

# Competency Based Questions

The following are examples of Competency questions you can use in your interviews using the STAR method to question soft skills in key areas.

## STAR Method

**S**ITUATION – what the situation was, where and when

**T**ASK – they should outline the task, challenge or nature of the issue

**A**CTION – they should explain how they approached the task and the actions they took

**R**ESULT – what were the outcomes?



**For each question you have:**

**Options A)** being suitable for candidates with very little work experience

**Options B)** for candidates with significant work experience

You also have probing questions to help you get the candidate to expand on their answers.

## Leading and Decision Making

Meaning: Makes prompt, clear decisions that may involve tough choices or considered risks. Takes responsibility for actions, projects, and people. Takes the initiative, acts with confidence and works under their own direction. Initiates and generates activity.

### Question Options:

- A) Describe a situation that required you to make a particularly prompt decision.**
- What was the situation?
  - What factors and risks did you consider?
  - How comfortable were you making this decision?
  - What did you learn?
- B) Give me an example of a situation where you had to take the initiative and control of a situation.**
- Why was this necessary?
  - How effective did you feel you were and why?
  - What would you do differently next time?
- B) Tell me about a time when you had to take responsibility for a group of people/person/object.**
- What did you do and why?
  - What was particularly successful?
  - What was less successful?

## Resilience

Meaning: Works productively in a pressurised environment. Keeps emotions under control during difficult situations. Maintains a positive outlook. Displays grit and determination to succeed even in the most challenging of environments.

### Question Options:

- A) Tell me a time when you have had to push yourself hard to achieve a challenging goal, objective or target.**
- What was the goal/object/target?
  - How did you approach the task?
  - How did you ensure you kept motivated throughout the task?
  - What was the outcome?
- B) Tell me about a time in the workplace when you had to make an effort not to give up on a task or project?**
- What was the task/project?
  - How did you feel about the task?
  - How did you motivate yourself to carry on with the task or project?
  - What was the eventual outcome?
- B) Describe a situation where you felt you were working under a high degree of pressure.**
- How did it affect your behaviour?
  - What did you do to maintain the quality of your work?
  - What did you learn from the situation?

## Results Driven

Meaning: Accepts and tackles demanding goals with enthusiasm. Sets high standards for quality and quantity. Consistently achieves project goals. Works hard and puts in longer hours when it is necessary.

### Question Options:

- A) Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.**
- What was the goal/target?
  - Why was the goal important to you?
  - What obstacles did you come across?
  - Would you do anything differently?
- B) Describe a particularly stretching target that you have worked towards.**
- What was the target and how was it set?
  - How did you go about tackling the target?
  - How successful were you in reaching the goal?
  - Looking back, would you have done anything differently?
- B) Give me an example of a time when you have spotted and developed a business opportunity and seen it through to completion.**
- What was this opportunity?
  - Why did you think it was worthwhile?
  - What was the final outcome?
  - Looking back, would you have done anything differently?

## Planning and Organising

Meaning: Sets clearly defined objectives. Plans activities and projects well in advance and takes account of possible changing circumstances. Manages time effectively. Monitors performance against deadlines and milestones.

### Question Options:

- A) Can you give me an example of where your time management skills have positively or negatively influenced a task or situation?**
- What was the task?
  - Why was time management central to the task?
  - What was the outcome?
  - What did you learn from this?
- B) Tell me about an instance when you needed to organise time and resources to complete a project?**
- How did you identify the resources necessary?
  - What did you do to organise the time involved to complete the project?
  - How did you monitor the progress of the project?
  - What was the outcome?
  - On reflection, would you have done anything differently?
- B) Outline for me 2 examples of where you have had to manage multiple tasks/jobs/projects at the same time to achieve a positive result?**
- Please outline each situation
  - What obstacle did you face?
  - What factors did you have to take into consideration?
  - How did you remain on course?
  - What was the outcome?
  - What did you learn that you can apply to a similar situation next time?

## Analysis and Problem Solving

Meaning: Demonstrates a rapid understanding of newly presented information.  
Manages knowledge. Gathers information to support decision-making.  
Produces a range of solutions to problems.

### Question Options:

**A) Tell me about a time when you have had to create your own solution to complete a difficult task/objective?**

- What was the task?
- How did you reach the decision to create your own solution?
- What was the outcome?
- What did you learn?

**B) Give me an example of a time when you developed a new or different solution to a particular problem.**

- What was the problem?
- Why did you think the problem needed a solution?
- What feedback did you receive on how it was working?

**B) Give an example of a time when you had to produce a document/presentation and tailor it to suit a particular audience (e.g. Customer, manager, client)**

- How did you know it had to be tailored?
- How did you structure the information you needed to include in the document/presentation to suit the audience?
- How successful was the document in reaching the audience you were targeting?
- What would you do differently next time?

## Persuading and Influencing

Meaning: Makes a strong personal impression on others. Gains clear agreement and commitment from others by persuading, convincing and negotiating in a structured way. Promotes ideas on behalf of self or others.

### Question Options:

**A) Tell me about a time when it was important that you made a good impression on someone.**

- Why was this important?
- How did you go about ensuring that you made a good impression?
- What obstacles did you feel you had to overcome?
- How do you feel it went?

**A) Tell me about a time where you had difficulty persuading someone around to your point of view.**

- What was the difficulty?
- How did you try to persuade them?
- How successful were you?
- What would you do differently next time?

**B) Give me an example of when you have successfully promoted an idea on behalf of you or others.**

- What did you do to promote this idea?
- How did you influence your target audience?
- How did you know that your target audience was really convinced?

**B) Tell me about a time when you negotiated yourself a good deal.**

- What was the situation and who were you negotiating with?
- Why did you try and negotiate?
- How did you deal with the reaction?
- What was the outcome?
- What did you learn from this?