

## **Behavioral (Situational) Job Interview Question**

**Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.**

**EXAMPLE:** In my last job, I worked as a supervisor at a Seattle company that designed, made and sold baby clothing and products. I was there for two years while the economy was declining and was asked to find ways to cut payroll costs so we could keep that facility open.

I either had to lay off someone, which I didn't want to do, or come up with another way to keep all the staff while saving the company money. So, I decided to implement a Friday furlough for all of the employees. They weren't happy about it, but after talking to all of them about our situation, we all agreed that sharing the burden was the best solution. So, I volunteered to start a walking group on Fridays for those who wanted to participate, and this helped us bond more as a staff and spend some social time with each other. It really worked out well in the end.

*Note: Keep the above sample on the document you submit.*

**Answer these questions that are commonly asked in an interview:**

Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it:

In my previous job, I worked on part of a farm for their fall seasonal during peak COVID-19 lockdown and the following year. During one of my seasonal stints, the mask mandate was removed state-wide but since the company was privately owned, they decided to continue to uphold a mask rule on the farm property for both employees and guests. I was required to check for both wristbands and masks worn on guests as they arrived, however other employees were not as strict on the mask policy and let things slide more than we were supposed to. I was quite unpopular with customers who did not want to wear a mask as they would see these other employees not upholding the policy. I remained calm but firm in what I was instructed to do and offered disposable masks without causing a scene or escalating the situation. Over time my willingness to follow company rules and policy despite coworkers acting differently allowed me to grow into a lead position in my subsequent work with this company.

Tell me about a mistake you made and how you handled it or resolved it.

While working at a car wash over the summer, we had some new employees that needed to be supervised at the pad (the area before the tunnel that actually cleans your car) because of the dangerous materials and machinery that meant they could not be left alone. When it was just me, a Lead, and one of these new employees, I was the one stationed up on the pad with them, however between pulling cars up and spraying them this person would constantly be on their phone and not be paying attention, leading to me doing a lot more of the work than I was supposed to be doing. While I had the skills to run that station by myself, my mistake was not calling out their behavior immediately both because they were supposed to be working and that it was a dangerous area. I struggled with conflict and worried that saying something would make the situation worse. My solution was to talk to the Lead that was on-site, and she gave me tips on what to say and full permission to take control while I was up there as I held seniority and full-say at the pad if a Lead was not present. She gave me the confidence boost (while also agreeing to talk to them when she had a chance) that I needed to not create an argument while still being firm that the behavior had to stop or else they would need to go back to the basics and be removed from the pad until they could handle the responsibility they were given.

How do you handle a challenge? (Still needs to address STAR)

Following my jobs at both Stocker Farms and the Wet Rabbit Car Wash, I have learned a lot about when to hold firm on instructions I was given and how to best implement conflict-management skills to both customers and employees. Because of this, I have also learned to address challenges swiftly and efficiently. I prefer not to let things fester and grow out of control, and when I am asked to do something that may be out of my current skillset, I have the confidence to know that I am being asked because someone already believes I am capable of completing the task. If I am truly in the dark about the situation, I am also willing to ask as many questions as needed to understand without becoming "too much" to handle. Above all else, knowing where exactly my limits are in my knowledge and proficiencies has given me a greater understanding of how to ask for help when needed, and when to persevere.

## **Situational/Hypothetical Job Interview Questions**

**Example: How would you react and respond to an angry client who is upset about something that isn't your fault?**

I would listen to the client patiently and determine the source of their frustration. I would make sure to get their contact information, and then I would do what I can to help solve the problem – even if it wasn't my fault.

**Example: What would you do if you are assigned a task that you have never done before?**

I would let my manager know that although I have never performed this type of task, I would be glad to take it on after receiving some guidance. I would ask my manager which co-worker I could approach to show me how to do the task. I would also do some research on my own to not overly burden others.

**Answer these questions that are commonly asked in an interview:**

If you were unable to meet a deadline for a client because of technology issues, how would handle the situation with the client? (Would you do anything in the meantime?)

Depending on the specifics of the technology issues, I would (if able) provide updates about the status/potential solutions to said issues while also discussing the severity of the missed deadline and if a reschedule could be in order. Whether or not that is not an option, I would also seek out what benefits/discounts/etc. I would be allowed to offer from my higher-ups in the meantime so as not to tarnish the relationship between myself, the business, and the client because of this situation. While the technology issues may be out of my control, I can control my communication with the client, and their opinion is one of the most important at the end of the day.

What would you do if you made a mistake that no one else noticed? (Would your response depend on how serious it was?)

The severity of my mistake would affect my response, because a mistake that affects the company goals is of a larger scale than something that may be a minor error that, in the grand scheme, does not reach the final product. I would immediately tell whoever I could about a large mistake that went unnoticed so that it can be rectified as soon as possible and not throw off deadlines. If it was a minor mistake, I may still tell another employee who has access to the information where the mistake was made, but the majority of my response would be internal. I would consider the series of events that led to the mistake being made, in either situation, and take note of the areas that were entirely within my control so that I can keep an eye on potential weak spots in my skills, both so that another mistake does not happen again and to generally improve my professional responsibility and quality of work.

If you knew a co-worker was bullying or harassing other employees, and it affected the work culture, what would you do? (Why?)

As this is something I have dealt with previously, I would take the same steps then as I would now: I would ensure, first, that the situation is not being misconstrued by any of the involved parties in their retellings of these interactions (if applicable), and I would reach out to someone with more seniority to myself that can aid in handling the situation going forward, most likely a manager or HR representative. I would also try to not let the situation spread to other coworkers by dispelling rumors as much as I am able and defer the conversation until a response is made from the higher-ups about the situation. There is no place for both bullying/harassment or rumor-spreading in the workplace, but it is unfortunately all too common in the modern day, so taking control as much as possible and not encouraging either behavior is the focus of my methods.