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How to Respond to Behavioral Interview Questions

In today's competitive workforce, it is important to impress upon the prospective employer that you are the best qualified candidate for the position by claiming not only that you have the skills required but by proving it through vivid examples of your past performance.

These examples may come from work experience, extracurricular activities, hobbies, volunteer work, and classroom experiences. A complete description of the behavior which includes the situation under which an action occurred, the action itself, and the result of that action are known as the **S.T.A.R. technique (or S.A.R. technique or B.A.R. technique)**.

Your answer to a behavioral interview question must explain the **Situation** you were in, the **Task** (problem) for which you were responsible, the specific **Action** you took, and the **Results** of your action to be considered a complete **S.T.A.R.**

Interviewers conduct behavioral interviews to identify candidates who have the core competencies that are necessary to be successful in the position being offered.

Some competencies might include:

- **Communication:** Able to clearly present information through the spoken word; influence or persuade others through oral presentation in positive or negative circumstances; listen well.
- **Decision Making and Problem Solving:** Able to take action in solving problems while exhibiting judgment and realistic understanding of issues; able to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics.
- **Team Building:** Able to work with people in such a manner as to build high morale and group commitments to goals and objectives.
- **Organization and Planning:** Able to organize or schedule people or tasks; to develop realistic action plans while being sensitive to time constraints and resource availability.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a specific experience that illustrates your ability to communicate.
- Solving problems requires more than good plans; it means taking action. Give me an example of a time when you were able to take meaningful action in solving a practical problem.
- It's sometimes important to deal with a negative attitude to build team motivation. Provide an example of a time when you confronted a negative attitude successfully.
- Tell me about a situation in which you were effective in doing away with the "constant emergencies" and "surprises" in your organization's climate. How did your planning and time management help you deal with the unexpected?