



HOW TO ACE A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

You delivered a clean and professional resume and now you have landed a behavioral interview. Your performance will make or break a potential job offer. So, how are you going to handle it?

In a traditional interview you are asked questions like, “What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are you passionate about? Where do you see yourself in ten years?” These questions are valuable to interviewers because it tells them who you are.

A behavioral interview is different because it allows the interviewer to predict what you will do according to how you responded to situations in the past. They will ask questions about how you handled different conflicts and assess how you handled them.

The questions posed to you may be constrained only to situations that are applicable to the position. For example, if the position requires working with coworkers, they may ask, “Have you encountered a difficult situation with a co-worker?” You should be ready with an anecdote that satisfies the question, even if the only co-worker conflict you have experienced was during a class project.

Preparation Tips for a Behavioral Interview

Answering open-ended questions is challenging, so how do you prepare for a behavioral interview? Start by making a list of scenarios that you have encountered at work or school. Think about everything you have had to overcome, like unruly customers, uncommunicative co-workers, lazy bosses, computer crashes, etc.

Take your list, read it over and figure out the instances in which you acted most admirably. Answer the questions a few times over with a friend or in the mirror. Be honest with yourself in your answers and try not to over-emphasize your heroism or mistakes too much. Always be ready to talk about what you learned from each situation, and if you made a mistake, how you are working to ensure it never happens again.

Knowing the company and position will allow you to anticipate what questions may come your way. Put yourself in the interviewer’s position and imagine what questions you would ask someone applying for the same position.

On the day of the behavioral interview, you should dress, sleep, and eat well; run through the company’s information; polish up your personal brand; and show up on time.

During the interview, some questions might trip you up and that is okay. However, if you find yourself without credentials for the questions they are asking, it might be a red flag. Is this really the right job for you? Do you need to secure more experience before getting a position like this?

For more information on behavioral interviews, check out Alison Doyle’s [article](#) on *AboutCareers* or Marc Cenedella’s [article](#) on *The Ladders*.