



BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

Tips For Answering Behavioral Interview Questions

If you haven't already done so, be sure to read our September 18, 2020 blog, "Behavioral Interviews – What Are They And How To Prepare For One" for great information to help you prepare for a behavioral interview. ([Behavioral Interviews – What Are They And How To Prepare For One.pdf](#)) and our September 21, 2020 blog, "Common Skills Addressed During A Behavioral Interview" for some specific skills that are common themes in behavioral interview questions ([Blog 2 Common Skills Addressed During A Behavioral Interview.pdf](#)).

Take Your Time. It's okay to take a moment before answering the question. Take a breath, or a sip of water, or simply pause. This will give you time to calm any nerves and think of an anecdote that appropriately answers the question.

Prepare Ahead of Time. Review common behavioral interview questions ahead of time and practice your answers. This will help you ensure that you have a number of thoughtful anecdotes ready to answer any behavioral interview questions. You want to study the job description and company you'll be interviewing with to help you prepare for a behavioral-based interview. If you can, find out some info about the last or current incumbent of the position and the types of employees the organization hires.

Come up with a list of competencies, attributes, and skills. Behavioral interview questions will give you the chance to showcase your talent, ability, and results. To prepare, you'll want to think about the type of competencies the company is looking for. Most companies will look for similar competencies, attributes, and skills, such as communication, team player, ability to focus, efficiency, timeliness, flexibility, attention to detail, management and leadership material, creativity, goal orientation and responsibility. Take a moment to rank the list you come up with in relation to the position for which you are applying.

Create a list of your past experiences. Make a list of your past experiences and successes that highlight the list of competencies, skills, and attributes you come up with, as noted in the point above. Come up with good antidotes and stories, as we all love a good story. With that said, you want to keep your answers focused and to-the-point.

Focus on the good and the not-so-good. Don't forget to come up with some examples or scenarios that were challenging, yet you pulled through successfully. Such examples showcase your problem-solving skills and ability to handle challenges professionally. You might also be asked how you might handle such situations differently, so be prepared to discuss your areas for improvement, as well.

Follow the STAR Technique. Be sure to answer any questions using the STAR technique described above. By completing each of the four steps, you will provide a thorough answer without rambling or getting off topic. (See tomorrow's blog for more information on the STAR technique.)

Be Positive. Often, behavioral interview questions require you to focus on a problem or a failure at work. Describe the problem or issue you faced, but don't focus too much on the negative. Quickly shift to describing how you solved the problem and the positive results.

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