

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Employers and hiring managers ask behavioral interview questions to understand what skills and competencies you have for their open position. The idea is that past behavior will reflect future behavior. Behavioral questions can be difficult if you are not prepared. The best way to prepare yourself is to familiarize yourself with examples of these questions and develop a method for answering them in a satisfactory manner. See below for sample questions.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Describe a time when you had to communicate something difficult to a customer.
- Describe a time when you were pushed past the point of what you consider acceptable by a customer. How did you handle it?
- Tell me how you have proactively developed better customer relationships.

INTEGRITY

- Give me an example of a time when you took responsibility for a mistake before anyone else knew.
- Tell me about a time when you showed integrity in the face of adversity.
- Tell me about a time you caught a peer or co-worker being dishonest. What did you do about the situation?

TEAMWORK

- Describe a project you were involved in that required competencies other than those you possess.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with difficult co-workers. How did you approach the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you were working on a team under time constraints and in a high stress environment. How did you continually communicate with the customer and your team to reach your deadline?

QUALITY

- How do you ensure quality in your work while meeting your deadlines?
- Describe a project that you worked on where minor details were important.
- Describe a project you led or contributed to that was “outstanding”. Describe your role and contribution to the project.

ADAPTABILITY

- Tell me about a time where you managed stress in a project (changes in schedule, scope, staff, etc.)
- Give an example of a time when you had to juggle multiple high priority tasks.
- Tell me about a time when goals changed in the middle of a project. What you did to keep it on track?

INITIATIVE

- Tell me about a time when you recognized and acted upon a need in your organization.
- Give an example of a time you went beyond your job description to positively impact or improve the company.
- Tell me about a time you implemented a creative solution.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Tell me about a situation when you had to communicate undesirable information.
- Describe a memo or correspondence that you wrote that convinced someone to make a decision or change their mind on something.
- Tell me about a situation where you communicated negative information in a professional, positive way.

ACHIEVING RESULTS

- Tell me about a time when your project hit a roadblock and how you got past it on schedule.
- Tell me about a project you led or participated in which failed. What did you learn from the experience?
- Describe a situation where you were required to put forth extra effort to get the job done.

COMPETENT AND EFFICIENT WORK

- Give me an example of a time when you were given a task outside of your knowledge expertise. How did you deal with it?
- Tell me about a situation where you had more work than you had time to do; how did you manage the situation?
- Describe a time you had multiple projects you were accountable for and how you prioritized your work?

PERSEVERANCE AND COMMITMENT

- Tell me about a time you had to overcome a customer objection to make a sale.
- Describe a challenging long-term project and how you stayed motivated through completion.
- Tell me about a time you had to forego a personal activity to get the job done.

METHOD FOR ANSWERING BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To answer these questions effectively, you need an effective strategy. We will outline a simple way to navigate behavioral interview questions. Just remember the S.T.A.R. Method.

- **Situation:** Set the stage. Briefly outline the setting in which your experience took place.
- **Task:** What was the “task” you were presented with in this situation?
- **Action:** Walk them through the steps you took to complete the task.
- **Result:** Explain the (positive) outcome.

Example: “Give me an example of a time you had to make a quick decision in a leadership role...”

- **Situation:** When I was in college, I had a summer sales internship where I was the Organizational Leader of a team of about 15 college students.
- **Task:** Early in the summer, a student called me one evening and told me she wanted to quit and go home.
- **Action:** I allowed the student to express her frustrations to me and then invited her to come work with me the following day to reset herself mentally and learn some new ways to enjoy the job.
- **Result:** After working with me for the day, and seeing how much fun could be had on the job, the student recommitted to her goals, focused on the things she could control, and finished the summer as a top first year student.