Behavioral Interview Questions

Productivity
- What do you think has been your most significant accomplishment within the past year?

Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Give me an example of a problem which you faced on a job you have had and tell me how you solved it.
- Describe a time when you faced unreasonable deadlines or expectations. How did you respond?

Conflict Resolution
- Tell me about a difficult person with whom you have had to deal with. Why was he/she difficult and what did you do?
- Tell me about the last significant crisis situation you faced in your work. Were you part of the solution?

Personal Adaptability
- Tell me about a time when you felt most pressured and stressed in your work/school.
- Tell me about the last time you were criticized by a supervisor/professor.

Communication Skills
- Tell me about the time you were most persuasive in overcoming resistance to your ideas or point of view.
- Describe the last time someone at work/school misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate.
- Tell me about the document you wrote of which you were most proud.
- Tell me about the most successful presentation you have ever given to a group.

Motivation
- Give me an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your co-workers.
- Describe the last time you did something which went well beyond the expected in school/work.

Organizational Skills
- Have you ever had to meet a scheduled deadline which caused a high stress level? What caused the most difficulty and why?
- Tell me about the work related (or campus) project that you organized most successfully.
“Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight.”

If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a behavioral interview. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is gaining wide acceptance among recruiters.

If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position:

“Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.”
“Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project.”
“What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?”

**How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview**

- Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.
- Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, i.e., be ready to describe the SITUATION, your ACTION, and the outcome or RESULT.
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable). Be honest. Don’t embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- Be specific. Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

The interviewer might then probe: “How did you feel when you confronted this person?” “Exactly what was the nature of the project?” “What was his responsibility as a team member?” “What was your role?” “At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?” You can see it is important that you not make up or “shade” information, and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

**Example:** “Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn’t pulling his or her weight” might go as follows: “I was assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time, and received a “B” on it.”