



Career Services

**INTERVIEW TIPS**

**Behavioral Interviewing**

This is a style of interviewing that more and more companies and organizations are using in their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. Behavioral questions reveal a candidate’s experience and behaviors to understand if they can handle the job, and provides a more objective set of facts to use in making employment decisions than other interviewing methods.

**Important Points about Behavioral Interviewing**

Answers to behavioral questions need to be specific and detailed. Describe a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Using the “STAR” technique can be particularly effective for answering behavioral interviewing questions.

**“STAR” INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE**

<b>Situation or Task</b>	Describe the situation/problem that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
<b>Action you took</b>	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
<b>Results you achieved</b>	What did you accomplish? What were the results? Quantify the results. How did the event end? What did you learn?

**EXAMPLE:**

Tell me about a time when you suggested a solution to a problem.

**Situation/Task:**

*I worked for a major credit card company. Our company went through downsizing last year and needed to layoff three people in my area. They were trying to find a way to reduce our overhead cost without laying off excellent workers.*

**Action:**

*I suggested that for three months we all should work a 36-hour week instead of 40-hour work week and that we should volunteer to work one weekend a month to maintain the call volume for our area.*

**Results:**

*We saved over \$400,000 in one month and no one in my area was laid off. My company has recovered from the recession and is now able to hire new employees.*



## Career Services

### 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

**1. Research the company, products, and competitors**

This will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

**2. Prepare success stories**

In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully. Consider these areas: Leadership, Teamwork, Personal Development, and Being Supervised.

**3. Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Conduct a practice interview with Career Services staff to get a feel for what your actual interview will be like. You will receive valuable feedback on what you did well and areas for improvement. It will also help you feel more relaxed and confident at the real thing.

**4. Image is often as important as content**

As the old cliché goes, you only get one chance to make a first impression. What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Gestures, physical appearance, and attire are highly influential during job interviews.

**5. Answer questions using the "STAR" format**

Clearly discussing your role, the action you took, and the results you achieved will help you stand out from the crowd. Even if an employer asks you a hypothetical question versus a behavioral question, you can use the "STAR" format to tell them about a time when you already experienced that particular situation.

**6. Talk in specifics and keep your answers brief and concise**

Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when answering questions. Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question.

**7. Repeat your key strengths several times during an interview**

It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer.

**8. Ask questions**

The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. This is also your opportunity to ask questions that can determine if this position is the right fit for you. Good questions require advance preparation. Write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview.

**Don't ask about benefits or salary.**

**9. Be Yourself!**

Nerves often get the best of candidates; leading them to portray someone they're not. Interviewing is about your fit within the organization, so relax and let them see how wonderful you really are!

**10. Evaluate the interview**

Did the questions you asked offer the information you need to decide if the opportunity is a good fit? What might you do differently next time?