



STAR Interview Question Response Model

Behavioural or Competency Based Interviewing

Behavioural Interviewing is a new style of interviewing that more and more organisations are using in their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioural interviewing is this: the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. It focuses on experiences, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. Traditional interviewing questions ask you general questions such as "Tell me about yourself." The process of behavioural interviewing is much more probing and works very differently. Employers predetermine which skills are necessary for the job for which they are looking and then ask very pointed questions to determine if the candidate possesses those skills. For example, if successful leadership is necessary for a position, you may be asked to talk about an experience in which you were a leader as well as what you think makes a good leader. To assess which skills the employer seeks, review employer literature, speak with alumni, family and friends who work for the employers, and listen carefully during the organization's information session.

During a behavioural interview, always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely. Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations from your experiences on your resume where you have demonstrated the behaviours a given company seeks. 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 about the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. Your answer should contain these four steps (Situation, Target, Action, Result or "STAR") for optimum success.

STAR Method

Situation: give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome

Target: describe what you set out to achieve

Action: talk about the various actions involved in the situation's task

Results: what results directly followed because of your actions

Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated STAR stories) during the interview.

It is helpful to frame your answer as a story that you can tell. Typically, the interviewer will pick apart the story to try to get at the specific behaviour(s) they seek. They refer to this as "digging a well." The interviewer will sometimes ask you open ended questions to allow you to choose which examples you wish to use. When a part of your story relates to a skill or experience the interviewer wishes to explore further, he/she will then ask you very specific follow-up questions regarding your behaviour. These can include "What were you thinking at that point?" or "Tell me more about your meeting with that person." or "Lead me through your decision process."

Whenever you can, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. For example: "I was a production supervisor." could be "As Production Manager, I trained and evaluated 4 employees."



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Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then? What did you learn? Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Demonstration of the desired behaviours may be proven in many ways. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvements, community service and work situations

Examples of a Behavioural Question

Behavioural questions can be difficult if you are not prepared. Always try to be conscious about what the recruiter is trying to find out about you by asking you a particular question. Practising a mock interview with a colleague or family member is an excellent way to develop your responses. Here are some examples:

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
- Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Give me an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communications skills in order to get an important point across.
- Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).



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START Interview Preparation Planner

Review the key competencies or behaviours for the role and anticipate questions you may be asked by preparing a START format reply.

Competence or Behaviour:
Situation: Describe the situation that best reflects how you effectively dealt with using this competency or behaviour.
Target: Specify what you decided needed to be achieved or the ideal outcome you were looking for.
Actions: List the specific actions you took that clearly reflect your competency or behaviours.
Results: Note the specific positive results you achieved. If you can add any figures or tangible comments, you should included those too.

Now you have some pointers, write down how you will start off answering the question that is strong, positive and grabs the attention of the interviewer.