

Interviewing with Clients

Behavioral Questions

The problem

Really capable wizeliners are failing client interviews.

- Technical reasons: other sessions.
- Non-technical reasons: this session.

How do they find out?

With imperfect tools

- Improvise and trust their gut.
- Structured interview: behavioral questions.

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED AS AN
INTERVIEWER!

Behavioral Questions

What are they?

Well designed behavioral questions

~~Tell me about your strengths~~

- Are hard to prepare for.
- Throw the candidate off balance.
- Feel like a conversation, not an interrogation.
- Have a follow-up.

How to spot a behavioral question

Ranked

- ★★★★★ Historical: A time when..., the last time you...
- ★★★★★ Hypothetical: What would you do if...
- ★★★★★ Direct prompt: What motivates you to....
- ★★★★★ Softball: Tell me about your best....
- ★★★★★ Curveball: Whos your favorite Teletubby...

Some examples from the internet.

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- 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).
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or coworker.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Describe your process for \$FOO
- Tell me about a time you took a risk and failed.
- What is an accomplishment you're proud of and why?
- Tell me about your latest AHA! moment.
- What's the most complex or niche thing you know a lot about? can you explain it to me in five minutes or less?
- Tell me about the most unstructured environment you've ever worked in.
- What do you most want me to know about you that we haven't covered yet?
- What are your favorite interview questions?

Behavioral Questions

Why ask them?

What are they looking for?

Reducing risk and uncertainty.

- Motivators.
- Responsibility, accountability, ownership.
- Performance under pressure.
- Communication skills.
- Ability to learn from past mistakes.
- Interpersonal skills, teamwork.

What are they looking for?

Motivators

- Curiosity, pride in a job well done, impact, personal growth, facing new challenges, etc...
- Power and authority, status, revenge, pettiness, always being right, etc...

What are they looking for?

Responsibility, ownership, accountability.

- Personal accountability vs. evasive prevarication.
- Giving credit where it is due vs. relentless self promotion.
- "Fix now, find out later" vs. "blame now, fix later".
- Raising hand vs. doing what you told me.

What are they looking for?

Performance under pressure

- Cool headed or overcome by emotion.
- Asking for help or burning out.
- Managing frustration.
- Panic hacks or upholding standards.
- Admitting failure (sunk cost fallacy).

What are they looking for?

Communication skills

- Influencing skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Ability to adapt the audience.
- Consulting mindset
- English.

What are they looking for?

Ability to learn from past mistakes

- Reflection.
- Changes in behavior.
- Changes in practice.
- Ability to articulate lessons learned.

Behavioral Questions

How to deal with them.

Painting a picture.

With a palette of facts.

- Quell the client's anxiety by covering explicit and implicit doubts.
- Rely on verifiable facts.
- Paint yourself in a good light, no need for 'gram filters.
- Manage your time.

USUALLY WE DO ROLE-PLAY HERE...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

STAR(Ch)

A memorable mnemonic

- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result
- Change

STAR(Ch)

Situation

- Complexity (any and all types).
- Impact.
- Introduce role here or in next section.

STAR(Ch) Task

- Your role and team composition.
- Your task.
- Your accountability.
- Your goal and how it relates to the bigger picture.

STAR(Ch)

Actions

- *Specific* actions *you* took to complete the task.
- Keep it focused on *you*, but don't steal credit.
- If you need to talk about other people's actions, turn the conversation back to yourself by talking about your responses.

STAR(Ch)

Results

- Outcome of *your* actions: Impact for users and stakeholders.
- Don't be shy about wins, don't try to hide fails.
- Show that you care about clients / users.
- Can start mixing in lessons learned here.

STAR(**Ch**)

Change

- Show reflection and learning.
- Talk about changes.
 - Personal
 - In processes and practices
- Show that you make better mistakes every day

USUALLY WE DO A SECOND ROLE-PLAY HERE...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Dos and Don'ts

If I have to tell you, someone did it

- Confidential information: Be as specific as possible without spilling the beans.
- Blame shifting: Do take responsibility for your actions.
- Credit where credit is due: Don't be shy.
- Embellishment: Stay honest, be prepared for follow up.
- Common goal: Don't end up in the wrong project.

Miscellanea

Tips and Tricks

- No, but...
- Yes, and...
- Rephrasing.
- Non-verbal cues.
- BE TRUTHFUL

HERE IS WHERE WE DO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS