

Behavioral Interviewing

What is it?

Behavioral interviewing is a style of interviewing that many companies are using in their hiring process. Behavioral interviewing is based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. Interviewers develop their questions based on skills and behaviors they have identified as being essential to the job. The interviewer's questions are designed to have you describe past experiences that demonstrate these skills.

Preparing for the Interview

Use job descriptions and organizational literature to identify the core skills of the job. Some of the skills you may be evaluated on include:

Adaptability	Analytical Ability	Attention to Detail
Communication (oral and written)	Creativity	Decision Making
Financial Analysis	Initiative	Leadership
Listening	Management	Marketing
Negotiation	Planning and Organizing	Presentation Skills
Problem Solving	Sales Ability	Strategic Analysis
Teamwork	Technical Knowledge	Training Ability

Using the Situation, Action, Result Approach

Your responses to the interviewer's questions need to be specific and detailed. Always describe a particular situation that relates to the question, what action you took, and the positive result or outcome. This is the STAR approach:

- 1) Situation or task
- 2) Action
- 3) Result or outcome

The interviewer may ask additional probing questions to uncover greater details about your actions and behaviors. When you prepare for the interview, identify a number of specific situations from your work history, academic experience, or community service that demonstrate skills relevant to the position.

Sample Questions

Careful preparation is the key to an effective behavioral interview. To prepare for the interview, jot down examples from your experience that you would use to answer questions such as these:

- Describe a situation in which you had to seek out relevant information, define key issues, and decide on a course of action to solve a problem.
- Tell us about a time that you failed.
- Describe a significant goal and how you achieved it, despite obstacles.
- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? How did you do it?
- By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- Have you ever had to “sell” an idea to your co-workers, work group, or customer? How did you do it?
- Describe a time on the job in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- How did you handle a challenging situation with a customer?
- Describe a situation in which you worked effectively as a member or leader of a team to complete a project.
- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and its results.
- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time? Give an example.
- Describe a situation where others you were working with disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- What steps do you follow when studying a problem and deciding upon a solution?
- As a manager or leader, how have you handled a situation in which you had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member?