

Behavioral Interview Questions

Employers ask behavioral interview questions to learn about how you have responded to specific situations in the past. By asking about your past behavior, they can get a better sense of how you will perform on the job in the future. You should respond to behavioral interview questions by giving specific examples where you have already demonstrated the skill that a search committee is looking for. How do you know what skills are important for a particular position?

- Read the job description
- View prospective department's websites and read occupational information that describes which skills are used in different functional areas
- Network with professionals who are working for the same organization or in the same position

In developing your responses, focus on accomplishments. An accomplishment is a concise statement outlining how you have used your skills and knowledge to achieve a positive result. Accomplishments can be found in all aspects of your life including work, academics, extra-curricular leadership and volunteer service.

Questions that begin with *"Tell me about a time when..."* or *"Give me an example of..."* are usually behavioral in nature. Answering these questions takes preparation, as the answers need to be specific and concrete. Below is a list of common behavioral interview questions for demand skills sets sought by today's employers. Using the SOAR method, develop and practice answering these questions.

STAR Method

Situation: Detail the background. Provide context. Where? When?

Task: Describe the expectations and/or challenges. What needed to be done? Why?

Action: Explain your specific action. What did you do? How?

Result: Highlight outcomes, goals achieved, lessons learned. (Quantify where relevant)

Communication Skills

Describe a time when your active listening skills really paid off.

Describe a time when you had to present complex information. How did you ensure that the other person understood?

Give an example of when you used persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.

Decision Making/Problem Solving Skills

Describe a difficult decision you had to make in the past year.

Give an example of a time when you used good judgement in solving a problem.

Summarize a situation where you had to seek out relevant information, define key issues, and determine the steps to get a desired result.

Flexibility/Adaptability Skills

- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control.
- Describe a time when you faced a stressful situation and how you handled it.

Leadership Skills

- Tell me about a time when you were in a leadership role and were faced with resistance.
- Describe a leadership situation that you would handle differently if you had to do it over again.
- Tell me about a time when you showed initiative and took the lead in a team project.

Teamwork

- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team and a member was not doing their share of the work.
- Describe your involvement with a team project and how you specifically contributed.
- Give me an example of a time when you were working on a project and the others disagreed with your ideas.

Self-Awareness/Career Management

- Give me an example of an important goal you set and what steps you took to reach it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me a goal that you set and did not reach..

Did You Know?

89% of hiring failures are due to poor culture fit. Research shows that employees that identify with their workplace culture have greater job satisfaction, superior job performance, and are more likely to stay with their employer.

Research shows that organizations with high quality leaders are 13 x more likely to outperform their competition. Employers are seeking workers who they believe will be able to inspire, motivate and influence others.

69% of hiring managers say adaptability is the most important soft skill they screen for. It makes sense...to stay competitive today, organizations need to continually adapt to a changing global economy. That means organizations have a critical need for employees who are highly adaptable and flexible.



For additional interviewing resources visit the Career and Professional Readiness Center website at www.sbu.edu/cprc. To practice, schedule a mock interview with a CPRC career counselor.

7 Career Readiness Competencies Sought By Employers

- 1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving**
- 2. Oral/Written Communication**
- 3. Teamwork/Collaboration**
- 4. Information technology Application**
- 5. Leadership**
- 6. Professionalism/Work Ethic**
- 7. Self-awareness/Career Management**

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