
Tips for Clients: Behavioral Interviewing

You may feel that two short interviews and a three-page resume are not sufficient for you to make an important hiring decision. Perhaps you should consider the kinds of questions you are asking the candidate in your interviews. Behavioral interviewing is a very good technique to help you identify the right person.

What is behavioral interviewing?

It is a style of interview that forces candidates to answer questions which demonstrate their competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) by giving specific examples from their past experiences. The focus on the interview is less about what they can or could do (i.e., hypothetical situations), and more about what they have done in specific situations in the past.

Behavioral interviewing is based on the assumption that a person's past performance (in previous roles) is an excellent predictor of their future performance.

How to prepare for a behavioral interview

To prepare for a behavioral interview, take the following steps:

- Make sure you have clearly defined the competencies for the role. General competencies include:
 - Enthusiasm
 - Knowledge/skills
 - Problem solving
 - Team building
 - Personal attributes
 - Leadership
 - Communication
 - Flexibility
 - Decision making

- Develop a series of questions which will enable you to find out if the candidate has these competencies.

- Questions might take the form of:
 - Give me an example of how you have ...
 - Tell me about a situation where you ...
 - In the past, how did you deal with a situation where ...
 - Given your experience, how would you best deal with ...

What should you look to evaluate in a behavioral interview?

There are three types of competencies you should look for:

- Content competencies – which are work/role specific.

- Functional/transferable skills – which are used generally with people, information or things, regardless of the specific environment.

- Adaptive or self-management skills – which are personal characteristics.