

# BEHAVIOR BASED INTERVIEWING

The employer's goal in an interview is to evaluate successfully your skills, experiences, and personal characteristics. One way to do this is through a process of behavioral interviewing. Behavior-based interviewing is a method of asking questions which focuses on specific examples of past behavior as a means of predicting future behavior. For example:

**Behavioral questions:** Tell me about a time when you demonstrated initiative. Describe a time when you had to work with others on a project. What did you do?

**Non-behavioral questions:** What are your long range career goals? What's your ideal job?

What's the best way to answer behavior-based questions? Use the **STAR** Method!

Think about a **Situation** you were in, the **Task** or problem that confronted you, the specific **Action** you took, and the **Results** of your actions. This is called the STAR method. You need to address each part of the STAR to answer behavior-based questions fully. Here's an example:

**Tell me about a time when you feel you gave exceptional customer service.**

**Situation:** When I was working for the university's catering office, I was responsible for booking reception rooms for special events. A woman called two weeks before her daughter's wedding to cancel her reservation for the reception room. A death had occurred in the family, and the wedding was being postponed until further notice.

**Task:** This customer was obviously very upset about these unfortunate circumstances, and I decided to do as much as I could to put her mind at ease about the reception arrangements.

**Action:** I knew that it wasn't too late to book another party for that room, so I checked with the manager regarding the possibility of refunding her deposit. We were able to return her full deposit, and I assured her that we could book another room for her when the family was ready to make plans.

**Results:** The customer wasn't expecting to get any money back and was pleasantly surprised, as well as relieved that canceling the reception plans wasn't a hassle. My manager complemented me for taking the initiative with this customer.

(Source: Larry Beck (1995). Behavior-based Interviewing Handout)