

CMD RECRUITMENT



A Guide To Competency Based Questions



Preparing for competency based questions

1

When you are asked competency based questions, the interviewer is looking for specific details in your answers.

2

We've looked at 5 common examples of questions and answers highlighting what the employer might be looking for.

3

We've also given some tips and advice on how to prepare for the answers so you are interview-ready.

Q1: “Give me a situation where you have worked within a team to achieve a goal?”

What they're looking for:

Alongside clearly demonstrating an example of when you have worked within a team to achieve a goal, the interviewer will be assessing your abilities and soft skill set. You need to connect the example directly to the skills you have that enabled you to achieve a goal.

Give evidence of planning, interacting closely with other people, negotiation, diplomacy, great communication and analysis, explain how you managed to solve problems.

You want to be identified as pro-active, someone who can make a valuable contribution. Show them you care about the work you do for companies.

An example of what you might say:

“Our goal was to attract entry level talent to the company. I created a jobs fair event at a central hotel in the city, designed and printed flyers and gave them to students at the local colleges and Universities. I had to create a planner and timetable leading up to the event, as well as a registration system to record who was coming. When they arrived at the event, I needed a way to track who was interested in new roles at the company so I had an I-Pad to take names and contact details. I had a company job information pack made to promote the benefits of working for the company.”



Q2: “Explain where you overcame a problem and what you might do differently if you were faced with it again?”

What they're looking for:

Your ability to solve problems and self identify areas of improvement.

The interviewer wants to know that you can analyse a situation, learn from it and come up with the best solutions to implement for future practice.

This is not about how well you performed. This is about being able to learn from experience and to recognise there's always a way to refine and improve. Demonstrate that you are always thinking about better ways to do things, even when you have done well in the first place.

An example of what you might say:

“I was asked to organise a way to ensure everyone in the office had an idea of what the others were doing on any given day. We used a piece of software that shared information between staff and it worked to a point, but not everybody was invested or used the system so some people were invisible to others.

If I had to rethink this I would ensure in the morning, after emails were read, that we stood around in a circle in a short ten minute meeting and explained what we were working on that day. That way, no one would hide from view and everyone could explain issues they had or if they needed something, that would present an opportunity to make a request.”



Q3: "What's your greatest achievement?"

What they're looking for:

They want to know what motivates you, what you value, how you view success, ambition alongside certain soft skills such as communication, leadership potential, teamwork, adaptability, creativity and problem-solving

This question is open for you to relate to your work life or personal life – for instance, if you have run a marathon or are involved in a charity. Just remember to think about your values and best qualities. try to highlight them, be specific and be yourself.

An example of what you might say:

"Last year my current company completely changed software systems. I was required to learn the completely new software and teach my fellow colleagues. To tackle this challenge, I took further online demos in my own time to ensure I fully understood the new software. I find that when there is a major change in the workplace it's best to take the learning curve head on as a positive challenge. I felt well-equipped to teach my fellow colleagues the new software and encouraged a positive attitude throughout the office."



Q4: “What is the biggest change you have dealt with in work? How did you adjust to it?”

What they're looking for:

Foremost the interviewer will be looking for your adaptability and flexibility to embrace change.

Alongside this, they will be discovering whether you can maintain a positive and adaptable attitude through changing environments, that you can learn to live with ambiguity and uncertainty and will maintain morale.

This is also an opportunity to demonstrate self reflect and new skills you may have learned through this journey.

You should be able to demonstrate you can adapt to new systems, ways of working, challenging situations and different environments – as the more able you are to be flexible to change – the quicker you will be able to make progress after change.

Follow this technique:

S = Situation. *In what context did your greatest accomplishment occur?*

T = Task. *What challenges did you face or what goal did you want to achieve?*

A = Action. *What action did you take? What skills did you use?*

R = Result. *What was the result? What did you learn from the experience? Why is this your greatest accomplishment?*



Q5: “Tell us about an incident where you had to deal with a conflict in a team?”

What they're looking for:

This is a behavioral interview question determining your response to conflict resolution and your soft skills surrounding it.

Employers will be looking to hear that you value diversity in opinions, that you can demonstrate your powers of diplomacy, emotional intelligence, the ability to manage a conflict and promote a positive outcome.

They might be wanting to see what you are made of. Are you the sort of person who hides away from the conflicts or do you rise to the challenge of finding resolutions and calming situations down?

Top tips:

To set a positive tone, begin your response by acknowledging the difficulty of the situation.

Demonstrate your diplomacy, compromise and compassion.

Be clear on how you value diversity in opinions with the undertone of promoting a peaceful coexistence between colleagues.





Final Advice

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Preparation is key. By thinking about your answers and practicing them beforehand, you will be able to dazzle the interviewer by demonstrating your experience. Consider your competencies ahead of time and you will be fully prepared.
- 2

Think about what the interviewer is looking for. Research the company to understand their key values. Think beyond the question, what soft skills are they trying to identify?
- 3

Interviewers may word the question differently but the key elements will remain the same. Identify these ahead of time so you are ready for the questions.
- 4

Take time before you respond. It's easy for nerves to make you rush your response. Once the question is asked, take a moment, breathe and think about your answer before responding.
- 5

Maximise your opportunity to shine. By preparing responses and taking time to think about what the interviewer might be looking for, you can use this opportunity to showcase all your abilities surrounding that question.

If you want to find a great job that's perfect for your skills or you would like more advice on a role you have seen advertised by CMD, contact one of our friendly Consultants, who will be happy to help you.