Behavioral Interview Questions
Also known as “Targeted Interviewing”

The purpose of behavioral interviewing is to see if you have experience with the management skills necessary for the position.

**Tips on answering:**
- Listen carefully to the question. Make sure you know what behavior the recruiter wants to know about.
- It is acceptable to ask clarifying questions about what the interviewer asked.
- Choose examples from your experience first, if you can, before using academic experiences.

**STAR Technique**
Use this technique to structure your answers.

*S* = explain the background of the *Situation* (very briefly!)
*T* = *Task* you played in the situation
*A* = *Actions* you took to resolve the situation
*R* = *Results* of your actions (both the successful result of your behavior AND the result of the situation)

**Example**
Q. Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict with a coworker?
A. *Situation* When working on a project to implement a new website, a teammate and I disagreed about the relative importance of content versus graphics in communicating our point to the user.
   *Task* As a member of the team, it was my responsibility to see that the whole team was successful.
   *Actions* ù I went to my coworker to talk face to face, because Internet communications tend to escalate problems.
   ù I asked him not only for more details on his opinion, but also why he believed that and how he saw that meeting the users’ needs. It is important to understand other people’s needs, so hopefully a solution can be found that meets both our needs.
   ù I also communicated what I wanted out of the project, and why so that he knew what my concerns are and that I too wanted to be successful.
   ù We found it helpful to list out our goals on a white board, which also helped keep the discussion objective.
   ù Then we identified the commonalities of our concerns, so he knew we were definitely trying to accomplish the same thing.

   *Results* Because of this we were able to craft a solution to the conflict that kept the project on schedule, and kept our working relationship healthy.

**Preparing for Behavioral Questions**
There is preparation you can do to perform better answering these questions. Here are some steps to take:

1. Evaluate your own experiences. Think of both your successes and your toughest experiences. These are good content for your stories. Come up with 10-12 situations.
2. Review them in terms of what skill sets you used. Focus on skills most important to success in the job for which you are interviewing. This will help you build a library of experiences to draw on in answering questions.
3. Create different stories around each experience; each focusing on a different skill set you used. Choose experiences that are most relevant to the target job. Use the STAR technique to structure your story.
4. Familiarize yourself with these stories, but do not memorize them! You need to be able to adapt to the nuances of the question.
5. Don’t forget to talk about the results of your actions.

**Want samples of behavioral interview questions?**
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