



Behavioural Interviewing: The facts

Behavioural interviewing, also known as competency based interviewing, is all about finding out how you performed in work situations in the past. Interviewers realise that how you have gone in the past is the best prediction of how you will perform in the future. So instead of asking you: “How would you deal with a difficult customer?”, they will ask you: “Describe a time when you dealt with a difficult customer”. The interviewer wants to know what you did in that situation, why you did it, and what the outcome was.

REMEMBER: THE MAGIC ANSWER FORMULA IS S.T.A.R

Situation: Explain the situation.

Task: What action was required and why?

Action: What action did you take in response to the situation?

Result: What was the outcome that resulted from your action?

Make sure your responses clearly state:

- What exactly you did
- What your specific role was
- What challenges you overcame
- Why precisely you did that
- Why exactly you made those decisions
- How you approached the situation
- What exactly the outcome was

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Competency - verbal communication

Q: Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade someone of your point of view when they thought you were wrong?

Competency - flexibility

Q: Tell me about a time when you had to change your approach during a project or task in the light of new information?

Competency - drive and commitment

Q: Tell me about a time when it was hard for you to deliver a task or meet a deadline?

Competency - customer service

Q: Tell me about a time when you delivered excellent customer service and why it was excellent?

Competency - teamwork

Q: Tell me about a time when you were a member of a team given a collective task and how you made your contribution?



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Competency - leadership

Q: Tell me about a time when you developed a vision or strategy and communicated this to a team?

Competency - sensitivity to others

Q: Tell me about a time when you upset someone at work, or at home, and how you resolved it?

To prepare well for your interview, have a think about the types of competencies and behaviours your prospective employer is likely to ask about. The job advertisement will give you some ideas. Prepare thoroughly and practice, practice, practice!