

List of Behavioral-based Interview Questions Focusing on Competencies & Skills

Behavioral-based Interviewing, a style of interviewing that is increasing in popularity due to its effectiveness, can be an intimidating activity. Below is a comprehensive list of sample behavioral-based interview questions. These questions are intended to help job seekers and interviewers alike in their preparation for their upcoming interviews.

Adaptability

- Describe a major change that occurred in a job that you held. How did you adapt to this change?
- Tell me/us about a time that you had to adapt to a difficult situation.
- Provide an example of an instance when job priorities changed quickly and how you handled it.

Ambition

- Describe a project or idea that was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you made a suggestion to improve the work in your department/organization.
- Give an example of an important goal that you set in the past. Describe your success in reaching it.
- Tell me/us about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to complete a project.
- Describe a time when you made a risky decision. What was the situation? What was the outcome?
- What types of challenges did you face on your last job? Give an example of how you handled them.

Analytical Thinking

- Describe a project or situation which best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role?
- Developing and using a detailed procedure is often very important. Tell me/us about a time when you needed to develop and use a detailed procedure to successfully complete a project.
- Give me/us an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?
- Tell me/us about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. Describe your thought process and the reasoning behind your decision.

Building Relationships

- Give a specific example of a time when you had to address an angry customer. What was the problem and what was the outcome? How would you assess your role in diffusing the situation?
- Tell me/us about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.
- Provide an example of how you guided and maintained successful workplace business relationships.

Communication

- Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person to guide your actions because you understood the individual's needs or values.
- Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?
- Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?
- Describe a time when you were able to effectively communicate a difficult or unpleasant idea to a superior.
- Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation which you had to complete.
- Explain an instance when you had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group. How did you do it? Did they "buy" in?
- Tell me/us about a time when you had to present complex information. How did you ensure that the other person(s) understood?
- Provide an example of the most challenging documents that you had to prepare.

Communication - Listening

- Give an example of when you made a mistake because you did not listen well to what someone had to say.
- Explain a time when listening was hard for you. How did you focus?

Customer Orientation

- Provide an example of how you handled problems with customers.
- Describe how you have established rapport with customers to gain their confidence. Give an example.
- Explain what you have done to improve relations with your customers.

Decision Making

- Discuss an important decision you have made regarding a task or project at work. What factors influenced your decision?
- Everyone has made some poor decisions or has done something that just did not turn out right. Has this happened to you? Please explain.
- Provide an example of when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- Give an example of when you had to keep from speaking or not finish a task because you did not have enough information to make a good decision.
- Provide an example of a time when there was a decision to be made and procedures were not in place.
- Tell me/us about a time when you had to defend a decision you made even though others were opposed to your decision.

Delegation

- Tell me/us the process you employ to delegate work.
- Provide an example of a time when you made a mistake delegating work.
- Provide an example of a time when you were very successful at delegating work.
- Describe how you have demonstrated your leadership.

Detail-Oriented

- Describe a situation where you had the option to leave the details to others or you could take care of them yourself.
- Provide an example of an experience that illustrated your preference to work with the "big picture" or the "details" of a situation.
- Give an example of jobs in the past that required little attention, moderate attention, or a great deal of attention to detail.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

- Provide a specific example of how you have helped create an environment where differences are valued, encouraged and supported.
- Tell me/us about a time that you successfully adapted to a culturally different environment.
- Describe an instance when you had to adapt to a diverse group by accepting and understanding their perspective.
- Tell me/us about a time when you made an intentional effort to get to know someone from another culture.
- Describe how you have furthered your knowledge/understanding about diversity.
- How have you demonstrated what you learned about diversity?
- What have you done to support diversity in your unit/department?

Initiative

- Can you provide me/us with an example of when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done?
- Can you provide examples of projects/tasks you started on your own.
- Can you describe a time when you suggested projects that required you to go beyond your job description?

Innovation

- Can you think of a situation where innovation was required at work? What did you do in this situation?
- Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution, idea, project, or report to solve a problem.
- Describe a time that you have implemented something new at work. What were the steps used to implement this?
- Describe the most creative work-related project/assignment that you have successfully completed.
- Provide an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?

Interpersonal Skills

- Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their needs and values.
- Tell me/us about the most difficult individual that you've ever had to work with, and how you managed to make the work situation successful.
- What have you done in past situations to contribute toward and build a team-focused environment?

Leadership

- Provide an example of a time in which you were able to motivate your co-workers or staff.
- Describe how you handled a situation when you were a member of a group where two of the members did not work well together.
- Can you give an example of the toughest individual or group that you worked with to complete a project or assignment? What was the outcome?

Mission

- A Fordham education goes beyond providing professional and technical skills. One of the foundational Jesuit values is "cura personalis" which means caring for the whole person. Tell me a time that you demonstrated care for a colleague or staff member?
- Fordham is a community, and collectively, we aspire to be a social force in the world, to contribute to society, and to help to improve the human condition. In your experience, can you provide an example of what a sense of community means to you?

- The University educates future leaders with an ethical framework that encourages students to live the Jesuit mission. In addition to “cura personalis,” Fordham also recognizes the value of “cura apostolica” which means care for the work we do together. In your experience, can you provide an example of the values that are important to you in the workplace?

Negotiating

- Describe the most challenging negotiation process in which you were involved. What was your role? What was the outcome? Did you consider it a successful negotiation?
- Can you provide an example of when you had to bargain with an employee or supervisor? How did you approach the situation? What was the outcome?

Performance Management

- Provide an example when you helped a staff member accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What were the change/transition skills that you’ve suggested?
- Give an example of how you were successful in empowering either an individual or a team to accomplish a task.
- Provide an example of how you handled a team member whose work was not up to expectations.
- Provide an example of how you coached a team member to develop a new skill.
- Explain how you handled performance reviews.
- Provide an example of a difficult performance situation.
- How often have you discussed job performance with each of your team members during the year?
- Tell me/us about a specific development plan that you created and implemented with one or more of your employees. What was the specific situation? What were the components of the development plan? What was the outcome?
- Tell me/us about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with someone you supervised.
- Tell us about a time when you had to explain to a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his/her/their work.

Presentation Skills

- Explain how you prepared for a presentation to a group of technical experts in your field?
- Tell me/us about the most effective presentation you have made. What was the topic? Why was it so successful?
- What kinds of presentations have you made in the past? What, if any, challenges have you encountered?

Problem Solving

- Have you ever been caught unaware by a problem or incurred an obstacle that you had not foreseen? Please explain the situation and the outcome.
- Tell me/us about a time when you did something completely different from the plan and/or assignment. Why? What was the outcome?
- What are some of the problems you have faced between business development and project leaders; between one department and another; or between you and your peers? How did you recognize and handle the issues?
- When was the last time something came up in a meeting that was not covered in the plan? What did you do? What were the results of your judgment?

Selecting and Developing People

- Explain how you coached an employee in completing a new assignment.
- Describe what you have done to develop your team members. Please provide some examples.
- Explain how you have developed the skills of your team members?
- Tell me/us a time when you made a poor hire. How did you deal with the situation?
- Tell me/us a time when you made a great hire.

Setting Goals

- Can you describe a time when you participated in a strategic planning process? Can you describe the process?
- Can you explain how you involved your staff in developing your department's goals?
- Explain how you communicated your department's goals to team members.
- Briefly describe, if relevant, when you missed your goals and why you missed meeting them.
- Out of all your previous goals that you have met, which one stands out and why?
- Can you describe your annual goals at your most current employer? How did you develop these goals?
- Can you explain your long-range goals at your most recent employer? What was your role in developing them?

Strategic Planning

- Describe what steps/methods you used to define/identify a vision for your unit/department.
- How did your unit/department relate to the overall strategic goals of the organization?
- In your current or former positions, what were your long and short-term goals?
- Tell me/us about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to current responsibilities/operations to meet these needs.

Time Management

- Describe a situation that required you to do a number of tasks simultaneously. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Explain how you determined priorities in scheduling your time. Can you provide some examples?
- Describe how you typically planned your day to manage your time effectively.
- Of your current assignments, which do you consider to have required the greatest amount of effort with regard to planning/organization? How have you completed this assignment? How would you assess your effectiveness?

***Note** - Some of the questions are adapted from Alex Rudloff.