A Guide to Behavioral Interviewing

If you've ever been in a job interview (and you likely have), you've probably been exposed to **behavioral interviewing**: a method of interview questioning that solicits specific examples about your past on-the-job behavior. This technique has become prevalent among employers because of its proven success.

Becoming comfortable with behavioral interviewing is a vital part of the job-hunting process. Luckily, there are ways you can prepare for this style of questioning so you can excel in your next interview.

Behavioral interviewing is designed to gather insight into how you have handled specific situations in the workplace. The interviewer will want examples of what happened, what you did, and how you achieved a positive outcome. This fact-finding approach focuses on your actual past actions and experiences versus what you should or would have done in various situations. It fosters a more interactive interview and provides an interviewer the opportunity to probe further or refocus a question.

From a candidate's perspective—although it encourages an unbiased, or more "neutral" style of questioning—this interviewing approach could result in some of the most challenging on-the-spot questions to answer.

Here are some common behavioral interviewing questions and how best to respond.

10 Common Behavioral Interviewing Questions:

1. Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
2. Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
3. Describe a stressful situation at work and how you addressed it.
4. Tell me about a time you were under pressure to complete a task. What did you do to achieve it?
5. Think about a time when you were working on multiple projects. How did you prioritize to complete what was most pressing?
6. Describe an instance where you had to meet a tight deadline. How did you handle it?
7. Give an example of how you have set goals and achieved them.
8. Give an example of how you've worked on a team effectively.
9. Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? If so, how?
10. Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.

STAR: The Best Approach to Answering Behavioral Interviewing Questions

Practice the STAR method to ensure you are providing specific and valuable information to the interviewer.

- **(S) Situation:** Describe the situation in which the event took place.

- **(T) Task:** Describe the task you were asked to complete. If there was a particular problem or issue you were trying to solve, describe that here.

- **(A) Action:** Explain what action you took to complete the task or to solve the problem.

- **(R) Results:** Explain the result of your actions. For example, if your actions resulted in completing a task, resolving a conflict, improving your institution's sales record, etc., explain this. Try to focus on how your actions resulted in a tangible success for the institution.

The More Prepared You Are, the Better

The more prepared you are for your interview, the more comfortable and confident you will come across to the interviewer.

Prior to your interview, make sure you:

- Thoroughly review the job description of the role you're applying for, focusing on the skills and capabilities needed to be successful in that role.

- Think about specific examples and experiences that demonstrate these skills and capabilities in action.

- Practice your interview with a friend or family member, answering some behavioral interviewing questions as if it were the actual interview.