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Behavioral Interviewing Tips

As a Talent Acquisition team, we know behavioral interviews can feel intimidating, but they're really an opportunity for you to share how you've learned, grown, and navigated challenges along the way. This guide is designed to help you feel prepared and confident by explaining what behavioral interviews are, what hiring managers are listening for, and how to share your experiences clearly and thoughtfully using real examples from your past.



Understanding Behavioral Interviews

Behavioral interviewing is a proven technique used by employers to evaluate candidates based on their past experiences and actions. The fundamental belief is that your previous behavior in professional settings is the best predictor of how you will perform in the future. Interviewers aim to uncover your thought processes, logic, and decision-making skills to gain insight into how you would address challenges in the new role.

What to Expect in a Behavioral Interview

- Questions will focus on specific situations from your past.
- Interviewers may ask about how you handled challenges, worked in a team, or resolved conflicts.
- Your responses should highlight not just what you did, but how and why you did it.

Structuring Your Answers?

The **PARLA** model is a powerful framework for preparing and delivering your behavioral interview answers. It stands for:

- **Problem:** Describe the situation or challenge you faced.
- **Action:** Explain what steps you took to address the problem.
- **Result:** Share the outcome of your actions.
- **Learning:** Reflect on what you learned from the experience.
- **Application:** Discuss how you applied (or will apply) this learning in future situations.

By using the PARLA model, you can provide well-rounded answers that demonstrate your ability to learn and adapt. Interviewers are not just interested in the actions you took but also in the impact, your reasoning, and your growth from the experience.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you overcame a significant challenge at work.
- Describe a situation where you had to work collaboratively with others to achieve a goal.
- Give an example of how you handled a conflict with a colleague.
- Share an experience where you made a mistake. How did you handle it and what did you learn?

Tips for Success

1. **Prepare in Advance:** Reflect on your past experiences and select several examples that showcase your skills, achievements, and adaptability.
2. **Use PARLA:** Practice structuring your answers using the PARLA model to ensure clarity and completeness.
3. **Be Honest:** When a direct example isn't available, share a comparable experience. Focus on the skills you used, what you learned, and how you've applied—or would apply—that learning in similar situations.
4. **Stay Positive:** Even when discussing challenges or failures, emphasize the positive outcomes and personal growth.
5. **Practice:** Rehearse your stories out loud to build confidence and ensure you can recall your best examples smoothly during the interview, even if you feel nervous. Practicing aloud helps you refine your delivery, remember key details, and respond naturally, making your answers more compelling and authentic.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Giving vague or generic answers.
- Focusing only on the outcome without explaining your reasoning.
- Neglecting to mention what you learned from the experience.
- Rambling or going off-topic—keep your responses focused and concise.

We wish you the best of luck in your interview journey! If you're scheduled for an interview with VSP, your recruiter can provide you with additional support. Preparation is essential to success, so take time to reflect, be confident, and remember to be yourself.

Good Luck!