

## **Behavioral Interviewing**

The behavioral interview technique is used by interviewers to evaluate a candidate's experiences and behaviors in order to determine their potential for success. The interviewer identifies desired skills and behaviors, then structures open-ended questions and statements to elicit detailed responses. As a candidate, you should be prepared to answer the questions and statements thoroughly.

### **STAR Interviewing Response Technique for Success in Behavioral Interviews**

#### **Situation or Task**

Describe the situation 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. Paint a picture! This situation can be from a class, a job, a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

#### **Action you took**

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.

#### **Results you achieved**

What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

**Example:** What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?

Situation- Recently I had to decide whether to eat a brownie or a chocolate chip cookie.

Action- I analyzed the calories, taste coefficient and freshness of each. I also considered how long it had been since I had eaten each type as a measure of my motivation or drive.

Result- I chose the brownie because it scored the highest on all measures. I was most pleased with my decision!

#### **Here is a good way to prepare for behavior-based interviews:**

- Identify six to eight examples from your past experience where you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that admissions committees typically seek. Think in terms of examples that will exploit your top selling points.
- Half your examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or meeting goals.
- The other half should be situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome.
- Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.
- Use fairly recent examples. If you are a college student, examples from high school may be too long ago.
- Try to describe examples in story form using the STAR technique.

To cram for a behavioral interview right before you are interviewed, review your application. Seeing your achievements in print will jog your memory.

In the interview, listen carefully to each question, and pull an example out of your bag of tricks that provides an appropriate description of how you demonstrated the desired behavior. With practice, you can learn to tailor a relatively small set of examples to respond to a number of different behavioral questions.

Modified from: [http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral\\_interviewing.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral_interviewing.html)