



Helping Organizations Define and Develop Top Talent

Behavioral Interviewing

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Have you ever wondered, while interviewing a candidate, how will you suspend your own personal biases during the interview? Well, if you have, you might want to read on and learn how to do just that.

Behavioral interviewing is a relatively new mode of job interviewing. Employers such as AT&T and Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting) have been using behavioral interviewing for 15 years, and because increasing numbers of employers are using behavior-based methods to screen job candidates, understanding how to excel in this interview environment is becoming a crucial job-hunting skill.

What is Behavior Based Interviewing? Behavior-based interviewing focuses on your past experiences, behaviors, attitudes, personal skills and capacities that are job-related. It is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. You may use work experience, outside activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school projects, family life as examples of your past behavior. However we suggest to focus on job related performance as much as possible.

Behavioral Interviewing Questions. This is the key to matching behavioral interviewing questions with specific soft skills or competencies. Below is a short list of 22 competencies with their definitions, suggestions for effective interviewing hints and a sample question for each.

1. Conflict Management: *Addressing and resolving conflict constructively.*

- Listen for proactive identification and resolution of concerns and issues.
- *Sample question:* "Describe the most difficult conflict you've ever had to manage."

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2. Employee Development/Coaching: *Facilitating and supporting the professional growth of others.*

- Listen for a belief in the potential of others and promoting of learning and development.
- *Sample question:* “Describe your personal experience with a mentor or coach.”

3. Interpersonal Skills: *Effectively communicating, building rapport and relating well to all kinds of people.*

- Listen for self-awareness, understanding and an ability to communicate effectively with others regardless of differences.
- *Sample question:* “Describe the most difficult working relationship you’ve had with an individual.”

4. Teamwork: *Working effectively and productively with other.*

- Listen for a strong commitment and contributions to team members working towards a specific goal.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of one of the most significant contributions you made as a member of a high performing team.”

5. Self-Management: *Demonstrating self-control and an ability to manage time and priorities.*

- Listen for composure, assertiveness and emotional stability.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of when you were able to meet the personal and professional demands in your life, yet still maintained a healthy balance.”

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6. Empathy: *Identifying with and caring about others.*

- Listen for genuine caring, compassion and initiative in assisting others without expectations of rewards.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of when you identified with someone else’s difficulties at work.”

7. Planning/Organizing: *Utilizing logical, systematic and orderly procedures to meet objectives.*

- Listen for logical, organized and systematic approaches.
- *Sample question:* “Describe the most complex assignment or project you’ve worked on.”

8. Customer Service: *Anticipating, meeting and/or exceeding customer needs, wants and expectations.*

- Listen for extraordinary efforts in responding to customer needs and wants to insure satisfaction.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of when you went out of your way for a customer.”

9. Written Communication: *Writing clearly, succinctly and understandably.*

Look for clear and understandable knowledge or written communication.

Sample question: “Give me an example of something you wrote for work that was effective in achieving a communication goal.”

10. Presenting: *Speaking effectively to small and large groups.*

- Listen for awareness, accuracy and composure.

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- *Sample question:* “ Describe a situation when you had to give a presentation to a group of people you have never met.”

11. Persuasion: *Convincing others to change the way they think, believe or behave.*

- Listen for persistence, determination and a “never-give-up” attitude in efforts to meet goals.
- *Sample question:* “Describe a situation where you were able to convince others to your way of thinking.”

12. Goal Orientation: *Energetically focusing efforts on meeting a goal, mission or objective.*

- Listen for the ability to maintain their direction in spite of obstacles in their path.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of the most significant professional goal you have met.”

13. Flexibility: *Agility in adapting to change.*

- Listen for a positive attitude towards lots of activity, multi-tasking and change, in general.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of when you were forced to change priorities or direction.”

14. Continuous Learning: *Taking initiative in learning and implementing new concepts, technologies and/or methods.*

- Listen for a positive attitude towards self-improvement, learning and the application of knowledge.
- *Sample question:* “How do you keep current on what’s going on in your field?”

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15. Personal Effectiveness: *Demonstrating initiative, self-confidence, resiliency and a willingness to take responsibility for personal actions.*

- Listen for a strong sense of self, personal responsibility, courage and resilience.
- *Sample question:* “What do you think has enabled you to meet your goals?”

16. Problem Solving: *Anticipating, analyzing, diagnosing and resolving problems.*

- Listen for an analytical and disciplined approach to solving problems.
- *Sample question:* “Describe a situation when you anticipated a problem.”

17. Negotiation: *Facilitating agreements between two or more parties.*

- Listen for seasoned expertise in negotiating “win-win” agreements.
- *Sample question:* “Give me an example of when you were able to facilitate a “win-win” agreement between two or more adversarial parties.”

18. Management: *Achieving extraordinary results through effective management of resources, systems and processes.*

- Listen for shrewd business sense, understanding of operational issues and an ability to improve the bottom line.
- *Sample question:* “Describe the largest budget you’ve ever developed and had responsibility for managing.”

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19. Leadership: *Achieving extraordinary business results through people.*

- Listen for an ability to obtain the trust, commitment and motivation of others to achieve goals and objectives.
- *Sample question:* "If you have held a leadership position in the past, draw the organizational chart above and below your position to illustrate the scope of your leadership responsibilities."

20. Decision Making: *Utilizing effective processes to make decisions.*

- Listen for an ability to make timely decisions under difficult circumstances.
- *Sample question:* "Give me an example of when you had to make a quick decision when the risk of making an error was high."

21. Futuristic Thinking: *Imagining, envisioning, projecting and/or predicting what has not yet been realized.*

- Listen for optimism, predictions and a commitment to future possibilities.
- *Sample question:* "Describe a situation when you were correct in seeing a future trend that others didn't."

22. Creativity/Innovation: *Adapting traditional or devising new approaches, concepts, methods, models, designs, processes, technologies, and/or systems.*

- Listen for "out-of-the-box" thinking and unusual approaches.
- *Sample question:* "Describe a work situation when you adapted a concept, design, process or system to meet a need."

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Be sure to probe for as many details and specifics as possible such as names, dates and other verifiable information. Skilled interviewers will also ask candidates for their thoughts or feelings about a situation to gain further insight.

How Can I Prepare for A Behavioral Interview?

- Be familiar with the type of positions for which you're applying.
- Reflect on your own background. What skills do you have that relate to the job you are applying for?
- Think of examples from your past experience where you demonstrated those skills. How can you give an example about your use of particular skills or knowledge?
- Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then? In hindsight, what would you do differently?
- Identify two or three of your strengths and determine how you will convey these assets during the interview.
- Once you land your desired position, keep a personal achievement diary to help document demonstrated performance.

How Do I Prepare For a Behavioral Interview If I Am The Interviewer or Company Hiring?

- If the job could talk; what would it say? About:
 - The *behaviors* of the person who will always be able to deliver superior performance?
 - The *attitudes* of the people doing the job?
 - The *attributes* or *soft skills* needed for superior performance?
- Job Benchmarking with a system such as **Trimetrix**, reveals why, how and what an individual can contribute to a job.
- It identifies a complete hierarchy of competencies or personal skills. It allows you to clarify any position issues. It prioritizes and validates the competencies required.

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- This can be done for any:
 - Leadership/Management Exempt position
 - Professional Exempt position
 - Hourly non-exempt position
- Anytime you need an unbiased opinion about whether someone is right or wrong for the job, the computer will analyze the input of up to ten respondents to identify the importance of the 23 soft skills competencies.
- Where can you do this...through the Internet! Have up to ten respondents identify the importance of the 23 soft skills competencies and then see how your candidate matches up.

For more information about the **Trimetrix** Process or how to benchmark a job, please feel free to call **Well-Run Concepts at 877-566-2900**, email us at Success@Well-Run.com or visit us on the Web at www.Well-Run.com

The premise behind behavioral interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations. Behavioral interviewing, in fact, is said to be 55 percent predictive of future on-the-job behavior, while traditional interviewing is only ten percent predictive.

Good luck with the process of Behavioral Interviewing and *Well-Run Concepts* encourages you to use the Behavioral Interviewing questions provided in this article to get you started.

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