



Intellenet
Executive Search
831-425-5251

www.salesheadhunter.com

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS REQUIRE NEW APPROACH

The cost of choosing the wrong candidate for a managerial or sales job is estimated by some employers at three times the annualized salary of an employee who leaves before a year is out. This doesn't even begin to factor in the cost of having the position effectively vacant until a productive individual can be found.

As a result, a new interviewing technique, which is a better predictor of performance in a position, is starting to find its way into many companies nationally. This technique is steadily increasing in popularity. Candidates who are unaware of how the technique works may be at a decided disadvantage in an interview to those who do.

Called Behavioral Interviewing, the technique seeks to evaluate everything about a candidate through assessment of specific actions or behaviors in given circumstances or jobs. In addition to eliciting general knowledge or expertise from a candidate, interviewers using the technique encourage candidates to recount in detail job situations and the results of specific actions, even for seemingly minor tasks on previous jobs.

"But candidates who are prepared to answer questions in the appropriate way have an advantage over candidates who are blindsided by them and must be coaxed by the interviewer to respond appropriately. It's not that you can 'beat the test' by understanding it beforehand; it's more a question of making the interview go a little better by knowing what's required of you."

There are some easy clues to recognize when one is in a behavioral interview and some strategies to keep in mind.

Behavioral interviews often begin with a statement that the interviewer will be looking for specific instances from real situations in answers to his questions, and not to be nervous if it takes the candidate a few minutes to gather his thoughts and memories to answer.

The questions will often begin with words to the effect of "tell me about a specific situation in which you..."

When the candidate wanders towards generalities, the interviewer will often coax the candidate back to specific examples, asking for the names of people,

their titles and other concrete details. Often the interviewer will rephrase a question so it sounds different but elicits the same information.

For a candidate preparing for such an interview:

Decide what your chief skills or strengths are and fix in your mind actual experiences, which exemplifies each. Be sure to recall or remind yourself of dates, names, quantities or measurements of success and other details that will convey the reality to the interviewer.

Understand the job description for which you are interviewing and be prepared to recall specific actions and behaviors, which address the skills, needed in the position.

For a client preparing for a behavioral interview:

Think about categories of questions that are most important to the position; e.g. what behavioral categories support success. Look at your best performers and ask what they do differently that leads to success.

Then think about the itemized activities or behaviors that are most important to successful execution to support success in this skill or activity category. Caution: these interviews are time intensive, and frequently yield much more information than a typical interview.

Examples are included hereafter to foster a dialogue internally at your firm.

Sales Interviews

1. Tell me about how you manage the business in your territory. How do you prioritize your work?
2. Tell me about how you profile and work an account?
3. Tell me about how you work and manage a pipeline funnel. What tools do you use to manage it? How does this facilitate your prioritizing?
4. Tell me about your toughest sale. How did you win it?
5. Tell me about a sale you lost? Why did you lose it? What would you do differently?
6. Tell me about the metrics you expect of yourself when you manage the business in your territory?
7. Tell me how you use other resources in closing your business and creating customer relationships. (Do you have good relationships with internal team)

Marketing/Product Management Interviews

1. Clients will explore the buzzwords on your resume. You say you know it: tell me what you have done with this technology. (lets test your expert knowledge)
2. Tell me about a set of features you included in a recent product release. Why did you include them? How did you prioritize the features?
3. Tell me how you spend a week? How do you time slice your week? (The client is assessing your time management skills).
4. Tell me about a successful Product Roadmap you have created? Why was it successful (Client wants to hear revenues and number of customers)
5. Tell me about an idea that you drove from concept to revenue. What was the product? How was it originated? What did you do to make it successful? Did it make it in the market? Revenues from the product?
6. Tell me about a product that you brought to market that didn't make it. What was the product? What did you do? What would you do differently if you had to do it over?

Marketing/Product Marketing Interviews

1. Tell me about a successful Product Launch.
2. Talk to me about a Marketing Requirements Document you have created. How do you gather functions/ features?
3. Tell me about the whitepapers/ technical documents you have created recently? How did you get the information? How did you do it?
4. How do you spend your week? How do you time slice and prioritize your work?
5. Tell me about an idea that you drove from concept to revenue. What was the product? How was it originated? What did you do to make it successful? Did it make it in the market
6. Tell me about a product that you brought to market that didn't make it. What was the product? What did you do? What would you do differently if you had to do it over?

Management & Leadership/Team Effectiveness

1. Describe a recent situation that best illustrates your style in taking charge and leading others to accomplish a task. What was the situation? How did you motivate your team members? Who was the hardest to get on your side? How did you do it?

2. Tell me about the last meeting you conducted. What was its purpose? What obstacles did you encounter? What were your objectives? Did you meet them? If yes, how? If no, why not?
3. What was the biggest contribution you have made to the profitability of a business? What problems did you encounter? What was your contribution? Did it work? Why or why not? What was the result?
4. Tell me about a recent situation in which it was important for you to bring about extra effort on the part of your subordinates. What did you do to motivate them? How did they respond?
5. Do you conduct formal performance appraisals of your subordinates? Tell me about the last performance appraisal you conducted. Was the appraisal positive or negative? Did the subordinate agree or disagree with your assessment? How did you handle it? What were the results?
6. Have you had a subordinate who was not performing to the fullest extent of his/her potential? What was the situation? What did you do? What was the outcome?
7. Have you ever fired anyone? Who did you fire? How long ago was it? What were the circumstances around the event? What did you do and what were the results?

Coaching and Developing

1. Describe the last important task you delegated. What instructions did you give? How did you check on the progress of the assignment? Was the outcome satisfactory? Why or why not?
2. When was the last time you coached or gave advice to a subordinate? Describe the situation. What was the issue? What did you advise? How did it turn out?
3. Tell me about a particular person who has become successful as a result of your actions. Who was the person? What role did you play in their development? What is this person doing today?
4. Tell me about the last person that you hired who just didn't work out. What was the problem? What did you do to try and correct it? Where is this person today?

General Interpersonal Effectiveness

1. Describe the last time you disagreed with one of your bosses or co-workers. What was the reason? How did you express your disagreement? What was the person's reaction? What was the outcome?
2. Tell me about the last time that someone criticized your work. What was the situation? What did they do or say? How did you respond? How well

- did they justify their criticism? How would you handle the situation next time?
3. Tell me about a recent time when you had to rely on the cooperation of your peers to get a job done. What was the task? How did you go about gaining their cooperation? What difficulties did you run into? How did you handle the difficulties? How did it turn out?
 4. Despite our best intentions, we don't always see eye-to-eye with people. Tell me about a co-worker who you just don't seem to get along with. What does this person do that irritates you? Tell me about the time you got along best with this person.
 5. Recall a time when you were really angry or frustrated at work. What was the situation? What did you do about it? How did you resolve the situation? (The value in these questions is as much in how the candidate answers them as what he/she says.)
 6. Recall a time when there was a conflict between your personal life and business life. What was the conflict? What factors did you weight in your analysis of the problem and its resolution? How did you resolve the conflict?
 7. Tell me about your most recent interview. With whom was it? What was the outcome?
 8. Describe the most prominent mistake you have made during your career. What did you do? What were the results? What did you learn from it?
 9. Describe a time when you experienced a setback in your career. What effect did it have on you and your family? What did you do about the setback? What was the end result?
 10. Tell me about the last time that you received critical feedback. What critical feedback did you get? Is there a pattern to it? How did you handle the feedback? What were the results? (Probe to determine if there is a pattern to critical feedback.)
 11. What was the most difficult ethical business decision you have had to make? What did you do? What were the results?
 12. Take a moment and visualize where you were working ten years ago. Describe a situation where you had to manage people or a project. What did you do? What were the results? How have you handled a similar situation in the recent past? How did your management style of today differ?
 13. During your last career move, what unfinished projects did you leave at the prior place of employment? What did you do about it/them? What were the results? (These questions tend to identify responsibility.)
 14. What was the worst thing that has ever happened in your life? What were your thought processes that helped you cope with the adversity/tragedy? Were you depressed during the incident and after its resolution? If yes, for how long? How did you get yourself through the

hard time? Did you ask yourself, "why me?" What was your answer?
(These questions identify optimism.)

Focus on Results

1. Tell me about the most long-term, extra-hour effort you have undertaken in the last year. What was the project or assignment? What extra effort did you put in? Were you successful? Why or why not?
2. Tell me about a recent time when your work was very hectic. What did you do to keep it under control? How many extra hours did you work? For how long?
3. Which of your past jobs has been most demanding in terms of having to handle a variety of tasks at once? What competing demands did you have to deal with? How did you decide what to do first? How did it turn out?
4. Tell me about a particularly boring or distasteful task you have faced in the last 12 months. What was the situation? What made the task so boring or distasteful? What did you do to ensure that the task was accomplished? How did it turn out?

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

1. Tell me about the most perplexing problem you have faced over the last two years. How did the problem arise? How did you go about analyzing the situation? What alternatives did you consider? What solution did you decide to try? How did you implement the solution? What was the result?
2. Tell me about the last time that you made a decision when the procedures or instructions you were given were unclear, ambiguous or contradictory. How did you decide what to do? What alternatives did you consider? How did the decision work out?
3. Tell me about the toughest decision you have had to make in the past six months. What made this decision so tough? What factors did you consider when deciding? How did you reach your decision? How did it turn out? How would you handle this type of decision differently in the future?
4. Tell me about the most recent technical or analytical skill you have acquired. What led you to acquire this skill? How did you approach it? What would you do differently the next time? Tell me about your most recent application of this skill.

Customer Service & Customer Responsiveness

1. Describe the toughest customer or other member of the public you have had to deal with? What was the situation? What did the person say/do? What did you say/do? How did it end?
2. Tell me about a recent customer complaint you handled. What was the complaint? How did you learn about it? What did you do? How did it turn out?
3. Tell me about the customer service guidelines at your previous job. What was the hardest time you had making sure the guidelines were followed? What made it so hard? What did you do? How did it turn out?