Competency Based Interviews

“Please **give an example** of when …”

“Please **describe** a situation when…”

**Tell me about a** time/situation/difficulty….”

“**How do you/would you**”

For HR and Training professionals there are 3 areas of competency:

- Technical HR competencies
- Business Partnering competencies
- Professional HR competencies
Be prepared and get ahead...

Identify the competencies for the job you have applied to from the job description and the company’s values and mission statement.

**Examples from the job description could be:**
- Managing and leading a team
- Negotiation and influencing skills
- Problem solving and analytical approach

Create your own competency based questions to practice how you could evidence examples of these at interview by simply prefixing an element within the criteria with one of the examples at the top of the page.

**For example**

“How do you develop the people in your current team?” (Managing and leading a team)

“Tell me about a time when you were able to significantly change someone’s point of view?” (Negotiation and influencing skills)

**Describe a situation** when you had to gather a large amount of data to analyse objectively and make a decision or a recommendation based on the results?”
Competencies within the HR Discipline

Within the HR sector, Competency Based Interviewing is standard so expect technical (for example a good working knowledge of HR policy and legislation), behavioral and professional competency based questions in your interview.

These will typically explore the core competencies regarded as essential in this discipline. Communication and interpersonal skills

- Planning and Organisation
- Problem Solving and decision making
- Team Work
- Coaching and mentoring
- Consultation
- Conflict management and pressure

For Senior HR and Personnel positions, questions can deal with:

- Your skills with managing a large team
- Your ability to create HR policy
- Your ability to design and deliver change
- Strong commercial and sector awareness
- Your ability to manage a large department
- Your experience with developing effective strategies

KELTA HR’s 3 steps to interview success

- Look at the job and person spec
- Plan which criteria you feel could be measured in the job interview
- Select from this list of example competency based questions the ones that you feel enable you to evidence the key skills and criteria required. (We suggest 5 or 6)
Don’t forget to apply the star technique to your answers

Apply the STAR technique to your answers

**S - Situation:** Describe context, scale, size etc.

**T – Task:** Duty, responsibility, problem, task etc

**A – Action:** What you did to solve/avoid problem/issue

**R – Result:** What was the outcome, what you learnt, observations including what you would do differently next time

Then simply practice......
Sample Job interview Questions/ Competencies for HR and Training roles

It is important that you are up to date with all legislation. What do you know about …? (For example the Equality Act 2010)?

What is the reason for grievance procedures and tell us about your experience in handling grievances?

Provide an example of when you had to diffuse a difficult situation?

How have you shaped HR objectives into business goals?

Provide an example where your influence had a direct bearing on an employee's performance targets?

Give examples of how you exerted your influence at a board/senior management meeting and how you have managed to have a direct impact on business strategy?

Part of the role will involve setting challenging and measurable goals and targets for the HR team. How would you do this?

As a HR Manager how would you ensure that you represent our company in the most positive light when dealing with the unions and other external bodies?

As a Head of Human Resources you will be expected to foster a climate of continuous process improvement. How would you achieve this?

Tell me about a time when you were specifically able to change someone's point of view.

Tell me about a time when you were specifically asked to do something you disagreed with.

Tell me about a time when you were successful in getting crucial information from another person.

Tell me about a time when someone misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate to them.

What kinds of people do you enjoy working with?

Tell me about the last time you had a disagreement with someone.

What skills and personal qualities have you contributed to the teams you have been part of?

Tell me about a time when your work or an idea was criticised.

Tell me about a time when you felt under pressure.

Tell me about a major problem you have encountered and how you dealt with it?

Tell me about a time when you acted over and above the expectations of your role.

What are the three most important events in your career to date?
How would you motivate an employee who was performing poorly?
What significant problems have you faced in the last year?
What is the toughest decision you have had to make while at your present company?
Tell me about a time when you bent the rules. When is it okay to do so?
If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
What do you feel qualifies you for this position?
What type of leadership style do you adopt?
How would those you have led describe you?
Explain a mistake you have made in delegating—what were the consequences?
In what instance would you delegate a task?
Give an example of an instance when you have had an argument with someone at work? What was the outcome?
How do you react if your boss asks you to do something which conflicts with your own deadlines?
How would you resolve a dispute?
Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?
What makes a good manager?
Suggestions of questions you could ask at the interview...

- Where have other people who have done this position in the past progressed?
- How would you describe the team / culture? / could you tell me a bit about the company culture?
- What is the most challenging aspect I would face in the role?
- What’s the most important priority for this job?
- What are the other people in the department like?
- What sort of one-off projects might I be given?
- What is the turnover of staff like throughout the company?
- Where will the job fit into the team structure?
- What are the measures used to judge how successful I am in the role?