



Behavioral Interview Questions

The following lists do not constitute exhaustive questions relating to the established competencies. Good additional behavioral questions may be developed through analysis of the competency language in the job description.

Questions for Public Sector Core Competencies

INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

1. Have you ever worked for a public organization? If so, tell me why that agency exists? How does it serve the public?
2. Tell me about a situation when you were asked to do something that you thought was a conflict of interest. How did you deal with the situation?
3. You notice a co-worker is taking the sweetener packets out of the break room at work for his/her personal use at home. What do you do?

WORK ETHIC

4. Tell me about a last minute assignment that put you under a short deadline. How did you accomplish the task on time? How accurate was your end result?
5. After being given an assignment, how do you prepare to "tackle" the assignment?
6. Tell me about a time that you exceeded a co-worker or boss' expectations.
7. It is thirty minutes before the end of the official work day. You have just finished a large project. What do you do in those last thirty minutes of the day?
8. Tell me about a time when you were asked to complete a task that you didn't know anything about. How did you complete the task?
9. Describe a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
10. You have a co-worker who is on a deadline for a project. It is almost five o'clock and you are ready to

walk out the door. The co-worker asks you to stay and help her finish up her project. How do you react?

11. Tell me about the most challenging task you have ever been faced with. What did you do to meet that challenge?

SERVICE ORIENTATION

12. Tell me about a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations. How did it make the customer feel? How did it make you feel?

13. Tell me about a time that you had to go out of your immediate network/job duties to help a customer.

14. Tell me about the worst customer you ever had and how you dealt with him/her.

15. Tell me about a time that a customer came to you angry (not necessarily at you) and how you worked with that customer to solve the issue.

16. Describe the steps you would take if a customer came to you with a problem you could solve at your job level.

17. Describe the steps you would take if a customer came to you with a problem that was beyond your knowledge and/or responsibilities.

18. Why is follow-up important in customer service?

19. A customer comes in with a small request. The small request is not a priority for you but you realize that they have the potential to use your services extensively in the future. How do you ensure that the customer has a good experience and will want to come back to you in the future?

20. Describe a situation where you were given exceptional customer service. What made it stand out?

21. Give me an example of when you were given special recognition or acknowledgment for going the extra mile to satisfy a customer.

22. Describe a situation when you took a stand for a customer.

23. Have you ever had a customer get angry at something that wasn't your fault? If so, please explain.

24. Describe the steps you would use to calm an angry customer.

25. Describe a recent situation when you didn't know with whom you needed to speak with in an organization to get something done. What did you do?

COMMUNICATION SKILLS/STYLES

26. Have you ever worked with a person whose first language was something besides English or that had a disability that inhibited your ability to understand them? If so, please explain how you overcame the situation.
27. Tell me about how you communicate with your current supervisor concerning project process, concerns, and suggestions.
28. One of your co-workers has a "trait" or habit that affects his relationships with other co-workers and customers. It is a difficult trait to mention but you feel it must be brought to his/her attention. How do you handle the situation?
29. Your supervisor has given you instructions to complete a project. You are not clear as to some of the details of the instructions. What do you do?
30. Your department is working on an important project. During the course of the project, you recognize a potential problem with its implementation. What do you do? During the course of this same project, you have an idea that has the potential to improve the project but you are in a lower level position that may not get respect from upper management. What do you do?
31. Describe how you handle rude, difficult, or impatient people.
32. Describe a recent situation in which you asked for advice.
33. Describe a recent situation in which you asked for help.
34. If you had a project due and a co-worker wanted to talk about something else, what would you do?

SELF DEVELOPMENT

35. Tell me about a time you had to learn a new skill in order to do your job.
36. Tell me about the most recent class or learning activity you participated in that was not a work requirement.
37. What is a subject, related to your job, which you would like to learn more about? Why?
38. After participating in a learning activity, how do you bring that knowledge back to the workplace?
39. Tell me about a time that you had to seek new ideas and approaches to allow you to complete a project.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

40. Tell me about a recent professional goal you set for yourself. What steps are you taking to reach that goal?
41. Tell me about a stressful work situation you have experienced and how you dealt with it.
42. Tell me about a time when you saw a potential conflict between yourself and another co-worker or between two of your co-workers. What did you do to help prevent the conflict?
43. Tell me about a time when you had to follow a superior's orders when you did not agree with them.
44. Tell me about a performance standard that you have set for yourself. For example, make 40 widgets in 4 hours without any mistakes or answer the phone by the second ring 9 out of 10 times. How are you working towards meeting that standard?
45. Tell me about a time that it was REALLY important to be focused on the task at hand but you kept getting interrupted. What did you do to ensure your focus was where it needed to be?
46. You are given outlined procedures to complete your job tasks but know that if you skip some of the formalities, you can complete your job more quickly. What do you do?
47. Describe a situation when you had to exercise a significant amount of self-control.
48. A fellow employee told you what his/her salary is and wants to know yours. How would you react and what would you do?
49. Tell me about a time that you were given an unwelcome assignment. What did you do?
50. Describe how you work under pressure. Do you anticipate problems effectively or do you just react to them?
51. Tell me about a time that you were given inadequate resources to get a job done. How were you able to complete the job?
52. Tell me about a team project you were involved in. What did you do to ensure the success of the team?
53. Tell me about the things you like about your current or most recent job.
54. Tell me what your least favorite part or parts are of your current or most recent job.
55. Your supervisor asks you to complete a task that you cannot stand doing. How do you react to him/her?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

56. Tell me about a conflict you have had with a superior. How did you resolve the conflict? How did you work towards mending the relationship with that superior?
57. Tell me about a situation where you were involved in a conflict. What did you do to resolve that conflict?
58. Describe the types of people you get along with best and why.
59. Describe the types of people you have difficulty getting along with and why.
60. Tell me about your relationship with a co-worker who you work well with.
61. Tell me about your relationship with a co-worker who you do not have a good working relationship. What steps have you taken to improve that relationship?
62. You have a co-worker who is swamped with a huge project. He/She doesn't think there is a light at the end of a tunnel. What do you do to help him/her through the project?
63. You have 2 co-workers who have formed an "alliance" and seem to make work difficult for everyone. How do you handle the situation?
64. You are assigned to a team project with 2 co-workers that you do not particularly like. How do you manage to make the team project successful while dealing with your personal feelings towards the two?
65. Give me an example of a situation where you had difficulties with a team member. What, if anything, did you do to resolve the difficulties?
66. Describe your relationship with the people you work with.

ACCOUNTABILITY

67. At your current or most recent job, what tasks do you routinely perform? How do these tasks relate to the overall functioning of the organization?
68. Tell me about a time that you were assigned a very difficult task. What resources did you use to accomplish the task? How did you delegate your time to accomplish the task?
69. You are given one and a half hours to throw together a luncheon for a client meeting. How do you get the lunch ready in time?
70. Describe a complex problem you solved.

71. Tell me about a time you had to take responsibility for a mistake you made.
72. Describe the thought process you go through when faced with making a tough decision.
73. How do you show commitment to your current or most recent organization?
74. Tell me about how your current or most recent job fits into the organization and how it contributes to the overall mission of the organization.
75. You are responsible for ordering the supplies for your office. How do you ensure that you are using the state's assets in the most appropriate way?
76. Describe a work situation in which you weren't proud of your performance. What did you learn from the situation?
77. Describe a recent project in which you failed. What did you learn from this?
78. Describe how your current department is organized.
79. How do you ensure that your work is accurate and consistent?

Questions for Management Competencies

These questions, used in conjunction with the previous questions, can be useful in interviewing for supervisory and management positions.

SELF MANAGEMENT

1. Tell me about the professional organizations in which you are currently involved.
2. Have you ever served on a committee or as an officer of a professional organization? If yes, please explain the position and the duties.
3. What have you gotten out of being involved in professional organizations?
4. How do you keep current on what's going on in your field?
5. What books and magazines have you read or classes you have taken to keep abreast of what's new in your field?
6. What learning activities have you been involved with since college/high school?
7. In what ways have you invested in yourself to improve your performance?
8. Give me an example that illustrates how other people have used you as a resource for knowledge in your field.
9. What are your future professional goals? How do you plan to achieve them? What might keep you from achieving them?
10. Tell me about a professional risk you took. What was the outcome?
11. Tell me about one of the most recent challenges you were subjected to. Were you able to turn it into an opportunity? Please explain.
12. Give me an example of when you were able to meet the personal and professional demands in your life yet still maintain a healthy balance.
13. Tell me what you would do if two of your co-workers had a personal problem between them that was interfering with your work. How would you handle it?
14. What's been the greatest influence on your career plans?

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

15. Give me an example of when you were able to apply a concept, theory or knowledge to a work problem or situation.
16. Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative and took action without waiting for direction. What was the outcome?
17. Describe how something you learned made a significant difference on your career.
18. Give me an example of when you did not know enough about something to be effective. How did you handle it?
19. Describe the last time you had to make or implement a difficult decision that one or more people didn't like. How did you handle it? How did you handle their displeasure?
20. Tell me about a time when you were given a deadline by someone of higher authority which could not possibly be met. How did you handle it?
21. Tell me about a time you had to "choose your battles carefully."
22. Tell me about the time when someone has lost his/her temper at you in a business environment.
23. Describe situations you have been under pressure in which you feel you handled well.
24. Given a situation when you disagree with your supervisor, how would you deal with it?
25. Looking back now, is there anything that you could have done to improve your relationship with that one bad boss?
26. Please tell me a situation where you were in a dilemma to make a decision and how you dealt with it.
27. Tell me about a work situation in which you thought something wasn't "fair." What made it unfair? What would have made it "fair?"
28. Describe a recent situation that you just couldn't handle.
29. Tell me about your last situation with an unhappy customer. What did you do?
30. How would you handle an angry supervisor?
31. Describe how you felt when a team you were on wanted to make a decision that you didn't agree with.

32. Describe a recent situation in which you had to quickly establish your credibility and gain the confidence of others. What did you do?
33. Describe a time when you had to take on something very new or different and you had little or no guidance and support in doing so. How did you handle it?
34. Has competition had any positive or negative impact on your achievements? How?
35. How would you characterize your leadership and use of authority?
36. How would you deal with a subordinate who violated a company policy?

WORKING THROUGH OTHERS

37. You and your work team are given two hours to come up with a report on violence in the workplace, a subject you know very little about. You are given the job of team leader. How do you get the report done in 2 hours?
38. Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for inappropriate behavior.
39. Describe your proudest professional achievement that involved helping improve the performance of someone you supervised.
40. Assume you have received a job with a new company and are assigned to manage 15 to 20 people. Most of them are long-term employees with definite ideas about the "old way being the best way." Your assignment is to get these people to support wholesale changes going on in the company. Outline your plan for achieving their support and participation.
41. What have you done in the past to build rapport and relationships with people?
42. Give me an example of your ability to communicate effectively and build relationships with people regardless of cultural differences.
43. Tell me about a time when you had to conduct a particularly difficult employee counseling or corrective session. How did you prepare for the session? Did you delay having it? How long?
44. Give me an example of one of the most significant contributions you made as a member of a high performing team. What, in your opinion, made it a high performing team? Describe how you felt about the contributions of other team members.
45. Describe a situation where the team was having trouble agreeing on a decision and what you did to facilitate consensus.

46. Give me an example of when you were on a team that failed to meet its objectives. What could the team have done differently?
47. What role do you take in a group situation?
48. What would you do if some team members weren't doing their share of the work?
49. What are the most important qualities in a person who will supervise other people?
50. What would you do if one of your team members who was getting older began to be unable to handle his end of the very physical job your division has. How would you handle it?
51. As a department manager, how would you establish staff rapport?
52. Explain how you motivate others to work more efficiently.
53. How would you handle an angry co-worker?
54. You asked a co-worker to complete a task to help move a project forward. When they complete the task, they bring it to you for your approval. You see they have made a good effort but have completed it incorrectly. How do you handle the situation?

MACRO ORIENTED

55. Tell me about a change that has occurred in your current or most recent workplace. How did you cope with those changes? What did you do to facilitate those changes?
56. Tell me about the most difficult work-related change or project you've ever been through. Describe your role and your feelings about the change.
57. Give me an example of the most significant professional goal you have met. How did you achieve it? What were your obstacles? How did you overcome them?
58. Tell me about an instance where you represent your current or most recent organization to an outside entity.
59. Tell me about how you represent your current or most recent organization to your co-workers and internal customers.
60. Has your job ever changed because of reorganization? Please explain how you handled the situation.
61. Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for tardiness.

62. Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for missing work.
63. Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for missing a deadline.

RESULTS ORIENTED

64. What changes do you see your profession or industry making in order to stay competitive?
65. Give me an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal.
66. Tell me about a time when you overcame great obstacles to achieve something significant.
67. Describe a recent situation in which it took several tries or approaches before you were able to figure out what was going on.
68. Describe projects that have required accuracy and attention to detail.
69. Finish this sentence: "Successful managers are the ones who....."
70. In relation to others, how do you grade yourself on taking initiative?
71. What organizational techniques do you use to manage your workload?
72. Describe the biggest change you have brought to your current company.
73. Tell me about a professional mistake or error you made. What was the outcome? What, if anything would you do differently? What did you learn from it?
74. How do you evaluate your own work? What do you do with the results of those evaluations?
75. Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?
76. Describe how your ability to communicate effectively and build relationships with many different types of people has contributed to one of your greatest accomplishments.
77. Give me an example of when you achieved something by your persistence that others couldn't.
78. Tell me about a time when you had a project or work due on a deadline and you got sick the night before it was due and weren't able to go to work the next day. How did you handle the situation?
79. Tell me about a time when you had two or more things which absolutely had to be completed on the same

day (multiple first priorities). How did you handle the situation?

80. If we contacted your current or most recent supervisor for reference comments, what do you think he or she would say about you?

Interpersonal Skills

81. Give me an example of a situation when you have demonstrated sensitivity to diversity issues.

82. Describe the ideal supervisor/employee relationship.

83. Give me an example of when you identified with someone else's difficulties at work. What, if anything, did you do to help them?

84. Give me an example of a time when a company policy or action hurt people. What, if anything, did you do to mitigate the negative consequences to people?

85. Describe a situation when you were criticized for being too concerned about the difficulties of others.

86. Describe a recent situation in which what was really going on with someone else was much more complicated than it might have seemed on the surface.

87. Describe how you go about mentoring an employee.

88. Tell me about a time when two people you supervised got "crossed up" and their upset spilled over into their work. How did you handle the situation?

89. Describe a recent situation when miscommunication created a problem on the job.

90. Have you prepared and communicated ideas and information in a formal setting? Please explain.

91. When have your verbal communications been important enough to follow-up in writing?

92. How have you developed your interpersonal skills?

93. How do you communicate with people at different levels?

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

94. Tell me about a time when an employee you supervised disagreed with you about a work issue and suggested an alternate way the issue might be addressed. How did you handle that?

95. When faced with layoffs, how would you decide who to let go?

96. Give me an example of when your ability to manage your time and priorities proved to be an asset.
97. What have you done in the past that demonstrates your commitment to continuous improvement?
98. How do you delegate responsibility?
99. How do you select the most appropriate candidate for a position?
100. Give me an example of when you had to make a decision in favor of your own self-interest or someone else's. What were your thoughts and feelings? What did you do?

