



Competency-Based Behavioral Interview Questions

Adaptability

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

Possible follow up questions:

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

Building Trust

Can you tell us about a situation where you found it challenging to build a trusting relationship with another individual?

Possible follow up questions:

- How did you go about doing it?
- How did it work out?

Collaboration

Can you tell us about a time when you formed an ongoing working relationship or partnership with someone from another organization to achieve a mutual goal?

Possible follow up questions:

- What did you do to make the relationship ship work?
- How has it worked out?

Continuous Learning and Professional Development

Aside from your formal academic education, can you think of something you have done to grow professionally in the recent past?

Possible follow up questions:

- Did you have a chance to apply what you learned on the job?
- How?
- What was the outcome?

Cultural Competence

Can you tell us about a time when you needed to be particularly sensitive to another person's beliefs, cultural background, or way of doing things?

Possible follow up questions:

- What were the circumstances?
- What did you do?
- How did the situation work out?

Decision Making/Problem Solving

Can you tell us about a really difficult decision you had to make at work recently?

Possible follow up questions:

- How did you go about making the decision?
- What alternatives did you consider?
- How did it turn out?

Stress Tolerance

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

Possible follow up questions:

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



Techniques for Conducting Good Behavioral Interviews

- Attempt to put the applicant at ease – The initial step in any good job interview is to help the applicant feel comfortable in what is usually a stressful setting. Engaging in a few minutes of “small talk” usually breaks the ice. Since many applicants have never participated in a behavioral interview, it is helpful to provide a brief explanation of the process at the beginning of the interview.
- Give applicants reassurance if they have trouble recalling specific examples – Some applicants will have a difficult time thinking of specific examples in response to certain questions. Encourage them to take some time to think about the question. Remind applicants with little work experience that examples from their college experience or their personal life are appropriate. If an applicant appears to be stuck on a particular question, offer to ask the next question and come back to this question later in the interview. Often, examples that come up in later questions trigger an example from an earlier one.
- Keep the applicant focused on the specifics – Some applicants have a tendency to speak in generalities. Watch for phrases like, “I always,” “I usually” and “I never.” Respond by asking for specifics, by redirecting the applicant with phrases like, “We’re looking for a specific situation,” or “Can you give a specific example of that?”
- Keep the applicant focused on what he or she did – Some applicants tend to use the word “we” even when talking about something done individually. Since it is very important to clearly understand precisely what the applicant did, it may be necessary to politely keep reminding the applicant that you are only interested in what he or she did. Offering an explanation of why the applicant needs to use the word “I” usually helps.
- Focus the applicants on facts rather than opinions – Some applicants couch their answers in the context of what they believe rather than what they did. If the applicant makes statements such as “Clients are always my top priority,” you should respond by asking them to provide a concrete example.
- Keep the applicant focused on past behaviors – Even if you ask for a specific example, some applicants may respond as if they were asked a hypothetical question. Simply remind the applicant that you need specific examples from the past.