

---

---

***BELLSOUTH***

**Small Business Sales Associate  
Behavioral Event Interview (BEI)**

**STUDY GUIDE**

Copyright © 2005 by BellSouth  
All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

BellSouth will consider requests for testing accommodations from individuals covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Documentation of the need for the accommodation may be required.

---

---

# BELLSOUTH

## Small Business Sales Associate BEI

The Small Business Sales Associate BEI is a behavioral interview designed to assess various skills relevant to the Sales Associate job.

### WHAT IS A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

As part of BellSouth's hiring process, you will participate in what is called a behavioral interview. A behavioral interview is a structured interview that is used to collect information about past behavior. Because past performance is a predictor of future behavior, a behavioral interview attempts to uncover your past performance by asking open-ended questions. Each question helps the interviewer learn about your past performance in a skill area that is critical to success in the position for which you are interviewing. The interview will be conducted face-to-face.

### USING THE STAR TECHNIQUE

In a behavioral interview, the interviewer will ask questions about your past experiences. A useful way to prepare for this style of questioning is to use the SAR technique. The SAR technique is a way to frame the answers to each question in an organized manner that will give the interviewer the most information about your past experience. As you prepare to answer each question, consider organizing your response by answering each of the following components of the SAR technique:

What was the **S**ituation in which you were involved?

What **A**ction(s) did you take?

What **R**esults did you achieve?

### PREPARATION TIPS

What's the best way to stay relaxed and calm during an interview? Be *prepared*. Here are some tips:

- Research the business unit or department.
  - Become familiar with the products, services, structure, competitors, reputation, and any recent significant changes.
  - Review the job description to understand the skills required.
- Do "research" on yourself as well.
  - Know why you want the job.
  - Review your resume.
  - Identify transferable skills, key accomplishments, work style, and personal and professional strengths. Remind yourself of specific experiences that exemplify these skills and strengths.
  - Be able to express the unique marketable skills you have to offer.
- Prepare a list of four or five questions about the department or position.
- Get a good night's rest.
- Know the exact place and time of the meeting.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the interview and plan to arrive early.

---

---

## **INTERVIEW TIPS**

- Listen carefully, and feel free to ask for clarification before answering a question.
- Take a moment to formulate your answers before you speak.
- Project energy and enthusiasm.
- Be honest while focusing on communicating your professional achievements.
- Be polite to everyone you meet at the interview.
- Do not chew gum, swear, or use slang.
- Thank the interviewer for their time. Within a day, send a written thank you note via e-mail or regular mail.
- If the interview is face-to-face:
  - Look your professional best.
  - Be conservative in your use of fragrance, cosmetics, and jewelry.
  - Make eye contact with the interviewer.

## **SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS\***

*\*Please note that questions included in this interview guide are not used in BellSouth's interview process. Doing well on the sample questions does not guarantee successful performance in any portion of BellSouth's interview process.*

- Please give me an example of a time when you had to come up with an alternative solution to a problem in a specific work situation.
- Describe a time when you had to use logic and good judgment to solve a problem.

## **Assessment Rating**

You will be notified of your performance on the Small Business Sales Associate BEI shortly after interviewing. The Small Business Sales Associate BEI results are good for one year, unless test standards change. Test standards are periodically updated to reflect current abilities and skills required for our jobs. Therefore, it may be necessary to meet new test standards, should they be introduced prior to your placement in the job.

## **Retesting**

If you do not qualify on the Small Business Sales Associate BEI, you are eligible to be retested, at your request, in 12 months.

---

---

# BELLSOUTH

## Competencies assessed by the Small Business Sales Associate BEI

There are several dimensions measured in the Small Business Sales Associate BEI. The successful sales associate will be proficient in most, if not all of these dimensions. The following is the profile of a successful candidate:

<b>Small Business Sales Associate INTERVIEW DIMENSIONS</b>
<b>1. Sales Ability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Promote ideas and shape opinions while overcoming resistance</li><li>▪ Show confidence even after a hard refusal/rejection</li><li>▪ Focus on achieving goals</li><li>▪ Present compelling rationale to gain acceptance for ideas and plans</li></ul>
<b>2. Communication:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Convey information in a manner that is understandable and persuasive</li><li>▪ Be able to identify and remedy situations when the audience has not understood the message</li><li>▪ Be willing and able to repeat or rephrase explanations</li><li>▪ Question and probe others to obtain information or to identify their underlying needs</li></ul>
<b>3. Flexibility/Multitasking:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Recognize priorities and balance conflicting demands</li><li>▪ Identify desired outcomes and determine steps needed to achieve them</li><li>▪ Structure work activities to ensure that work is done efficiently and effectively</li><li>▪ Organize their work activities to meet the requirements of the job</li><li>▪ Posses the ability to perform multiple activities at the same time</li></ul>

---

---

## Small Business Sales Associate BEI Developmental Suggestions by Competency

### **Competency: Sales Ability**

#### **On the Job Activities**

- Observe people in your organization who are good in sales, and try out techniques that seem to work for them.
- Ask your supervisor or co-workers for feedback on your ability to present compelling rationale to convince others. Ask them for suggestions on what you can do to be more influential.
- Use various resources – books, observing others, the internet - to learn about different approaches to making a sale. Try out different approaches when talking with customers.
- Consciously think about how to match customer requirement with product features.
- Learn how to restate your position clearly to ensure that others understand your perspective. Don't back down immediately when challenged.
- Role play with colleagues or other friends/family about how you would talk to a tough customer.

#### **Training**

- Attend a course on being an effective salesperson offered through your local high school or community college.
- Attend a course on assertiveness training offered through your local high school or community college.

#### **Books**

1. Richardson, L. (1997). *Stop Telling, Start Selling: How to use customer focused dialogue to close calls.* McGraw Hill.
2. Gitomer, J. (2004). *The Little Red Book of Selling: 12.5 Principles of Sales Greatness.* Bard Press.
3. Zaltman, G. (2003). *How Customers Think: Essential Insights Into the Mind of the Market.* Harvard Business School Press.
4. Nirenberg, Jesse S. (1989). *How to sell your idea.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

#### **Personal Time Activities**

- Observe sales people you deal with during your daily activities. Note what they do to convince you to purchase.
- Convince yourself that taking your advice/suggestions will actually benefit the person you are trying to influence. Be able to clearly envision how the person will realize these benefits.
- Volunteer for a position with a community group that requires you to influence or “sell” (e.g., a fundraiser, soliciting advertisers, etc.).

---

---

## Small Business Sales Associate BEI Developmental Suggestions by Competency

### **Competency: Communication**

#### **On the Job Activities**

- When trying to orally communicate an idea, think through the main idea you are trying to express, and then state the idea in a clear, concise statement, and try to demonstrate a strong sense of purpose.
- Before speaking to others about a topic, take a moment to list possible points that may come up during the conversation and decide how you will respond to each, with a focus on achieving results.
- If you tend to be soft-spoken, work on speaking in a more forceful and confident tone.
- Rehearse presentations in front of a mirror or on video. Work at varying your volume and pace for emphasis.

#### **Training**

- Attend a course on oral communication offered through your local high school or community college.
- Attend a course on identifying common barriers to communication offered through your local high school or community college.
- **For current BellSouth Employees:** Attend the “Listen Up” (CT116) correspondence course offered through PARTNERSHIP.

#### **Books**

1. O’Conner, P.T. (2004). *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. Penguin Group.
2. McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (1995). *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Press.
3. Garner, Alan (1991). *Con conversationally speaking: Tested new ways to increase your personal and social effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
4. Woodhall, M. K. (1993). *How to Think on Your Feet*. New York: Warner Books.

#### **Personal Time Activities**

- Eliminate speech habits that may annoy others, such as talking too slowly, too rapidly, or too hesitantly. Also work to eliminate slang phrases.
- Have a friend count the number of times you say “uh,” “um,” and “you know,” in a conversation and make a conscious effort to lower this number.
- Pursue speaking opportunities with community groups, service organizations, and church/school-related groups.
- Join Toastmasters, the world’s largest organization devoted to communication excellence.

---

---

## Small Business Sales Associate BEI Developmental Suggestions by Competency

### **Competency: Flexibility and Multitasking**

#### **On the Job Activities**

- When you are in a situation in which you are multitasking, using phones, computer and other technology, try to identify strategies that make you more effective.
- Observe people who are able to multitask easily, look at what strategies they use and how they are effective at multitasking.
- Refrain from telling the customer that “it can’t be done”. Focus on how you can make it happen.
- Gain confidence in dealing with unstructured, unpredictable situations. For example, seek out opportunities like participation on task forces or ask to handle calls in several different areas of the company.
  - Prioritize your work and develop an action plan to complete the assignments.
  - Identify situations that cause you stress and prepare a plan for handling those situations.
  - Stay organized and manage your time effectively.

#### **Training**

- Take a course on dealing with stress offered through your local high school or college.

#### **Books**

1. Petty, James (2001). *Priorities: Mastering Time Management*. P&R Publishing.
2. Covey, S. (1990). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press.
3. Goman, C. K. (1993). *Adapting to Change: Making it Work for You*. Crisp Publication.

#### **Personal Time Activities**

- Try to remember the ‘tricks’ that you use to balance and prioritize tasks, errands, projects, etc. in your personal time
- Work on projects/tasks that require you to do multiple things at the same time