

Top 40 Behavioral Interview Questions With Answers

The key to answering behavioral questions during a job interview is to face them without fear and answer them with confidence and poise. Once you know the pattern of these questions, you can respond appropriately to them while avoiding blunders and pitfalls.

Simply explained; behavioral questions are worded in a manner as to invoke a response from the candidate that gives the interviewer a good idea regarding how he will behave under tricky situations. In fact; these questions are designed to put you, the candidate, under stress. Every individual reacts differently to stress, and some might even annoy or irritate coworkers creating disharmony in the workplace. Employers want to minimize such friction and headaches; hence they ask a series of behavioral questions to assess how an employee will act under stressful situations. No organization wants a clown on their payrolls, neither does a company need employees who are likely to misbehave or give a bad name to the entire company with their bad behavior. This is precisely why behavioral interview questions are asked.

Behavioral questions are always unrelated to what you have put in the resume. They are meant for assessing how you:

1. Dealt with pressure situations
2. Took steps to submit a project on time
3. Proactively solved an issue before it escalated out of control
4. Worked with a coworker who was difficult
5. Reorganized work when your responsibilities were shifted
6. Handled criticism

Here, we shall present the top 40 behavioral questions, situations and their possible answers. Naturally, these answers can only be used as basic guidelines. You will need to improvise and come up with your own answers. However, you can certainly use them to get an idea as to how to respond when faced with similar questions during the interview.

1) The biggest mistake you made and what did you learn from it? The reason behind this question is that the interviewer is trying to judge if you can admit to mistakes and whether you learn from them. Additionally he wants to know if you are humble enough to accept mistakes or whether you have the tendency to blame others for them. You can tell the interviewer things that you have learned from your past mistakes in your previous job. Examples include: when you disagreed with your manager and went over him to higher authority that agreed with you but in turn affected your relationship with your direct supervisor.

2) Have you worked with someone you did not like and was difficult to get along with?

The interviewer wants to know how you diffuse tension and how well can you work with others. You can come up with a situation where in a manager was controlling and difficult but you won him over by taking an interest in his hobbies etc or befriended him etc. Here, you may mention that even

though, working with the person whom you did not like was stressing, so you decided to work towards solving the issue. You aimed at understanding the person and knowing what made him behave this way. You did this through engaging in a project that involved working close with this colleague, by the end of it; you had managed to understand the person and worked towards building a positive relationship. You may also mention that you understood that one might be wrong and then, you worked towards building on strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses.

3) Have you worked with a coworker who was not shouldering fair share of the workload?

Here, you may mention coworkers who were habitually late, or made several mistakes leading to rework or about coworkers who took several personal calls while on duty etc. You may also mention colleagues who were overly chatty or took up extra long coffee breaks or lunch hours. Be sure not to relate overly personal details but explain how you got involved and brought about a positive outcome in their behavior.

4) Have you faced dishonesty in the workplace, if yes, how did you deal with it? Here, the company does not expect you to be a policeman, but only expects you to NOT look away while there is blatant dishonesty going on in the workplace. An example could be when a colleague has purposely delayed a customer's order just to get even with him. Any act of dishonesty that reflects badly on you or your team or the Company must be pointed out to the higher management.

5) What are the qualities you look for in your immediate boss/supervisor? The answer to this question should basically describe all the qualities that a good leader should possess: clear communication, treats employees with respect, is available when needed, allows you to work with minimal supervision, yet assists you in removing roadblocks that, in turn, increase your productivity etc.

6) The title of the book you read last-

This question is generally asked to get an insight into your reading habits: whether you read for education or entertainment, regarding your interests or how you stay current in the latest trends in your field etc. When giving an answer to this kind of question, it is important to think about the kind of the job being interviewed. Giving a title which seems too aloof will reflect wrongly. The book name given should also not be offensive in any way to avoid misinformation and misjudgment. The interviewee also needs to give a title which he or she is comfortable giving a summary. "Last read" in this context does not necessarily mean the book that was read last week, month or year, it basically means the one which interested the interviewee, is related to the job in question and can easily be described if asked to do so.

7) What steps do you take to improve yourself? The answers to this could include facts like you are learning a foreign language or undergoing professional certifications to improve yourself, or taking courses to learn more about computer/programming or pursuing a degree side by side etc.

8) What are your hobbies/interests outside work?

This helps the interviewer get an idea whether you lead a balanced life or whether you are too focused to have hobbies and outside interests and also regarding the kind of person you are. Remember here: the more outside commitments you have, the less attractive you'd look to potential employers. "Watching Television" or "playing PC games" may distract the employer's attention. Reading good books (you may name a few books related to your subject) will be a good answer. Though, it would be suspicious if you say that your hobbies are studying financial market or working overtime for free.

9) What motivates you?

This question is known to render many candidates speechless. It is asked to get an idea as to “why you do what you do”. High achievers naturally would answer this question using sentences like: “I like to solve complex problems”, or “I like to teach and mentor youngsters” or “I like to make efforts to help improve the lives of people” etc. Do not use factors like money, rewards, contests etc as these are non-lasting and known to produce only a short burst of efforts. Here, you should mention your goal/vision/passion for life. Be honest yet intelligent, what you say and describe.

10) Why did you choose your major in college? This helps ascertain whether you have always known what you wanted in life, or whether you simply chose the path of minimal resistance. The question also helps the interviewer note if you have a true passion for your field. Here, you might want to point out things like you are true to your craft and continually learning by taking nighttime classes or earning a professional certification etc. This will help them know that you have a true passion for the field.

11) Explain how you handle a situation where at the workplace you met with resistance while introducing a new idea or policy?

To implement new idea or policy it is usually difficult, to implement idea new at the work center, I will provide all the supportive evidence or proof which can prove that the implementation of new idea would be beneficial.

12) Explain what will be your reaction if a project you had been working on suddenly changed or the deadline had been changed?

if a project I have been working on suddenly changes or the deadline is changed my first reaction would be

- To consult the supervisor and ask the reason why the project had been changed
- I will ensure that all the facts and reasons are genuine before informing the team members
- Once everyone aware about the changes, I will sit down with the team members to discuss a new plan for the project

13) Explain what if you realize at deadline time that a report you wrote to your supervisor is not to the par?

If I realize that at deadline time a report that I wrote to my supervisor is not to the par, my first reaction would be to inform my supervisor or boss. Also, I will see if there is any chance of rectifying the error, and if not I will evaluate the cause behind the error.

14) Explain how would you deal with a co-worker at work with whom you are not able to build a successful working relationship?

To deal with a co-worker at work with whom I am not able to build a successful working relationship, my approach would be

- Practice common courtesy like “hello” and “thank you”
- Call people with their first name while maintaining the eye contact
- Communicate with them on regular basis
- Be friendly and encouraging to co-workers
- Invite a co-worker for dinner or outing over the weekend
- Find out a common interest
- Don’t present an unprofessional side in personal or on social sites with co-workers
- Keep email on topic and concise as possible

15) How would you deal with the work that is criticized by your boss or supervisor?

In a situation like this remind yourself that no one is always perfect. But the important thing is to learn with such situations and make sure the mistake does not happen over again.

16) Explain what you will do when work comes to a standstill because your colleagues and team leads are not present to answer a few important questions?

In a condition where my work comes to a standstill because my colleagues and team leads are not present to answer a few important questions. I will adopt following approaches.

- I will contact and speak to my boss as well as colleagues and inform them that I continued working on the project that were time sensitive
- I will contact client and other parties in the project to gather project related information that will help to complete the project on time
- I will keep working on the project that falls under my capabilities until some experienced colleague is not available for help

17) Being an HR manager what would you do if your team members are leaving the company in alarming ratio?

- Try to identify the common problem that is faced by everyone, and look for possible resolution
- Hold an one-on-ones session with everyone on the team weekly or monthly and keep having them, so problems can be resolved even before it occurs
- Protect the interest of the employees in organization
- Enhance training programs- by shortening or skipping the training period, you could be skipping a useful experiences for the employee that can result in feelings of exclusion
- Try to eliminate the most common reason for leaving the company
- Identify the expectation of key employees
- Increase employees satisfaction and loyalty

18) Explain what would you do if you are not hired for an internal position within your company?

If I am not hired for an internal position within my company, I am committed to the company and its progress. If I am selected, I will work with and support whoever might get selected. Also, I will keep looking for the position in this field that suits my experience and goals.

19) Explain what if your client ask to work on a project outside the specialization?

If you or your colleagues don't have skill, who can work on a project that your client demanded it's better to deny by telling that the project requires expertise, and you don't have the bandwidth. To give a good impression to your client, you can even offer your client to help him/her find someone to do this work.

20) Explain how you prioritize work when everything is a priority?

When everything is priority, you could use the following approach

- Make a list of all your tasks
- Identify task important vs. urgent
- identify the task that holds the highest value to your organization and business
- Target those topic first whichever one you think will take the most effort to complete
- Be adaptable and flexible to the task

- May happen that not everything in the list can be achievable, focus on the priorities that you can complete

21) Explain how can you present complex task or project into simplified way?

To present complex task or project into simplified way, you need to follow the following steps

- Write down the task and break it down
- Convert big project or task Into Microtasks
- Break down your time and use time management tools
- Multitask wherever you can
- Stay Organized
- Work smarter not harder

22) Explain how can you present project presentations for clients and executives?

You can present project presentations for clients and executives in the following manner

- When communicating with management avoid complex project documentation
- Create a graphical project presentation using Excel, Powerpoint presentation, etc.
- Use Gantt chart to show the tasks and how it will be initiated
- Present the major milestones or deliverables of a project schedule
- Highlight key aspect - like summary of the project, what are the set expectation and how it will be achieved.

23) Mention what are the emotional intelligence or EQ is commonly split into?

Emotional Intelligence is commonly defined into five traits

- **Self regulation:** The ability to control where necessary, redirect your emotions and impulses, adapting to changing circumstances
- **Self awareness:** It is an ability to understand your strength, emotions and goals and their importance
- **Empathy:** It is an ability to relate and understand the feelings of others
- **Motivational skills:** It is an ability to push yourself towards a certain goal or outcome
- **Social skills:** It is ability to communicate well with others and building relationship

24) Why EQ question should be asked in an interview?

EQ question should be asked in interview to check if

- The person has a strong understanding of the driving force behind his behavior
- Is the candidate's reaction is intentional or does he/she react to something or someone
- Is the candidate defensive? Is he self-aware
- Do the candidates reveals much about him or herself

25) Why EQ or emotional intelligence is related to a person's thinking or working ability?

All information to the brain propagates through our senses, and when this information is stressful or emotional, our instinct take over and we lose the ability to act or react. Also, our memory is strongly linked to emotion. By staying connected to the emotional part of the brain, persons thinking capability and decision-making ability enhances. This is why EQ is related to the person's thinking or working ability

26) For which of this option this statement is applicable - “Positive affirmations are effective in boosting self-esteem”?

1. People with low self-esteem but not for people with high self-esteem
2. People with high self-esteem but not for people with low self-esteem
3. No one

It is true for (b)

27) Mention what are the mistakes that emotionally intelligent people should never make?

Five mistakes that emotionally intelligent people should never make are

- Not paying attention to non-verbal signals
- Do believe that emotions should play a role in business or decision-making
- Don't be impatient
- Getting easily offended
- Letting negative emotions reign due to regret or guilt feeling



29) Mention what are the characteristics of Emotionally Intelligent people?

The characteristics of emotionally intelligent people are

- They keep lines of communication open even when they are frustrated
- Identify the situation quickly when others are affecting their emotional state
- Express their care for others
- Are open to feedback
- Gel well and quickly with the mood of the room
- Only speak out when it helps the situation

30) List out the traits of high EQ for Social Expertness?

For social expertness, the traits of high EQ should have

- Building relationships
- Collaborating with others (inviting)
- Ability to resolve conflicts
- Ability to understand and maneuver within organizations

31) Mention what are some strategies you can employ to develop your self-control?

Strategies you can employ to develop your self-control are

- In stressful conditions, analyze the “self-talk” that drives your emotional reactions
- Introduce a pause before speaking
- Give adequate thought to the impact of your words and actions on other

32) Why non-verbal communication matter when it comes to EQ or emotional intelligence?

Non-verbal communication matters because it plays five major roles.

- **Repetition:** the listener can recall easily what the speaker is communicating and repeat the message the person is making
- **Contradiction:** they can contradict a message that an individual is trying to convey
- **Substitution:** It can be a substitute for a verbal message
- **Complementing:** It may add complement to a verbal message like patting a person on the back
- **Accenting:** It may accent or underline a verbal message

33) Explain how emotional awareness strengthens nonverbal communication?

- It helps you respond in ways that show others that you understand, notice and care
- It creates trust in relationships by sending nonverbal signal that match up with your words
- It reads the unspoken messages that they are sending

34) List out the tips to improve the nonverbal communication?

To improve the nonverbal communication, you can follow the following tips

- Focus on the other person
- Make eye contact
- Pay attention to nonverbal cues

35) Explain how people with better EQ deal with difficult people?

People with better EQ, they would deal with difficult people in following ways

- They establish boundaries with difficult people
- They focus on solutions and not on the problems
- They focus on their strength and weaknesses
- They use previous experience with difficult people
- They ignore negative talk
- They don't involve any type of conflict with difficult people
- They get disconnect themselves with difficult or negative situations
- They stay connected with the likeminded people for support

36) Mention what are the two factors that may be responsible for resistance to change?

The two factors that may be responsible for resistance to change may be

- Fear of the unknown
- Possible job losses

37) Explain what is personal competence is about?

Personal competence is about

- Self Awareness
- Self Regulation

38) Mention what does a good model to build EQ in the workplace includes?

A good model to build EQ in the workplace includes

- Training
- Evaluation

39) Explain what ways you can successfully resolve a conflict?

To resolve the conflict successfully you can follow the following tips

- Manage stress quickly while remaining calm and alert
- Control your behavior and emotions
- Listen for what is felt as well as said
- Be willing to forgive
- Focus on the present
- Know when to let something go

40) Explain what is empathy in terms of EQ?

In terms of empathy is the ability to understand how other perceive situations, It includes knowing how others feel about a particular set of circumstances or events.

Tips for preparing your 'stories' for answering behavioral questions:

1. If you have any notable achievements, ensure that you provide details regarding these. Focus on obstacles you encountered and how you took steps to solve them. You can even write down some 'stories' prior to the interview and revise your answers until you are comfortable telling these stories.
2. Rehearse your answers with a friend/co-worker.
3. Always place yourself in the hiring manager's shoes and think like him. Make sure you make an eye contact with the interviewer because it is not only "**what you say**" but also "**how you say it**".
4. Always talk about lessons learned. Did the experience teach you anything and how you plan to cope with similar situations in the future?

Wrap it up in Style

Once you have made it to the interview stage, it is mainly due to the fact that you are qualified and already have the skills that employers are looking for. What they are trying to determine is who the best candidate is, and the best naturally is someone who seems responsible, trustworthy and personable. Behavioral questions help the hiring manager reveal these traits and also help them decide whether to offer the job to you or someone else.

Few more behavioral questions that can be asked at interview

- Tell us why you are the best candidate for the job? Give us reasons why we should hire you?
- What is your customer service motto/philosophy?
- Tell us about the time when you were faced with an arrogant boss? How did you deal with it?
- Suppose a person has been trying your patience for a long time? How will you manage?
- Tell us about a situation when you had to cope with a colleague's behavior which bothered you? Shed light on circumstances and how did you tackle them?
- Describe a scenario where you had to use your "power of persuasion" to make your team members see thin
- Often you are required to detect how a person is actually feeling or thinking. Have you been in such situations where you had to size up the person? This will show us your ability of "reading" people
- How do you handle a colleague or a supervisor who is not a good listener?
- Has there been a situation where you over spent time in planning rather than execution?
- What are some techniques of planning for a project? How do you use them?
- Describe a situation where you used your creativity in project to complete it on time?
- Some ideas come from hard work, some come from intuition. Describe a case where you came up with an idea using both hard work and intuition
- Have you faced circumstances where you had to justify your actions for which you stood firmly for, but it did not descend to well with others in the team?
- Give us an example that shows you are adaptable and flexible
- Provide examples that show us that you can deal with a wide array of colleagues, circumstances or environments
- Think about a time when you were given constructive criticism/feedback that was not positive. How did you respond to it?
- Imagine a situation where you are enforced to learn new software or a new application or procedure. How did you deal with it?
- Tell us about a time where there was some bad blood between two employees and you had to act as a mediator or a buffer between them
- Describe a situation where you demonstrated some brilliant customer service
- Describe a scenario when you had to verbally communicate a very sensitive issue to co-workers. What was the outcome and how did you structure the communication?
- How do you think your college experience has prepared you for the chosen career?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Give us an example of a situation where you had to deal with two demanding projects. How did you manage time/resources while on these?
- Describe a situation where you took a wrong decision and the outcome was negative and counterproductive. How did you turn this around?
- Describe a scenario when you had to deal with personal rejection or interpersonal conflict at work?
- Tell us about a time when you showed high enthusiasm to create positive motivation in your peers?
- Describe a scenario when you brought two disinclined people together?
- Describe a scenario when you had to cope with high stress situation at work? How did you cope with it?
- Describe a scenario when you had obeyed the rules when you did not agree with them?
- How will you conduct yourself if you would have given unreasonable responsibilities at work?

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