

Behavioural Assessment System

MANAGING BY THE STARS WORKSHOP

The Workshop

The Behavioural Assessment System workshop provides participants with a practical framework which can be applied to the people and performance issues managers need to deal with every day. This includes developing job descriptions, assessment and selection, and performance management: establishing performance expectations, coaching performance, and performance appraisal.

The STAR model provides a simple, practical framework to understand, describe and manage behaviour. The broad agenda and sequence for a two-day workshop is attached. The specific content and emphasis can be customised, with particular segments of the workshop expanded or reduced in emphasis to meet current organisation priorities.

Participants also complete some pre-work so they can bring with them examples from their own jobs. This allows practical application of the concepts introduced. Rather than just participate in training, participants are getting on with the job! They have the opportunity to examine their own job description and apply the STAR process to develop a Position Profile. They also practice establishing Performance Expectations for a direct report and prepare a coaching situation to either improve performance or reinforce effective performance.

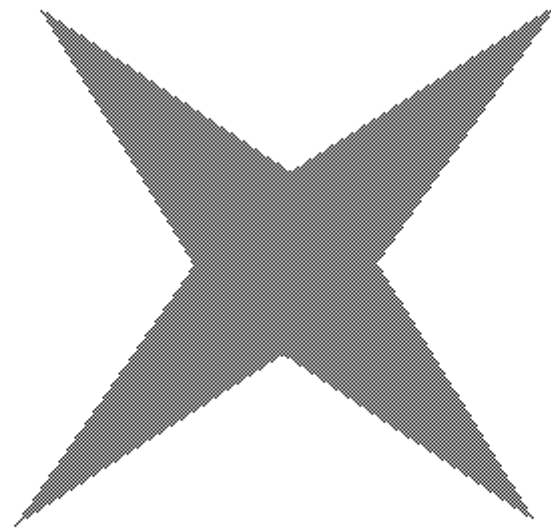
Rather than unrealistic role plays, participants practice the behavioural interviewing approach with real candidates for a particular position. Typically this involves potential applicants for a secretarial or administrative assistant position. Each participant receives a set of materials which include models, exercises and templates to use during the workshop and back on the job.

Situation

Culture
People
Technology
Resources
Stress

Task

Responsibilities
Activities
Input
'To Do' List



Result

Accountability
Outcomes
Measures
Output

Action

Behaviour
Knowledge
Skills, Abilities
Attitude

Behavioural Assessment System Workshop
AGENDA

Day 1

Managing Organisation Performance
The Performance STAR
Assessing Performance
Performance Decisions
Understanding Behaviour

The Assessment Centre Method

Recruitment & Selection - Four Stages
Position Profile
Recruitment Process
Assessment & Selection Process
Performance Development

Behavioural Criteria Reference Guide
Behavioural Interview Process Model
Behavioural Interview Evaluation of
Behaviour Behavioural Interview Skill
Practice

Day 2

Behavioural Interview Skill Practice

Behavioural Simulation

Performance Management Process

Position Profile

Establishing Performance Expectations

Performance Coaching

Performance Review

Succeeding in behavioural interviews

By Peter Vogt

Your big job interview is today, and you're primed for it. You know the company and its players inside and out, you've practiced answering questions about yourself and your skills -- you've even worked on responding effectively to those hypothetical, "what if" questions you're likely to get during the discussion.

The interview begins and, sure enough, you're sailing. "Tell me about yourself," the interviewer says to open the conversation. You deliver a great response -- one you rehearsed so much, in fact, that you're a master at making it sound unrehearsed.

"Why do you want to work for us?" the interviewer continues. You're ready for this one, too. Now you're two for two in the "wonderful answer" category.

But then the interviewer crosses you up -- big time: "Tell me about a time in college when you had to work with someone you really didn't like."

Yikes!

You stumble your way through an answer and hope the interviewer doesn't see through your smokescreen. You had figured you would spend most of the time in the interview responding to hypothetical scenarios, not talking about your real past experiences.

Welcome to the behavioural interview, an increasingly popular way for employers to determine whether you're the person who can best fill their job vacancy and help their companies. Unlike more traditional interview approaches, which often rely on getting you to simply talk about yourself, behavioural interviewing focuses more on your past behaviour in actual work or conflict situations.

From an employer's standpoint, the philosophy behind behavioural interviewing is simple and straightforward: Your past behaviour predicts your future behaviour. In other words, if an employer wants to know how you'll respond to a future situation in the company, he or she can get a pretty good indication by figuring out how you've responded to similar situations before.

That's why, when you find yourself in the middle of a behavioural interview, you'll often hear questions phrased as "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a case where you had to..." Questions like these are a dead giveaway of a behavioural interview, and they call for a specific type of response on your part -- a response you must prepare for ahead of time as best you can.

How do you get ready for a behavioural interview? By developing brief stories from your past highlighting the skills you think the company will be looking for.

Suppose, for instance, that based on the job description of the position you've applied for, you figure there's a good chance the interviewer will ask you about your leadership skills. Think like a behavioural interviewer for a moment: How might he or she phrase this question?

It might sound something like this: "Give me an example of a time when your leadership/team/conflict resolution skills made a school-related project succeed."

You then need to come up with a good story to tell in response to what the interviewer is looking for. And that will be much easier for you to do if you've thought about it ahead of time and you don't, instead, have to "wing it" during the interview itself.

As you think about stories to tell in relation to the various skills you think the interviewer will be looking for, practice as well the way you'll tell your stories. For each story, make sure you cover three specific areas:

The situation or the task you had to perform

The action you took in response to the situation or task

The results of your actions

In your mind, you can use the acronym STAR (situation/task, action, result) to easily remember these story elements, each of which the interviewer will be looking for specifically.

Behavioural interviews can be nerve-wracking, especially if they catch you off guard. But if you're ready for them, they can also offer you a wonderful opportunity to show off what you've accomplished in your past

You Can Survive the Behavioural Interview

by Carole Martin

When asked a traditional question like, "What would you do if you had a customer who wasn't interested in buying the product?" you can make up a story. But when you are asked behavioural questions, the interviewer is listening for specific examples of how you have handled situations or problems in the past.

Behavioural questions begin with phrases like, "tell me about a time when," or "can you give me an example of." The interviewer wants to hear your real-life examples. When an interviewer asks such questions, he or she is listening for examples of how you handled situations similar to the ones you may handle for this company. This is your chance to talk about your accomplishments. If you can demonstrate, through examples (preferably recent ones), that you've succeeded in certain areas of interest, you will be considered a possible candidate for success in a future position. After all, if you did it somewhere else yesterday, you can do it for this company tomorrow.

Your success stories should include the situation, the action you took and the result. Here is an example if you were interviewing for a sales position:

The Situation: I had a customer who did not want to hear about the features of my merchandise because of a prior interaction with my company.

The Action: I listened to her story and made sure I heard her complaint. I then explained how I would have handled the situation differently and how I can offer her better service. I showed her some facts that changed her mind about dealing with the company again.

The Result: She not only bought the merchandise, but complimented how I handled her account. She is now one of my best customers.

You can prepare for this type of interview by writing out your stories before the interview. Determine what stories you have that would be appropriate for the position based on its job description. If the job requires dependability, write your story about a time when your dependability was recognized or made a difference with a customer.

You can use the stories you prepare even when the interviewer does not ask behavioural questions. If you are asked a traditional question, use your prepared story and preface it with, "I can give you an example of a time when I used that skill on a previous job."

By preparing for the interview ahead of time and recalling your past successes, you will be able to have examples in mind and will not be caught off guard. There is no way you

can predict what the interviewer is going to ask you, but you can prepare what you want him or her to know about your past as a predictor of your future performance.

Preparing for an Interview

Written by Ambrose McKinnery, Psychologist & Counsellor, Chandler & Macleod

Let's face it, it's a competitive world, and you could be up against any number of applicants. To secure the position, you will need to create a favourable impression during the interview. How is this done? Well, there are many factors that come into play, all of which you can control and improve upon, and all of which centre around preparation. Preparation, by the way, is not the night before! It is both general for your job search, and specific to an application. Let's examine the ways in which you can improve your capacity to showcase yourself to someone.

Self Assessment

The interviewer will want to know what sort of person you are in terms of your values and attitudes, and also in terms of your skills and abilities. What is it that drives you, what's your work style likely to be, and how will you fit in with the work culture and specific demands of the position on offer? You may have all the skills required, but will the job tasks actually suit your style, and would you be able to maintain motivation in an unsuitable position.

Your capacity to articulate yourself well comes from knowing something about yourself. It will also enable you to formulate the right questions to ask about the position, and workplace. Your career counsellor or other career guidance professional can help you identify your values, attitudes, skills and abilities, through simple exercises or personality assessments. As a start, do any of the below listed words & phrases mean anything to you, and in what situation have or do they apply?

Security

Adventure

Stability

Artistic Creativity

Challenging Problems

Help Others

Work Under Pressure

Independence

Supervision Management Style

Style

Time Freedom Autonomy

Intellectual Status

Recognition

Public Contact

Influence People

Creativity

Location

Exercise Competence

Fast Pace

Profit / Gain

High Earnings

Power & Authority

Change & Variety

Help Society

Achievements

Perhaps the single most important preparatory exercise you can do is to prepare an extensive list of your achievements. Achievements are problems you have overcome, issues you have addressed, or demands you have faced, where your action has led to problem resolution, or value being added in some way to overcome the demand or issue.

Interviewers are increasingly following the 'behavioural' or 'targeted selection' approach, where you are asked for past examples of when you overcame problems, addressed issues, or met demands. It can be difficult to recall your achievements unless you have them at the forefront of your memory, e.g. Question: 'tell me a time when you showed your initiative?'

Therefore the process of thinking about and writing down your achievements will enable a speedier memory access during questioning, simultaneously providing evidence of your problem solving capacity. While work place achievements carry more weight, if you are

a recent graduate, your work history may not be extensive. You can however consider other life areas, such as sport, community activity or groups, asking yourself:

Have I taken the initiative in confronting problems, opportunities or challenges?

Have I developed something?

Have I identified the need for, or created or designed a new program, procedure, service, or product?

Have I participated in any technical contributions?

Have I been involved in any administrative or procedural recommendations?

Have I resolved a panic situation?

Have I dealt with difficult people?

Have I organised something?

Develop more achievements using the list of values, attitudes, skills, and abilities listed above. Think about what happened as a result of your action, or intervention. Revisit them over a period of time, to implant them in your memory for ready recall.

Preparing Answers and Questions

You cannot possibly prepare for, or know what questions you will be asked. However, most questions will centre on common themes. You can prepare for almost any question, by running through listings of interview questions, found in numerous books with titles such 'the 50 most frequently asked questions', etc. These books will also suggest ways to answer questions. Go through these questions and think about how you would respond, perhaps with an achievement. Do this process repeatedly during your preparation.

You should also arm yourself with questions of your own. Some of these might be:

What are the key requirements for the position?

What do you see as the main challenges facing someone in this role?

What is most pressing, and what would you like to see done in the short / medium term?

How is performance measured, and will goals be clearly defined. How does this occur?

What is the company's culture?

What about training programs?

Other questions can be formulated from your research (below). Write down these questions and take them to the interview.

Research

Oh no, not more research! You will almost certainly be asked 'why do you want to work here, what do you know about us?' If you can't answer this question you're in trouble. Find out as much as you can about the company's market, their products, how they operate, size, etc. Detail this information in a fact sheet on the company.

Suggested sources include web sites, and annual and quarterly reports for public companies available through the public relations, or treasurer's office. The stock exchange can also provide information. Ring the company and ask for their corporate brochure. Better still, visit and ask at reception for anything you can get your hands on. Take note of the vision statement, profile, or strategic essence, sometimes on display.

Your local library is also an excellent source of business magazines, and directories such as Kompass or Australian Business Index. Trade publications are available in libraries, or through trade associations.

At the Interview - Tips and Techniques

Interviews can be stressful for many people, as being judged and assessed tends to provoke the stress response. Unfortunately, when we become anxious, one of the first things to fail is our memory, with our thought processes not as sharp as they would otherwise be.

Trained interviewers are aware you may be a little nervous, and will attempt to settle you with humour and rapport building type questions. Other interviewers may launch into the process without preamble. Preparation as per the preceding section will engender confidence, which will manifest both verbally and non-verbally. Preparation will also lessen the chances of you fumbling on a question.

Achievements

The workplace is full of demands, issues to address, and problems to solve. All questions are directly or in some way connected to these workplace aspects. Positions become available because of current or perceived future deficits in company operations. These deficits are basically problems that need to be solved.

In a way, the interviewer is looking for someone who is a problem solver, and is why your preparation in self-assessment and identifying your past achievements is so vitally important, and cannot be over emphasized.

Many interviews will use targeted selection techniques, otherwise known as behavioural interviewing. You will be asked for evidence where you have shown certain actions in the past. This is your opportunity to recount achievements relevant to the question. Be sure to mention what the problem was, what you did, and what the outcome was. Try and avoid verbosity, keeping your answer concise and to the point.

Other interviews will not be behaviourally based. However, whether you are asked a behavioural question or not, you should try and answer as if you had been. For example:

Behavioural Question:

'Can you tell me a time when you had to meet a deadline, what did you do?'

Behavioural / Achievement Answer:

'Yes, last term my course structure required the submission of 4 pieces of work simultaneously. From the outset I developed a schedule that enabled me to portion and better manage my time. I was able to avoid a last minute panic, and was very happy with the standard and result I achieved.'

Non Behavioural Question:

What are you like with deadlines?

Non Behavioural Answer:

I always meet deadlines, I've never had a problem.

This tells the interviewer very little.

Behavioural / Achievement Answer:

'I'm quite used to deadlines, in fact last term-----,' and you recite as above.

This will impress the interviewer a great deal, as you continue to build value as a problem solver.

Asking Questions

It is essential that you find out what needs to be done or solved, what the main responsibilities are, and the major tasks. What is critical to the role, it's essence, and in

what you would be primarily involved? It is up to you to find out and convey interest by asking questions.

Many people think they can be a passive responder, which gives all the control to the interviewer. Some interviewers even believe this is how they should proceed, and may even say "I'll give you a broad overview of the position, and then ask you some questions, and then I'll give you the opportunity to ask me some questions. How's that with you?"

Whilst you would answer in the affirmative, you should try and come in with questions as soon as you can. Asking a question at the end of your answer is one technique, e.g. following from above answer

'----- very happy with the standard I submitted. Are deadlines common with this role?'

In reality, everyone in an interview is both interviewer and interviewee at the same time. You can help turn it more into a conversation, and communicate your interest by asking questions. This leaves the interviewer with the impression that you really want to find out about this job, i.e. you are enthusiastic, and that when you leave, the interviewer will think that you have got a pretty good handle on the position's requirements. Contrast this to the passive responder, who finds out very little about the position and company. The interviewer is unsure that you know what you could be getting yourself into, and will be less impressed with you.

In closing the interview it is common to be asked if you have any (more) questions. It is quite acceptable to overtly refer to your question list at this time, or during the session. This will show some preparation, some systematic thinking, preparedness, and orderliness, all of which imply enthusiasm, and career motivation.

Be an Active Listener

Active listening refers to communication techniques that help us to follow and understand each other. Foremost is that you must listen attentively, and confirm that you are listening by using clarification.

Always seek clarification on questions you don't understand. For example:

Your question:

'Are you saying that I would be able to plan for all deadlines?'

Answer:

'Well not really, what I mean is things get sprung on you

This is a clarification attempt from the interviewee, which turned out to be not quite right. However, the attempt to clarify, even if incorrect, conveys a powerful message in that you are trying to understand the role and expectations.

The better your understanding of the position, through questioning and clarification, the better your capacity to selectively recall and respond with relevant material, including achievements, in relation to the position's requirements.

One more thing to note is whether you are the 'interrupting type' or not. Interrupting gives the message that what you have to say is more important than what the interviewer is currently saying, and will cause this person to become irritated, and develop a less favourable perception of you.

Presentation

We've all heard of first impressions. The reality is that first impressions are crucial in determining how well you come across throughout the interview. First impressions tend to last so that once you have been 'boxed,' subsequent information is assimilated into how you have been first perceived, with impressions being quite resilient to reality checks.

Therefore, aspects of presentation are critical. Presentation means dress and grooming, and how you carry yourself. Walk with confidence; shake hands firmly with eye contact and a smile. Ladies offer your hand first. Show courtesy by sitting simultaneously, not before the interviewer. Vitality, enthusiasm, manners and style, will foster the development of a positive impression.

What to Wear

You should be well groomed and wear the kind of clothes most commonly worn in the job environment you wish to enter. If you are uncertain, err on the side of caution. Better to be slightly overdressed than vice versa.

For office positions, dark suits for both men and women are appropriate, with plain clothes preferable to patterns. Men should wear a white shirt. For women, favour dark blue, black, and grey colours over brown and green, with strong colours (red) or patterns kept to embellishment items. Shoes should be always polished.

Follow Up

Make sure you know what the next step is, so that you can act at that time, or follow up if they have not responded as agreed. Why not continue to market yourself by sending a

brief thank you letter confirming this. You will also show some style, and differentiate yourself with your courtesy. Good luck.