Even though someone demonstrating a competency is one of the best ways to authenticate proficiency, using behavioral questions can serve as an alternative. Behavioral questions ask applicants to describe a situation when they had to carry out a specific task or exhibit a certain behavior. It’s more effective than asking a hypothetical question – what would you do if…? Use the STAR method as a guide to talk through an experiences in a brief but effective manner.

The STAR Method is a systematic structure to follow when answering behavioral-based questions during an interview. For example, when an interviewer asks you to share a time when you set a goal and accomplished it, you can use the STAR Method as an outline for discussing this experience. It is important that you “tell the story” of your experience by including the situation, task, action and result. Below is a sample behavioral interview question and STAR response.

**Situation (S)**: Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, The Review, and many of the long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

**Task (T)**: My goal was to assemble a marketing team to generate new ideas, create an action plan and discuss incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.

**Action (A)**: As a result of the marketing team’s suggestions, I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of The Review circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set- up a special training session for the account executives with a College of Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

**Result (R)**: We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

Adapted from <https://career.sites.clemson.edu/core/documents/CCPD_Proficency_Levels_and_Behavioral_Interview_Questions.pdf>

The behavioral interview questions are organized by the five proficiency levels of Awareness, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert. Read through the five behavioral interview questions for a competency and reflect on previous experience(s) that could serve as the basis for a STAR response. The “answer” space can be used to make notes on a response.

Remember competency development occurs over a life-time thus no one expects undergraduate or graduate students to reach the expert level by the time they graduate. If answering the intermediate or higher proficiency level questions is a challenge, develop goals and identify future experiences that would allow for a STAR response in the future.

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| **Competencies**  |
| **Communication**  |  | **Teamwork** |  | **Leadership** |
| Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively. | Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict. | Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge*  | Tell me about a time when you had to compose a message that provided ideas and supporting information. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about a time when you tailored your communication style or message to different audiences while maintaining your intended outcome. |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me about a time when you adapted your message to others’ learning styles, languages, cultural backgrounds, and/or levels of understanding to foster dialogue and productive outcomes. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Tell me about a time when you anticipated others’ reactions and prepared for questions and counter- arguments when presenting complex or sensitive information. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time when you modeled inclusive communication (e.g. taking into account others’ learning styles, languages, cultural backgrounds) and assisted others in developing strategic communication plans. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | Tell me about a time when you understood the importance of building genuine relationships with individuals you had to work with in an academic or non-academic setting. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about a time when you contributed to a team-based initiative and observed how different teams function and value its members. |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me about a time when you formed relationships with people outside of your immediate area/department and contributed to an organization or company goal. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Tell me about a time when you led a team and created a positive and supportive team environment by accepting responsibility, meeting team commitments, valuing others, and sharing relevant information or resources to help others. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time when you served as a connector for individuals seeking to build networks and learning how to leverage networks in mutually beneficial ways. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | Tell me about a time when you observed a supervisor, advisor, professor, other employee or student developing a group and leading them towards achieving a shared vision or goal. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about a time when you observed a supervisor, advisor, professor, other employee or student recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds. |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me about a time when you encouraged discussion where individuals could express different points of view to develop a shared vision or achieve a common goal. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Tell me about a time when you empowered others to achieve a shared vision and communicated group accomplishments to stakeholders. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time when you served as a conduit to assist groups in aligning objectives with broader organizational or global objectives. |
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| **Competencies** |
| **Professionalism** |  | **Critical Thinking** |  | **Digital Technology** |
| Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes. | Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness | Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | Describe the difference between integrity and ethics. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about some of the rules and policies that guide you in different environments and how you learned them. |
| Intermediate*practical application* |  Tell me about a time when you exhibited a commitment to integrity and ethics — “walked the talk” — and sought feedback from others to guide decisions and actions. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Tell me about a time when you evaluated implications of different courses of action (e.g. likely consequences) that could have had an impact on others or the organization as well as yourself (e.g. character/brand). |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time when you focused on the greater good by challenging others when integrity and ethics were not being considered. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* |  During an experience, how would you obtain, process, and synthesize different kinds of information? |
| Basic*limited experience* |  Tell me about a time when your supervisor, professor, or advisor identified a problem and then how you obtained, processed, and synthesized different kinds of information to solve the problem. |
| Intermediate*practical application* |  Tell me about a time when you identified a problem and then obtained, processed, and synthesized different kinds of information to solve the problem. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* |  Tell me about a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a plan to solve the problem and made a recommendation for a course of action. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* |  Tell me about a time when you promoted and maintained a culture where others were able to imagine alternatives and were empowered to identify and solve problems that led to organizational improvement. |
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| **Competencies** |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | Tell us about how you learned about current and emerging software and tools that are used in an experience to solve general and industry-specific challenges. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about a time when you used basic software and tools with the assistance of others to solve general and industry-specific challenges. |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me about a time when you used basic software and tools and were able to troubleshoot issues independently before asking for assistance from others. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Tell me about a time when you articulated strengths and shortcomings of current and emerging software and tools in solving sophisticated general and industry-specific challenges and made recommendations for adoption. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time during your internship when you were recognized as a resource on current and emerging software and tools and were sought out by others on how technology can help solve general and industry-specific challenges. |
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| **Competencies** |
| **Career Management** |  | **Global Fluency**  |  |  **Have questions?**  |
| Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace. | Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals’ differences. | Contact Career Exploration and Development or visit our website for more information on the career readiness competencies.Phone: 330-672-2360Email: Career@kent.eduLocation: 261 Schwartz Center Website: www.kent.edu/career |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | Tell me how your supervisor, professor, or advisor would describe you as a result of your time interacting with them. |
| Basic*limited experience* | Tell me about a time when you tried to intentionally align your intended and perceived reputation by applying feedback from others. |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me about a time when you initiated a conversation to gain feedback from your supervisor, professor, or advisor. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | During your experience(s), how did you develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that led you to make a positive impression in every facet of your life? |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Tell me about a time when you served as a resource to and supported others as they sought help with developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that led to making a positive impression in the workplace. |
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| Awareness*theoretical knowledge* | What does diversity mean to you? |
| Basic*limited experience* | Was diversity valued at your past employer? If so, did you make an impact on this? |
| Intermediate*practical application* | Tell me an example of a time when you worked with or helped somebody of a different culture/background of your own. |
| Advanced*extensive experience and application* | Describe a time where you had to work with someone culturally, racially, or ethnically different from you and any challenge it may have created and how you dealt with the situation. |
| Expert*recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas* | Describe the value of having diversity within an organization and a time you have observed this value. |
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