

# Behavioral Interviewing

"Tell me about a time when you had to work in a team and one of the members was difficult to get along with."

If you hear a question like this, you are being asked a behavioral interview question. In the interview process you can either have an entire interview that is behavior-based, or more commonly, you will be asked behavioral interview questions along with more traditional interview questions.

## WHAT IS BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING?

Behavioral interviewing is based on the principle that future behavior is best determined by assessing past behavior in similar situations. In other words, *past behavior predicts future success*. An interviewer will ask you to provide a *specific example* of a past situation in order to determine if you are a fit for the role.

## TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS VERSUS BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Traditional interview questions will ask you "what if" types of questions. They do not require you to call upon your past experiences, and are often thought of as easier to answer. The interviewer is assessing your thought process as opposed to your behavior.

Behavioral questions usually start off with, "Tell me about a time when...", "Give me an example of..." or "Describe a time when..."

## HOW DO PREPARE FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS?

The best way to gear up for behavioral interviewing is to prepare in advance several 30- to 90-second skills-based stories. Each of these "career stories" should focus on demonstrating a relevant skill to the desired position. Remember that many behavioral questions probe for your response to *negative* situations. You will need to have examples of negative experiences ready. **Try to choose negative experiences that you made the best of – or – those that had positive outcomes.**

**Here's a good way to prepare for behavior-based interviews:**

- Identify 6-8 top examples from your past experience where you demonstrated top behaviors/skills that employers typically seek. Think of examples that highlight your skills relevant to the position.
- Vary examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.
- Use recent examples. If you're a college student, examples from high school may be too long ago.
- Describe examples using the **PAR technique** so that your answer is well-rounded and structured.

## ARE YOU ON PAR?

<b>Problem</b> you faced	Describe a situation or a problem you needed to address. <b>You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past.</b> Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
<b>Action</b> you took	Describe the action(s) you took, identifying skills utilized. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you <i>did</i> do. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what <i>you</i> did -- not the efforts of the team. The focus should be on <i>your</i> skills and actions.
<b>Results</b> you achieved	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Focus on positive results.

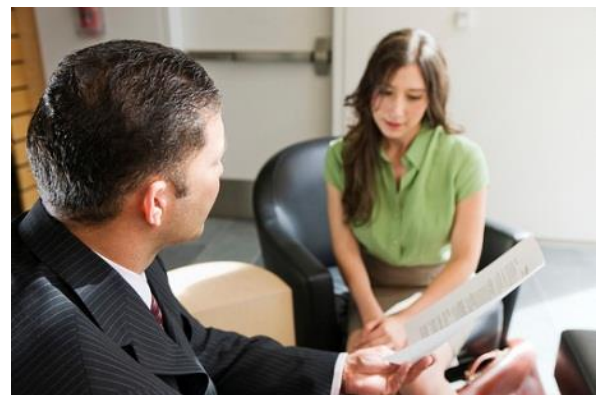
Use examples from internships, class projects, activities, team participation, community service and work experience as examples of your past behavior. In addition, you may use examples of special accomplishments, whether personal or professional, such as scoring the winning touchdown, being elected president of your Greek organization or raising money for charity. Wherever possible, quantify your results. Numbers always impress employers.

## EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Knowing what kinds of questions might be asked will help you prepare an effective selection of examples.

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and how you prioritized your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.

Remember, **listen carefully** to each question asked of you and respond with a **specific and detailed example**. With experience, you can learn to tailor your examples to several different behavioral questions.



Source: [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com)

Industry-specific questions: [Readyprepinterviews.com](http://Readyprepinterviews.com)