

100 Behavioral Job Interview Questions

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Introduction

Most non-technical interviews today have a Cultural-oriented or Behavioral-Oriented part, in which interviewers want to see if you match the company values and if you may be a good fit for the organization in this sense. They want to see if you align with company's goals for their people, if you'll get along well with the existing employees, if your past non-technical expertise matches the soft skills of their job description.

There are many free pages on the Internet with related information. However, most of them are diluted, and very few offer an interactive experience. Most of those pages are written by people from HR, recruiters who only interviewed people, but who rarely had experienced the other side of the table.

Unlike them, the author here has been in both roles for dozens of times, over a three-decades experience in the software industry. To interview and hire people as a Development Manager, Team Lead, or Lead Architect. Or to be hired as a Senior Architect, Software Developer, or Consultant. While most of the following Behavioral Job Interview questions are common in different industries, the focus here is on high-tech, for computer-oriented organizations.

We offer five quizzes with 20 questions each. The questions are either multi-choice or multi-selection, with exactly five total choices each. In a following section, each question has the answer(s), with detailed explanations and at least one reference link:

(1) **Most Common Questions** - this section presents the most common questions in a typical Behavioral Interview. Walk through each one of them and remember the right answers and the eventual traps.

(2) **Traps to Avoid** - this section will focus on the traps to avoid in the most common questions from a Behavioral Interview, as presented before.

(3) **The STAR Technique** - this section has quizzes about the STAR technique, which is a structured manner of responding to a Behavioral Interview question by discussing the specific Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

(4) **Company Values** - this section emphasizes on typical core Company Values, that frequently come up in most of the Behavioral Interview questions.

(5) **Written Communication** - this section relates to styling and Behavioral-specific areas found in your resume, cover letters or other written communication.

An interactive version of this book has been provided on Udemy as **100 Behavioral Job Interview Questions**.

Quizzes

Most Common Questions

This section presents the most common questions in a typical Behavioral Interview. Walk through each one of them and remember the right answers and the eventual traps. While most of them are common in different industries, the focus here is on high-tech, for computer-oriented organizations.

Question 1:

Describe how you handled your most difficult customer. Which of the following should be avoided MOST as an answer? (Select one)

- A) I've put him nicely on hold for 5 minutes to calm down.
- B) At the end, we've offered them the product for free, to avoid a bad publicity.
- C) We used to pass difficult customers from one phone to another, until they got exhausted.
- D) You simply stop talking to him at all if he becomes confrontational.
- E) One of them came on site to threaten us, and I pushed him down the stairs, because I am taller.

Question 2:

Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure. (Check all that apply)

- A) I don't like to work under pressure.
- B) I prioritize tasks, and I may postpone some of them eventually.
- C) I focus on what's the most important, and I get rid of the rest.
- D) I timebox the tasks and adjust the planning.
- E) I always work under pressure; this is unfortunately my life.

Question 3:

How do you set and achieve your goals? (Check all that apply)

- A) I have a long list with what I want to do, but I never find the time.
- B) I never set any goal in advance, as I'm always too busy at work.
- C) I have so many things to take care of, that I could be late from work.

- D) I look at what I'm passionate about and try to find the time to earn more.
- E) I passed a few certification exams lately, preparing by myself.

Question 4:

You're working on a planned Sprint task, and a colleague asks for help for a very urgent matter. What do you do? (Select one)

- A) You refuse, because already planned Sprint tasks cannot be postponed.
- B) You immediately start helping your colleague, this is the ethical thing to do.
- C) You talk to your manager to decide which should be the priority.
- D) You dedicate every 15 minutes within the next few hours to your colleague.
- E) You start planning a schedule for the next week.

Question 5:

What answers should be avoided when you're asked about your greatest weakness? (Check all that apply)

- A) Tell them about your health problems they wouldn't know otherwise.
- B) Surprise them with some amazing adventures you lived when you were little.
- C) Admit your weakness honestly but demonstrate how you conquered.
- D) Talk about something that will not be a detriment to the company.
- E) Tell them how most people take advantage of your unusual kindness.

Question 6:

What is your greatest strength? (Select one)

- A) Try to relate anything you say to the current job description.
- B) Say something totally unrelated with the current job description.
- C) If you have a great body, you may remove your T-shirt and show them your muscles.
- D) Try to vent about anything you can remember, now is the time to impress.
- E) Tell them how much better you've been than most of your colleagues at the previous job.

Question 7:

Describe a right decision you made, that wasn't popular. (Select one)

- A) I had to fire people, but I was entitled to, I was their manager.
- B) I had to fire people, yet we saved the company and the rest of the jobs.
- C) I had to leave a company once because I was not getting along with anyone.
- D) I asked everyone to work several weekends in a row, while I was in vacation.
- E) All the decisions I made in my life were both right and super-popular.

Question 8:

Example of something you tried to accomplish but failed? (Select one)

- A) That's a trap, never talk about personal failures in an interview.
- B) Focus on the pile of great and amazing things you came up with, despite the outcome.
- C) Always have someone in mind to blame: a coworker or the whole company.
- D) Best time to show them a list with the things you're not good at, they'll appreciate the honesty.
- E) Talk about most embarrassing situations you can remember, as people appreciate humility.

Question 9:

How do you delegate tasks to other people? (Select one)

- A) You rarely delegate because you're hard-working and know to do everything by yourself.
- B) You prepare in advanced for several days because you want to do a good job.
- C) If you're a lead, with both responsibility and authority.
- D) You regularly contact your teammates during a day, to ask them ad-hoc services.
- E) If you're a lead, you kindly remind them that they must obey.

Question 10:

Tell us about your coaching skills. (Check all that apply)

- A) You are very good at giving orders, as people obey.
- B) Think about a situation when you showed someone how to do something.
- C) Without being a manager, you've been able to help someone learning your skills.
- D) People laugh when you tell a joke.
- E) You organized a presentation for a certification exam you passed.

Question 11:

You know one of your colleagues regularly steals for himself printer paper. What do you do? (Select one)

- A) You do not report him, because the paper is not so expensive.
- B) You still must report it, but in a diplomatic way.
- C) You confront him in company's meeting, to serve as a harsh example.
- D) You wait until the loss is within the hundreds of dollars.
- E) You only install a hidden camera and let other people discover and report him.

Question 12:

Are you better working alone? (Select one)

- A) I'm at my best when I work alone, indeed.
- B) I like hanging around with people, but at work I prefer doing things on my own.
- C) I never worked in a team.
- D) I'm very good working alone as well, but I'm a team player, I prefer working with people.
- E) I can never work just by myself; I always need to be surrounded by people.

Question 13:

Are you outspoken? (Select one)

- A) I am very outspoken, I always tell it as I see it, that's my best quality.
- B) It depends, I try to use words in public with care.
- C) Only if it doesn't hurt people around.
- D) I'm often harsh, but most of the time right.
- E) I'm very quiet, always know my place and keep my mouth shut.

Question 14:

How do you work in a team? (Select one)

- A) I love competition, may the best win.
- B) I take about two hours daily just to talk with my colleagues, for the sake of team building.
- C) I'd rather work alone, I'm way more efficient in what I do this way.
- D) I'm myself an immigrant and I mix-up well with all sorts of people around.

- E) I'm the best team player, I send email messages just to stay in touch with everybody.

Question 15:

Example of a time when you showed initiative. (Select one)

- A) I frequently suggest solutions when we remain behind on a project.
- B) I used to come up with better solutions than my project manager.
- C) I always come up with ideas how to invest more in training or other things around.
- D) Our company meetings were longer because I used to ask plenty of questions.
- E) I used to take over from my teammates if I could do a better job than they do.

Question 16:

How do you motivate others? (Check all that apply)

- A) I incite them to go out to a restaurant when we all feel bored.
- B) I check on what they do every 10 minutes.
- C) I show enthusiasm and passion in everything I do.
- D) I show by example how people around can do better in less time.
- E) I tell them what to do with a serious attitude.

Question 17:

Why should we hire you? (Check all that apply)

- A) You should start laughing because they know already, they called you in the interview.
- B) Do not answer, you are tested here on your ability to keep your mouth shut.
- C) Tell them how their job description is matching your top skills.
- D) Think about the way you could fit well into company's values.
- E) Tell them why the company and the position are also a good fit for you.

Question 18:

How do you approach problems? What's your process? (Check all that apply)

- A) Can talk about how you break them down into steps.
- B) Can mention tools and techniques you use to work through a problem.

- C) Can mention how you delegate most of the work to other peers.
- D) Can highlight how you spend most of the time planning.
- E) Can mention how you spend more time than your peers because you want everything perfect.

Question 19:

Tell me about a time when you were consulted for a problem. (Select one)

- A) Friends come to me for relationship advice.
- B) My nephew asked me about places to visit around town, but I didn't know.
- C) I talk with people at work if Putin should also invade Moldova.
- D) I've been asked if we should work one hour less on Friday.
- E) A co-worker came to ask me about something, but I was very busy.

Question 20:

How do you deal with someone who doesn't like you? (Check all that apply)

- A) I patiently try to improve our relationship in time, getting him to know me better.
- B) I don't care about this kind of people.
- C) I try to understand if this is indeed the problem, but I continue focusing on what only I can do.
- D) I confront him and, if it doesn't work, I immediately complain to the manager.
- E) I ask him to be fired, if the company's policy is to be nice with each other.

Most Common Questions - Answers and Explanations

Question 1:

Describe how you handled your most difficult customer. Which of the following should be avoided MOST as an answer? (Select one)

- A) I've put him nicely on hold for 5 minutes to calm down.
- B) At the end, we've offered them the product for free, to avoid a bad publicity.
- C) We used to pass difficult customers from one phone to another, until they got exhausted.
- D) You simply stop talking to him at all if he becomes confrontational.
- E) One of them came on site to threaten us, and I pushed him down the stairs, because I am taller.

Answer: E

Explanation:

From all these, "At the end, we've offered them the product for free, to avoid a bad publicity" looks like the most reasonable. However, companies cannot do this on a regular basis because it may affect in a negative manner their business. Other customers may also take notice and use this form of blackmail.

All other answers reflect a bad behavior from your part, the potential employee. You're never supposed to mock customers, to treat them badly or disrespectful just because there are "not nice". After all, nice or not, customers pay for the business, which pays your salary.

But from all these answers, the last choice, the selected choice here, is by far the most to be avoided. Pushing someone is not just dangerous behavior but qualifies as physical assault. This is a criminal act, and both you and the company may be sued. You might go to jail!

References:

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html>

Question 2:

Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure. (Check all that apply)

- A) I don't like to work under pressure.

- B) I prioritize tasks, and I may postpone some of them eventually.
- C) I focus on what's the most important, and I get rid of the rest.
- D) I timebox the tasks and adjust the planning.
- E) I always work under pressure; this is unfortunately my life.

Answer: B D

Explanation:

If you're being considered for a high-stress job, the interviewer will want to know how well you can work under pressure. Give a real example on how you've dealt with pressure when you respond.

As usual, extremities – that you never work or do not like to work under pressure, or that you always work like this, but you hate it – are never good.

A proper planning and prioritizations are great actions that could be included in the answer.

References:

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-behavioral-interview-questions-2059618>

Question 3:

How do you set and achieve your goals? (Check all that apply)

- A) I have a long list with what I want to do, but I never find the time.
- B) I never set any goal in advance, as I'm always too busy at work.
- C) I have so many things to take care of, that I could be late from work.
- D) I look at what I'm passionate about and try to find the time to earn more.
- E) I passed a few certification exams lately, preparing by myself.

Answer: D E

Explanation:

With this question, the interviewer wants to know how well you plan and set goals for what you want to accomplish. The easiest way to respond is to share examples of successful goal setting.

Try to underline a good balance between the goals you set and the time you take to accomplish them, a few of them at least.

Do not act like an over-achiever on insignificant things, or like someone who never has time for this.

References:

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-behavioral-interview-questions-2059618>