



# Behavioral Interviewing Question Guide



**Bridgeforce helps financial services companies of all sizes bridge the gap between pressing challenges and emerging opportunities to succeed and thrive. Whatever the need, we bring a unique combination of skill, talent and insight to our clients —and the right people armed with direct and relevant experience. We are thinkers and doers known for our extraordinary commitment and hands-on approach to providing practical, actionable and measurable solutions to our efforts. Our approach results in extraordinary value for our clients' investments and sustainable positive change for the future.**

# OVERVIEW

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# Overview

## Behavioral Interviewing Question Guide

This Behavioral Interviewing Question Guide can either augment an existing interview process, or it can be used as a stand-alone interview guide.

The questions are designed using the STAR method for behavioral interviewing enabling the interviewer to assess the candidate's behaviors based upon a previous time when the candidate was faced with a similar situation.

There are several questions for each category. We recommend that you select the most appropriate questions for the interview based upon the candidate's experience, and the behaviors and responsibilities required of the role.

### Guide contents:

- A high-level overview of the Behavioral Interviewing STAR Model.
- Behavioral interviewing tips.
- Interview questions grouped into nine categories.
- Sample Candidate Comparison Evaluations.



# Behavioral Interviewing “STAR” Model

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- Situation:** A specific example with a positive or negative outcome
- Task:** The tasks involved in the situation
- Action:** The behaviors taken to address the situation
- Results:** The outcome directly associated with the candidate’s behaviors

**The most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.**

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# Behavioral Interviewing “STAR” Model

## Behavioral Interviewing Tips

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- Use **Open Ended questions** rather than Closed Ended questions
  - Open Ended: Tell me about a time... **or** Describe a situation....
  - Closed Ended: Did you... **or** Were you ever..
- When interviewing a candidate, **look for each behavior example** to capture the “whole story”.
  - You will use this example to evaluate the candidate in terms of specific job behaviors, knowledge, and skills.
  - It is common that the candidate’s example will address more than one behavior and/or skill.
- To keep the candidate focused on your questions **use transitional language** such as, “As you’re thinking about responding to this next question, please focus specifically on your experience related to \_\_\_\_\_.”
- When appropriate, **paraphrase the candidate’s response** in order to summarize and agree on your conclusions from the conversation.



## CASE STUDY

# Client Builds a Care Culture in Collections

*"The work that we did has helped hundreds of customers in a material way. Overall, the effort to stand this up has been the most meaningful work of my career and I feel fortunate that you were there to help move it forward." - Client*

## Bridgeforce Brings Practicality and Speed to a Client's Cultural Augmentation

### Client

A top 20 global bank, committed to "doing right," wanted to augment their customer centric culture.

### Challenge

Build—within 6 weeks—a special team for customers experiencing a lifetime event negatively impacting their finances. The team would be the single point of contact offering tailored solutions for customers in crisis and unable to pay.

### Action/Solution

Define and install a target operating model; build processes, procedures, team structure, role profiles and success profiles. Recruit, interview, hire and train up to 28 agents/managers. Monitor and coach agents on performance to ensure agent competency. Ultimately, Bridgeforce hired and onboarded 28 agents. We trained them and provided 52 original training modules, along with job aids, participant workbooks, assessments and facilitator guides. We designed a new customer service training and development suite. We provided the client with collections strategies and programs to offer customers and established reporting and quality controls for ongoing monitoring and improvement

### Benefits

The client is amazed that **customer satisfaction** scores are consistently in the 90s, after taking 4000 calls and putting 200 payment programs in place. Plus, **delinquency is only 4%** for those on programs. The client believes the team will **pay for itself** within 12 months.

# INTERVIEW QUESTION CATEGORIES

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# Customer Service

## Identifying and understanding the customer's needs

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Identify and understand the customer's needs through good communication and listening skills, demonstrating empathy, and carrying problems through to resolution in the easiest manner possible for the customer.

- **Give me an example of how you handled an upset customer.**  
How did you handle the situation? What, if anything, would you have done differently?
- **Tell me about how you obtain information to better understand a customer's situation.**  
What did you do? How did the information improve your service?
- **Give me an example of a time when you received good customer service.**  
What stood out to you?
- **What do you see as the top qualities that make a good Customer Service representative?**  
Why are these top qualities?
- **Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond to deliver exceptional customer service.**
- **Which process do you use to check that you have the right details from a customer?**



# Listening Skills

## Using active Listening

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Use active listening skills to effectively, recognize customer triggers and respond appropriately.

- **Give me an example of a situation where you had to listen carefully to a customer.**  
How did the customer know that you were listening?
- **Tell me about a time when you were confused by a customer.**  
Which steps did you take to clarify things?
- **Describe how you would demonstrate active listening skills.**  
Can you provide a specific example of how this has served you well in the past?
- **Describe a time when you had a customer who you found difficult to understand.**  
How did you approach the conversation?



# Communication

## Using appropriate methods to share and persuade

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Using appropriate communication methods and styles to share information in a way that is easy to understand and gain acceptance for an idea, plan, activity, or product from a customer, a peer or team member.

- **How would you grade your ability to communicate with customers?**  
Why would you give yourself that grade?
- **Describe a time when you had to convey a message to someone that you knew may be taken negatively.**  
How did you prepare, what was your approach, and how did you diffuse the situation?
- **Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information.**  
How did you ensure that the other person understood?
- **Tell me about a time when you had to use your verbal communication skills in order to get an important point across.**  
What was the outcome of your efforts?
- **Give an example of a time when you had to adjust your style because the other person was not responding correctly.**  
What was the outcome?
- **How do you keep your business partners informed about relevant information?**



# Relationship Building & Trust

## How interpersonal and communications skills build trust

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Interpersonal and communication skills which build trustworthy relationships with customers, peers, business partners or other stakeholders.

- **Tell me about a time when you had to gain a customer's trust?**  
Which steps did you take to establish rapport? How did you gain their trust?
- **Tell me about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult circumstances.**  
What did you do to put the other person at ease and build their trust?
- **Describe a situation in which you extended compassion to a customer.**  
In which ways did this help with relationship building?
- **Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their individual needs or values.**



# Relationship Building & Trust

## How interpersonal and communications skills build trust, continued

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- **Have you ever dealt with a situation where communications were poor?**  
Was there was a lack of cooperation or lack of trust? Give a specific example and tell me how you handled the situation.
- **How do you build collaborative relationships with internal business partners and peers?**  
Give me an example of one that was particularly challenging.
- **Tell me about a time when your peers, business partners, or other stakeholders disagreed with you.**  
What did you do to get their buy-in?



# Problem Solving & Decision Making

## Carrying problems through to resolution

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Ability to carry problems through to resolution through information gathering, critical thinking, judgement and decision making.

- **Describe a situation in which you had to use your own judgement to solve a problem.**
- **Describe a situation in which you had to solve a problem that you were not fully knowledgeable enough to solve on your own.**  
How did you approach solving it?
- **What do you do when someone comes to you with a problem?**  
How did you approach resolving it?
- **Describe a time when you had to find a creative way to overcome an obstacle.**  
What did you do and how did you overcome it?



# Problem Solving & Decision Making

## Carrying problems through to resolution, *continued*

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- **Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond to solve a problem.**
- **Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all of the information you needed.**  
What was the situation and how did you handle it?
- **Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.**
- **Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.**  
What was the situation, the impact, and the outcome?



# Leadership

## Providing direction and motivation through empowerment and teamwork

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Ability to provide team direction and motivation through empowerment and teamwork taking into consideration organizational values, vision and mission.

- **How do you keep yourself and your team motivated to complete a difficult task during challenging times?**
- **Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.**  
What specifically did you do to accomplish this?
- **How do you keep yourself and your team motivated to complete a difficult task during challenging times?**
- **Describe a time when you have had to nurture teamwork.** What was the situation and what was the outcome?
- **What have been the greatest obstacles you have faced in developing a team?**
- **Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers.**  
Why do you think you have been successful motivating others in the past?
- **Tell me about a difficult performance review which you had to deliver.** What was the outcome?
- **Give an example of how you have been successful at empowering a group of people in accomplishing a task.**





# Training & Coaching

## Empowering team members for success in their job responsibilities

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Provide team members with the knowledge and ability to develop the skills and behaviors for successful completion of job responsibilities.

- **How would you describe your coaching and training style?**
- **Give me an example of how you coached someone who was underperforming in the past.**  
What was the end result?
- **Describe a time when you had an employee that was difficult to coach.**  
How did you approach the situation?
- **Describe a situation where you had to address a lack of performance.**  
How did you identify the employee was underperforming? Which steps did you take to address the performance? What was the outcome?



# Analysis & Critical Thinking

## Improving processes by identifying challenges through analysis

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Identification of trends, gaps or bottlenecks through the analysis of reporting and control monitoring and initiates change to improve processes.

- **Tell me about a time when you identified a gap or bottleneck in a process.**  
What was the situation and how did you handle it?
- **Tell me about a time where you were able to identify an issue with a workflow through the analysis of data.**  
Which steps did you go through to identify the issue?
- **Tell me about a time when you had to assign work or tasks to improve a process.**  
How did you determine who to assign it to and ensure completion of the work or task?
- **What is the most creative idea you've had for making your job better?**  
Was it implemented?



# General Questions

## Assessing culture and team fit

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These questions can be used to assess culture and team fit.

- **Which factors are most important to you with your next role?**
- **Describe a time when you had a positive impact on someone.**
- **What is something you've achieved that you're most proud of and why?**
- **What type of work environment brings out your best performance?**

# SAMPLE CANDIDATE COMPARISON EVALUATIONS

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# Candidate Comparison Evaluation: Team Member

Based on the examples provided during the interview, evaluate the core behaviors using the following scoring model to calculate a total score for each candidate: 4 (Excellent), (3) Good, (2) Fair, (1) Poor.

Empathetic Behaviors	Customer Service	Listening Skills	Communication	Problem Solving	Decision Making	Relationship Building & Trust	Total Score
Sam Jones	4	3	4	2	2	4	19
Marcia Smith	4	3	3	4	3	4	20



# Candidate Comparison Evaluation: Team Manager

Based on the examples provided during the interview, evaluate the core behaviors using the following scoring model to calculate a total score for each candidate: 4 (Excellent), (3) Good, (2) Fair, (1) Poor.

Empathetic Behaviors	Leadership	Training & Coaching	Communication	Problem Solving	Decision Making	Relationship Building & Trust	Total Score
Jan Barry	3	2	3	4	4	3	19
Eric Kennett	4	4	3	4	3	4	22



## Tricia Wyatt

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Tricia brings more than 25 years of experience managing all facets of HR to provide support and leadership to clients in HR, training, employee development and designing incentive programs. She recently designed and implemented a client's interviewing and selection process to hire a new team of 30 people within a quick 6-week window.



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