

Human Resources 101

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Fifty Behavior Based Interview Questions

November 21st, 2007 · [13 Comments](#)

In September 2006, I post a link to Lynda Ford's article, [50 Behaviour Based Interview Questions](#). I tried using the link today and it doesn't seem to be working. Just in case the original post is gone forever, I found a cached version of the article via Google and have posted it, along with the copyright information.

If someone knows where a copy of this can be found on-line, I can edit this post to point to the original material. In the meantime, here it is for your reference.

Are you looking for behaviour based interviewing questions? While the questions and behaviour characteristics listed below are by no means comprehensive, it might be just the jump-start you're looking for. Try these...

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Leadership:

1. Tell me about a time when you accomplished something significant that wouldn't have happened if you had not been there to make it happen.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to step into a situation, take charge, muster support and achieve good results.
3. Describe for me a time when you may have been disappointed in your behaviour.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to discipline or fire a friend.
5. Tell me about a time when you've had to develop leaders under you.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Initiative and Follow-through:

1. Give me an example of a situation where you had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives.

2. Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working towards.
3. Tell me about a time when you won (or lost) an important contract.
4. Tell me about a time when you used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
5. Tell me about a situation that you had significant impact on because of your follow-through.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Thinking and Problem Solving:

1. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
2. If you had to do that activity over again, how would you do it differently?
3. Describe for me a situation where you may have missed an obvious solution to a problem.
4. Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
5. Tell me about a time when you surmounted a major obstacle.

You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Communication:

1. Tell me about a time when you had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do this successfully.
2. Tell me about a situation where you had to be persuasive and sell your idea to someone else.
3. Describe for me a situation where you persuaded team members to do things your way. What was the effect?
4. Tell me about a time when you were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Working Effectively with Others:

1. Give me an example that would show that you've been able to develop and maintain productive relations with others, though there were differing points of view.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to motivate others to get the desired results.
3. Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker, and how you handled it.
4. Tell me about a time when you played an integral role in getting a team (or work group) back on track.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Work Quality:

1. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was well received. What do you attribute that to?
2. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was not well received. What do you attribute that to?
3. Tell me about a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in improvement in a major work area.

4. Tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Creativity and Innovation:

1. Tell me about a situation in which you were able to find a new and better way of doing something significant.
2. Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
3. Describe a time when you were able to come up with new ideas that were key to the success of some activity or project.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to bring out the creativity in others.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Priority Setting:

1. Tell me about a time when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully.
2. Tell me about a time when you had to pick out the most important things in some activity and make sure those got done.
3. Tell me about a time that you prioritised the elements of a complicated project.
4. Tell me about a time when you got bogged down in the details of a project.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Decision Making:

1. Describe for me a time when you had to make an important decision with limited facts.
2. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to adapt to a difficult situation. What did you do?
4. Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision
5. Tell me about a time when you hired (or fired) the wrong person.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Ability to Work in Varying Work Conditions (stress, changing deadlines, etc.):

1. Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
2. Tell me about a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
3. Tell me about a time when you had to change work mid-stream because of changing organisational priorities.
4. Describe for me what you do to handle stressful situations.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Delegation:

1. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
2. Tell me about a time when you did a poor job of delegating.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to delegate to a person with a full workload, and how you went about doing it.

If You're Looking For Behaviours that Revolve Around Customer Service:

1. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.
2. Tell me about one or two customer-service related programs that you've done that you're particularly proud of.
3. Tell me about a time when you made a lasting, positive impression on a customer.

Lynda Ford, author of this article, is a consultant, author and speaker and president of The Ford Group, a management and human resource consulting firm. Her book, [Transform Your Workplace](#), (McGraw-Hill) is available in bookstores across the country. She can be contacted by e-mail at lynda@fordgroup.com, or by phone at (315) 339-6398.

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13 responses so far ↓

- [50 Behavior Based Interview Questions | Human Resources 101](#) // Nov 21, 2007 at 9:55 am

[...] Lynda Ford has compiled a list of behavior-based interview questions. It is not a comprehensive list of characteristics, but should provide some ideas for developing other questions. [...]

- [Jimmy Ockey](#) // Jan 8, 2008 at 12:07 am

Thanks for the behavioural interview questions. I have read that behavioural interview questions are becoming more commonplace, as behavioural questions are designed to focus on actions and behaviours that are critical to the success of the job. To familiarize oneself with these questions, it may be useful to answer them. One approach is to use the STAR (situation, task, approach, result) method or the CAR (challenge, action, result). Challenge – provide the context of the problem or challenge include details so the employer can get a clear picture; Action – describe the action and provide the reason for your decision; Result – what happened? What did you learn? I recently started keeping a work journal of CAR examples.

- [ranko](#) // Feb 6, 2008 at 12:28 pm

I need help with answers for behaviour questions .
Do you have sample of answers

- [lawal ibrahim olanrewaju](#) // Jan 6, 2009 at 4:00 pm

can you please develop a behaviour based test and interview questions and answers.

- **Standing out from the crowd « Be Your Best – IT Jobs For Graduates** // Jun 10, 2009 at 4:40 am

[...] following site <http://www.hr-esources.com/11/21/fifty-behavior-based-interview-questions/> provides 50 behaviour based interview questions. Not all of these courses are relevant to graduate [...]

- **Jaz** // Feb 20, 2011 at 3:36 pm

I have a very important job interview coming up in 2 days. I have read all these behaviour-based interview questions but need help to answer them. I freeze up and get too nervous and then cannot think of examples or at times don't understand what the question means.

- **Galt** // Mar 4, 2011 at 11:41 am

The point of behavior based questions is that it that the only good answers are those that come directly from your experience. Canned answers are fairly easy to spot and won't get you very far.

If you are new to a profession or job, pull examples that are relevant from other areas of your life and tell a story.

- **behavioral interview** // Jun 16, 2011 at 7:04 am

behavioral interview

Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) questions have been used for over 20 years and are widely used by skilled interviewers. In today's job market.

- **targeted selection** // Jun 23, 2011 at 1:01 am

When it comes to behaviour based interview, Swan Consultants Inc will help you. The workshop presents a proven way to hire more productive employees, reduce costly errors, and attract top candidates. Interviewing in the context of a more diverse workforce, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, require managers to be more knowledgeable and skillful than ever. An increasingly popular variation of this program, our Campus Recruitment Workshop, shows how to make effective use of the 30-minute campus interview.

- **Amoabeng** // Jun 24, 2011 at 12:04 am

i have read the behavioral interviews questions and got freeze because i dont really understands some of the questions asked but it must be answered at point of the interview.therefore i help for the answers of the questions asked.

- **Joe Brown** // Jul 15, 2011 at 11:25 am

It would seem logical that the answers to these questions would be rated on some sort of scale, dependent on a proscribed scale of a “high,” “medium,” or “low” reflecting an established “answer” structure. An “answer” could be technically correct, but fall outside the proscribed structure guideline. In this case, the interviewer would have to draw upon not just the textbook guideline, but upon life experience and good old common sense. Unfortunately, a younger HR interviewer may probably fall somewhat short of these two very relevant qualities and, only being able to think within the “box” structure of the “textbook” answer structure guideline, rate the interviewee “low” in this particular area. A more experienced and thus wiser HR interviewer could extrapolate the “out of the box” response and rate the interviewee higher. Obviously, the true success of this process is based on a combination of textbook application, life experience and common sense.

- **Karen Girard** // Jul 20, 2011 at 1:02 pm

Hello – I am a Certified Employment Interview Professional, and would be happy to provide more information – for the time being, here is some basics for those of you who need help:

1. Read the job description so you know what kinds of questions to expect
2. For each question that is relevant, decide what skills/information they are trying to find out
3. Think back to your experiences, find one that applies, and write out a CAR statement – challenge (what was my task or challenge), action (what actions did I take that demonstrate what the employer is looking for), results (what were the results – if good, quantify if possible, if negative, what did you learn from it).
4. Practice your delivery.

If you are looking for a career coach who can help with resumes, interviews, career selection, etc. I am able to help.

Karen Girard, CCDP, CPRW, CEIP, CCC
<http://www.karengirard.ca>
1st, what is the