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# USC Professional Development Night

## *Acing the Behavioral Interview*

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*Modernize the Nuclear Deterrent*



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# The Behavioral Interview. What to expect.

- Work history, academic preparation and accomplishments, evidence of leadership, certification/skills
- Specific experiences
- Interests, career goals



Interviewer's goal: To learn about your behaviors and accomplishments relevant to the job's requisite KSA's (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities)



# What is a behavioral interview question? Here's the inside scoop from an HR Manager!

- Past performance and demonstrated experience is the best predictor of future performance
- “Real life” examples of how you apply your knowledge, skills and abilities



# Here's how I train managers to conduct a Behavioral-based interview!

**It's a Formula:**

Lead in + Question + Behavior

= Behavioral Interview Question





# Lead-in to the Question

- Tells candidate what we are going to expect in the job. We are telegraphing what we are looking for or what it is like to work here.
- Example: At Sandia, we often work in teams comprised of individuals with different technical disciplines.



# Behavioral-based Question

- Designed to let the candidate talk.
- Suggest the need for a narrative, description.
- Much better than who what why, yes/no questions.
- Encourages candidate to tell us about a situation, event, or occurrence.
- We want to hear a story, then probe.

# Examples of how to start the Question



- Tell me about a time when you
- Describe a situation where you
- When have you had to
- Walk me through an experience where you
- Share with me an example of you demonstrating
- Give me an example of a time when you
- Give me an example of a situation where you
- Think of some time when you



## Add the Behavior

- A reference back to the lead statement. We are trying to explore the applicant's past in relation to what we need for the job. Simply re-word the lead-in!
- “Tell me about a time when you worked on a multidisciplinary team. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?”



## Another example

- Typically, we manage over 75 projects at any one time, and we sometimes can drown in work. Share with me an example of how, at your current company, you handled many urgent project priorities.



# More behavioral interview questions...

- Give an example of an important goal that you set in the past. Tell about your success in reaching it.
- Some people work best as part of a group - others prefer the role of individual contributor. How would you describe yourself? Give an example of a situation where you felt you were most effective.
- Describe a situation where you didn't have enough work to do. How did you use your time?
- Tell us about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

**Expect the interviewer to probe for specifics.**



# How should you best prepare for it?

- Develop a list of some good examples
- Use the **\*STAR\*** technique!



**SITUATION** - Provide context

**TASK** - What was the issue/challenge

**ACTION** - What did you do, give details

**RESULTS** - How did it end up



# More Preparation Tips



- Research common behavioral interview questions
- Develop go-to examples that can work for many questions
- VCS (Viterbi Career Services) has mock interviews upon appointment



The interviewer asked me a question, and I can't think of a good example...What should I do?



- Pause and think
- Don't talk without thinking
- If you don't understand the question, ask the interviewer to repeat it or explain what they mean



## Common Mistakes by Interviewee

- Gives general or hypothetical example
- Does not distinguish his or her role on a project team or provide specifics
- Does not understand the question
- Clearly has not prepared for the interview





# Some additional resources

- Behavioral interview tips

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKBubKO-798>

- List of behavioral interview questions

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/behavioralinterviews/a/behavioral-interview-questions.htm>

- So tell me about yourself

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrVUog9yAj0>

- General interview tips

<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/careers.aspx>



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# What should I wear?

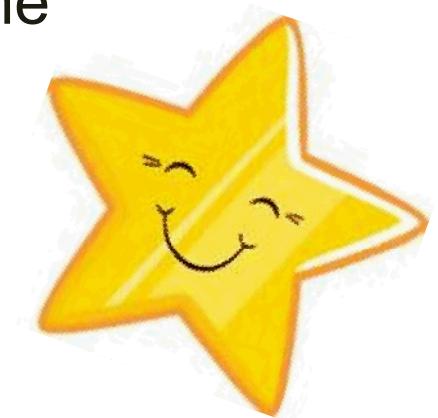


- Varies on type of industry
- Ask recruiter about appropriate dress for interview
- Better to (slightly) overdress than go too casual



# How should I follow up with interviewer?

- Thank you email
- Add personal touch/comment reflecting upon the interview
- Express your enthusiastic interest for the company and the job!





Thank you.  
Kudos to SWE, SHPE and NOBE!

**FIGHT ON!**

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