

## **GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIORAL-BASED INTERVIEWING**

### **What is behavioral-based interviewing?**

- Behavioral interviewing requires candidates to respond with specific examples of past experiences rather than generalized responses.
- Past performance is the most accurate predictor of future performance.
- The framework for behavior-based questions requires the applicant to respond by describing the:



**Behavioral interviews** are founded on the belief that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Questions are designed to uncover the extent to which a candidate possess key characteristics and competencies essential for effective job performance.

Behavioral questions often begin with “Tell me about a time when....,” “Describe a situation....,” or “Give an example of...”

Some areas where behavioral questions are used include:

- Relationship Building
- Communication
- Team Experience
- Organization
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Innovation
- Performance Management
- Diversity

Next, we will consider example questions that could be asked to assess candidates in each of these areas.

### **Relationship Building**

Examples of behavioral interview questions that assess relationship building experience include:

- Give an example of a situation where there wasn't a trusting relationship with a colleague. What did you do to try to build a more trusting relationship? What was the outcome?
- How would you coach someone on building trust?
- Describe a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under adverse conditions.

## **Communication**

Behavioral interview questions that assess communication experience include:

- Tell about a time when you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?
- Describe a time when you had to “sell” an idea to a group. What approach did you use? What was the outcome?
- Tell about a time you encountered resistance when implementing a new policy. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Describe your methods for keeping your supervisor advised of the status on projects.

## **Team Experience**

To assess team experience, you could ask any of the following behavioral interview questions:

- Share an example of a successful team experience from your previous job.
- Tell about a time when you experienced an unpleasant teamwork situation. How did you manage the situation?
- Provide an example of how you have motivated team members to produce at their peak potential to solve a difficult problem in a short period of time.

## **Organization**

Examples of behavioral interview questions that assess organizational experience include:

- Share an example of a project you led that best describes your organizational skills.
- Describe how you would manage a reorganization of departments in the face of significant budget cuts.
- Tell of a time when you had to manage multiple projects within tight deadlines. Explain the most difficult aspect of that situation. How did you manage it?

## **Problem Solving**

Behavioral interview questions that assess problem-solving experience include:

- Describe the most challenging decision you had to make in the past year. What made it challenging? How did you solve it?
- Describe a situation where your best efforts did not produce the desired result. What did you learn from the experience?
- Give an example of a time when you were caught off-guard about a problem that existed and you had not foreseen. How did you respond?

## **Leadership**

An applicant’s skill in leadership can also be assessed through behavioral interview questions. Ask questions like:

- Give an example of a situation in which you were able to build motivation within your department.
- Describe a situation where you had to obtain cooperation from a difficult group. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- What is your vision for the department [or college]? What would you accomplish during the first six months as department chair [or dean]?

## Innovation

Examples of behavioral interview questions that assess innovative experience include:

- Describe a problem you solved using an unusual or unique approach. What was the outcome?
- Describe a situation which required you to develop an innovative approach. How did you develop the approach? Who was involved?
- Give an example of a time when you had to take a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?

## Performance Management

Effective performance management skills are necessary for supervisor positions. Examples of behavioral interview questions that assess an applicant's performance management skills include:

- Give an example of how you have successfully empowered faculty to increase research productivity.
- Describe a difficult performance review you had to provide. What was the development plan you devised to help the staff member improve performance? What was the outcome?
- What have you done to develop the skills of your staff?

## Diversity

The University embraces diversity and inclusion in its workforce. Examples of behavioral interview questions that assess diversity include:

- What have you done in your current position to create an environment where the sharing of differences is encouraged and valued?
- What have you done to further your understanding of diversity?
- What have you done to support diversity in your unit?

## RESOURCES

*Interview Questions.* Michigan State University, n.d. Web. 30 Jan. 2018. <https://www.hr.msu.edu/ua/hiring/support-staff/interview-questions.html>

*Interviewing.* University of Washington Human Resources, n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. [http://hr.uw.edu/ops/hiring/interview-tips/interviewing/.](http://hr.uw.edu/ops/hiring/interview-tips/interviewing/)

Rudloff, Alex. (2007): n. pag. *Complete List of Behavioral Interview Questions.* Duke University - Law School. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. <https://law.duke.edu/sites/default/files/career/Complete List of Behavioral Interview Questions and Answers.pdf>.

"Sample Interview Guides." *Sample Interview Guides - CalHR.* California Department of Human Resources, n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/Training/Pages/supervisors-sample-interview-guides.aspx>.

"Structured Behavioral Based Interview Guide." Washington State Department of Enterprise Services, n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. <http://des.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/Recruitment/Assessment/Structured%20Behavioral%20Based%20Interview%20Guide.doc>.

*Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide.* US Office of Personnel Management. September 2008. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/structured-interviews/guide.pdf>.

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