

COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The type of competencies against which you will be assessed also depends on the actual post and the company that is interviewing you. For example, some companies view leadership as a competency on its own whilst others prefer to split leadership between a wide range of components (creativity, flexibility, strategic thinking, vision, etc).

The company you are visiting may ask some or even none of the questions below, but this will help you remember past experiences, triumphs and challenges and help prepare your memory for any more technical and vocationally-based questions you may be asked. Please have a read-through and feel free to think of personal triumphs to respond with as well if relevant.

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself (5-minute elevator pitch. Make it relevant to what the company wants to hear from you as a person, culturally and technically for the job)
- Why do you want to work for our company
- What do you know about our company
- What is your learning approach?
- How do your friends describe you?
- If you could do anything for a job what would it be?
- What are 3 strengths you have?
- What are 3 weaknesses?
- Why did you leave your last job?

Adaptability

- Which change of job did you find the most difficult to make?
- Tell us about the biggest change that you have had to deal with. How did you cope with it?
- What would you do when you first arrive? In the first 3 months? In the first 6 months?

Communication

- Tell us about a situation where your communication skills made a difference to a situation?
- Describe a time when you had to persuade someone who was reluctant.

- Describe a situation where you had to explain something complex to a colleague or a client. Which problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- What is the worst communication situation that you have experienced?
- How do you prepare for an important meeting?
- Tell us about a situation when you failed to communicate appropriately.
- How do you vary your communication approach according to the audience that you are working with?
- Describe a situation when you had to communicate a message to someone, knowing that you were right and that they were wrong and reluctant to accept your point of view.

Listening

- Give us an example where your listening skills proved important to an outcome.
- Tell us about a time when you had trouble remaining focused on your audience. How did you handle this?
- Describe a situation where you had to deal with an angry customer.

Written

- What type of writing have you done? Give examples? What makes you think that you are good at it?
- What positive and negative feedback have you received about your writing skills? Give an example where one of your reports was criticised.
- How do you plan the writing of a report?

Sensitivity to Others

- What problems has one of your staff or colleagues brought to you recently? How did you assist them?
- Tell us about an unpopular decision that you made recently? What thought process did you follow before making it? How did your colleagues/clients react and how did you deal with their reaction?
- How do you deal with "time wasters"? Give a recent example.
- When is that last time that you had an argument with a colleague?
- When did you last upset someone?
- What steps do you take to understand your colleagues' personalities? Give an example where you found it hard to adjust to one particular colleague.

Teamwork

- Describe a situation in which you were a member of a team. What did you do to positively contribute to it?
- Tell us about a situation where you played an important role in a project as a member

of the team (not as a leader)

- How do you ensure that every member of the team is allowed to participate?
- Give us an example where you worked in a dysfunctional team. Why was it dysfunctional and how did you attempt to change things?
- Give an example of a time when you had to deal with a conflict within your team?

What did you do to help resolve the situation?

- How do you build relationships with other members of your team?
- How do you bring difficult colleagues on board? Give us an example where you had to do this.

Conflict Management

- Tell us about a time when you felt that conflict or differences were a positive driver in your organisation. How did you handle the conflict to optimise its benefit?
- Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a conflict within your team.
- Tell us about a situation where conflict led to a negative outcome. How did you handle the situation and what did you learn from it?
- Give us an example where you were unable to deal with a difficult member of your team.

Creativity and Innovation.

- Tell us about a project or situation where you felt that the conventional approach would not be suitable. How did you derive and manage a new approach? Which challenges did you face and how did you address them?
- Tell us about a situation where you trusted your team to derive a new approach to an old problem. How did you manage the process?
- Tell us about a time when you had to convince a senior colleague that change was necessary. What made you think that your new approach would be better suited?

Decisiveness

- What big decision did you make recently? What did you do?
- Why do you want to change jobs? How did you decide? How long did it take you?
- Give an example of a time when you had to delay a decision to think about the situation. What did you need to do this?
- What is the decision that you have put off the longest? Why?
- When is the last time that you refused to make a decision?
- Give us an example of a situation where you had to make a decision without the input of your team, but knowing that your team would judge you on that decision.
- Tell us about a time when you had to make a decision without knowledge of the full facts.

- Tell us about a situation where you made a decision that impacted negatively on others. How did you make that decision and how did you handle its consequences?
- Tell us about a decision that you made, that you knew would be unpopular with a group of people. How did you handle the decision-making process and how did you manage expectations?
- Tell us about a situation where you made a decision too quickly and got it wrong. Why made you take that decision?

Delegation

- What type of responsibilities do you delegate?
- Give examples of projects where you made the best use of delegation.
- Give an example of a project or task that you felt compelled to complete on your own. What stopped you from delegating?
- Give an example of a situation where you reluctantly delegated to a colleague. How did you feel about it?
- Give an example where you delegated a task to the wrong person? How did you make that decision at the time, what happened and what did you learn from it?
- How do you cope with having to go away from the office for long periods of time (e.g. holidays). Explain how you would delegate responsibilities based on your current situation.

Flexibility

- Describe a situation where you had to change your approach halfway through a project or task following new input into the project.
- Describe a situation where you started off thinking that your approach was the best, but needed to alter your course during the implementation.
- Describe a situation where one of your projects suffered a setback due to an unexpected change in circumstances.
- Describe a situation where you were asked to do something that you had never attempted previously.
- Give us an example of a situation where your initial approach failed and you had to change tack.
- Describe your strongest and your weakest colleagues. How do you cope with such diversity of personalities?
- If we gave you a new project to manage, how would you decide how to approach it?

Independence

- When did you depart from the company guidelines to accomplish your goal?
- Which decisions do you feel able to make on your own and which do you require senior support to make?
- Describe a situation where you had a disagreement or an argument with a superior. How did you handle it?
- When do you feel that it is justified for you to go against accepted principles or policy?
- Which constraints are imposed on you in your current job and how do you deal with these?
- When did you make a decision that wasn't yours to make?
- Describe a project or situation where you took a project to completion despite important opposition.
- When have you gone beyond the limits of your authority in making a decision?

Influencing

- Describe a situation where you were able to influence others on an important issue. What approaches or strategies did you use?
- Describe a situation where you needed to influence different stakeholders who had different agendas. What approaches or strategies did you use?
- Tell us about an idea that you manage to sell to your superior, which represented a challenge.
- What is your worst selling experience?
- Describe the project or idea that you were most satisfied to sell to your management.
- Describe a time when you failed to sell an idea that you knew was the right one.

Integrity

- When have you had to lie to achieve your aims? Why did you do so? How do you feel you could have achieved the same aim in a different way?
- Tell me about a time when you showed integrity and professionalism.
- Tell us about a time when someone asked you something that you objected to. How did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever been asked to do something illegal, immoral or against your principles? What did you do?
- What would you do if your boss asked you to do something illegal?
- Tell us about a situation where you had to remind a colleague of the meaning of "integrity".

Leadership

- Tell us about a situation where you had to get a team to improve its performance. What were the problems and how did you address them?
- Describe a change where you had to drive a team through change. How did you achieve this?
- Describe a situation where you needed to inspire a team. What challenges did you meet and how did you achieve your objectives?
- Tell us about a situation where you faced reluctance from your team to accept the direction that you were setting.
- Describe a project or situation where you had to use different leadership styles to reach your goal.
- Tell me about a time when you were less successful as a leader than you would have wanted to be.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)

- Give an example of a situation or project where a positive outcome depended on the work of people from a wide range of backgrounds and ideas
- Tell us about a time when you included someone in your team or a project because you felt they would bring something different to the team.
- Describe a project where you needed to involve input from other departments. How did you identify that need and how did you ensure buy-in from the appropriate leaders and managers?
- Describe a time when you had to leverage on your company's D&I policy because of an issue with your team.
- How important is D&I to you as a person?
- What is your understanding of diversity and inclusion in the workplace?

Resilience and Tenacity

- Tell us about a situation where things deteriorated quickly. How did you react to recover from that situation?
- Tell us about a project where you achieved success despite the odds being stacked against you. How did you ensure that you pulled through?
- Tell us about your biggest failure. How did you recover and what have you learnt from that incident?
- Give us an example of a situation where you knew that a project or task would place you under great pressure. How did you plan your approach and remain motivated?
- How do you deal with stress? Give us an example of a situation where you worked under pressure.

- Under what conditions do you work best and worst?
- Which recent project or situation has caused you the most stress? How did you deal with it?
- When did you last lose your temper?
- When is the last time that you were upset with yourself?
- What makes you frustrated or impatient at work?
- What is the biggest challenge that you have faced in your career? How did you overcome it?
- Tell us about a time when you wanted to push one of your ideas successfully despite strong opposition.
- Which course or topics have you found most difficult? How did you address the challenge?

Risk Taking

- What is the biggest risk that you have taken? How did you handle the process?
- Please describe one of your current or recently completed projects, setting out the risks involved. How did you make decisions? How do you know that you made the correct decisions?
- What risks do you see in moving to this new post?

Compliance

- How do you ensure compliance with policies in your area of responsibility?
- Tell us about a time when you went against company policy? Why did you do it and how did you handle it?

Sustainability and Environmental

- What are your thoughts about sustainable and environmental policies in your area of responsibility?
- How important are these to you?
- What do you understand about sustainability and environmental trends in your area of work? Where do you see the future of these areas?

Data and Technology-Based Questions

- Tell me about a time when a data-led decision made an integral positive change of direction for the team or company? What was the outcome?
- How do you implement change within an organisation which is reluctant when the change is technology led? Describe your process.
- What is the single biggest change you have made (technology or data-led) to a



company structure and what was the outcome? Did you encounter any issues? How did you overcome them?

- Tell me about a time when your KPI structure had to be changed because of a change in company technology or technological advancement.
- What are your thoughts on digitalisation in your company/ industry?