

## CORE COMPETENCIES WITH CORRESPONDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED S.T.A.R. ANSWERS

### Competency: Knowledge

**Reason for asking:** To gain insight into your understanding related to the job. Your answers should include quantifiable results relating your experience to the responsibilities on the job description.

**Sample question:** Give me an example of how you executed the product development process?

**Response:**

*Situation:* I was responsible for the product launch of the new 'xyz' widget.

*Task:* We had 30 days to launch the product.

*Action:* Here you would describe the steps you went through such as idea generation, idea analysis, concept testing, business feasibility, product development, test market, and launch.

*Result:* Launch was on time and increased revenue by 15% and market share by 5%.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe your design experience as it relates to the development of our products.
- Walk me through the code you wrote for the design of the new widget.
- Give me an example of how you reduced costs.

## Competency: Team work

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your ability to work with others and how well you share and receive information. Your answers should highlight how you collaborate with co-workers and listen to the ideas of others.

**Sample question:** Give me an example of a team you've participated on.

**Response:**

*Situation:* I participated on a team with accounting.

*Task:* Improve the billing cycle.

*Action:* I flowcharted the existing processes and then together as a team we identified numerous process flow improvement opportunities. Our team worked to improve the processes. (Note: you would want to give at least one example of a process that wasn't working.)

*Result:* In the end, we reduced the billing cycle from 7 to 3 days.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe some of the challenges you faced being on the team and how you worked through them.
- How did you handle the non-performer on the team?
- If you were the team lead, provide examples of how you kept the team on track.

## Competency: Integrity

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your ability to respect confidential information and organizational regulations. Your answers should highlight how you conduct work in accordance with the policies of the organization as well as your commitment to completing work assignments.

**Sample question:** Has your manager or supervisor ever asked you to do something you were uncomfortable with?

**Response:**

**Situation:** My supervisor was having an issue with another department so he was making us delay the orders.

**Task:** We're tasked with turning orders around in 48 hours.

**Action:** I had a conversation with my boss.

**Result:** He listened and agreed that the priority was getting the orders out to our customers.

*Other questions might include:*

- Tell me about a mistake you made?
- Tell me about a time you witnessed a fellow employee doing something against company policy? What did you do?

## Competency: Leader

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your ability to be a team lead, manager or leader. Your responses should include your experience related to being a mentor, taking charge, directing the work of others and being an exemplary leader.

**Sample question:** Give me an example of how you established goals for your department and gained buy-in from your team.

**Response:**

*Situation:* Every department in our Company conducts an annual planning process.

*Task:* Conducted department meetings to determine goals.

*Action:* I had the team submit goals they felt the department should achieve for the year. In department meetings we discussed the goals until we all agreed which ones to work toward. Each team member is assigned the responsibility to track our progress for a particular goal.

*Result:* Our department consistently met our goals. Even more than that, we grew stronger as a team.

*Other questions might include:*

- Give me an example of a time when you successfully got your way.
- How do you convince others your plan is the best way?
- How do you motivate a team of employees?

## Competency: Problem Solving

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your methodology in diagnosing problems. Your answers should exemplify your ability to identify cause and affect relationships and select the appropriate solution.

**Sample question:** Tell me about a time you incurred a problem on a project. How did you diagnose the problem? What were the steps you took to solve the problem?

**Response:**

*Situation:* We were having a particular product returned by customers.

*Task:* I was tasked with determining the reason for the return.

*Action:* I reached out to some of the customers. Based on the feedback, I analyzed the product and was able to determine there was a defective part. At this point I briefed management on the solution required.

*Result:* Management decided to stop production of the product.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe the most difficult problem you've had to deal with.
- What are some of the day-to-day problems you have to deal with?

## Competency: Decision Making

**Reason for Asking:** Gain insight into your ability to make good decisions based on information gathered and analyzed. Your answers should include your methodology in making decisions and your commitment to the decision.

**Sample question:** Give me an example of a decision you made on a direction to take as a team member or as a manager. What criteria did you use in making that decision?

### **Response:**

**Situation:** As a team lead I was responsible for deciding what projects the team would take on.

**Task:** Analyzed projects as they were assigned to our department.

**Action:** First, I reviewed each project in relation to corporate goals. I had to consider the scope of the project, the complexity, the duration to complete, cost to complete, resources available, and any other contributing factors.

**Result:** Setting our team up for success.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe some of the decisions you have to make on a daily basis.
- What's the toughest decision you ever had to make?

## Competency: Adaptability

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your ability to adapt quickly to changing directions, work with demanding personnel, and coping with stress. Your answers should include the ability to meet organizational needs as they change as well as your ability to work with a diverse population.

**Sample question:** Give me an example when you had to drop everything and change gears. How did you feel?

### **Response:**

**Situation:** Recently I was given a project to analyze the costs on a particular build. The deadline was in a couple of weeks. It was going to be a lot of work. I was about half way finished with the project when my boss told me to drop it and start this other project.

**Task:** I did what my boss asked and started working on the other project.

**Action:** Since I was so close to finishing the first project I kept working on it, too because I knew how critical it was. I was okay with having to work a little extra.

**Result:** I was able to get both projects completed on time.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe a time you had competing priorities and how you handled them?
- Give me an example of a difficult work situation and how you handled it?
- Describe a time when you received negative feedback on your performance and how you handled it?

## Competency: Planning and Organizing

**Reason for asking:** Gain an insight into how you plan and organize your work to accomplish your tasks efficiently and on time. Your answers should show your methodology of how you plan your work to meet deadlines as well as how you keep organized when working on multiple projects.

**Sample question:** Provide an example of a project you were assigned. Explain how you planned your work to complete the project. How did you stay organized to make sure you stayed on track?

**Response:**

*Situation:* I led a project to revise the applicant onboarding process. My finished project was due in eight months.

*Task:* Organize a team to review and revise the onboarding process.

*Action:* First, I sent out inquiries to individuals who might have a need to participate. At our first meeting I brought a flow chart of the existing process. As a team we outlined the changes needed and I assigned tasks. Then I put together a timeline for the project of the tasks and their completion date in order to meet the overall due date for the project. I kept a spreadsheet of progress and sent weekly reminders. The team met weekly to discuss any issues or roadblocks. I maintained a shared folder so everyone had access to the data.

*Result:* We completed the project on time and ended up with a best practice onboarding process.

*Other questions might include:*

- How do you stay organized with all the projects you're work on?
- How do you plan your day?

## Competency: Communication

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your communication experience both verbal and written. Your answers should include your ability to gather information and present clearly your ideas as well as your ability to listen.

**Sample question:** Give me an example of any written types of documentation you've developed.

### **Response:**

**Situation:** Hiring managers were asking inappropriate questions during interviews.

**Task:** I developed and delivered a training program on best hiring practices to train new hiring managers.

**Action:** The program included tips on how to handle the interview from the time the applicant arrived until they left. The training included how to conduct small talk, behavioral based interviewing, what questions could put the company at risk, how to structure the interview, and how to end the interviews.

**Result:** Once completed, I rolled out the program and it was well received. We didn't have any more complaints from candidates.

*Other questions might include:*

- Give me an example of when you had to deliver a speech.
- Give me an example of a complex process you had to explain to someone.
- Describe the types of reports you have to prepare.

## Competency: Detail Oriented

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight on the responsibility you take to ensure accuracy in your work. Your answers should include your awareness of maintaining high work standards and your concern for the quality of the finished product.

**Sample question:** How do you control mistakes in your work?

**Response:**

**Situation:** Let me tell you about a recent mistake I made. I included the incorrect salary in an offer letter.

**Task:** I'm tasked with sending out all the offers.

**Action:** I contacted the applicant and they understood the mistake.

**Result:** I put a process into place where I had someone review my offers before they went out.

*Other questions might include:*

- How do you know if your work is correct?
- Tell me about a time when you weren't pleased with your work performance. What did you do about it?

## Competency: Motivation

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into your taking the initiative in your work. Your answers should show your effort in going the extra mile, your enthusiasm for your work, and your ability to be productive under minimal supervision.

**Sample question:** Describe a time you've improved a process.

### **Response:**

**Situation:** In my job as a customer service rep I respond to a lot of questions customers have. The department didn't have a 'frequently asked questions' sheet with how to respond. So every customer service rep had to find out the answers to the same questions.

**Task:** I started a 'frequently asked questions' list with responses so that all the customer service reps could use.

**Action:** I collected the questions customer services reps were being asked and listed them on an excel spreadsheet that I made sure everyone had access to. Then, I researched the best way to respond, including links on the spreadsheet to useful information regarding our products.

**Result:** This expedited the time we spent on the phone and provided for better customer service.

*Other questions might include:*

- Tell me about some of the teams you've worked on.
- Describe a time when you saw a need at work and acted on it.

## Competency: Ability to Prioritize

**Reason for asking:** Gain insight into how you handle multiple projects. Your answers should include your thought process into how you decide what to work on when, how you deal with competing priorities and your effectiveness in prioritizing your work.

**Sample question:** Describe a time you had competing priorities? What did you do?

### **Response:**

*Situation:* I support three executives.

*Task:* I get work assignments from them that have competing deadlines.

*Action:* Normally I can prioritize but sometimes I do have to go to the executives and explain the situation and ask them to prioritize what I should be working on.

*Result:* If I didn't ask them to prioritize and I don't get the work done, they might think I'm not doing my job. So in the end the work gets done and that's what matters the most.

*Other questions might include:*

- Describe to me how you determine what is most important to work on.
- Describe how you accomplish a project with a limited budget and resources.