

## COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS

- Well structured, each **question** targeting a specific skill or **competency relating to the role you have applied to**. Individuals are asked **questions** relating to their approach in specific work situations, which should be answered with relevant examples.
- Examples would include "Can you give us an example of..." or "Can you describe how you would deal with...". If you haven't had any direct experience of the subject then you could choose to state that you haven't but if you were to you would handle it in such a way – this is a preferable response than opting out.
- In order to confidently structure your answer it is recommended you adopt the *STAR technique*, this breaks it down into **Situation or Task, Action** and **Result**
  - Situation or Task - you begin by outlining the situation or task and what part you played in it, what were you tasked with? Example: "I was Finance lead in the implementation of Oracle accounting software"
  - Action – What did you do? Timeframe? Include relevant detail "This project was anticipated to take 10 months, whilst maintaining full responsibility for the daily finance function. I allocated 1.5 days per week to the implementation, initiating weekly meeting and discussing progress with the other 5 members of the role-out team"
  - Result – What did you achieve? What new skills did you learn? "Oracle went live 2 months ago, 1 month earlier than anticipated and has been rolled out across our 2 main manufacturing sites. Im delighted to have been instrumental in it, gaining recognition from our Board of Directors for the work involved"

Competencies relevant to the accountancy sector may include;

**Knowledge** - "Can you give us an example of how you have implemented the recent tax changes in your company?"

In your reply ensure relevance and a solid technical understanding of the subject area.

**Planning and Organising** - "What work objectives did you set for this year and what steps have you taken to ensure you will achieve them?"

In your reply demonstrate that you can develop specific objectives and plan and prioritise systematically to accomplish these objectives within set time frames. This includes scheduling, identifying and allocating resources and the use of appropriate tools.

**Information and Task Monitoring** - "Can you describe how you monitor the performance of your team?"

In your reply include effective procedures for information collection and review. Describe how you monitor projects and check the progress of delegated tasks.

**Problem Analysis and Assessment** - "Can you describe your most difficult accountancy task you have faced and how you overcame it?."

In your reply demonstrate a calm and measured approach, explain the logical break down of the task mentioned and the requirement for effective relationships.

**Decision-Making** - "Can you share with us what has been the most important decision you made at work recently?"

In your reply discuss how you determined a suitable and effective decision based on factual information, accurate assessment and consideration of the alternatives. Include how you communicated your decision with colleagues.

**Attention to Detail and Accuracy** - "Give me an example of when you were not happy with the details of an established procedure and what you did about it."

In your reply demonstrate your requirement for high standards, both on your yourself and others within the team. Scrutiny on the accuracy and reliability of data being paramount and the measures you put in place to maintain strong working practice..

**Interpersonal Communication** - "Describe a time that you had to present financial data to non-financial staff."

In your reply show your ability to clearly and effectively give information to individuals or a group, how you are able to adjust your communication style to suit your audience and simplify complex information to enable understanding.

**Motivation** - "Can you summarise the main reason why you chose a career in accountancy?"

In your reply demonstrate drive and ambition towards your career within accountancy, the achievement of targets, goals and industry qualifications is attractive to an employer.