

# TRINE

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### Behavior Based Interviewing

Behavior based interviewing is based on the belief that past behavior and performance is the best predictor of future behavior and performance. Interviewers seek to learn how the interviewee acted in specific employment-related situations.

You should identify examples from your past experience when answering behavior based questions. You need to tell a story about your use of the skills or knowledge you want to emphasize. Stories can be about school, sports, personal challenges, community service, internships, job experiences, etc.

Concentrate on developing complete STAR success stories and remember that a good story has a beginning, middle and end. Wherever possible, quantify your results. Be sure not to memorize answers; the key to interviewing success is simply being prepared for the questions and having a mental outline to follow in responding to each question.

#### The **STAR** Approach

<b>Situation or Task</b>	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
<b>Action you took</b>	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
<b>Results you achieved</b>	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Here is one list of sample behavioral-based interview questions:

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
6. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
7. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.

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8. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
9. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
10. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
11. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
12. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
13. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
14. Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
15. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
16. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
17. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
18. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
19. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
20. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
21. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
22. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
23. Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
24. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

Source: [http://www.quintcareers.com/sample\\_behavioral.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html)

**Question\*: Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.**

### Part I – The Situation & Task

"At my high school they take their yearbook very seriously. The book is over 400 pages long, has an annual budget of over \$200,000, and has won numerous national awards. There is typically an editorial staff of two editors-in-chief and eight section editors, along with a staff of 30. My senior year our advisor asked if I would be willing to take on the position of editor-in-chief by myself as she did not feel anyone else was qualified for the job. I agreed and spent the summer before preparing the layout of the book, setting up our office and buying new equipment."

"Our first deadline of around 80 pages was due in mid- October. I decided to tell the staff the deadline was at the end of September so we would have adequate editing time. The due date came and went to collect layouts, and I found that only half had completed their layouts and even those were only mediocre. I went home that night feeling that I had already failed. I had nothing to work with and yet in a few weeks I was responsible for turning in 80 pages. No one had listened to the revisions I had made and I felt powerless. I decided that I couldn't give up; I was going to get this book done and done right because I had been given the responsibility to do so."

### Part II – Actions You Took

"I stayed up almost all night and wrote a two-page speech to deliver to my staff the next morning. I had to be careful to balance coming off as angry to get my point across that I was serious, but I also did not want everyone to think that I was on a power trip, especially because these students were in my same grade."

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"I sat everyone down and explained how I was very disappointed with the results I had seen and that they were unacceptable. I outlined a plan of how I wanted the layouts to get done including showing them new forms that I had created so that each student could review his or her own work before turning it in. I stressed that I believed in the ability of each one of them and that I knew we could have fun and produce a great yearbook."

### Part III – Results

"I could tell when I was done that everyone seemed much more motivated, they really wanted to work hard as a team and get this done. Every deadline after that I almost always received layouts on time and in near perfect form. In addition, our staff really bonded throughout the year and we had a really great time. When the book came out at the end of the year we heard from countless students that of all the years this was their favorite yearbook. I felt so proud of the book and my staff."

\*Northeastern University student example, Rebecca Harkess, class of 2010

**Question\*\*:** Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.

### Part I – The Situation & Task

"When I joined the executive board of NUHOC, the club's method of tracking members was out of date and unorganized. Although this was problematic even from a club-wide point of view, since I specifically communicate with members and potential members, this was especially precarious for my job because I cannot know all 450 of our current members by name."

### Part II – Actions

"Since members knew they needed to renew membership in the fall semester, I took initiative to create a membership form requiring the information I needed as well as information that would help other board members do their job. After approving my membership form with the board, I asked the treasurer to have members fill out the paperwork and turn it in when they paid dues to her."

"After the first few meetings, I took the paperwork home and entered all the members' names, email addresses, phone numbers, and things into an Excel file so that we could search by any criteria and find the member we were looking for, delegating to others when I needed to but checking to make sure that it was done by Friday, when trips leave and non-members need to pay more."

### Part III – Results

"Now that the club is near the end of collecting membership, we know that about 75% of the people attending meetings have paid membership dues and are receiving my communication, while about 85% of members are attending meetings. We're hoping to increase the percentage of people attending meetings that have paid dues, but for now being able to check which people are members and who isn't is invaluable helpful to our organization."

\*\*Northeastern University student example, Stephanie Pollock, Class of 2011