

Behaviour Based Interviews

Your Past Is Your Future

This type of interview is based on the premise that the best way to predict a candidate's future performance is to examine his or her past and present performance.

The key is not what a candidate knows about a process or discipline. The key is how well the candidate is able to apply his or her knowledge and skills in a specific set of circumstances.

Here are some examples of questions that are designed to help the interviewer learn about you and how you perform:

• **To find out if you're an analytical/systematic thinker:** "Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What was your reasoning? What kind of thought process did you go through?"

• **To find out if you're adaptable:** "Give me an example that would demonstrate your ability to adapt to a changing environment such as a recent restructuring or job redundancy. How did you cope with these changes?"

• **To find out if you're persistent:** "Describe for me a work situation where you had to overcome resistance. What were the circumstances, how did you deal with the resistance, and what was the outcome?"

• **To find out if you're service-oriented:** "Describe a time when you had to deal with an especially difficult customer situation. What did you do? How did you feel?"

• **To find out if you take initiative:** "Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do?"

A good framework for structuring your responses is the **STAR** system.

Situation: describe the setting or situation

Task: outline what needed to be done

Action: describe the action you took (illustrating the skill clearly)

Result: very important! -- outline the positive results of your action, especially the benefits to the organization

Preparing for a Behaviour Based Interview

The key to a successful Behaviour Based Interview is preparation. Thorough preparation requires you to complete several tasks:

- Research the company
- Analyze the job description for which you are applying
- Break the job description down into skill areas
- Rank the skills in order of importance
- Prepare ten Behaviour Based questions; try to anticipate what the employer may ask, based on the skill set described in the job description
- Prepare concise answers that include examples using the STAR formula
- Rehearse your answers aloud
- Use examples from work experience, volunteer work, education, sports and extra curricular activities.