Behavioral interviews are designed to learn about your past experience and behaviors to predict your future performance in critical situations. Questions usually cover 6 Key Skills:

- Communication
- Initiative
- Decision Making
- Planning/Organization
- Leadership
- Collaboration

ANALYZE THE JOB YOU’RE INTERVIEWING FOR

- What are the necessary skills to do this job and what makes a successful candidate?
- What would disqualify an otherwise attractive candidate?
- What is the most difficult part of this job?

PREPARE EXAMPLES OF EXPERIENCES SHOWING THOSE SKILLS & QUALITIES

- Identify 1 or 2 examples for each skill; it’s ok if some of your examples cover more than one skill.
- Use examples from internships, projects, design competitions, team participation, volunteering; almost anything can serve as examples of past behavior.
- It’s ok to include special accomplishments outside of engineering, either personal or professional.
- Quantify results when possible. Numbers add credibility and helpful detail.
- Half your examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or meeting goals.
- For behavioral questions about negative situations, include examples where you made the best of the outcome. Describe how you might have done things differently based on what you learned.
- Keep examples recent whenever possible. Some interviewers may specifically require this.

ANSWER EACH QUESTION WITH A BRIEF STORY

- Listen carefully to each question. What is the desired behavior it’s probing for?
- Answer with an experience that provides an appropriate description of the desired behavior.
- Use the PAR Method: Problem, Action, Results. What challenge did you face? What did you do to overcome it? What were the results? What did you learn along the way?

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Use real-life examples and practice in advance. It is very difficult to make up behavioral stories, which is why behavioral interviewing is becoming more common.
- Be sure you understand the question. Ask for clarification if needed.
- Stay focused; practice answers so you can be on point and easy to follow.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

4 Most Common Interview Types