Behavioral Interviews

Nicolet College Career Services

Most employers ask interview questions where you will need to describe specific situations or examples from past experience or how you would handle a specific circumstance if it came up. These are called situational, behavioral, or skills-based type questions. To answer situational/behavioral questions use examples from work, volunteer experience, or education that will show an employer your ability to do the job. Prepare by thinking of examples you could give that demonstrate skills in areas such as teamwork, organization, quick-thinking, verbal and written communication, adaptability to change, problem-solving, customer service, etc.

Examples:

Describe a time where you had to adapt to change and how you handled it.
Two years ago, I was laid off from a job as a program services provider with a local agency where I had worked for eight years. I weighed my options in order to make an informed decision on my future. A career in accounting had always interested me. I love working with numbers and doing detail work. I decided to use this as an opportunity to go back to school and learn a new career. Going back to school was difficult at first, but it is the best decision I ever made. Now I am looking forward to working in the industry.

Tell me about a time when you had to use organizational skills. What were the results?
Two years ago, I was asked to assist with a fundraising activity for a local homeless shelter. A fundraiser had never been held before for this agency. I worked closely with agency members and other volunteers to develop and run this event. I wrote a plan of action including a timeline, arranged for a site to hold the fundraiser, and arranged to have t-shirts printed for volunteers. It was very successful and is now a yearly event.

How would you respond to a co-worker who is not doing their share of a project?
I have dealt with a similar issue in school. In one of my business classes, I was required to work cooperatively with another student to do research on a specific topic and then give a presentation to the class. However, the other student blew off meetings and put no effort into the project. I finally spoke to this student after class and explained my frustration with this situation. I discovered this individual was working two jobs and going to school full-time. We solved the problem by choosing a meeting time and location that would better accommodate his schedule. Communication is the most important way to resolve this type of issue.

Examples of Other Situational/Behavioral Type Questions:
We deal with all types of customers and co-workers. Explain how you have dealt with a difficult person at work. How did you handle it? What were the results?
Provide an example of a time when you had to make a quick decision and act on it.
Give an example of a goal you set for yourself in the past and explain how you went about reaching that goal.
As a ________ you will need to train and educate other employees and customers. How would you ensure the proper information is provided to each group?
How would you deal with the pressure of handling a variety of issues at the same time?