

MASTERING COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS

Competency-based interview questions play a crucial role in helping employers assess whether you possess the requisite skills for a given role.

They shift the focus from mere qualifications and industry experience to identifying crucial skills such as teamwork, communication, decision-making, and leadership.

In this guide, we will walk you through the process of preparing for these interviews, ensuring your responses are detailed and insightful, thereby enhancing your chances of securing the role. The guide covers:

1. Identifying key competencies
2. Relating these competencies to your experience
3. Structuring your responses
4. Researching the company
5. Preparing for behavioural questions

HOW TO PREPARE

During the interview, maintain a calm and confident demeanour. Take your time to contemplate before responding, and don't hesitate to seek clarification if necessary. Remember, the interview serves as an opportunity for both parties to evaluate the fit, so be authentic and let your genuine qualities shine through.

Identify key competencies related to the job

Commence by scrutinising the job description to pinpoint the key competencies the employer is seeking. Common competencies include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability, and time management. Compile a list of these competencies and gain a thorough understanding of each one.

Relate your experience to the competencies

For each competency, recall instances from your past experiences that showcase the required skills. Focus on specific examples highlighting your achievements and contributions. When responding to questions, incorporate how your competencies facilitated success and explain how these abilities can benefit your potential employer. Since you might not know the competencies in advance, run through your examples, noting down each relevant competency for flexibility in responding to unexpected queries.

Structure your responses with the STAR technique

The STAR technique (Situation, Task, Action, Result) is a proven method for structuring responses in competency-based interviews.

- **Situation:** Describe the context or situation.
- **Task:** Explain the task or challenge.
- **Action:** Detail the actions taken to address the situation.
- **Result:** Conclude with the positive outcomes or results.

This method ensures structured, focused responses that present a comprehensive picture of your abilities. Practice your examples using the STAR technique, consider mock interviews for feedback, and refine your responses for increased comfort and clarity.

Research, Research, Research

Beyond understanding competencies, delve into the company's values, mission, and culture. Tailor your examples to align with their goals, illustrating how your skills and experiences make you an ideal fit. Explore their company page, LinkedIn, and news articles for insights.

Preparing for behavioural questions

Competency-based interviews often involve behavioural questions starting with phrases like "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of..." Be ready to discuss specific situations related to identified competencies, ensuring your answers portray your abilities positively while showcasing versatility.

When preparing examples, aim to demonstrate versatility in your skills. Employers value candidates who can adapt competencies to various situations. Emphasise your ability to apply skills in different contexts and highlight your flexibility.

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