

STAR Behavioral Interview Technique

One of the primary types of interviews being used to recruit new graduates today is the behavioral based interview. In this type of interview, candidates need to provide an in-depth response to a question by drawing upon their background, experience, and knowledge of particular issues and situations. The recommended practice to respond to these types of questions is called the STAR method. That is:

S = Situation
T = Tasks Involved
A = Action Taken
R = Results

Student responses should detail a pertinent situation, along with the tasks they were involved in, the actions they took and the results that were achieved. All of these elements must be included to provide sufficiently detailed answers to ensure proper evaluation for the candidate being considered. A candidate's ability to provide appropriate and detailed answers to interview questions will give them a substantial advantage over candidates who give more general answers.

Behavioral interview questions can be characterized by asking for a specific example or situation. Most behavioral questions start off saying:

Give me an example of a time...
Describe a situation where you...
Tell me about when you...

However, the more concrete examples candidates can provide to answer questions, the easier it is for interviewers to envision how they may or may not be a fit for the position they are interviewing for. Therefore, anytime one can provide a pertinent personal example at the core of their answer, the stronger their answers will be.

Here is a Sample Answer to the Question "Tell me about a time a team member wasn't pulling their weight."

Situation: In one of our class projects, we had a team member that was responsible for researching the history of the issue.

Task: This team member was missing meetings and online chat sessions about our project. Her part of the project was due earlier than others but she was not communicating with us about her progress.

Action: I reached out to her to find out how I could help her. She said that she was very busy at work and was struggling with completing her part of the project on time. I spoke to the rest of the team and we agreed to have her swap her part of the project that was due early with another that was due later in the semester.

Result: By swapping with another team member, she had the time necessary to complete her part of the project and we were able to deliver a better presentation with all of our team members involved.

Interview Preparation

Unless someone can see the future, there is no way to predict whether or not an interview will lead to a successful job offer. However, advance preparation greatly increases the probability of interview success. There are several things candidates can and should do to make sure they are prepared for their interviews.

The single most necessary element of interview preparation is research. Before going into the interview, candidates should be able to articulate what the company they are interviewing with does, and what the position they are applying for entails. They should also be able to clearly explain *why* they would want to work with in this position with this particular company. Candidates should plan on being able to answer the following questions about the company, the position, and themselves before going into a job interview. Answers can be found by speaking with recruiters or company representatives, reading company literature, or researching on the internet.

Company Information

What are their key products or services?
Who is their primary market?
Where are they located?
What are their core values?
What is their company culture like?
What does their competitive landscape look like?
What interests you about this company?

Position Information

What does this position do on a daily basis?
What are their key responsibilities for this position?
What qualifications are required for this position?
What skills (Technical and Soft Skills), or personality traits are necessary for success in this role?
What opportunities are there for growth or upward mobility?
What interests you about this position?

Understanding of Self

What is your academic/professional background?
What have you accomplished in your experience?
What are your short and long-term career goals?
What core values define your professional and personal objectives?
How will this position and company help you meet your goals?

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about a project you worked on that required you to persist in overcoming several obstacles.
2. Describe a situation where you had to persuade someone to see things your way.
3. Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't doing his/her part adequately. What role did you play in reaching a conclusion?
4. Give me an example of a time you were in a leadership position.
5. Tell me about a time when you were assigned to do something in an area in which you had little or no knowledge, training or experience. How did you approach the assignment?
6. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a co-worker or team member that you didn't get along with.
7. Give me an example of a time when you showed excellent work ethic.
8. Tell about a situation when a crucial deadline was nearing, but you didn't want to compromise quality.

To Practice answering Behavioral interview questions using the STAR pattern, take a look at the **Behavioral Interviewing Grid** available on the Resources Page of HireBauer.com