

# Tips and Tricks for Interviewees

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## Planning

- Prepare in advance. Ask for the job description if you don't already have it and then make sure that you consider the skills, experience and competencies required which are likely to be asked about during your interview. Sometimes these are detailed within the job description but they may not be.
- Identify examples from your past experience which you can use to demonstrate that you possess the necessary skills and competencies. Learn to narrate the story using the STAR method outlined below. This means setting the scene, explaining how you handled the situation by placing the emphasis on your role, and detailing the outcome/result.
- Know your CV - it's essential to be able to explain what's on your CV: why your experience is relevant, your work history, why you left previous jobs, what your ambitions are, and what you're like as a person.
- Be prepared to ask your own questions of the interviewer not only to ensure that the company and the job on offer are right for you but also as a way of demonstrating your genuine interest in the role. Think about what is important to you – this may be areas of the job requirements itself, development opportunities, the working environment and culture, the size and structure of the department you would be working in, the company's future plans and objectives.
- Research the company – review their website, social media presence, any news articles related to them
- Research the people who will be interviewing you – having an idea of their background may help you establish some early synergy and possibly give you an indication of how they have developed within the company you are interviewing with.

## At the interview

- Dress appropriately, even if it's a virtual interview! Smart office wear is recommended unless you are specifically told otherwise but even then it's best to be cautious at going too casual.
  - Have your questions ready and in a format where you can easily refer to them – usually you will be given the opportunity to put your questions forward towards the end of the interview.
  - Be an active listener and make sure you answer the question being answered. If you are not sure you have heard or understood a question correctly, ask for it to be repeated or clarified.
  - Make eye contact with the person/people interviewing you, try to relax as much as you can and be yourself. The interviewer(s) will not only be looking to assess your experience and attributes but also how you would fit in with their company, its culture and the team you would be working within.
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- At the end of the interview, reconfirm your interest, thank the interviewers for their time and ask what the next steps are and when you are likely to have a decision from the company regarding those next steps.

## Competency based interview and the STAR approach

Competency based interviews are designed to assess your knowledge, skills and attitude. In such an interview, each question is designed to test one or more specific competency that is necessary for the job you are interviewing for. For example - you might have good interpersonal skills (skills), but will not be competent to join a company as a Vessel Operations Manager unless you possess adequate experience (knowledge) and the right temperament/behaviour (attitude). Competency interviews can help provide valuable insights into an individual's preferred style of working and help predict behaviours in future situations.

**The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) approach** is a widely used technique developed to obtain meaningful answers to questions designed to demonstrate previous experiences and situations and how competent you are in a particular skillset. It is recommended that you answer questions as follows:

**Situation** – give an example of a situation where you applied the competency in question

**Task** – explain what the task was you were looking to achieve

**Actions** – describe what actions you took to fulfil the task. Make sure you focus on what you did personally rather than 'the team'.

**Results** – what was the outcome

Remember to:

- Be honest: you should answer what you did personally; don't lie or embellish the truth
  - Provide details: make sure your interviewer knows exactly what you did and why you did it
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## Examples of competencies and questions to assess them

### Creating solutions

#### Question 1

Can you think of a recent problem in which old solutions wouldn't work? How did you solve the problem?

#### Question 2

What is the most imaginative or innovative task you have done in your present position?

#### Question 3

Do you sometimes see a way of doing something better when other people seem to be floundering or casting about?

#### Question 4

Tell me about a new business idea that you have had in the last twelve months?

#### Question 5

What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me about what you have devised?

#### Question 6

Describe the last problem in your organisation that was solved in a highly imaginative manner. What part did you play?

#### Question 7

What do you do differently from your predecessors in your present position?

### Teamwork

#### Question 1

Describe a situation where you were successful in getting people to work together effectively?

#### Question 2

Describe a situation in which you were a member (not a leader) of a team and a conflict arose within the team. What did you do?

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## Examples of competencies and questions to assess them cont..

### Influencing or persuading others

#### Question 1

Tell me about a time when you were able to change someone's view point significantly?

#### Question 2

Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you disagreed with?

### Results Orientation

- Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a goal.
- Tell me about a time when you improved the way things were typically done on the job.
- Describe something you have done to improve the performance of your work unit.
- Describe something you have done to maximise or improve the use of resources beyond your own work unit to achieve improved results.

### Impact and Influence

- Describe a recent situation in which you convinced an individual or a group to do something.
- Describe a time when you went through a series of steps to influence an individual or a group on an important issue.
- Describe a situation in which you needed to influence different stakeholders with differing perspectives.

### Relationship Building

- Describe a situation in which you developed an effective win/win relationship with a stakeholder or client. How did you go about building the relationship?
- Tell me about a time when you relied on a contact in your network to help you with a work related task or problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you deliberately attempted to build rapport with a co-worker or customer.

### Resource Management

- Describe a situation in which you took a creative approach to resourcing to achieve a goal.
  - Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a particular resource management issue regarding people, materials, or assets.
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## Examples of competencies and questions to assess them cont..

- Describe the options you would consider to resource a project or goal if you did not have the available resources within your own span of control.
- Describe a situation in which you established a partnership with another organization or stakeholder to achieve a mutual goal. What steps did you take to ensure the partnership was effective?

### Self-Management

- Describe the level of stress in your job and what you do to manage it.
- Describe a time when you were in a high pressure situation.
- Describe a time when things didn't turn out as you had planned and you had to analyze the situation to address the issue.

### Strategic Thinking

- Describe a challenge or opportunity you identified based on your industry knowledge and how you developed a strategy to respond to it.
  - Describe a time you created a strategy to achieve a longer term business objective.
  - Describe a time when you used your business knowledge to understand a specific business situation.
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