Behavioral Based Interviews

Also called "targeted selection," this interview technique involves the employer asking questions that ascertain how effective you are at critical dimensions of the job for which you are interviewing. Critical dimensions refer to the specific skills, knowledge areas, and abilities required to perform particular job functions. Examples of critical dimensions include decision-making, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Below are some examples of behavioral-based interview questions along with the underlying critical dimension the interviewer is trying to assess:

- "I'd like to learn about occasions when you were in charge of a group and responsible for the work of others. Tell me about any jobs or projects when you had to get something done by directing the work of others." (Leadership)

- "I'd like you to describe an occasion when you had to work closely with someone who was having personal problems of one kind or another. How did you get along with this person?" (Sensitivity)

- "Tell me about a time when you were in the position of having to 'sell' your ideas to someone else. Describe one time in particular when it was important to try to convince someone to come around to your way of thinking." (Assertiveness, Persuasiveness)

- "I'd like to hear about an occasion when you were trying to accomplish something important, but were frustrated by a major obstacle." (Motivation, Resourcefulness)

- "Tell me about the most complicated research project you've had to complete while you've been in college." (Knowledge of library research or other research tools)

To be successful in interviews, you should prepare by identifying the critical dimensions required for the position along with two examples of how you have developed or enhanced relevant skills or knowledge areas through campus activities, past jobs, etc. When responding to this type of interview question, follow the STAR format and describe the situation, your conceptualization of the essential task required to deal with the situation, the action you took, and the result.

Example:
Interview question: "Tell me about a time when you suggested a solution to a problem."

STAR Response:
- Situation: Advertising sales were decreasing for the college newspaper, the Lantern, where I worked.

- Task: I was asked to develop ideas for increasing ad sales by at least 10% from the previous year.

- Action: I contacted the campus newspapers at other Big 10 schools to collect information on the incentives they use when reaching out to new clients. Then, I generated ideas for applying the incentives that I thought would work best with companies in central Ohio.

- Results: We signed contracts with 10 new clients, increasing ad sales by nearly 15%.

Use the worksheet on the reverse to prepare for upcoming interviews.

STAR Interview Worksheet

3 Critical Dimensions	STAR Stories
Skills/Knowledge/Abilities required for success in the job.	Examples that illustrate how you have performed on these critical dimensions in the past.
1.	Situation: Task: Action: Result:
2.	Situation: Task: Action: Result:
3.	Situation: Task: Action: Result: