Sample Interview Questions

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

The behavioral interview focuses on a match of values and style, not just skills. Applicants are asked for answers to questions that indicate how they would handle past or hypothetical situations. When preparing for these types of questions, ask yourself why you approached a problem on your last job in the way you did. What might have you done differently? The key to success in behavioral interviewing is understanding that the interviewer is more interested in the process than the result. The interviewer wants to know the reasoning behind your decisions. You may want to prepare responses to these characteristics: teamwork, ability to deal with stress, initiative, tenacity, attention to detail, follow-through, customer service, technical skills, and communication skills. Listed below is a sampling of "tough questions" that you may be asked in a behavioral interview.

- Give an example of when you worked as a team member. What did you contribute?
- Tell me about a time you used your spoken communication skills to get a point across.
- What would you do if you detected a peer falsifying expense reports?
- If you could create an ideal job, what responsibilities and working atmosphere would you like to have?
- What has been the most difficult decision you've had to make in the last three years? Describe the steps to finalizing your decision.
- Describe a past job duty that required accuracy and attention to detail. What was the process and outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you felt it might be justifiable to break company procedure? Why?

Be prepared to answer questions by practicing, out loud, ahead of time. Rehearse your interview with a friend, if possible. Do not memorize the answers to the following questions. The answers below are designed to give you an indication of how you could respond with your own experience.

1. **Why do you want to work for us?**
   To answer this question, you must have researched the company. The more you know about the company and the job, the better you will appear in the interview. Reply with a statement that recognizes the company's attributes and explain what you can do for the company. You could mention that the company has the reputation of providing their employees with a stable and happy work environment. Working in such an atmosphere would encourage your best work. "I'm not looking for just a job. I enjoy my work as a database developer and am proud of my accomplishments. Your company produces an excellent product/service. I share the values that make this possible and feel confident that I would fit in and complement the team."
2. **Tell me about your biggest accomplishments.**
   Talk about your accomplishments that closely match the position you are applying for.
   Use the material from the Rule of Three outlined in this course work. Remember to quantify your skills using numbers to illustrate your level of authority and responsibility.
   You might begin your reply with: "Although I feel my biggest achievements are still ahead of me, I am proud of my involvement with…

3. **What are your career goals? What would you like to be doing in two years?**
   Your answer should reflect a professional and team-player attitude. You may want to ask what opportunities exist with the company before giving a specific answer.
   "From my understanding of the company's goals/vision it seems you place a significant emphasis on computer systems. I believe that my efforts in (web developing, programming, networking, etc.) could contribute to these goals."

4. **What did you like/dislike about your last/current job?**
   Criticizing a prior employer, colleague, teacher or institute is a warning flag that you could be a problem employee. If there were problems with previous experiences, try to put your answers in the positive rather than the negative. The interviewer could also be looking for incompatibilities. If a computer programmer says he or she dislikes sitting at a desk all day, such a statement will only weaken his or her candidacy.
   For example, you may say that the only thing your employer could not offer might be something like "the ability to contribute more in different areas in the smaller/larger environment you have here." You could also say: "I really like everything about the job. The reason I want to leave it is to find a position where I can make a greater contribution."

5. **Can you work under pressure? Describe pressure situations that you feel you have handled well.**
   Rather than giving a yes or no answer, you could say: "Yes, I usually find it challenging. However, I believe in planning and utilizing proper time management tools to reduce panic deadlines within my area of responsibility."
   Then, describe an experience using the Rule of Three.

**Sample questions you might want to ask the employer**

Toward the end of your interview the interviewer will typically ask if you have any questions. You should be prepared to ask two or three thoughtful questions; if you do not, he/she may think you are not interested in the company. Use this opportunity to ask questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the organization and industry, making sure your questions don't become an interrogation. Here are sample questions you might ask. Use your own words and ask questions stemming from information gathered during your interview.

- I understand that your company is the market leader in …… I am curious to know your opinion of what makes your organization/business different from it's competitors?
• How would you describe your organization's personality and management style?
• What skills are considered most useful for success in the position I'm applying for?
• What is the length and structure of the training program?
• What other positions and/or departments will I interact with most?
• Assuming I was hired and performed well as the (position you are applying for), what possible opportunities might this lead to?