

50 Behavioral Based Interview Questions

By Lynda Ford, September 21, 2001

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Are you looking for behavior-based interviewing questions? While the questions and behavior characteristics listed below are by no means comprehensive, it might be just the jump-start you're looking for. Try these:

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Leadership

1. Tell me about a time when you accomplished something significant that wouldn't have happened if you had not been there to make it happen.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to step into a situation, take charge, muster support, and achieve good results.
3. Describe for me a time when you may have been disappointed in your behavior.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to discipline or fire a friend.
5. Tell me about a time when you've had to develop leaders under you.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Initiative and Follow-Through

1. Give me an example of a situation where you had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives.
2. Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working toward.
3. Tell me about a time when you won (or lost) an important contract.
4. Tell me about a time when you used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
5. Tell me about a situation that you had significant impact on because of your follow-through.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Thinking and Problem-Solving

1. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
2. If you had to do that activity over again, how would you do it differently?
3. Describe for me a situation where you may have missed an obvious solution to a problem.
4. Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
5. Tell me about a time when you surmounted a major obstacle.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Communication

1. Tell me about a time when you had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do this successfully.
2. Tell me about a situation where you had to be persuasive and sell your idea to someone else.
3. Describe for me a situation where you persuaded team members to do things your way. What was the effect?
4. Tell me about a time when you were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Working Effectively with Others

1. Give me an example that would show that you've been able to develop and maintain productive relations with others, though there were differing points of view.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to motivate others to get the desired results.
3. Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker, and how you handled it.
4. Tell me about a time when you played an integral role in getting a team (or workgroup) back on track.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Work Quality

1. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was well received. What do you attribute that to?
2. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was not well received. What do you attribute that to?
3. Tell me about a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in improvement in a major work area.
4. Tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Creativity and Innovation

1. Tell me about a situation in which you were able to find a new and better way of doing something significant.
2. Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
3. Describe a time when you were able to come up with new ideas that were key to the success of some activity or project.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to bring out the creativity in others.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Priority-Setting

1. Tell me about a time when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully.
2. Tell me about a time when you had to pick out the most important things in some activity and make sure those got done.
3. Tell me about a time that you prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
4. Tell me about a time when you got bogged down in the details of a project.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Decision-Making

1. Describe for me a time when you had to make an important decision with limited facts.
2. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to adapt to a difficult situation. What did you do?
4. Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision.
5. Tell me about a time when you hired (or fired) the wrong person.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Ability to Work in Varying Work Conditions (stress, changing deadlines, etc.)

1. Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
2. Tell me about a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
3. Tell me about a time when you had to change work midstream because of changing organization priorities.
4. Describe for me what you do to handle stressful situations.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Delegation

1. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
2. Tell me about a time when you did a poor job of delegating.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to delegate to a person with a full workload, and how you went about doing it.

If You're Looking for Behaviors That Revolve Around Customer Service

1. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.
2. Tell me about one or two customer-service related programs that you've done that you're particularly proud of.
3. Tell me about a time when you made a lasting, positive impression on a customer.