

Situational Interview Questions

Job seekers can expect to be asked **situational interview questions** to determine their suitability for the job they are interviewing for. Be well prepared by reading through the list of frequently asked situational questions with excellent answer guidelines.

Situational interviews, also commonly referred to as behavioral interviews and competency-based interviews, ask the candidate to provide specific examples of past behavior that demonstrate a required competency or behavior relevant to the specific job vacancy they are interviewing for.

Frequently asked situational interview questions:

Competency - Communication Skills

All jobs involve some form of communication. Expect to be asked questions that explore this competency or ability in your job interview.

Give us an example from your previous job where you had to rely on information given to you verbally to complete a task.

Your listening skills are under the spotlight here. Your situational example should include the following - the ability to actively listen, ask questions to clarify, rephrase the information back to the sender to ensure accuracy, successful completion of the task.

Give us an example of a complex process or task you had to explain to another person or group of people.

Are you able to effectively express yourself verbally? Include the ability to adapt your level of communication (words and terminology) to the target audience, actively listen to questions and requests for more information, check for understanding by asking for feedback.

Tell us about a challenging writing assignment or important report you had to prepare recently.

Your situational or behavioral example should demonstrate an ability to clearly express your ideas in writing. Include how you can gather, organize and present data in a logical and concise manner in a style appropriate to the target readership.

Competency - Interpersonal Skills

Most jobs require interaction with other people - colleagues, customers, managers etc. Prepare for situational interview questions that explore your interpersonal effectiveness.

We have all had to work with someone who is difficult to get along with. Give us an example of when this happened to you and how you handled it.

How sensitive, empathetic and flexible are you? Your example should show how you are able to select the right approach to the situation or individual. Acknowledge differences and display empathy to others. Focus on the situation not the person. Anticipate reactions and prepare to deal with them.

Tell us about a situation when a colleague was less cooperative than you needed or wanted.

Provide an example that demonstrates your use of an appropriate interpersonal style to gain commitment, to ask for help and encourage involvement. Show how you used open communication and built self-esteem to get cooperation.

Tell us about two of your colleagues/customers/employees who are very different to each other. How do you interact with each one?

Demonstrate your ability to adapt your behavior to meet the demands of each individual. How you are able to determine the best way to approach each individual?

Describe a situation when you had to persuade someone recently to accept an idea/plan/product.

This focuses on your persuasiveness and ability to build rapport with others. How did you select the right approach for the situation? How did you go about establishing rapport with others? How did you demonstrate the benefits of your idea or plan and show them what's in it for them?

Competency - Decision Making Skills and Judgment

Every employee is required to make decisions as part of their job. Situational interview questions will explore your ability to use your judgment to make the right decisions.

Tell us about a good decision you made recently at work.

Your example should show how you gather all the necessary information to make a decision. How you consider available resources and possible outcomes before making your decision.

Tell us about a recent problem you faced at work and how you found the best solution.

How did you go about analyzing the problem before considering possible solutions? Describe how you weighed the pros and cons of each option before deciding on the best solution.

Tell us about a mistake you made at work and how you dealt with it.

The ability to recognize and acknowledge one's mistakes is a sign of maturity and self-growth. Your example needs to demonstrate how you used your judgment to review the situation and evaluate information to determine why it happened and what measures you put in place to prevent it from occurring again.

What recent innovation have you made at work that had a positive outcome?

The focus is on how you used your initiative to generate ideas for improvement and develop new approaches. How did you evaluate what needed to be changed, how did you decide on which changes to make and how to implement them?

View more situational interview questions and excellent sample answers for these competencies by clicking on the table below.