

Competency-Based Behavioral Interviewing

Best Practices

Competency-based behavioral interviewing focuses only on those skills/abilities that are related to success on the job. Instead of asking candidates how they think they would act/perform, candidates are asked to give ***specific examples of how they have performed in the past***.

A person's behavior does not fundamentally change over the course of their adult life. The way they have performed in the past in certain job-related areas is a good indicator of how they will probably perform in similar situations in the future.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions, by Competency

Problem-Solving

- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem.
- Describe a situation in which you found a creative way to overcome an obstacle.
- Tell me about a time that you identified a need and went above and beyond the call of duty to get things done.
- Tell me about a time when you came up with a new approach to a problem.
- What's the most innovative new idea that you have implemented?
- Tell me about two improvements you have made in the last six months.
- What was the best idea you came up with at your last job?
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Please describe a time when you faced a significant obstacle to succeeding with an important work project or activity.
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation.

Handling Conflict

- Tell me about a team project when you had to work with someone difficult.
- Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work.
- Give an example of a time you had to respond to an unhappy manager/customer/colleague.
- Tell me about a time that you disagreed with a rule or approach.

Teamwork

- Describe a project that required input from people at different levels in the organization.
- Share a rewarding team experience.
- Please describe a situation in your career in which you built a team using members from separate workgroups.

Probes: Be specific about the groups with which you worked, your common goal, the specific role you played in bringing everything together, and the outcome of the situation.

Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.
- Tell me about a time that you took the lead on a difficult project.
- When have you delegated effectively?
- Describe a time when you led by example.
- Who have you coached or mentored to achieve success?
- Tell me about a time that you led an important meeting.

Adaptability

- Please describe a significant change you have had to deal with at work recently

Probes: What was your initial reaction to the change? What was your response? How did it all work out?

Collaboration

- Tell me about a time when you formed an ongoing working relationship or partnership with someone in another organization to achieve a mutual goal?

Probes: What did you do to make the relationship work? What are some of the challenges you faced? How has it worked out?

Stress Tolerance

- Can you recall a particularly stressful situation you have had at work?

Probes: What was your role in the situation? Did you do anything specific to deal with the stress? How did it work out?

Time Management

- Tell me about a time when you were required to complete multiple assignments in the same time period

Probes: How did you handle the situation? Please be specific about the number of assignments, the actions you took, the reasons for those actions, and the result.

Experience Managing Budgets

- Using examples from positions you have held in the past, describe your experience managing budgets.

Probes: How did you make decisions when allocating resources? What unique problems or resistance did you encounter? Please include any rules or stipulations you had to follow to receive funding.

Overcoming Obstacles

- Describe a situation in your career in which a goal or objective was delayed or thwarted. What was the specific goal?

Probes: What were the obstacles in your path, and what specifically did you do to overcome them?

Sales

- Tell me about a situation where your contact person changed at a key account, how did you adjust to the new contact?
- Give an example of when you had to change your approach to a prospect because the initial one failed.
- Tell me about a time you worked hard for a sale but didn't get it in the end, how did you handle the situation?
- Give an example of when you had to overcome strong resistance from a customer.
- Describe a recent approach you took with a brand-new prospect.
- Tell me how you developed your largest account.
- Tell me about one of the most time-consuming sales you have made.
- What goals have you set for yourself this year, how have you ensured progress towards them?
- Describe a recent situation where you negotiated terms with a tough customer.
- Tell me about an important negotiation that failed, what went wrong and why?
- Give me an example of when you had to make a presentation to an unresponsive audience, how did you handle it?