Interview Questions: Behavioral Based Questions

Behavioral based interview questions are the most popular among recruiters. The purpose of behavioral questions is to identify how a potential new employee would act in future situations. Behavioral questions are often open ended, leaving the interviewee to fill in the blanks. To answer these questions in the most effective way, follow the STAR method. Remember to spend most of your time talking about the Result—that is what employers are most interested in hearing!

STAR Method
During the interview, your responses need to be specific and detailed. Tell them about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Briefly tell them the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive outcome or result (i.e. what did you learn). Your answer should contain these four steps: Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

**Situation:** Set up the situation in which you had a positive outcome or result that relates to the question asked. It can be something from class, an internship or a volunteer experience.

**Task:** What goal were you working toward?

**Action:** What did you do specifically to make an impact? What was your role?

**Result:** Describe what happened as a result of your actions. What did you learn? The result is what they are really looking to hear in your response, so spend the most time talking about the result.

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**Example Question:** Tell me about a time when you took on a difficult project. What were the results?

**Example STAR Answer:**

**Situation:** During my internship last summer, I was charged with managing and improving events.

**Task:** I noticed attendance was dropping each summer and wanted to improve attendance and event quality.

**Action:** I designed a new marketing campaign and focused on social media and other free venues. I surveyed focus groups to hear what our target population would like to see changed with our events and made recommendations to the event manager.

**Result:** We utilized some of the ideas we gathered and promoted things daily. Our attendance grew by 80% last summer, and this resulted in more money raised. Our board of directors was very pleased with this increase.

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**Sample Questions about You:**

- Tell me about a time when you had a list of things to do and your supervisor/instructor came to you and said “I need this project/assignment completed by 5 o’clock”. How did you handle the situation?
- Give me an example of a time where you failed to meet a goal. What did you fail to do? What were the consequences? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you were assigned a task but were provided little direction about how to complete the task. What steps did you take to complete the task? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about how you keep yourself organized so to meet deadlines or goals.

**Sample Questions about Working with Others:**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker or fellow student on a project. How did you handle the situation? What were the outcomes?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision that affected those with whom you worked. What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you were a team leader. Who was on the team, and what did you do to help your team be successful?
- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade someone to see your point of view. What tactics did you use? What were the outcomes? What did you learn?
- Give me an example of a time when you used creativity to complete a project, work with someone else, or develop a new idea. How did you communicate your idea and how was it received?
- Tell me about a time you were involved in a project with a group.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to supervise someone.
- Describe a time when a co-worker approached you and criticized your work. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Provide me with an example of a time when you had to motivate others. What were the outcomes?