

Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

ADAPTABILITY

- Give an example of a time when the scope or structure of a project changed. How did you modify your plans/actions? What was the outcome?
- Give an example of a time when you had two important projects competing for your time. How did you handle? What happened?
- Give an example of a time when you had to change your negotiating position in order to achieve an objective.
- Describe a time in which you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you? On your work or project?
- Tell me about a time when you had to be flexible, adjusting to the needs of your co-workers or manager.

ANALYSIS

- What steps do you take to analyze a problem before making a decision? Can you tell me about a time when you have taken these steps? What happened?
- Sometimes a small problem can be identified and fixed before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of when you have done this and what the result.
- Describe a situation where you had to research and review information for the purpose of making a decision or recommendation.
- Provide an example when you used tools such as survey data, research or statistics to define or solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you made an important decision with a limited amount of information.

COMMUNICATION (oral/written)

- Give me a recent example that best shows your ability to communicate effectively.
- Listening is a valuable tool. Describe a time when good listening skills helped you overcome a communication problem or gave you an opportunity to exceed expectations.
- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Describe the most significant written document or presentation you've written or presented. Who was your audience? What was the outcome of your communication/presentation?
- Give an example of a time when you communicated successfully with another person, even when that individual may not have agreed with your point of view.
- Have you had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers, classmates or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Tell me about a time when you had a miscommunication with a team member or manager. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Give an example of a complex process / situation you had to describe to someone. What specifically did you do to make sure the information was clear?
- What has been the most challenging written assignment you have had? What made it challenging? How did you approach the assignment?
- What communication techniques have you used to ensure that employees feel informed?
- Describe a time when you realized you needed to make an improvement in your communication skills. What was the situation and how did you manage it?
- Describe a time when you communicated difficult information/critical feedback to your supervisor. How did you give the information/feedback?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Give an example of time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle him/her?
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a conflict involving members of your team or family.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

- Tell me about a job that you held in the past where continuous learning was necessary and important. How did you continue to grow your knowledge, skills and expertise? How did you apply new learning to your position?

Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

- Describe a time when you realized you needed additional skills or knowledge to be successful. What was your approach to gaining these skills?
- Tell me about a specific situation when you did not have the knowledge or skill to complete a task or assignment. What did you do?

COPING SKILLS

- Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stressful situations at work. How did you work through them?
- What methods or processes have you used when you were facing a change in your job responsibilities to ensure a positive outcome for you, your department, or the organization?
- What types of things in your work have caused stress or made you uncomfortable? What did you do when those situations happened?
- Describe a work situation in which a project that was important to you was delayed or postponed. How did you respond? What were your next steps?
- Describe a time when you received feedback about your performance that was not positive. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands. Provide an example.

CREATIVITY

- Describe your most recent idea to improve a process at work. What steps did you take to bring the idea to life?
- Tell me about a time when you have been creative in your work. What was the situation and what did you do?
- What have you done that might be considered innovative?

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- Describe a time when you had to commit to a plan of action in an emergency. What were the details and what did you do?
- What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?
- Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem with very little guidance or direction.
- Can you tell me about a time when a slow, deliberate and methodical approach made a difference in your response to a problem?
- Describe a time when you had to analyze a problem and generate a solution. What was the result?
- Tell me about a situation that did not work out as expected. How did you handle and what were your next steps?

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Tell me about a situation in which you had to deal with a patient or family member that was upset. What was the situation and how did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations. What was the situation and what did you do?

DECISION MAKING

- What has been one of the most difficult decisions you have had to make on the job? What facts did you consider? How did you reach your decision?
- Give an example of a time in which you had to make a decision quickly.
- When (if ever) have you delayed making a decision to give more thought to the situation?
- Describe a time when you did not have all the information you needed to make a completely informed decision. What did you do?

DILIGENCE

- Getting the job done sometimes requires persistence in the face of obstacles, such as time demands and shifting priorities. Tell me about a time when you were very persistent in order to achieve goals. Be specific.
- Describe a time when you had to do a job that was particularly uninteresting. How did you keep yourself focused and motivated to complete the task?

DIVERSITY

- Working with people from different backgrounds or cultures can present challenges.



Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

- Describe a time when differences in background made communication or work challenging. How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a co-worker or manager with a different background/culture than yours. What did you do to ensure that there was good communication between you? **OR** What steps did you take to make the co-worker or manager feel comfortable?

EXERCISING GOOD JUDGMENT

- Describe a time when you used good judgment in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision. What happened and what did you do?
- Provide an example of how you reached a decision by reviewing facts, information at hand and available options. What was the situation and what did you decide?
- Describe a situation where you handled decisions under pressure or when time limits were a factor. What was the outcome?

EXERCISING INITIATIVE

- What processes or techniques have you learned to make a job easier, or to be more effective? What was your discovery process and how did you implement your idea?
- Give me an example of a new idea you suggested to your manager within the last six months. Describe steps you have taken to implement your idea.
- Can you tell me about a time when you went beyond your supervisor's expectations in order to get the job done?
- Tell me about a time when you identified a new, unusual or different approach for addressing a problem or task.
- Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.

GOALS – Setting and Measuring

- How do you decide what goals to establish, either for yourself or your department? Provide an example of when you have done this.
- What personal or work related goals have you established? How successful were you in accomplishing these goals? How did you know (measure) that you had achieved the goal?
- Give me an example of an important work related goal that was established for you and the steps you took to achieve that goal?
- Tell me about a specific goal and how you measured your progress for the goal. How did you establish a goal baseline and targets?
- Describe a time when you developed method or process for measuring the progress your department or organization was making toward their goal.

INTEGRITY/HONESTY/TRUSTWORTHINESS

- Tell about a time when you demonstrated honesty and integrity in a work situation.
- Describe a situation you saw an employee or co-worker do something you thought was inappropriate. What did you do?
- When was the last time you "broke the rules"? What was the situation and what did you do?
- Have you ever faced an ethical or value conflict in your job? Explain the situation and how you handled.
- Describe a time when your integrity was challenged.

LEADERSHIP

- Provide an example of a time when you took on the role of a leader in a committee or group. How did you lead the team and what were the outcomes?
- Tell about a time when a group you led failed or did not meet expectations. What happened? What did you do?



Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

- Give an example of how you have motivated your staff, a team or a group of coworkers.
- How have you recognized and rewarded others for their performance?
- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? Describe how you handled. What was the outcome?
- What is the most important skill of a good leader? Describe a time when you effectively used this leadership skill on the job.

JOB KNOWLEDGE

- Describe your strength in terms of job knowledge and expertise. Tell me about a time when you used that knowledge and expertise on the job.

PLANNING , ORGANIZING and PRIORITIZING

- Give an example of when your time schedule or project plan changed because of unforeseen circumstances. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- What steps do you take to ensure effective organization and planning? Provide specific examples.
- Describe a time when you had to handle multiple, competing priorities. What did you do? Provide specifics.
- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time? Can you tell me about a time when you had to prioritize several key deliverables?
- Describe a time when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- Describe a time when you faced a particularly demanding situation such as an emergency, or deadline. How did you decide what to do first? Second? Last?
- How do you organize your work to ensure that you are the most effective and productive?
- Tell me about your work experience in managing multiple job priorities with varied deadlines. When and how do you determine priorities and deadlines?
- Think of a day when you many items 'on your plate'. How did you prioritize your work?

PROBLEM SOLVING

- Describe a situation in which you identified a problem and explain how you resolved.
- Tell about a time when you identified a problem and presented several solutions to your supervisor.
- We all know some problems just don't have solutions. Tell me about a problem you tried to solve but couldn't.
- Tell me about any experience you have had turning a problem into a success.
- Tell me about a situation where you blew it. How did your resolve or correct it?
- What type of approach to solving work problems seems to work best for you? Provide a specific example of when you've used this approach.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Describe a time when you led a complex project. What was your approach to managing the project? Provide specific actions and outcomes.
- Tell about at time when a project fell behind schedule or ran over budget. What actions did you take?

SERVICE ORIENTATION

- Describe a time when you exceeded a customer's expectation. What did you do to achieve that outcome?
- Tell me about the most difficult customer service experience you've had to handle. Be specific and tell what you did and what the outcome was.
- Describe a time when you had to deliver difficult information to a customer.
- Tell about a situation with a customer when you were not able to meet their expectation. What did you do?
- Describe an organization where you worked that highly valued customer satisfaction. What actions did you take to ensure delivering satisfaction was part of your work?
- Tell me about a time when your patience and diligence with a customer helped achieve a positive outcome.

SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS



Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

- What is your experience in supervising a diverse group of employees with varied backgrounds and skills? How have you ensured the best fit of employees for each job?
- Tell about a time when you've had to give critical/constructive feedback to a poor performer. How did you clarify expectations? And what the outcome of your coaching?
- Describe a time when you made an unpopular decision. How did you handle?
- Describe a time when you motivated your team to achieve their goals or meet a difficult deadline. How did you accomplish this?
- What are some of the ways you reward and recognize your staff?
- Describe a time when an employee or your supervisor gave you feedback on a leadership skill you needed to develop. What was the skill and what did you do? What was the outcome?
- Tell about a leadership role you have held in the past. Describe the key leadership skills you believe you have and how you demonstrated them in this role. Give specific examples.

TEAMWORK

- Tell about a time when you demonstrated excellent team member behaviors. What was the situation and what did you do?
- Describe how you contributed to the success of a team of which you were a member. Provide specific examples.
- Give an example of a team decision in that you were involved in. What did you do to help the team reach the decision?
- Have you ever been in a situation in which one of the team members was unproductive or uncooperative? Tell me about the situation and what you did.
- Describe a situation in which you had to influence another peer to cooperate.
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do and what was the outcome?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work. How did you handle the situation and what was the result?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- Tell me about a time when you put the needs of a group before your own when completing a task.
- Tell me about a time when willingness to share your knowledge significantly enhanced an outcome or decision for the team.
- Describe a time when you made a decision that was unpopular with the other members of your group. What was the end result?
- Describe a situation in which you had to influence another peer to cooperate. What exactly did you do to accomplish this?

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Describe a situation that required you to handle multiple tasks at one time. What did you do?
- What is your procedure for keeping track of items that need your attention?
- Describe your typical workday and how you prioritize your work.
- We have all had times when we just couldn't complete everything on time. Describe when this has happened to you. What did you do?

WORK STANDARDS

- How do you determine if the work you do is a quality job? What are some ways that you have improved the quality of your own work?
- In your present position, what standards have you set for doing a good job? How did you determine them?
- What are some of the problems you encounter doing your job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?
- Give me an example of a time when your work was above the standard. How did you measure it and how did you achieve that result?



Situational and Behavioral Interview Questions for Common Competencies

- Give me an example of a time when your work was below the standard. How did you measure it and what changes did you make as a result?
- Tell me about a time when your evaluation of your performance differed from your manager's evaluation of your performance. What happened?
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed. What did you do? What did you learn?
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Describe a time when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Describe the best work environment you've experienced. Why was this particular environment so positive?
- Tell me about a work environment that was not ideal? What was the situation? What did you do? What did you learn?
- What previous job was the most satisfying and why? Provide specific examples of what made the job satisfying.
- What previous job was the most frustrating and why? Provide specific examples and what you did about the situation.