

HOW TO ANSWER *BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS*

In the 1980's, industrial psychologist [Dr. Tom Janz](#) introduced a method of interviewing called the "Behavioral Interview." Research shows that this interviewing style is extremely effective, and as such, it has rapidly increased in popularity. The premise is that the best predictor of future behavior is your past behavior. It also will identify your behavioral tendencies in the work environment.

Whether you are on a job hunt, or are planning to interview someone, it is important to know how to prepare for answering behavioral questions. This guide is designed to teach you the basic structure for answering these increasingly common interview questions. This is a list of competencies employers may be probing:

Assertiveness

Commitment to task

Creativity and imagination

Dealing with ambiguity

Goal setting/achieving

Leadership

Results orientation

Clarification

Communication

Customer Service

Decision making

Interpersonal understanding

Problem Solving

Team building

Preparing for Behavior-based Interviews

When developing a behavioral interview, employers consider the types of soft skills that will be needed for the position.

- Analyze the type of position for which you're applying. What skills do employers require?
- Analyze your own background. What skills do you have (content, functional, and adaptive) that relate to your job objective?
- Identify examples from your past experiences where you demonstrated those skills. How can you "tell a story" about your use of particular skills or knowledge? Concentrate on developing complete answers and remember that a good story has a beginning, middle and end.
- Whenever possible, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility.
- Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then?
- Before starting the interview process, identify 2 or 3 of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points during the interview.

- Once employed, keep a personal achievement diary to help demonstrate performance.

Formula

To properly answer a behavioral interview question, there is a three step process referred to as “**STAR**”.

1. The **Situation**
2. **Task**
3. **Action** that you took
4. **Result** of that action

Sample

Describe a situation when you negotiated with others in your organization to reach agreement (negotiation skills).

The interviewer is exploring your ability to communicate information or alternatives in a manner that gains agreement and acceptance. Show how you are able to look at the position of others, present alternatives and reach an agreement that is positive for both parties.

"My manager presented me with an unreasonable deadline to complete a project.

(Situation)

*I asked him how he had determined the deadline. He said that it was based on his deadline to present the project to the CEO. I outlined every step that needed to be taken to complete the project and how long each step would realistically take. **(Task)** We discussed possible ways of reducing these time frames. I suggested allocating more resources to the project. He asked me to put together a project proposal that covered what we had discussed and he would use this to negotiate with the CEO for a more realistic time line. **(Action)***

*We were able to settle on a plan that worked for both of us." **(Result)***

Practice behavioral questions

http://www.quintcareers.com/interview_question_database/college_student_behavioral.html