do just that. How did you handle that situation? What was the result?
- Tell me about a time you were affected by a major change. What did you do? What was the result?
- Think of a time somebody had a very different point of view on something important to you. How did you handle that situation?

**Analytical Thinking**
Gathering detailed information and thinking through situations to identify non-obvious core issues and their action implications.
- Describe the last time you made a difficult decision. What factors did you consider?
- Describe a situation when you had to draw a conclusion or make a recommendation based on a large volume of data. How did you go about this? What was the result?

**Confident Attitude**
Demonstrating belief in own expertise or abilities and willingness or desire to take on challenging assignments or situations.
- Describe a time you stood up for your own opinions even when others strongly disagreed.
- Now tell me about a time you didn’t stand up for your own opinions. How did handle that situation?

**Communication Skills**
Communication in ways that promote clarity and understanding and that keep internal people informed.
- Tell me about a team or group you belonged to that wasn’t very cohesive. How did you handle that situation? What was the result?
- Think about a particularly good relationship you developed with a customer co-worker. What did you do that contributed to building this relationship?
- Tell me how you handled a conflict at school or work.
Focus on Results
Focusing attention on critical goals and results and holding people accountable for achieving them.

- Describe a stretch goal you set for yourself. How did you go about achieving it? What was the result?
- Tell me about a time you were faced with major obstacles as you attempted to meet an objective? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time that you failed.

Organizing Skills
Developing and using approaches that organize and manage work or solve problems efficiently and effectively.

- Tell me about a time when you found yourself swamped at work or school? What did you do?
- Think about a large project or complex task you were responsible for. How did you go about getting it done? What was the result?
- Think about a situation when your work was constantly being interrupted. How did you stay on track?

Focus on Detail
Understanding the importance of accuracy when attending to the needs of both clients and the company.

- Tell me about a project you worked on that involved handling a large amount of data. How did you handle this?
- Describe a task that required absolute accuracy. How did you go about this?
- Have you ever been confronted with the dilemma of having either to finish something fast or finish something right? How did you handle that situation?

Technology Oriented
Understanding and applying technology to the needs of the industry, clients and the organization.

- Describe how you went about learning __________ (a specific PC application).
- Tell me about a time you solved a problem or improved something by using a technology solution.

Ownership
Demonstrating personal commitment to the group and taking responsibility to ensure success.

- You’ve heard the saying “The buck stops here.” Tell me about a time the buck stopped with you. What did you do?
- Now tell me a time the bucket slipped through the cracks and something didn’t get done. What happened? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time you didn’t have the information needed to complete an important task. What did you do?