

## BEHAVIOURAL BASED INTERVIEWS

Behavioural interviews are based on the idea that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. The interviewer will want specific examples of when and how you demonstrated particular behaviours. Prior to interview each position is assessed for the skills/competencies and characteristics that relate to job success. Interview questions are then developed to probe into these areas.

To prepare for this type of interview, first review the job description carefully and identify the skills and traits likely to be assessed. Next, identify the situations and experiences that you will refer to in the interview to demonstrate these skills and traits. Competency focussed, well-structured answers are extremely powerful and will win you the interview. The STAR model will provide a structure to your answers:

**Situation** - describe a situation or problem that you have encountered.

**Task** - describe the task that the situation required or your ideas for resolving the problem.

**Action** - describe the action you took, obstacles that you had to overcome.

**Results** - highlight outcomes achieved.

Describe the **Situation** and the **Task** briefly. Most of your answers should focus on **Action** and **Results**.

## EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**CLIENT FOCUS: The ability to anticipate and influence client needs and wants, and strive to provide services that meet their short/medium and long term needs.**

- Can you give an example of a change you have initiated in the last 12 months to improve client service in your job?
  - Describe the situation?
  - What action did you take?
  - What was the result?
  - What would you do differently next time?
- What impact have you had on the way your clients perceive the services of your firm/practice area?
  - Can you describe how you did this?
  - What client service principles and techniques did you use?
  - How did you implement them in this situation?
- Can you describe a situation where you had to confront a difficult issue with a client and you were not happy with the way you handled it?
  - What was the situation?
  - What would you do differently next time?

**LEADERSHIP: The ability to create a shared understanding of requirements in the work environment and through influence, enable team members to fully contribute to team and corporate goals.**

- Describe a specific situation that best demonstrates your ability to effectively develop and lead a team?  
What difficulties did you encounter and how did you overcome these?  
How did you measure the success of the team?
- Tell me about a time when you had to manage a conflict between individual and team needs/aspirations and how you went about obtaining cooperation?  
Did you have any formal authority?  
What did you do?  
What was the response?

**TEAM WORK: The motivation and ability to effectively contribute to the establishment, maintenance and success of work teams, focused on achieving individual, team and organisational goals.**

- Describe a situation that best demonstrates your approach to working as part of a team?  
What did you do?  
How did you address differences or issues that arose in the team?
- We've all had to work with someone who is very difficult to get along with. Give me an example of when this has happened to you?  
Why was that person difficult?  
How did you manage the relationship?  
How did you influence the person's approach?
- Have you ever made a decision that impacted on other members of your team?  
What was the situation?  
How did you communicate this to team members?  
What was the outcome?

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & INITIATIVE: A proactive approach applied to the identification, analysis and exploration of opportunities that have the potential to improve the outcomes and performance of a specific work area or the organisation.**

- Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were sold, implemented successfully, primarily due to your efforts?  
What was your role?  
What was the outcome?
- Can you think of a change in your work area that your peers would recognise as resulting principally from an innovation you developed?

- Can you think of a situation you had to handle in which previous solutions didn't work?
  - What did you do to handle it?
  - What was the result?
- Tell me about a new policy or new idea you recently implemented which was considerably different from the standard approach?
  - What was the idea?
  - What approach did you take to get others to go along with it?
  - What was the result?

**COMMUNICATION & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: The ability to effectively transfer ideas, concepts and information. The ability to create, maintain and enhance relationships with clients and staff in order to achieve work goals.**

- What kinds of written material have you developed? Can you give me some examples? (follow up one example)
  - How did you approach it?
  - Tell me about the content and the results that it achieved?
- What different approaches do you use in relating to different people?
  - How do you know you are getting your point across?
- Tell me about a time when someone misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate to them.
- Have you ever done any public or group speaking? Examples?
  - How did you prepare?
  - Were you nervous and how did you deal with this?
  - What were some of the questions you were asked?
  - What kind of feedback did you get?
- Sometimes a colleague or client will waste your time at work.
  - Tell me about a similar situation and how you handled it?
  - What did you do?
  - What was the result?
- Describe a situation with someone at work that in hindsight you would have dealt differently?
  - What did you do?
  - What happened?
- Describe your most recent discussion with a team member who was having or causing problems?
  - How did you get involved?
  - How did it turn out?
- How have you presented an idea or decision to your supervisors knowing that the outcome was likely to receive little support or potentially be criticised?

How did that make you feel? How did you deal with it?

**ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS: Generally checking that you have effective work habits, and the knowledge of workplace routines and some experience of common office administration systems.**

- Tell me how you organise your work and schedule your time.
- Tell me about computer software packages you are familiar with and your experience in using them.
- Tell me about your experience of managing a budget.

**PERSONAL AND CAREER OBJECTIVES: Employers are likely to invest money in your training and development and will want to ensure that your objectives don't conflict with theirs.**

- What are your short and long-term goals?
- What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?
- What are the most important things you are seeking in a career?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Why do you want this position?

**STRESS QUESTIONS: Designed to test your resilience in the work environment. Are you able to maintain appropriate behaviour in the face of what may seem inappropriate behaviour in others?**

- How do you react to criticism?
- What if I told you that you'd work very hard, but recognition of your contributions would be nil?
- How long would you expect to remain with this organisation?
- How would you describe your work style?
- How would you describe your personality type?

**SOME 'INTERESTING' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: Often asked by employers to add a bit of interest or inspiration to the interview process to see how you cope with the unexpected or a change in direction. Tend not to have a right or wrong answer.**

- What is the most difficult issue facing Australia / New Zealand today?
- If I gave you an elephant, where would you hide it?
- Why are soda cans tapered on the top and bottom?
- You are in a boat on a fresh water lake. In your hand is a rock. You throw the rock into the lake. How is the lake's water level affected?
- Describe your best friend and what he or she does for a living.
- In what ways are you similar or different from your best friend?
- If you had a weekend to spend doing anything you wanted, how would you make the most of the time?

**Preparation is your key to success.  
Good luck from all the team at Law Staff!**