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Answers to Behavioral Interview Questions

All answers to behavioral interview questions should be structured around 3 components. The situation or task in which you displayed the behavior in question, the actions you took and the results of these actions. The interviewer is asking you to provide a real-life example of how you have previously used or demonstrated the required job behavior or competency.

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The situation or task is the background or context in which you took action. Common situations in which candidates are required to take action include a change in job responsibilities, demands made by managers, colleagues and customers and challenges in meeting job requirements.

The actions are what the candidates did or said in response to the the situation and how they did it. Actions commonly include steps taken to complete a task or project, solving a problem or overcoming a challenge, making a decision and interacting with managers and customers.

The results are the effects or outcomes of the candidates actions. The changes, consequences and differences the actions made and if the actions were effective and appropriate.

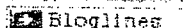
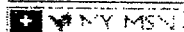
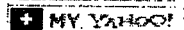
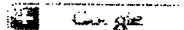
Go through the list of 7 common behaviors required for successful job performance in a wide range of job categories.

See what the interviewer is looking for in answers to behavioral questions that explore the competency or behavior. Use the answer guidelines to determine appropriate past situations where you have used or demonstrated the behavior. Prepare and structure your behavioral example to provide the information the interviewer wants.

Planning and Organizing



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The examples you present in answers to behavioral questions that determine your ability to plan and organize should include the following actions - establishing clear and realistic objectives, scheduling activities and time parameters to get the job done, setting priorities, knowing which resources are needed and making the best use of these, monitoring your progress and adjusting your activity where necessary. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Decision Making

Your answers to behavioral interview questions about using your judgment and making decisions should include the following steps in the decision making process - gathering the necessary information and facts, using this information to work out possible courses of action to take, considering alternative courses of action, considering the implications and consequences of different courses of action and carrying out the most appropriate course of action. Involving the necessary stake-holders in the decision-making process is another important aspect of decision-making. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Problem Solving

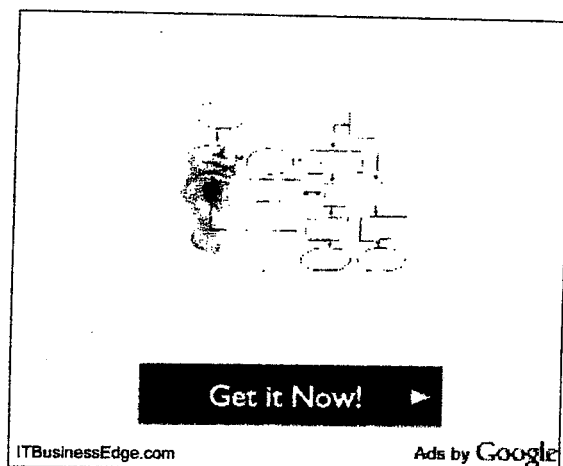
Use past examples that demonstrate the following key elements to successful problem analysis and problem solving - finding and gathering all the relevant information from the right sources, organizing and sorting the information to identify the reasons for the problem, coming up with possible solutions to the problem. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Adaptability

Behavioral examples that you use to demonstrate adaptability should contain these elements - adjusting your behavior, communication style and your approach to match changing tasks, work demands or different people, adjusting priorities to meet new deadlines and information, adjusting activities and attitude to work effectively in a new environment, willing to try new approaches for changed situations, attempting to understand and embrace change positively. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Initiative

Your choice of behavioral examples to demonstrate the use of initiative should show you to be a person who is able to be proactive and seek out new opportunities, to capitalize on opportunities and come up with new ideas. The interviewer is looking for an individual who is able to solve problems without being asked, come up with new ways to apply existing information and knowledge, to anticipate problems and challenges rather than just reacting to them, to work independently and who is willing to look for ways to improve oneself and one's work environment. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)



Teamwork

Answers to behavioral interview questions that explore your ability to work as part of a team should focus on examples that show how you exchange information freely and openly and offer information and ideas to other team members. Highlight how you were able to listen to and acknowledge the input of others, use empathy in dealing with team members, ask for and encourage feedback and help, support team actions and decisions and put the team objectives ahead of your own goals. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Work Standards

Examples of past behavior that indicate high work standards should include these elements - setting high goals and standards for performance, imposing standards of excellence on oneself, not being satisfied with average performance, assuming responsibility and accountability for one's own successful performance and work outputs. [Sample behavioral answer.](#)

Communication

Answers to behavioral interview questions that center on your communication skills require a behavioral example that demonstrates the ability to listen with empathy and respect, avoid interrupting and hearing the person out, receiving the right message by asking appropriate questions and clarifying details, expressing oneself effectively and clearly, using the appropriate language and communication style to match the individual/s you are communicating with. [Sample Behavioral Questions.](#)

What is the interviewer not looking for in answers to behavioral interview questions?

The interviewer wants an actual example from your past. What he or she does not want in answers to behavioral interview questions are the following:

Vague responses - these include generalizations that do not provide a specific situation. Avoid using phrases such as *"Most of the time..."*, *"Usually..."*, *"Sometimes..."*

Opinions - The interviewer is not asking for your opinion. He or she wants a real-life, factual example of what you did in a certain situation. Avoid phrases such as *"I believe..."*, *"I think..."*, *"In my opinion..."*

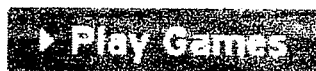
Theoretical responses - these answers indicate what you would do rather than what you did do. Avoid phrases such as *"If I had"*, *"I would have..."*, *"I might.."*

Criticism of former colleagues, managers and companies - it is important to provide a straightforward account of what you did in your behavioral example. Bad mouthing other people in your answer will only detract from its validity.

Use the [behavioral interview tips](#) and [sample answers to behavioral interview questions](#) to prepare thoroughly for challenging behavioral job interviews.

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