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THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

The interview process is an integral part of your job search. In order to gain employment, you will meet with the potential employer to ascertain the appropriateness of your candidacy for the available position. You may interview a number of times with various representatives of the organization. Throughout this process, the employer will have the opportunity to gather information concerning your background and experience and its relevancy to the position. Employers will ask you a series of questions which are work-based and which seek to link your past behavior to behaviors required in the organization conducting the interview. Since the goal is to “predict” success in their environment, based on your actions and reactions, in another environment, the common name for this type of interview is the “behavioral” interview. Be prepared to describe prior employment, experiences, class projects, and college activities.

Questions may be similar to the following:

Describe a time when you were faced with a major problem and how you dealt with it.

Identify, from your background, a situation where you needed to take control.

How have you dealt with conflict? What was the result?

Describe an incident where you have applied a theory in class to an actual project.

Give an example of when you had to utilize your communication skills.

There also may be follow-up questions such as:

Can you give me an example?

What did you do?

How did you respond?

What was your role?

What did you say?

How did you feel?

Responding to questions

In preparing for the behavioral interview, it is useful to review your entire background *as it may apply to the position* for which you are interviewing. If you are interviewing for a position which will utilize computer skills, be able to respond to inquiries designed to allow you to demonstrate your expertise in the field. When meeting with an employer for a position where your creativity is being reviewed, consider from where in your background you can give actual examples of these skills. If the primary function you will have in the position involves working and communicating with people, consider how you may best demonstrate your abilities in this area.

In general, when preparing for interviews:

Concentrate on incidents in which you had favorable outcomes.

Prepare a *short but complete* story with a beginning, middle, and end, which demonstrates the behavior that is being evaluated.

Attempt to be specific in responding to the question.

In addition to the behavioral interview, some companies have also started to incorporate the use of a group/case study into the interview process. Here, the employer is attempting to determine a number of your qualities. Typically, your leadership potential, ability to work in a group, and analytical/problem-solving skills are all being evaluated.

As with any interview, remember to research the company prior to the appointment and prepare several well-thought out questions. Interviewing is a two-way process: both you and the corporation need to evaluate the appropriateness of your employment with the organization.

Please contact the Career Services to make an appointment to meet with a career counselor.