

Today, more than ever, every hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that can affect the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

Behavioral interviewing is based on the "Behavioral Consistency Principle" which essentially states that the best predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar circumstance. Therefore, the questions that are asked of you will tend to focus on behavior and attempt to evoke how you responded to a variety of specific personal and interpersonal situations and what results occurred from your actions.

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview:

1. Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.
2. Prepare short descriptions of each situation and be ready to give details if asked.
3. Be sure each story has a beginning, middle and end; i.e. be ready to describe the situation, your actions, and the outcome or result.
4. Be sure the outcome or results reflects positively on you.
5. Be honest! Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
6. Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed account of one event.

Typical Behavioral Questions you should be prepared for:

- > What do you feel is your biggest academic accomplishment? What did you do to contribute to that achievement?
- > Share an example of when you were faced with an unpleasant task. How did you go about facing it?
- > Give me the most recent example of a workplace conflict and how you handled that.
- > Describe a situation in which you had to use your communication skills in order to make an important point.
- > Tell me about a time when you had to use a persuasive argument to help someone see your viewpoint. How did you do it?
- > Give me an example of when you had to explain something difficult over the telephone.
- > Describe a talk or presentation which you have given recently. How did it go?
- > Describe a recent project which required you to collect a lot of different sorts of information.

- > Describe a complex problem which you solved recently for a customer or colleague.
- > What impact do you feel this position has on your overall business performance?
- > What is the most important thing you have done to increase profit? Decrease costs?
- > Tell me about a time when you had to prioritize a list of activities.
- > Tell me about the last time you were asked to do something by your boss or someone in authority.
- > Describe a time when you failed to complete a task on time.
- > Tell me about a time when a customer or colleague made an excessive or unreasonable demand on you.
- > Tell me about a situation in which you had to work under pressure and stress.
- > Describe a recent opportunity you had to take on new responsibilities.
- > Give me an example of when you have set yourself an ambitious target or goal.

Follow up Questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

- > Can you give me an example?
- > What did you do?
- > What did you say?
- > How did you feel?
- > What was your role?
- > What was the result?
- > What did you learn?

Don't Forget the Basics

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview. The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in any given situation, whereas *the behavioral interview is looking for past actions only.*

It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm, and positive attitude.