

THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

More and more employers are using behavioral interviewing, a recent trend in the hiring process. Employers predetermine which skills are job-related and necessary, and then ask selective questions to determine if the candidate possesses those skills. Behavioral interviewing is:

- Based on the idea that the best way to predict your future performance is to examine your past and present performance in a similar situation.
- Focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related.
- Currently being used by approximately 30% of all hiring corporations and organizations.

Before the Interview

One way to prepare for the interview is to first consider the job description. What skills are listed as qualifications for the job? Key qualifications are usually stressed in the description. Once you have a greater understanding of the kinds of skills they are seeking, you can begin to reflect upon experiences in which you demonstrated these skills. If you don't have a job description, think about the skills that might be necessary for the job or speak to an advisor in career services. It is necessary to make the connection for your interviewer between what the employer desires in a candidate and how you possess those capabilities, demonstrated through your past experiences.

During the Interview

Typical questions will focus on your previous experiences. Typical skills and attributes that employers that look for are communication, creativity, decision making, initiative, leadership, teamwork, and planning/time management. The next page includes typical behavioral questions. To prepare for an interview, take time to formulate answers to those questions. When answering behavioral questions use the STAR Method.



Situation Use: Be specific about your past situations or tasks.

Task: Tell what led to the situation or task.

Action Taken: Discuss what you did and who was involved.

Result: Communicate the outcome.

Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then? What did you learn? Your resume will serve as a good guide to answer these questions. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvements, community service and work experience. Remember to give direct answers that completely answer the question.

COMMON BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Communication

- " What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- " 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).

Creativity

- " Tell me about a time when you used your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- " Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way.

Decision Making

- " Describe a situation where you have had to overcome a problem or obstacle.
- " Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed.

Initiative

- " Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- " What tricks or techniques have you learned to make yourself more effective, either in school or a job?
- " What was the best idea you came up with during your professional or college career?
- " Give me an example of a time when you failed.

Leadership

- " Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- " Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- " Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project?

Planning and Organization/Time Management

- " What do you consider when setting up your academic schedule?
- " Describe a time in school when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time.
- " How do you prioritize projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give some examples.

Teamwork

- " Tell me about a recent situation in which you dealt with an upset customer or co-worker.
- " Give an example of when you were part of a group and there was conflict. How did you handle it?
- " Describe a situation where you have had to work in a team to achieve a result.
- " Describe a situation where members of your group disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?