

Behavioral Interviews



Behavioral interview questions are based on the idea that past performance is a good indicator of future performance. These questions typically begin with phrases such as “Tell me about a time when...” or “Describe a situation in which you...”. To successfully answer behavioral interview questions you will need to describe in detail past situations that demonstrate the skills and qualifications of the position.

When answering behavioral interview questions it is helpful to use the P.A.R. technique.

P.A.R. TECHNIQUE

Problem: What was the situation and specific problem that had to be addressed?

Action: What specific skills/tools did you use to address the task?

Result: What was the result of your behavior?

SAMPLE QUESTION/ANSWER

Question: Describe a time when you took the initiative to do something when it wasn't your responsibility.

Answer: (Problem) The past two years, I have been in a mentor program in which students and alumni from my university are matched based on their career interests. In my case, my career interest is human resource development. During the course of the program, I noticed there were many other student and alumni matches focused HRD, so I thought it would be beneficial to connect with each other. Unfortunately, we didn't have a formal way to do this.

(Action) So, I scheduled a time to meet with my mentor program coordinator to talk about ways to increase our networks. We developed a plan to start a blog for participants to talk about their experiences and share insights from the program.

(Result) As a result of our thoughtful approach, we increased networking opportunities among the mentor program members by 50%. It was a huge success!

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- + Tell me about a time when you had great difficulty communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group and how you handled this situation.
- + Tell me about the most significant project you worked on in which it was crucial to keep track of details while still managing the “big picture.”
- + Tell me about a time when you exhibited excellent listening skills while distractions were present.
- + Tell me about a time you voiced a concern to a co-worker, supervisor, or professor.
- + Discuss a time when you were responsible for a project that didn’t go the way you expected. How did you handle it?
- + Tell me about a time you took a leadership role amongst your peers. What specific things did you do that showed leadership and how did others respond to you as a leader?
- + Tell me about a time when you had to work with a challenging person. What made your interactions challenging and how did you handle the situation?
- + Describe a time when you worked on an effective team. Why was the team effective and what was your role in the team’s success?
- + Tell me about a time when you had to motivate or excite others about a project or event. What strategies did you use to make this happen?
- + Explain a difficult decision you made and your decision making process.
- + Describe a time when you had success communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group.
- + Tell me about an aggressive goal that you achieved. What specific steps did you take to achieve the goal?
- + Tell me about a time when you built strong relationships where none existed before.
- + Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
- + Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone’s opinion.

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