

Behavior-Based Interview Questions

What are behavior-based interview questions?

Behavior-based interview questions are developed around the skills or abilities the employer desires for the position. By asking these questions, employers can get a sense of how the applicant will perform, fit into the work environment, and respond to common job pressures.

Flexibility/Adaptability

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a situation where you had to quickly adjust to a change in your department or team priorities. How did this change affect you?
- ▶ Describe a time you had to meet a scheduled deadline while your work was being interrupted continuously. What was most difficult about this and how did you handle it?
- ▶ Tell me about a time a significant change was made within your company or organization. How did the change affect you?
- ▶ Give me an example of a time when you had to balance multiple responsibilities at once. What did you do to keep organized? How did you prioritize your tasks?

Appreciating and Valuing Diversity

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Interacting with coworkers or customers from different backgrounds or cultures can be challenging at times. Tell me about a challenging time you were faced with a person from a different background or culture.
- ▶ In your own words, describe what diversity means to you.
- ▶ Give me an example of different types of individuals you have worked with and how you got along with each of them.

Customer Service Orientation

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a time you were approached by an upset customer, but in this situation you knew they were wrong. How did you deal with the situation?
- ▶ Tell me about the internal/external customers at your current place of employment.

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What percentage of your time is/was spent servicing them? Tell me about one of these instances.

- ▶ Describe what skills or qualities are important for dealing effectively with customers. Give me an example of when you used these skills.
- ▶ Describe a situation when you had to involve others to help solve a customer's problem. What was the problem and how did others help?
- ▶ On occasion, we all wish that we could change how we interact with customers. Tell me about a customer interaction you wish you could change. What would you do differently?
- ▶ Tell about a time when you worked with a customer who was satisfied.
- ▶ Tell about a time when you had to handle a difficult customer. Did the customer leave happier?

Communication

An effective way to measure this skill is through observation. Interviewers may evaluate the applicant by their use of appropriate grammar and vocabulary and whether the applicant provides clear descriptions and demonstrates effective listening skills.

Particular attention will be paid to the applicant's delivery style, including rate, volume, and body language. One way written communication skills are evaluated is a careful review of an applicant's completed application, or the interviewer may ask for writing samples if this is important for the position.

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a time you were approached by an irate customer, coworker, or individual. What was your response?
- ▶ Tell me about a time you had to give a presentation to a group.
- ▶ Describe one of the most difficult communication situations you have encountered to date. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?
- ▶ Describe a time when you had to communicate bad news to someone. How did you prepare? What was the outcome?

Continuous Learning and Growth

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Can you describe a time when you needed to learn new information about

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changing products, markets, or procedures? What did you do?

- ▶ What techniques have you learned to make your job easier or to make you more effective?
- ▶ Give me an example of when you had to learn something complex in a short period of time.

Decision Making

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Give me an example of when you had to make a decision about something that you would have preferred having more information about.
- ▶ Can you give me an example of when you had to make an unpopular decision? What was the result?
- ▶ Describe a time you had to go against traditions or policies to accomplish a goal. What was the result?
- ▶ Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision. What was the result?

Follow-Up

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ What is your system for tracking progress on delegated projects for which you are responsible? Give me an example.
- ▶ Give me examples of how you monitor the satisfaction of your internal/external customers.
- ▶ Have you ever delegated an assignment that was not completed on time? What happened? What did you do?

Initiative

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Have you ever suggested new ideas to your manager? What were they and what happened?
- ▶ Tell me the steps you have taken to improve your skills or performance. What was the result?
- ▶ What do you do differently from your peers that makes your work unique? Give me an example.

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- ▶ What would you describe as your greatest professional/work achievement? How did you achieve it?
- ▶ Give me an example of a time when you took on a responsibility that was not assigned to you but needed to be done.

Inspiring and Guiding Others

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a time that you inspired someone to work hard to do a good job. How did you do it? What was the result?
- ▶ Give me an example of a time that you were able to get someone outside of your department/team to cooperate with you on an important project/assignment.

Integrity

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Can you give me an example of a time that you had to bend an organizational practice or policy to get your work done more efficiently?
- ▶ Have you ever been faced with a situation when the line between confidential information and public knowledge was blurred? What did you do?
- ▶ Have you ever been in a situation where your manager asked you to do something that you did not think was appropriate? What did you do?

Organizational Fit

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ When considering a new job opportunity, what elements—such as job responsibilities, location, and hours of work—are important to you?
- ▶ What do you consider to be your three greatest strengths? Give me an example of when you used each of these strengths.
- ▶ What skill do you feel you need to develop the most? Why?
- ▶ Describe some specific tasks or conditions you found frustrating. How did you handle them?
- ▶ Describe the style of management under which you work most effectively. Why do you prefer this style?
- ▶ Tell me about a time you received constructive criticism. What was it? How did it

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make you feel when you received it? What did you do to improve?

Planning and Organizing

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Describe your system of planning and organizing your work. Give me an example of how this system helped you do your job.
- ▶ Walk me through a recent or typical workday and explain how you planned the day's activities.
- ▶ Tell me about a time you were faced with conflicting priorities. How did you determine what was the top priority?
- ▶ Tell about a time you were responsible for planning an event and had very limited resources. How did you overcome this obstacle?

Problem Solving and Judgment

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Give me an example of a time you were unsure what your internal/external customer wanted. How did you handle the situation?
- ▶ Tell me about a time that you had to get information by asking many questions of several people. What was the result?
- ▶ Describe the biggest work-related problem you recently faced. How did you handle it?

Sales Ability

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Describe a time when you had to use a different approach because your initial approach failed to sell or persuade another.
- ▶ Tell me about the most successful time you sold an internal/external customer a product or idea. What did you do to make it successful?
- ▶ Tell me about a time that you felt you had a good idea for solving a problem, but were unable to convince others to try your idea. What did you do? Why was it rejected?

Service Quality

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Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Describe what you do to control errors in your work.
- ▶ How do you know if your customers are satisfied with the quality of service they receive from you? Give me a specific example.
- ▶ Describe a time you identified an error or problem that could have had a negative impact on the customer. What did you do?

Teamwork

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a time when you had to work with a team member who was not pulling his/her weight. How did you handle it?
- ▶ Tell me about the most effective team you have worked with. What made them effective? What role did you play in the team?
- ▶ Have you ever helped a coworker improve his or her performance at work? Tell me about a specific instance.

Tenacity

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Tell me about a time when one of your customers was experiencing repeated problems with your company's products or services. What did you do to solve that customer's problem?
- ▶ Describe a situation when you tried your hardest, but were unable to achieve your desired result. What did you do? Why were you unsuccessful?
- ▶ Tell me about a project/task you were involved in where you faced a major obstacle. What did you do to get around that obstacle?

Tolerance for Stress

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Describe one of the most challenging interactions you have had with an internal/external customer. What happened?
- ▶ Describe the most stressful work situation you have faced. Why was it stressful and how did you react?

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- ▶ Tell me about a time that you faced unrealistic/unreasonable goals or expectations. How did you respond/handle it?

Work Standards

Sample interview questions for this competency are as follows:

- ▶ Describe your standards of success in your job. What have you done to meet those standards?
- ▶ Describe a situation in which your results did not meet your manager's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- ▶ When evaluating your direct reports' performance, what factors are most important to you?
- ▶ Tell me about a time when your work was above standard and a time it was below standard. What were some reasons for the difference in performance?

Job Preferences/Job Fit

- ▶ Tell me about a time when you were asked to change your schedule unexpectedly. How did you feel about it? How did you handle it?
- ▶ What types of responsibilities do you like most?
- ▶ What types of responsibilities do you like least?
- ▶ When you imagine yourself sitting at your desk, working hard, with a smile on your face, what type of job are you doing?
- ▶ When you imagine yourself frustrated and stressed at work, what is going on?
- ▶ What behaviors does your current organization value or reward? Are they important to you?
- ▶ What do you like most about your current work environment?
- ▶ Why or how did you choose your current location?
- ▶ What makes one location more desirable to you than another?
- ▶ Can you describe your dream job?
- ▶ If you could change one thing about your current job, what would it be?