

Behavioural Interview Questions

Finding the right candidate isn't just about knowledge, skills and experience. Somebody who's perfect on paper could clash with other employees and fail to thrive in their new working environment. You need to know what their personality is like, too.

Behavioural style interview questions will tell you what really makes candidates tick.

Step 1

Evaluate the job and your company then make a list of all the traits that the successful candidate will need.

Common traits employers look for are:

Communication skills; adaptability; the ability to handle pressure; conflict resolution; teamwork; leadership; problem-solving; attention to detail; time-management; organisation; creativity; taking initiative

Step 2

Analyse people who have previously, or are currently, performing well in the same role. What qualities have they got? Is there anything they're lacking that somebody else could offer?

Step 3

Create a list of questions based around the characteristics you identified – the candidate's answers should demonstrate the traits you need.

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Examples Questions

1. Tell me about a time when you've been involved in a conflict.

Always ask for a specific example. The theory is that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour.

2. Describe a situation when you had to get a job done in spite of an unforeseen problem.

Most jobs require problem solving skills to some degree. Some people's jobs *are* solving problems (doctors, solicitors, IT support technicians, to name a few).

3. Tell me about a time when you worked on a challenging team project

Humans are social for a reasons; working together gets jobs done. Make sure that your candidate can show you that they're a team player.

4. Do you prefer to work alone or with others?

Always ask this question. You know whether your workplace is more of a library or a collaborative environment. This question will let you know how good a match the candidate truly is.

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5. Tell me about a time you delivered a successful presentation

This one is very important if it's a client-facing role you're recruiting for, but is equally important if the candidate will need to deliver presentations to colleagues, too.

6. Describe a time when you took a leadership role.

Most companies reserve this question for senior or management level roles. However, it's interesting to see how more junior members of staff respond, too; they're forced to think about what strong leadership actually is.

7. Give an example of a time you had to make a decision quickly.

Looking for a decisive employee? Make sure you ask this question, then. Most workplaces are fast-paced and have no time for ditherers.

8. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.

This question will tell you how adaptable the candidate is.

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Remember...

You're not trying to catch anyone out. The idea of these questions is to find out more about candidates.

Some people may need to be prompted a little if they haven't expanded as much as you'd like.

If a candidate has already demonstrated a competency when answering a different question, is OK to skip that corresponding behavioural question.

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