



Behavior – Based Interviewing Example Questions

What is Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI)?

More and more employers are using this interviewing technique. Simply put, behavioral-based interviewing encourages candidates to describe situations in which they have utilized skills and abilities similar to those required in the job for which they are applying. The interviewer asks questions targeted at the behaviors or qualifications they are looking for from an individual who will fill the position.

Why do employers use Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI)?

Any interviewee can memorize the “correct” answers to a question. Because of this, a better indicator of a future employee’s success is based on the simple premise that ***past performance is the best predictor of future performance***. If a candidate successfully utilized a particular skill in the past, chances are she/he will do so in the future. The more recent and frequent the behavior, the greater the indicator of the candidate’s success on the job. ***The goal for the employer is to hire candidates that not only have the knowledge and skills required for the job, but also the personal attributes needed to succeed in the position as well as within the organization’s environment and culture.***

Steps to Interview Preparation

- **Read the job description and highlight the KEYWORDS in the qualifications section**
There’s a reason why you feel qualified for this position. But, if the employer doesn’t hear you communicate this, then that’s a problem. The employer has listed these qualifications for a reason – he/she wants to hire someone who meets or exceeds these qualifications. Be ready to share stories/examples of how you’ve demonstrated these qualifications in the past.
- **Prepare a list of questions based upon the qualifications**
If one of the qualifications is “Strong communication skills,” then the employer will likely ask, “Tell me about a time when you demonstrated strong communication skills.”
- **Research the organization, especially their MISSION and VALUES**
Most organizations have a website. Read through each section on their site, including organization’s history, products/services, annual report (if applicable). Pay careful attention to their mission and values. Why? Organizations want to hire individuals who are committed to and support their mission and values. Be sure to communicate this in your interview.
- **Prepare your STORIES – Situation, Behavior, Outcome (SBO)**
Articulate examples which best illustrate what you can do for the employer. Employers will ask questions targeted at the behaviors or qualifications needed for the candidate to be successful within the position. Choose examples from current or previous employment, internships, volunteer activities, class projects, and involvement with on or off-campus organizations. Tell stories with a beginning, middle, and end. Candidates must give the employer enough information for the employer to realize the skills that the candidate utilized in the situation. A complete answer to a behavior-based question has three parts:
 - **Situation** – what was the situation or problem you were facing?
 - **Behavior** – what did you do or say? Be *specific* and give important details. Paint a word picture so the employer can completely understand the scenario.
 - **Outcome** - what was the result of your actions or behavior?

Example Questions

The following are examples of possible behavior based questions which employers frequently try to assess during an interview:

Problem Solving - When was the last time you solved a difficult problem that had significant impact? What was the situation? How did you go about analyzing the problem? What alternative solutions did you consider? Explain how you implemented your solution. What was the outcome?

Teamwork - Tell me about a time when you worked with a team to solve a problem. What steps did *you* take? How were you involved? What was the outcome? How would you describe your role on the team?

Decision Making - What was the most difficult decision you have made in the last six months? What was the situation? What made it difficult? What factors or variables did you consider? What did you decide? What was the result?

Initiative/Self-Motivation - Describe your best example of taking the initiative to do something that needed to be done, even though it wasn't really your responsibility or, Tell me about a time when you saw a better way to do something. What was the situation? What circumstances required you to act? What actions did you take? What impact did your initiative have on the situation?

Achievement Drive - Describe a situation in which you believe you were effective in achieving an ambitious goal. What caused you to work hard to meet this objective? What methods or skills did you use to meet your goal? What were the results? What feedback did you receive from others?

Motivation - Explain an instance in which you were part of a team or group that needed to be motivated. How did you go about moving the team forward or bringing them together on a project? What was the outcome?

Detail Oriented - Tell me about the most significant project you have worked on in which it was crucial to keep track of details while still managing the "big picture." What was the project? What skills did you utilize in managing it? How did the project turn out? What feedback did you receive on your management of the task?

Communication - Describe for me when you had great difficulty communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group. What was the situation? Where did the difficulty in communicating effectively lie? What did you do to get your point across more clearly? What was the outcome?

Conflict Management - Detail an example of when you voiced a concern or disagreement to a co-worker, supervisor, or professor. What was the concern or disagreement? What did you say? What was his/her reaction? What was the outcome of the disagreement?

Coordinating/Leading Others/Leadership/Delegation - Identify a situation in which you had to coordinate several people to achieve a goal. What prompted you to take the lead? How did you go about coordinating and leading the group? How did they respond? What was the outcome?

Managing Stress - Describe your most disappointing experience, or tell me about a time when you were under a lot of stress? What were the circumstances? How did you cope with it? What did you do to move beyond it?

Technical Expertise - Share with me the circumstances of when you needed to use your technical knowledge to solve a problem. What was the problem? What technical knowledge did you utilize to solve it? What was the outcome?

Thinking Critically - Tell me an instance in which you personally had to analyze a situation, problem, or task and come up with a result or recommendations.

Flexibility - Explain a time when your plans had to change because of circumstances or other people. What was the situation? What changes did you have to make? How did you handle the changes? What would you do differently?