

Case Interview Tips and Resources

Many people wonder what the differences are between a behavioral interview and a case interview. The case interview is employed primarily by consulting firms and hospitals hiring administrative fellows and other management-type roles. Case interviews are increasingly being used by other types of organizations as well.

Below you will find a summary of the differences between behavioral interviews and case interviews. You will also find many helpful websites, practice sites, and additional information to help you prepare for your *case interviews*.

Behavioral Interview Summary

The behavioral interview technique is used by employers to evaluate a candidate's past experiences and behaviors in order to determine their potential for future success. The interviewer identifies desired skills and behaviors, and then asks for very specific examples from the candidate's prior experience to demonstrate that they indeed possess these skills. For example, an interviewer might ask, "Could you give me a specific example of when you worked with a difficult team member, and how you handled it?"

Case Interview Summary

The case interview is one in which "you are introduced to a business dilemma facing a particular company. You are asked to analyze the situation, identify key business issues, and discuss how you would address the problems involved." (MIT Careers Handbook)

For preparing for case interviews, below are several resources:

1. Take a look at this excellent YouTube video that showcases the flow of a case interview:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-VgpMrFlls>
2. *Case in Point* by Marc Cosentino. Considered "THE" top resource for case interview preparation, the author takes you inside a typical interview by exploring the various types of case questions and sharing with you a system that will help you answer today's most sophisticated case questions.
 - o Check out website resources: <https://casequestions.com/case-preparation/>
 - o Find partners to practice with via the free EXCHANGE tool.
3. Caseinterview.com. Free tutorial created by consulting "guru" Victor Cheng.
4. Case Interview 101 is a paid subscription (not via BU), but the intros to their cases are free and used by top consulting firms. Link: <http://www.consultingcase101.com/tag/healthcare-hospital-medical/>
5. Review [Bain Consulting](#) and [McKinsey Consulting](#) websites for interview tips including case interviews.

Sample Free Introduction Case:

Methodist Hospital to Re-target Patient Segments

Case Type: [improve profitability](#).

Consulting Firm: [IMS Health Consulting Group](#) second round job interview.

Industry Coverage: [healthcare: hospital & medical](#).

Case Interview Question #00591: Your client is the CEO of The Methodist Hospital. Located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas, Methodist is one of the most comprehensive hospitals in the United States, with leading specialists in every field of medicine. The hospital has earned worldwide recognition in multiple specialties including cardiovascular surgery, cancer and epilepsy treatment and organ transplantation. As a

large comprehensive hospital providing full range of services in a large urban area, the Methodist Hospital has done very well historically. In the last five years, however, the hospital's profitability has decreased to the point that they are almost out of money and will not be able to meet their financial and social mission. The CEO comes to you to ask for advice. Specifically, he wants you to help address the following two questions:

- Why has the hospital's profitability gone down?
- How should they turn it around and improve profitability?

Additional Information: (to be given to you if asked): The revenue scheme of The Methodist Hospital's different services falls into the following three different categories.

Case Interview Tips

- Listen very carefully to the problem stated. Make sure you are answering the question you have been asked.
- Begin by setting a structure. Think of four to five sub-questions that you need to answer before you can address the overall issue.
- Stay organized. When discussing a specific issue, remember why you are discussing it and where it fits into the overall problem.
- Communicate your train of thought clearly. If you have considered some alternatives and rejected them, tell the interviewer what and why.
Step back periodically. Summarize what you have learned and what the implications appear to be.
- Ask for additional information when you need it. But make sure that the interviewer knows why you need the information.
- Watch for cues from the interviewer. Any information given to you by an interviewer is given to help you—listen to them carefully and follow their lead.
- Be comfortable with numbers. You will almost always have to work with numbers in a case. This requires comfort with basic arithmetic and sometimes large quantities. You may also be asked to perform estimations.
- Don't fixate on "cracking the case." It is much more important to demonstrate a logical thought process than to arrive at the solution.
- Use business judgment and common sense.
- Relax and enjoy the process. Think of the interviewer as a teammate in a problem-solving process and the case as a real client problem that you need to explore and then solve. Clients need pragmatic solutions that they can act on as soon as possible. Always focus on actionable recommendations, even though sometimes they may not be the most elegant solution to the problem.

Some Common Mistakes

- Misunderstanding the question or answering the wrong question.
- Proceeding in a haphazard fashion. For example, not identifying the major issues that need to be examined or jumping from one issue to another without outlining your overall approach.
- Asking a barrage of questions without explaining to the interviewer why you need the information.
- Force-fitting familiar business frameworks to every case question, whether relevant or not, or misapplying a relevant business framework that you do not really understand, rather than using common sense.
- Failing to synthesize a point of view. Even if you don't have time to talk through all the key issues, be sure to synthesize a point of view based on where you ended up.
- Not asking for help. Some candidates feel it is inappropriate to ask for help when they are stuck. Whether it is a misunderstanding related to the overall problem, or whether you are struggling with a specific analysis, be sure to ask for help when you need it.
- To practice, look up the website(s) mentioned above in the previous section and try out their case interview samples. The website will typically give you some information, ask a question, and then, when you are ready, give you a sample answer. (Please note, usually computer cookies must be enabled to use the website samples effectively).