



BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are examples of behavioral questions, an increasingly common style of interview. We've provided insight into what employers are looking for when asking behavioral questions (taken from a tool used by hiring managers at ARAMARK, a professional services company).

Question	What to look for
Tell me about a time you made a commitment and did not deliver on it.	<p>Candid discussion of the situation. Candidate that takes responsibility for decisions. Evidence of: informing everyone affected of what could occur because of inability to keep commitment, learning from the experience, awareness of results or impact. Perseverance in eventually delivering what was promised.</p> <p>Uncover reasons for not keeping commitment. Acceptable-nature of business changed the need, budgeting constraints. Unacceptable-did not effectively manage the project.</p>
In the past, what have you done when working with someone who disagreed with you about how to proceed?	Willingness to address and not avoid conflict, seeing it as an opportunity to come up with a better solution that represents a hybrid of both approaches. Demonstrates an ability to listen to the other side and discuss alternative perspectives before dismissing conflicting views.
Tell me about a time you creatively allocated resources in your group.	Knows what to do in the event money or employees get cut. Want to see that candidate sees obstacles and trade-offs as hurdles that can be creatively overcome.
Describe a unique way you reached an organizational objective this year.	Exhibits enthusiasm for what they did. Also looking for methods that are different from how candidate and organization usually does things.
Talk about a time you had to choose between your personal agenda and what was best for the organization.	Understanding of importance of doing what is best for organization. Consideration of implications of decisions and actions. Reasoning based on mixture of wisdom, experience or judgment. Looking to others for advice.

Tell me about a time when you generated excitement about one of your ideas despite initial resistance.	Ability to communicate a compelling and inspired sense of purpose. Ability to make the idea sharable by everyone. Ability to motivate people behind the idea.
Describe the vision and direction of a group you've led in the past.	If candidate can't communicate it to you, he/she isn't going to be able to communicate it to team members either. Probe to find out about the results of the vision. Want to make sure that the momentum it generated lasted a long time and that employees remained inspired by it.
Describe a situation where you had a poor performer in your group. How did you remedy the situation?	Acknowledged the damage the poor performer was doing. Did not just give up on the performer or tolerate poor performance but attempted to develop him/her through enriching tasks, training, mentoring, etc. Knew when development wasn't working and had poor performer moved to another area where s/he had a better chance of succeeding or out of the company. Respected poor performer in terms of confidentiality and fair treatment.
Describe an innovative method or approach you initiated.	Creativity in thinking. Breakthrough innovation. Concrete evidence that there was a dramatic change in the way business is conducted.
Describe a time you allowed a project to fall through the cracks.	If candidate states that this has never happened, probe by saying: it doesn't have to be something catastrophic, just something small. Issues to look for: Not managing the details. Failure to anticipate bottlenecks. Inability to deploy resources effectively. Poor time management or issues with prioritization. Could/should it have been foreseeable and avoided?
Discuss a time you engaged your team to improve results.	Ways that the candidate involved his/her team to create results. The ability to inspire his/her staff to achieve more.
Discuss a time you came up with a creative solution to changing conditions/demands/priorities.	Thinks in terms of new trends/opportunities benefiting the organization. Thinks strategically about uncovering ways to proactively address issues. Seeks out and discovers a best practice solution. Anticipates and adapts to a changing environment.

For more information, contact Career Services -
 617.495.3427
cso@gse.harvard.edu
www.gse.harvard.edu/about/administration/careers/
 025 Longfellow Hall



INTERVIEWS

The key to successful interviewing is **preparation**. First, prepare your “pitch.” Do some careful self-evaluation to organize your thoughts. Seriously consider your intended career trajectory and how this position aligns within that vision. Determine how your strengths, experiences, education, skills and knowledge will ensure success in the position and company. Most importantly, think of examples from your past that illustrate your skills and abilities. Effective interviewees show their qualifications rather than tell about them. Use the “**STAR**” approach in which you think of a **S**ituation or **T**ask you faced, describe the **A**ction you took and the **R**esults you achieved.

Interview preparation is less effective when you attempt it yourself. Career Services can help you evaluate your skills and strengths and refine your pitch through videotaped mock interviews with a career counselor.

Before the Interview

- Build upon your “pitch” by targeting it to the company with which you are interviewing. Answer the following typical questions with the company’s interest in mind:
 - Why do you want to work here?
 - What are your greatest strengths?
 - Why did you leave your last job?
 - Describe a problem and how you solved it.
 - What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- Conduct extensive research about the company and industry so that you are as knowledgeable as possible on the company’s market segments, growth areas, geographic locations, finances, etc. Adjust these criteria as needed for schools or non-profits. CSO can give you direction on how to research.
- If possible, conduct a practice run to the interview location so you know exactly where it is and how long it takes to get there. Alternatively, make sure you know exactly where it is.
- Prepare extra copies of your resume, a listing of references and their contact information, a portfolio of work samples (if appropriate) and any other information that would help you fill out a job application or solidify your candidacy.

During the Interview

- Dress appropriately and professionally.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early. If you are late due to circumstances out of your control, call the company.
- Be courteous and respectful to the receptionist, who may inform your interviewer if you were rude or if you acted unprofessionally while waiting for your interview. Your interaction with the receptionist is the unofficial start of your interview.
- Similarly, make a good first impression with the interviewer through your smiling demeanor, confident voice, appearance and punctuality. Interviewers make snap judgments on a candidate’s suitability in the first 20 seconds through verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Make sure your handshake is firm and strong, not limp.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer to try to determine what s/he is looking for and tailor your pitch accordingly.
- Avoid using verbal ticks such as “umm”. Practice describing success stories beforehand so that you can speak with confidence.
- Maintain good eye contact. Practice this with a career coach during a mock interview.
- Show enthusiasm for the position and company and speak with confidence and energy – without seeming arrogant.
- Answer questions truthfully and succinctly – do not over-explain or talk too much.

- Avoid saying anything negative about former companies and colleagues.
- If your interviewer falls silent, don't panic by talking simply to fill up the time. Remain quiet for a bit, then say, "Is there anything else you'd like to hear on that point?"
- Always ask questions – not asking questions signifies a lack of interest. Have a minimum of 3 prepared – on the industry, the organization and a personal question.
- As the interview is ending, reiterate your interest in the position by claiming you want the job and ask about the **next step in the hiring process and the timing of those steps.**
- Do not ask about salary. Wait for the interviewer to do so. If s/he mentions salary up front, turn the question around by asking, "Based on my qualifications, what were you thinking for this position?"

Interview Questions

- If asked about weaknesses, talk about an area that you worked to improve and how that process contributed to your professional development and increasing skill set. Alternatively, address any obvious weaknesses immediately and discuss how you can transcend them.
- Avoid speaking negatively about your current or previous employer if asked why you are leaving your job. Speak positively about them and simply state that you believe you advanced as far as you could in your current role and are ready for new challenges.
- Emphasize your interest in staying with and growing in the company with which you are interviewing when asked about your future career plans.
- Be ready for behavioral or situational interviews in which you are asked to recount how you solved a problem or would handle a potential situation by practicing the "STAR" approach mentioned above.
- Prepare for stress interviews, which are sometimes used for positions that are highly stress-filled. Interviewers may try to stress you in several ways but always remain calm, have a sense of humor and keep reiterating your pitch.

After the Interview

- Take notes immediately after the interview to accurately record your impressions.
- Send thank you notes within 24 hours to your interviewers that state again your interest and underscore how your qualifications match the company's needs.

Typical interview questions lists:

http://www.quintcareers.com/interview_question_collections.html

http://www.quintcareers.com/asking_interview_questions.html

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