



***Effective Interviewing Strategies:***  
***Making Every Interview A Great Interview***

the **A|R|T|I|S|A|N** group

*"Effective Interviewing Strategies, Making Every Interview A Great Interview,"* was developed to help individuals consistently enjoy better overall interview experiences. This handout is intended to help you capture important interview concepts, strategies, and methodologies that can tangibly and favorably optimize your overall preparedness, while also enabling you to realize better interview outcomes.

- I. Program Agenda & Goals: Summary of Program Goals, Objectives & Content Areas Addressed. (Starts at 3:44)

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- II. Interviewing Objectives: Why Interview Preparation Matters; Understanding How to Compete Effectively; Projecting Professionalism & Positivity; Peripheral Advantages Associated With Interviewing Effectively. (Starts at 4:38)

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- III. Understanding Interview Formats: 1:1 Interviews, Panel Interviews, Competency/Skills-Based Interviews, Formal vs. Informal Interview Structures; Interview Format Advantages & Disadvantages. (Starts at 8:17)

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- IV. Interview Questioning Approaches & Strategies: Skills-Based Interview Questioning Approaches; Assessment of Specific Skills via Demonstrations & Tests; Behavioral Interview Questioning Approaches; Assessment of Core Competencies via Experiential & Situational Questioning. (Starts at 12:42)

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- V. Formulating a Strategic Interview Game Plan: Effective Preparation & Employer Research - Key Preparation Tactics for Communicating Fluidly & Intelligently About Your Background; Leveraging the 'STAR' Approach. (Starts at 17:29)

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- VI. Interview Attire, Etiquette & Conduct Considerations: The Importance of Projecting a Professional Image & Attitude; The Power of Positive First Impressions; How Creative Follow-Up Questions Can Differentiate You; Avoiding Assumed Familiarity; Steering Clear of Controversial Topics & the Dreaded 'WIIFM' Questions. (Starts at 20:04)

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- VII. Critical Interviewing Components: Tactics Within the 3 Key Stages of the Interview - Interview Opening, Interview Body, and Interview Close; Establishing a "Balanced" Interview Dialogue; Effective Parallel Selling; Understanding the Significance/Importance of Formulating High-Quality Questions. (Starts at 23:34)

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- VIII. Capturing Interview Feedback & Interview Closing Strategies: Obtaining Positive, Negative, and Miscommunication Feedback; Leveraging “Outweighing” Techniques to Offset Negative Feedback; Respectfully Acknowledging & Accepting Interviewer Feedback & Perceptions. (Starts at 31:30)

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- IX. Optimizing Phone Screens and Phone Interviews: Managing Logistics/Assuring a Distraction-Free Environment, Leveraging Resume Summaries & Highlights; Linking Your Background to Key Aspects of an Opportunity, Suggestive Selling Methods to Advance Phone Interview to a Face-to-Face Meeting. (Starts at 38:28)

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- X. Addressing Compensation: Intelligently & Thoughtfully Handling Questions Regarding Current & Desired Compensation; Completing Applications; Assuring Alignment With Your Recruiter on Key Salary Elements; Projecting Your Desires & Expectations Realistically. (Starts at 42:16)

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- XI. Critical Post Interview Actions & Avoiding Major Interviewing Mistakes: Post-Interview Actions That Will Help Distinguish You as a Top-Tier Applicant; Appropriate Follow-Up Protocol; Understanding & Eliminating 14 Devastating Interviewing Mistakes From Your Interview Experience. (Starts at 46:16)

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XII. Final Thoughts on Effective Interviewing Strategies: Adopting the 3 “P’s” (Plan/Prepare/Practice), Communicating With Conviction; Deploying a Likeable, Upbeat Demeanor. (Starts at 54:47)

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## Effective Interviewing Strategies

It has long been held that past behavior is the best indicator of future behavior. For this reason, organizations in a wide range of market sectors are increasingly incorporating behavioral interviewing techniques within the candidate selection process. In fact, recent survey response data suggests that more than 30% of employers have implemented some form of behavioral interviewing approach within their candidate interview and selection process.

Unlike traditional interview formats, behavioral interviews attempt to isolate examples of past job performance behavior that can be used to predict future job performance success. This interview format is designed to identify desired job-related competencies, and correlate these to experientially-based illustrations of past job behavior. By soliciting and considering these examples, a hiring authority or interviewer can objectively evaluate a candidate's skills based on past actions, versus relying on an overall feel or "gut-sense" for how someone might perform in a particular role.

The behavioral interviewing format is structured, goal-oriented, and factually-based. As such, an employer may be able to more meaningfully evaluate applicants as well as obtain a greater overall confidence level relative to a candidate's ability to successfully carry out various responsibilities inherent to a given position. The behavioral interviewing format may also be useful in eliciting information regarding the manner in which an applicant has previously addressed real-world situations.

Below, are a few samples of some traditional interviewing questions; in each question a key competency is underlined. Below each traditional question is a behavioral question that addresses the same competency area, but that is likely to engender a much richer, more meaningful response.

**Traditional Question:** Do you like to work hard?

**Behavioral Question:** Tell me about a time in which you were persistent in order to reach your goals.

**Traditional Question:** How decisive are you?

**Behavioral Question:** Describe a situation in which you had to be decisive and formulate a conclusion quickly and take immediate action.

**Traditional Question:** Do you consider yourself to be detail-oriented?

**Behavioral Question:** When have you found it useful to use detailed checklists and procedures to reduce potential for error on the job? Be specific.

The Behavioral Interviewing approach avoids hypothetical and/or closed ended questions and encourages the use of open-ended questions about real-life experiences. As an interviewer you ideally want to find out how a person is going to approach or execute a job, and not merely address whether a candidate simply perceives that she/he has the credentials to do it.

Behavioral interview questions attempt to access an individual's performance in past situations, as well as assess an individual's thought process and decision-making style. To illustrate how behavioral interviewing questions are designed, see the list of interviewing questions related to accountability, leadership, and communication below. There are no "perfect" or "correct" answers to any of the questions noted below. A candidate's responses, however, may provide a hiring manager or recruiter with meaningful insights regarding how a prospective employee might handle key aspects of a job or certain types of workplace situations.

# Sample Behavioral Interviewing Questions:

## Accountability

- Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for a failure.
- Tell me about the last time you made a mistake.
- Tell me about your biggest failure in your career.
- Tell me about your greatest weakness.
- Tell me about a time you did something you regret.
- Tell me about a time when you received negative feedback from your boss.
- Tell me about a time when you learned from a mistake.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a commitment you had made.

## Leadership

- You decided to reorganize the department or work unit that you lead. Tell me how you proceeded with the reorganization?
- Have you ever been a member of a successful team? If so, describe the role you played on the team and in its success.
- Give me an example of a time when you played a leadership role in an event, an activity, a department or work unit, or a project. Describe how you led the efforts. Tell me how people responded to your leadership.
- If I were to ask your reporting staff or your peers to comment about your leadership style, your leadership strengths, and your leadership weaknesses, how would they respond? What would this discussion tell me about you as a leader?
- Tell me about a time when you created agreement and shared purpose from a situation in which all parties originally differed in opinion, approach, and objectives.
- As a leader within an organization, you must often build support for goals and projects from people who do not report to you and over whom you have no authority. Tell me about a situation in which you demonstrated that you can build the needed support.
- What are the three most important values you demonstrate as a leader? Tell me a story that demonstrates each of these leadership values in practice within your workplace.

## Communications

- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation, which you had to complete. Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you. Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
- Have you had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers, classmates or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you-maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed.
- Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others?
- How do you ensure that someone understands what you are saying?
- Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information.
- Give me an example of a time when you were successful in communicating with a difficult person(s) or circumstance?
- Describe the most significant written report that you had to complete.

## Behavioral Interviewing

### Basic List of Core Competencies

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Accountability                   | 16. Flexibility                         |
| 2. Accountability                   | 17. Good Judgment                       |
| 3. Adaptability                     | 18. Goal Oriented                       |
| 4. Analytic Skills                  | 19. Integrity/Honesty/Trustworthiness   |
| 5. Communication Skills             | 20. Initiative                          |
| 6. Commitment                       | 21. Job Knowledge                       |
| 7. Conflict Resolution Skills       | 22. Leadership                          |
| 8. Coping Skills                    | 23. Planning, Organizing & Prioritizing |
| 9. Creativity                       | 24. Problem Solving                     |
| 10. Critical Thinking Skills        | 25. Project Management                  |
| 11. Customer Service                | 26. Resolve                             |
| 12. Decision Making                 | 27. Service Orientation                 |
| 13. Development (Personal Learning) | 28. Supervisory Skills                  |
| 14. Diligence                       | 29. Teamwork                            |
| 15. Diversity                       | 30. Thinking (Strategic Vs. Tactical)   |
|                                     | 31. Time Management                     |

What do you feel are your greatest areas of ability or competency? Write them down below and attempt to think about instances in which your abilities/competencies have been particularly valuable to you in performing your job.

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# Conventional Job Interview Questions

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. What kind of career evolution do you see for yourself over the next five years?
3. What do you really want to do in life?
4. What are your long-term career objectives -- and how do you plan to achieve them?
5. What's more important to you -- the work itself or how much you're paid for doing it?
6. What are the most important rewards you expect to gain from your career?
7. Why did you choose this career?
8. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
9. What motivates you to go the extra mile on a project or job?
10. How do you define success?
11. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful?
12. What do you think it takes to be successful in this company?
13. How are you going to make a contribution to our company?
14. What are two or three accomplishments that have given you the most satisfaction -- and why?
15. Do you feel you work well under pressure?
16. Why are you interviewing for this position?
17. What can you tell us about our company?
18. What interests you about our products?
19. What do you know about our competitors?
20. What criteria are you using to choose companies to interview with?
21. What are your expectations regarding promotions and salary increases?
22. Are you willing to travel for the job?
23. How much training do you think you need before you can make a contribution to the company?
24. How well do you work with people? Do you prefer working alone or in teams?
25. Have you ever been in a group project where there were difficulties? How were these issues resolved?
26. How would you describe your leadership skills?
27. How well do you adapt to new situations?
28. Which is more important: creativity or efficiency? Why?