

10 Behavioral Interview Questions and Sample Answers

Here are some common behavioral interview questions you may be asked during a job interview. Review the responses and consider how you would answer the questions, so you'll be prepared to give a strong answer.

As you can see from the sample responses, it's important to be ready with specific examples and anecdotes.

While you don't need to memorize answers, have a sense of what experiences you would share and how to describe them to the interviewer. You'll want your examples to be both clear and succinct.

1. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

What They Want to Know: If you're being considered for a high-stress job, the interviewer will want to know how well you can work under pressure. Give a real example of how you've dealt with pressure when you respond.

Example Answer

I had been working on a key project that was scheduled for delivery to the client in 60 days. My supervisor came to me and said that we needed to speed it up and be ready in 45 days, while keeping our other projects on time. I made it into a challenge for my staff, and we effectively added just a few hours to each of our schedules and got the job done in 42 days by sharing the workload. Of course, I had a great group of people to work with, but I think that my effective allocation of tasks was a major component that contributed to the success of the project.

More Answers: [How do you handle stress?](#)

2. How do you handle a challenge? Give an example.

What They Want to Know: Regardless of your job, things may go wrong and it won't always be business as usual. With this type of question, the hiring manager wants to know how you will react in a difficult situation. Focus on how you resolved a challenging situation when you respond. Consider sharing a step-by-step outline of what you did and why it worked.

Example Answer

One time, my supervisor needed to leave town unexpectedly, and we were in the middle of complicated negotiations with a new sponsor. I was tasked with putting together a PowerPoint presentation just from the notes he had left, and some briefing from his manager. My presentation was successful. We got the sponsorship, and the management team even recommended me for an award.

More Answers: [Tell me about how you handled a challenging situation.](#)

3. Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?

What They Want to Know: Nobody is perfect, and we all make mistakes. The interviewer is more interested in how you handled it when you made an error, rather than in the fact that it happened.

Example Answer

I once misquoted the fees for a particular type of membership to the club where I worked. I explained my mistake to my supervisor, who appreciated my coming to him, and my honesty. He told me to offer to waive the application fee for the new member. The member joined the club despite my mistake, my supervisor was understanding, and although I felt bad that I had made a mistake, I learned to pay close attention to the details so as to be sure to give accurate information in the future.

Tips for Responding: [How to answer interview questions about mistakes.](#)

4. Give an example of how you set goals.

What They Want to Know: With this question, the interviewer wants to know how well you plan and set goals for what you want to accomplish. The easiest way to respond is to share examples of successful goal setting.

Example Answer

Within a few weeks of beginning my first job as a sales associate in a department store, I knew that I wanted to be in the fashion industry. I decided that I would work my way up to department manager, and at that point I would have enough money saved to be able to attend design school full-time. I did just that, and I even landed my first job through an internship I completed the summer before graduation.

5. Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.

What They Want to Know: The hiring manager is interested in learning what you do to achieve your goals, and the steps you take to accomplish them.

Example Answer

When I started working for XYZ Company, I wanted to achieve the Employee of the Month title. It was a motivational challenge, and not all the employees took it that seriously, but I really wanted that parking spot, and my picture on the wall. I went out of my way to be helpful to my colleagues, supervisors, and customers - which I would have done anyway. I liked the job and the people I worked with. The third month I was there, I got the honor. It was good to achieve

my goal, and I actually ended up moving into a managerial position there pretty quickly, I think because of my positive attitude and perseverance.

More Answers: [Interview questions about achieving your goals.](#)

6. Describe a decision you made that wasn't popular, and explain how you handled implementing it.

What They Want to Know: Sometimes, management has to make difficult decisions, and not all employees are happy when a new policy is put in place. If you're interviewing for a decision-making role, the interviewer will want to know your process for implementing change.

Example Answer

Once, I inherited a group of employees when their supervisor relocated to another city. They had been allowed to cover each other's shifts without management approval. I didn't like the inconsistencies, where certain people were being given more opportunities than others. I introduced a policy where I had my assistant approve all staffing changes, to make sure that everyone who wanted extra hours and was available at certain times could be utilized.

More Answers: [What are the most difficult decisions to make?](#)

7. Give an example of how you worked on a team.

What They Want to Know: Many jobs require working as part of a team. In interviews for those roles, the hiring manager will want to know how well you work with others and cooperate with other team members.

Example Answer

During my last semester in college, I worked as part of a research team in the History department. The professor leading the project was writing a book on the development of language in Europe in the Middle Ages. We were each assigned different sectors to focus on, and I suggested that we meet independently before our weekly meeting with the professor to discuss our progress, and help each other out if we were having any difficulties. The professor really appreciated the way we worked together, and it helped to streamline his research as well. He was ready to start on his final copy months ahead of schedule because of the work we helped him with.

Tips for Responding: [How to answer interview questions about teamwork.](#)

8. What do you do if you disagree with someone at work?

What They Want to Know: With this question, the interviewer is seeking insight into how you handle issues at work. Focus on how you've solved a problem or compromised when there was a workplace disagreement.

Example Answer

A few years ago, I had a supervisor who wanted me to find ways to outsource most of the work we were doing in my department. I felt that my department was one where having the staff on the premises had a huge impact on our effectiveness and ability to relate to our clients. I presented a strong case to her, and she came up with a compromise plan.

Tips for Responding: [How to answer interview questions about problems at work.](#)

9. Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.

What They Want to Know: Do you have strong motivational skills? What strategies do you use to motivate your team? The hiring manager is looking for a concrete example of your ability to motivate others.

Example Answer

I was in a situation once where the management of our department was taken over by employees with experience in a totally different industry, in an effort to maximize profits over service. Many of my co-workers were resistant to the sweeping changes that were being made, but I immediately recognized some of the benefits, and was able to motivate my colleagues to give the new process a chance to succeed.

More Answers: [What strategies would you use to motivate your team?](#)

10. Have you handled a difficult situation? How?

What They Want to Know: Can you handle difficult situations at work, or do you not deal with them well? The employer will want to know what you do when there's a problem.

Example Answer

When I worked at ABC Global, it came to my attention that one of my employees had become addicted to painkillers prescribed after she had surgery. Her performance was being negatively impacted, and she needed to get some help. I spoke with her privately, and I helped her to arrange a weekend treatment program that was covered by her insurance. Fortunately, she was able to get her life back on track, and she received a promotion about six months later.

More Behavioral Interview Questions

- Have you worked on multiple projects? How did you prioritize?
- How do you handle meeting tight deadlines?
- How do you handle it when your schedule is interrupted?
- What do you do if you disagree with a co-worker?
- Give me an example of when you did or when you didn't listen.

- What do you do if you disagree with your boss?
- How do you handle it when there's a conflict among team members?
- What is your most career important accomplishment? Why?

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