

# How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

Although behavioral interviews resemble regular interviews and often can be asked along with the usual questions rather than being separated in a different round, they are not the same. Therefore, getting ready for them and preparing some elevator pitch beforehand will certainly not go amiss.

What is a behavioral interview though? How is it different from a traditional one? Let's answer these questions in more detail.

## What Is a Behavioral Interview?

Essentially, a behavioral interview doesn't differ that much from a traditional job interview. You will still need to meet with the interviewer either online or in-person, and you will still be asked a series of job-related questions. The difference between the two, though, is in the type of questions you will be asked. Whereas a regular interview will mostly focus on your qualifications, a behavioral one will ask for concrete examples of your skills and try to find out how you handled various challenging situations in the past. For example, you may be asked questions like "Can you give me an example of a challenging project that you handled?" or "How did you act in difficult situations and under a tight schedule?" The idea behind this interview is that your past behavior will indicate how you're going to perform under specific circumstances in the future. It will also help show your personality and decide whether you will be a good match for the team.

Naturally, behavioral interview questions may vary based on the role and the position you're applying, but most of them will have similar openings:

- Give me an example of...
- Describe a...
- Tell me about a time when you...
- What do you do when...

So, what types of questions can you expect? Here are some common behavioral interview questions:

"Give me an example of a situation when you disagreed with another programmer at work. How did you respond to the situation, and what did you do to handle it?"

"Describe the traits that you expect of the ideal Team Lead/Product Manager."

“Have you been in a situation when you had to go above and beyond your duty? What did you do? Were your efforts recognized? What was the outcome?”

“Tell me about a time when you suggested to improve something on the project that your team was working on. How did your PM respond to your suggestion? What did you feel?”

“What do you do when you’re procrastinating? What motivates you in situations like this?”

“Tell me about a time when you had to present a project to the other team members. What did you do to make sure that the whole team could understand you?”

“Tell me about a situation when you had to work under pressure. What was the situation? How did you handle it? Did you ask for help?”

## How to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions

Answering behavioural interview questions is sometimes difficult, however there is a technique—the **STAR method**—which can help make it easy. Using this interview technique, you can shape a compelling narrative of what you did in the past.

The STAR method comprises the four main components:

1. **situation** (the work environment, project, scene, etc.);
2. **task** (your responsibilities and duties);
3. **action** (how you addressed the situation);
4. **result** (how you responded to the situation and what was the outcome, ideally with numbers).

To [use this method to your advantage](#), think of at least a few stories and examples in advance. You can’t know what exact questions you will be asked during the interview, but having a few answers ready to go will help develop the best ones.

Some tips to succeed:

- Keep your answers short and sweet. Ideally, it should take you **no more than 2 minutes** to answer the question. With that in mind, resist the temptation of telling the interviewer many unnecessary details and focus on the important things.
- **Be genuine.** Don’t be afraid to talk about problems and challenges. Even if you made a mistake, you could take advantage of the situation by focusing on what lessons you’ve learned from it and how you acted to solve the problem.

- When answering questions, **be as positive as possible**. Skip negatives. Naturally, work is not all roses. There can be unpleasant situations to deal with, but focusing too much on the negative may unfavorably portray you and lower your chances of nailing the interview.

## How to Prepare for Behavioral Interviews

Because there's no way of knowing what type of interview will take place until you meet with the interviewer and hear questions, the best thing to do would be to prepare for both the usual and behavioral interview:

- Look through the tech job ad to **determine what behavioral characteristics are required from a candidate** and use this information to craft your answers.
- Review the [common behavioral questions](#) and **practice** formulating one- or two-minute responses. Making a list of examples of what you did in your workplace in advance will help you provide detailed and relevant answers. Another effective way to practice answering behavioral questions is to conduct a few mock interviews with your friends. Often, by doing so, it's easier to see where your nerves still get the better of you and concentrate on controlling your emotions.
- Be ready to talk about anything that you've mentioned in your resume. The interviewer may ask you all sorts of questions, and you must **know your resume like the back of your hand**.