

# Behavioral Interview

## What is a Behavioral Interview and Behavioral Interview Questions and Answers

What is a behavioral interview? Behavioral based interviewing is interviewing based on discovering how the interviewee acted in specific employment-related situations. The logic is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future i.e. past performance predicts future performance.

### Traditional Interview vs. Behavioral Interview

In a traditional interview, you will be asked a series of questions which typically have straight forward answers like "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" or "What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?" or "Describe a typical work week."

In a behavioral interview, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills. Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you did behave. The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future.

### Questions in a Behavioral Interview

Behavioral interview questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions:

- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

Follow-up questions will also be detailed. You may be asked what you did, what you said, how you reacted or how you felt.

### Preparation for the Potential Behavioral Interview

What's the best way to prepare? It's important to remember that you won't know what type of interview will take place until you are sitting in the interview room. So, prepare answers to traditional interview questions.

Then, since you don't know exactly what situations you will be asked about if it's a behavioral interview, refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You may be able to use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved problems or performed memorably. The stories will be useful to help you respond meaningfully in a behavioral interview.

Finally, review the job description, if you have it, or the job posting or ad. You may be able to get a sense of what skills and behavioral characteristics the employer is seeking from reading the job description and position requirements. Take a look at what employers are advised about developing the job posting for a behavioral interview on the About Human Resources site.

### **During the Behavioral Interview**

During the interview, if you are not sure how to answer the question, ask for clarification. Then be sure to include these points in your answer:

- A specific situation
- The tasks that needed to be done
- The action you took
- The results i.e. what happened

It's important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. The interviewer is simply trying to understand how you behaved in a given situation. How you respond will determine if there is a fit between your skills and the position the company is seeking to fill. So, listen carefully, be clear and detailed when you respond and, most importantly, be honest. If your answers aren't what the interviewer is looking for, this position may not be the best job for you anyway.