



# University of New Hampshire

## Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics

### Behavioral Based Interviewing: selecting the right person for the job

At first glance, BBI may seem like an assortment of open ended questions designed to stump you during an interview. But many companies are invested in using BBI as a tool to make the right hiring decision the first time around, and move away from “gut feel” hires.

BBI insures “best fit” by matching a candidate’s technical skills, behavioral competencies, and values to the company’s employees who currently excel in the job/similar jobs. At some point in your career search, you will experience BBI.

**BBI Questions will cover characteristics needed to succeed in the role you are applying for. Examples include:**

Customer Service

Team work

Attention to Detail

Problem Solving

Initiative

Planning/Prioritizing/Goal Setting

Leadership Decision Making

Relationship Management

Communication

Integrity

Conflict Resolution

**\*popular skills in jobs sought in new graduates – examples are below.**

#### I. **CUSTOMER SERVICE:**

- Think of a time when you had to deal with an unhappy customer. Describe the situation and how you handled it.
- Have you ever had to make a change in your approach to accommodate the needs of a customer?
- Have you ever run into an angry customer who wanted you to do something that you did not have the authority to approve? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond normal expectations to improve a customer’s experience.

**A positive answer describes the situation, briefly.**

- Shows that you can empathize with others.
- Shows evidence of restraint under a difficult situation.
- Demonstrates a mature problem solving attitude.
- Shows that you work hard to ensure satisfaction.

**Red flags:**

- Complains about customers. No empathy in the response.
- Adheres blindly to established procedures.
- Does not offer volunteer assistance.
- Fails to recognize customer’s needs.
- Unconcerned about customer satisfaction.

## II. INITIATIVE:

- Describe something that you've done that shows how you can respond to situations as they arise without supervision.
- Tell me about a time when you anticipated an opportunity or problem and were ready for it when it happened.
- Describe a time when you voluntarily undertook a special project that was above and beyond your normal responsibilities?

### Positive answers:

- Show you work well without supervision
- Show you like new opportunities
- Show you plan before situations arise
- Show you generated an action plan to bring good idea(s) to reality
- Show you volunteer for tasks and succeed without compromising other responsibilities

### Red flags:

- Does not work well without supervision
- Does not take on additional responsibilities
- Does not recognize problems in advance
- Trivial efforts with insignificant rewards

## III. TEAMWORK:

- Share with us a situation in which you accomplished something as a member of the team. What was the team's purpose? What was your role?
- Describe a time when you were able to help a co-worker/peer solve a problem or improve their performance.
- What is the main strength or natural style that you bring to a team? Describe a specific situation and how your work style affected the team's decision.
- Give me an example of a time when you confronted a team member's negative attitude.

### Positive answers:

- Show you encourage participation.
- Show you distinguish between your own efforts and contributions made by others.
- Show you are proud of team accomplishments.
- Maintains a positive attitude in light of disagreements.
- Is able to appropriately resolve conflicts, with empathy.
- Shares critical information with everyone.
- Follows through on promises and commitments.

### Red Flags:

- Does not see the benefit of working in a team, prefers to work alone.
- Uses "I" responses rather than "we" when discussing team work.
- Does not understand or make room for differing viewpoints, disparages teammates.

## IV. PROBLEM SOLVING

- 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 tried to accomplish something and failed.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with an upset customer.

- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.

#### **Positive Answers:**

- Show you are able to learn from failure.
- Demonstrate resilience.
- Show flexibility and/or adaptability.
- Illustrates creative thinking.

#### **Red Flags:**

- Have difficulty admitting to failure or dealing with road blocks
- Does not appear able to think creatively or on his/her feet
- Appears ridged in approach.
- Finds failure devastating /completely demoralizing.

### V. **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a recent situation when you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

#### **Positive Answers:**

- Show you are able to work with others under adverse conditions
- Show you are open to opposing/different points of view
- Show you can be flexible in your approach to others and/or communication style
- Demonstrate a willingness to respond and adapt to a differing interpersonal style

#### **Red Flags:**

- Only is able to see your own perspective and don't appreciate others.
- Not open to feedback
- Unable to adapt interpersonal style.
- Unable or unwilling to compromise.
- Fail to appreciate diversity

### **Behavioral Interviewing: selecting the right person for the job**

#### **How to prepare?**

Read the job description and make notes of what skills they are looking for. Be sure to match your technical skills to the job's day to day needs.

Identify 4-5 key strengths you want them to know about you before you leave the interview.

How can you demonstrate those strengths? Through story telling. Based on real life past situations. Select 4-5 "stories" that speak to your strengths. Don't worry if you use the same situation more than once during your interview.

Write them down - use bullets to capture the major points.

Rehearse answers out loud before the interview. You will appreciate feeling like you "got this one" when you are in the actual interview.

**Tips:**

Remember to use the STAR approach - briefly describe the:

- 1) Situation or Task.
- 2) Actions you took focusing on your positive traits in each story/scenario.
- 3) Results that were achieved.

Be authentic and stay positive so you don't raise red flags.

**So.... Is behavioral interviewing just a bunch of open ended questions designed to stump you?**

No.

BBI allows you to illustrate your best characteristics – ones that are a good match for the job. BBI gives you a chance to illustrate these desired traits thru your own past experiences.