

CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEW

The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. This is the principle behind the behavioural interview.

Unlike traditional interview questions – “What would you do if...” – recruiters want to understand what candidates have actually done. Using the Critical Incident Technique, interviewers gather input in advance from managers and team members about situations critical to success: conflicts, leadership challenges, customer complaints. In the interview itself, candidates are then asked to describe comparable situations from their own past. This structured format – known in English as the behavioural interview – has proven particularly valid in studies, as it provides evidence of real behaviour rather than hypothetical responses.

For candidates, behavioural interviews are demanding – and require targeted preparation. Anyone who wants to demonstrate leadership ability should be able to describe a specific situation from their day-to-day work in which they have shown it. The STAR method – Situation, Task, Action, Result – helps to structure such examples clearly and coherently.

Those who succeed in doing so enable the interviewer to visualise their behaviour. And that is exactly the goal.

Articles on behavioural interviews (all articles)

- Tell me what I already know!
- In job interviews, provide information – not interpretations