

# The S.O.A.R. Answer Model

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Here you are in the interview you have been dreaming about. Now what? Will you nail the interview by making a great impression mastering artful responses to behavioral questions being asked? Or will this be another unsuccessful attempt at getting to your dream job.

The following **S.O.A.R. Answer Model** is helpful for preparing for interview questions as well as keeping you focused in the interview while answering questions, especially behavioral questions.

## Situation

You begin by briefly providing context using a real life situation you experienced. This is the “before” picture which illustrates what was happening “at the time” of the situation.

***For example** – “I was newly promoted to department manager. The department had doubled in volume growth but was experiencing higher than average turnover.”*

## Obstacles

You then articulate the issues or define the problem. This gets the interviewer’s attention regarding what it is you had to overcome.

***For example** – “Employee turnover was over 50%. The newer staff required training and coaching. The senior staff were overworked and stressed. Work wasn’t getting done and this was creating regular customer complaints.”*

## Action

You then explain the action you took to resolve the situation.

***For example** – “I identified and prioritized the immediate action I needed to take. I analyzed the workflow and matched the work to the people who could best get the job done. I then made sure each of the employees had job descriptions. I set up a regular coaching schedule with each employee so I could monitor progress. I had the newer staff job shadow the senior staff and had the senior staff mentor the newer people. We had regular team meetings to ensure we were all communicating results and progress with each other.”*

## Results

Lastly, you share the result of your actions. Sharing the quantifiable as well as qualitative outcomes.

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***For example** – “Employee turnover dropped to 10% within the first year. Morale improved significantly. Customer complaints stopped coming in. The department became the most efficient and productive department in the division.”*

Here are some behavioral questions.

Practice using the S.O.A.R. Answer Model to develop your own responses.

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult client or coworker.
- Tell me about your most significant achievement in your last job.
- Tell me about the most significant mistake you have made, how you handled it, and what you learned from it.
- Give me an example of when you had to sell your boss on a new product, service, system, or program.
- Give me an example of a problem you faced on the job and how you handled it.
- Give me an example of how you dealt with an employee who was not performing up to expectations.
- Give me a recent example of how you went about motivating your coworkers and subordinates.
- Recall for me a time when you challenged your boss and/or company policy.
- Tell me what you did in your last job to help build teamwork.

Make sure you take the time in advance of the interview to develop some strong answers to each potential question. The better prepared you are to answer questions, the more likely you will make a strong impression on your interviewer, become a master interviewee, ultimately landing that dream job.