

Career & Professional Development

Behavior-Based Interviewing

Behavior based interviewing has become an increasingly popular interview strategy with employers. By asking specific questions about previous experience interviewers can gain a better understanding of your thought process, decision making skills, ability to work in a team and the results of your actions. This is based on the premise that your previous behavior and actions will predict how you will react in similar situations.

Employers will generally ask questions concerning previous jobs, activities, goals, classes and projects. In doing so, the employer wants you to describe what you did, thought, and felt in key situations. The employer expects you to give detailed yet focused descriptions of your actions.

Some commonly asked behavior-based scenarios:

- Discuss an idea that you had which contributed to a successful activity or project.
- Describe a situation in which you distrusted or did not get along with a co-worker. What measures did you take to improve the situation and maintain a professional environment?
- What was the most difficult or challenging role you have had? How did you manage it?
- Share an example of how you acquired a technical skill and applied the skill to practical use.
- Demonstrate your flexibility by sharing examples of how you can adjust to new people, environment and situations.
- Describe a situation in which you did not meet a deadline. How did you handle the situation and what was the subsequent outcome?
- What do you think are three fundamental aspects of leadership? How have you demonstrated these in your previous experience and will continue to do so in the future?

Ideal answers should include a situation, task, action and result (**STAR**)

Situations: Give a brief description of the project and how you got involved.

Tasks: Explain your role in the project (club president, residence hall council, volunteer coordinator) and what you did (introduced new processes, established program, raised funds for service project).

Action: Describe your course of action specifically detailing what you did, how you did it, and how it made a difference. Be sure to include action verbs in your discussion.

Results: Relate what you accomplished to how it benefited the organization and what overall improvements or changes were made because of your actions.

What types of scenarios should you discuss? Topics should be customized to your experience:

- Situations in which you received recognition/acclaim for your efforts from clients, peers and supervisors
- Participation on a team project in which you contributed to the success of the team
- Situations where you worked effectively with other classmates or employees
- Discuss how you handled a stressful situation and the outcomes
- Describe how you introduced a new process or initiative that improved prior methods