

Acing the Interview – Behavioral Interviewing

The employer has two objectives for an interview:

- To evaluate your ability to perform successfully the required duties;
- To discover personality traits that may indicate your success on the job.

To make these evaluations, employers rely on **behavioral interviewing**, a method of interviewing that examines your past behavior as a means of predicting future behavior.

Some typical questions asked during behavioral interviewing:

- “Tell us about a time when you demonstrated initiative.”
- “Describe your most memorable experience working on a project with others. What happened?”
- “I see on your resume that you worked last summer at Target. Tell me about a time you delivered exceptional customer service.”
- “I understand that you worked as a math tutor at FMU. Describe the most challenging tutoring experience you faced, and how you handled it.”

A Guideline for Answering Behavioral-Based Interview Questions: The STAR Method

- Identify a **situation** that satisfies the question
- Identify the specific **task** you had to complete
- Explain the **actions** you took to complete the task
- Describe the positive **results** of your actions.

Example:

Lab technicians in our labs have to spend a lot of time working independently, running tests and recording the exact outcomes of those tests. We need people in those positions who are self-motivators and who can work without having someone standing over them all day.

Can you describe for me a time when you were self-motivated and completed a difficult task without supervision?

What was the outcome?

(S)ituation Answer:

As a shift supervisor at Burger King, I am solely responsible for seeing to it that the restaurant is closed properly when I am on duty. I have to see that all the machinery and the kitchen area are cleaned and broken down, the dining room is thoroughly cleaned and restocked, the restrooms are cleaned, and the parking lot is swept. All of this work must meet the regulations of the county health board, and I strictly follow those guidelines. I am also responsible for counting the tills and making the

deposit, which means I am responsible for over \$5,000 a shift. I am also responsible for securing all the locks and setting the alarm. I usually do this routine 4-5 nights per week.

(T)ask Answer:

When I am the shift supervisor at night, I am the highest-ranking employee on the premises, which means that I have to be self-motivated. I have to see to it that all of the work is completed and that it meets Burger King's standards and the health department's. I have to manage my staff and their time to see to it that all the duties I just mentioned are accomplished, every night.

(A)ction Answer:

When I was promoted to shift supervisor, I realized the amount of work that I alone was responsible for completing, and I immediately developed a system for accomplishing the work. For one, I assigned specific duties to specific employees. So for example, I instructed the person operating the drive-thru to breakdown and clean that area before she left. Also, I instructed the dishwasher that he would be responsible for sweeping the parking lot. When the employee had completed the duties, I would then go and check the work. By having my staff members perform specific duties that kept them engaged, I was able to work in my office on completing the necessary paperwork and run the required reports that must accompany the deposit. Then, at the end of the night, I could focus on securing the premises for the night.

(R)esults Answer:

My managerial system paid off. In the nine months I've been the shift supervisor, I've not had one error in any of my reports or with a deposit, and the restaurant has always been in tiptop shape for the morning crew. I also learned that on the job, it's very important to be able to manage yourself, know what you need to do, and be responsible and mature enough to do it without having to be told to do it 100 times. I know that it's important for a lab technician to be able to work without a lot of supervision. If a lab technician doesn't complete her tests for the day, she can slow down the production of important medicines, and cost the company a lot of money.