

BEHAVIOR-BASED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Office of Human Resources – Employment

ADAPTABILITY

Definition: Maintains effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment; adjusts effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures.

Many jobs in state government require employees to be effective in various situations. Some jobs involve a wide range of tasks while other jobs require work with clients and/or individuals who have different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds.

Possible Questions – ADAPTABILITY

1. Describe how you adjusted when priorities or procedures were changed.
2. Describe a work situation when you interacted with people from different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Were you effective? How?
3. How have you remained effective in your job when you experienced changes such as reorganization, a new supervisor, new procedures, legislative changes, or conflicting priorities?
4. Have you ever had to move from one group to another? What adjustments did you have to make?
5. What strategies would you use in a small group meeting if there were divergent opinions or solutions proposed to solve a problem?
6. Have you ever had the primary mission of your job or a task change completely in a short period of time? What did you do?

ANALYTICAL THINKING

Definition: Identifies issues; obtains relevant information, relates and compares data from different sources, and identifies alternative solutions.

All jobs call for some degree of analysis to evaluate a situation and find problems or opportunities -- or, to anticipate potential problems or opportunities. The people in these jobs must be able to do two things. First, they must gather and analyze the facts that will show the critical issues of a problem or opportunity. Second, they must find the most likely causes and possible solutions. There are many kinds of analysis: financial, quantitative, operational, organizational, staffing, and scientific. Each requires different ways of finding causes and solutions.

Possible Questions – ANALYTICAL THINKING

1. All of us are surprised occasionally to discover that the services we are performing for clients are not working. What steps did you take to correct a situation like this?
2. Using accurate information obtained from expert sources is the best information. What sources of information do you use in your job?

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3. Describe the sources of information you have used to accomplish a project within the last 12 months. What did you do with the information?
4. Describe a situation in which you had potential barriers to success in a project. How did you overcome the barriers? Did you succeed?
5. Recall a difficult work problem you have encountered within the last 12 months. Explain how you identified the critical issues. What solutions did you develop?

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Definition: Accomplishes tasks and processes accurately and completely.

Some jobs need people who can handle both the small and large parts of a task. Such individuals won't overlook what needs to be done and can be depended on to do each task accurately and completely.

Possible Questions – ATTENTION TO DETAIL

1. How do you insure that all parts of a task, both large and small, are accomplished without any of them being overlooked?
2. Give some instances when you found errors in your work. How did you find them? How did you correct them?
3. Describe a situation in which some aspect of a project or task was overlooked. What were the causes of the omission and what were the results? How did you correct the mistakes?
4. Describe a situation when a project you were working on did not meet established deadlines. What caused the delay(s)? What did you do?
How do you stay on track when you are constantly interrupted while working on a project?

BUILDING WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Definition: Works effectively with others, outside the line of formal authority, to accomplish organization goals and to identify and resolve problem.

Individuals often find themselves in the middle of challenging relationships that require great skill to handle. Because most activities outside of the immediate work unit involve a number of people, Collaboration is important. Collaboration will make the best use of resources when no direct reporting relationship exists. Collaboration is different from Teamwork because Collaboration refers to working with other employees outside of your immediate work group. An employee might work with individuals in other units, divisions, or Agencies within or outside of North Carolina State Government, or the general public.

Possible Questions – BUILDING WORK RELATIONSHIPS

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1. Describe how you handled a problem relationship with someone from another work unit, division or agency.
2. Explain how you worked with someone outside your immediate work group to accomplish a common goal.
3. How have you identified and resolved a problem with others outside your normal line of authority?
4. Discuss a situation in which you were assigned to work in a group and had to share your knowledge, resources, etc. with the group and they had to share theirs with you.
5. Describe a situation in which you and another member of a work group had different opinions about a topic. What happened?

CAREER AND/OR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Definition: Plans and supports the development of others using a competency based system. Identifies skills and abilities to fulfill current or future job/role responsibilities more effectively.

Many jobs need people who care about making all employees as effective as possible and who can identify employee's weaknesses, design or locate the right development situations, and motivate employees to develop themselves. Supervisors need to make sure they develop their staff in their current jobs. This behavior is closely linked to the competencies of Coaching or Training. Development of Employees focuses more on the long-range development of employees.

Possible Questions – CAREER AND/OR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

1. If you or someone else in your work unit were to be absent for an extended period of time, how would their work be accomplished?
2. Have any of your subordinates ever been promoted to a position of more responsibility?
3. Were they successful? Why?
4. Describe your least effective employee's weaknesses and what you have done to strengthen them.
5. Do you have a training program or a development plan for your employees? Describe it.
6. Give some examples of times when you delegated projects to employees to provide them with opportunities to develop additional skills. Did they develop them? Why or why not?

CLIENT/CUSTOMER SERVICES

Definition: Develops and maintains strong relationships with clients (those who buy goods and services and for whom formal professional services are rendered) or customers (those who consume goods and services) by listening to the client/customer and understanding and responding to identified needs.

To most citizens, the contact person is the organization. In their eyes, the organization is only as competent, knowledgeable, courteous, and reliable as the person who represents it.

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Possible Questions – CLIENT/CUSTOMER SERVICES

1. How do you anticipate customer needs?
2. How do you check for customer satisfaction?
3. Describe a situation when you did not “pass the buck” but accepted responsibility for the outcome.
4. Relate some instances when you continued through a course of action or followed up afterwards to insure customer satisfaction.
5. Define empathy. How do empathize with customers?
6. Who are your internal customers? How do you interact successfully with them?

COACHING/MENTORING

Definition: Provides guidance and feedback to help an employee or groups of employees strengthen their knowledge and skills to accomplish a task or solve a problem, which in turn improves job performance.

The effort into coaching will pay off for the employee, the supervisor, and the State of North Carolina. Effective coaching helps avoid performance and work habit problems, while building the confidence, commitment, and skills people need to handle their work and achieve their performance expectations. When people work more effectively, productivity increases and there is more time to complete the important aspects of the job.

Possible Questions – COACHING/MENTORING

1. What steps do you take to correct your employees’ performance or work habit problems?
2. What do you do to build employees’ confidence, commitment, and skills?
3. Describe some employees who have become more successful and productive as a result of your management.
4. Give some examples of delegating work to subordinates in order to provide them development opportunities. What happened?
5. Have you ever conducted an interim review with an employee? What steps did you take?
6. Have you ever had an employee who had difficulty completing tasks? What action did you take with that employee?
7. Giving negative feedback about job performance to an employee is very difficult. What methods of giving negative feedback have you used which seem successful?

COMMUNICATION - ORAL

Definition: Conveys information orally to individuals or groups to ensure that they understand the message. Listens and responds appropriately to messages from others.

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Many jobs require people who can speak effectively. The focus is on the form of the communication, not the content. Oral Communication focuses more on informal day-to-day expression of thoughts, ideas, and information. Oral Presentation is more appropriate for jobs that require frequent formal and/or planned presentations.

Possible Questions – COMMUNICATION-ORAL

1. What steps do you take to insure adequate understanding of information by different audiences when you are communicating?
2. Give two examples of presentations you were required to give and how you accomplished them?
3. What different approaches do you use when talking to different groups of people?
4. Give three examples of incidents when you communicated information to a client and the client remarked that they did not understand it. What steps did you take to correct the situation?
5. All of us have had situations where we had difficulty explaining a subject over the phone. How have you corrected those situations when they occurred?
6. What complicated concepts, ideas, policies or practices have you had to explain?

COMMUNICATION – PRESENTATIONS

Definition: Develops presentations using a variety of media and presents ideas effectively to individuals or groups; delivers presentations suited to the characteristics and needs of the audience.

Some employees must make prepared presentations. Generally, such presentations are planned and can be given before large groups (business briefings) or individuals. The key to the presentation's success is that the speaker has time to prepare. The presentation must follow a logical sequence, develop issues and ideas succinctly, state needs and recommendations clearly, and address the listener's goals and levels of understanding.

Possible Questions – COMMUNICATION-PRESENTATIONS

1. What steps do you take to prepare for a presentation?
2. How do you determine an audience's needs, interests, attitudes and level of awareness?
3. Describe a presentation you made within the last 12 months. What kind of feedback did you get?
4. Describe a situation when you tailored a presentation to fit the needs of the audience?
5. How do you handle difficult questions or check for clarity during public speaking?

COMMUNICATION - WRITTEN

Definition: Conveys written information to individuals or groups to ensure that they understand the message.

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Varying levels of writing skills are required for different jobs. The ability to convey ideas is important. The extent to which proper grammar and form are important depends on both the job and the method of communication.

Possible Questions – COMMUNICATION-WRITTEN

1. When do you prefer written communication versus oral communication?
2. How do you evaluate and edit your own writing for grammar, spelling, style, and content?
3. What types of reports have you written?
4. What has been your most difficult writing assignment and why?
5. How do you ensure that the reader understands the message you are sending?

COORDINATION - OPERATIONS

Definition: Facilitates flow of work for a process or procedure; sets up ongoing procedures to collect and review information and monitors or regulates those procedures, tasks, or activities.

Some jobs require the employees to track and control activities, assignments, tasks, and projects. This can be done through direct observation, reports, systems, etc.

Possible Questions – COORDINATION-OPERATIONS

1. How do you check to see that assignments are accomplished?
2. Describe procedures you use to monitor your own job activities and responsibilities or to monitor the tasks and activities of employees.
3. Do you keep minutes of your meetings or notes of discussions? What do you do with them?

COORDINATION - WORK

Definition: Follows instructions through a standard work process; performs routine tasks; checks work for accuracy before completion of tasks.

Some jobs require a person who can do all the steps in a specific process, such as laboratory work, medical work, economics, educational research, mechanical or physical production, and office/administrative work while maintaining consistency. This is important in maintaining quality control with any activity.

Possible Questions – COORDINATION-WORK

1. How do you maintain quality control standards?
2. Review the step-by-step procedures to accomplish a task in your job.
3. Explain how to operate a piece of workplace equipment/machinery from start to finish.
4. How do you maintain consistency in each part of your job?

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CREATIVITY

Definition: Generates innovative solutions in work situations; tries different and novel ways to deal with work problems and opportunities.

Some jobs require creativity when handling tasks or solving problems. Creativity/Innovation is often shown by an employee's support of creativity in others. (Creativity/Innovation in hobbies and non-job-related areas is not relevant)

Possible Questions - CREATIVITY

1. Describe the most innovative or creative thing you have done in your work experience.
2. Have you ever had a problem that the usual techniques could not resolve? What did you do to solve it?
3. Describe a positive change in your organization resulting from one of your original ideas.
4. How do you do things differently now than you did five (5) years ago?
5. What is the most unusual approach you undertook to resolve a problem?

DECISION MAKING

Definition: Identifies and understands opportunities, issues, and problems; uses effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions and/or reaching conclusions; takes action consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.

In addition to analyzing problems, people often must reach a conclusion, make a recommendation, or take action. With available information, individuals must make decisions on time and take action without waiting for more information or guidance. Decisiveness deals with the number of decisions made and the time it takes to reach conclusions. The quality of the decision or conclusions is covered by Judgment, and independent variable. A quick decision or action (high decisiveness) might be sound (good judgment) or unsound (poor judgment).

Possible Questions – DECISION MAKING

1. Explain how you adjust your daily routine when priorities change.
2. Describe a difficult situation you have experienced within the last 12 months? What did you do?
3. Describe a project with critical deadlines to meet and how you met them.
4. Have you ever had to postpone action on a project to allow yourself more time to think? What happened?
5. Describe a situation where you rendered a snap decision based on available information and altered the course of action. What were the results? Were they positive or negative?

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EQUIPMENT OPERATION

Definition: Uses specific equipment or machines to meet defined quality and quantity standards.

Word processing equipment, copy machine, bulldozer, forklift, motor vehicles, medical equipment, lab equipment, kitchen appliances, laundry machines, electronic equipment, and boilers -- all are examples of machines or equipment that might be required for a job. It is appropriate to define the level of operation required as part of the definition.

Possible Questions – EQUIPMENT OPERATION

1. What equipment are you trained to operate? How do you use it to accomplish your job?
2. Explain the safety precautions you use when you are operating your equipment.
3. Are you responsible for maintaining and repairing your equipment? How do you do it?
4. How do you maximize the usage of your equipment to achieve success?

INITIATIVE

Definition: Takes prompt action to accomplish objectives; takes action to achieve goals beyond what is required; being proactive.

Taking action beyond what is necessarily called for in order to achieve goals; originating action. Most jobs require people who will take actions beyond their job responsibilities. The person high in Initiative will originate actions rather than respond to the requests of others. Most people control their own and others' resources, activities, and time. It's impossible for management to specify all that needs to be done to achieve the job's goals. Thus, people must continually evaluate, select, and act in different ways to meet their goals.

Possible Questions - INITIATIVE

1. List two or three suggestions or new ideas you have presented to your supervisor in the past 12 months. Why did you suggest each one? Were your ideas implemented?
2. Name some problems you have tried to solve before being instructed to do so.
3. What was the last difficult work problem you offered to help solve?
4. Describe some situations in which a project was accomplished primarily due to your actions. What actions did you take?
5. Give some examples of actions you took which were beyond what is normally expected from someone in your position. Why did you take those actions? What were the results?
6. Describe a new idea you have originated to improve work efficiency or make the job easier. How did you get that idea implemented?

INTEGRITY

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Definition: Maintains social, ethical, and organizational norms; firmly adheres to codes of conduct and ethical principles.

Most jobs demand that individuals do what is morally and ethically right as well as fast. It might be possible at times to get away with something without being found out. It is important that employees do what is morally and ethically right.

Possible Questions - INTEGRITY

1. Discuss an instance when you could not honor a commitment or had to renege on a promise? How did you notify affected persons? Did they understand?
2. Most regulations leave some leeway for interpretation. Discuss a few examples of when you had to stretch or bend the rules.
3. Describe a situation where you broke a rule or came close to breaking it. What were your reasons?
4. Have you ever had to confess or admit to a mistake in the workplace? Discuss the situation.
5. Describe some instances when you kept commitments to others even to your own detriment? Do you feel you did the right thing?
6. What action(s) have you taken when you observed others breaking the rules?

JUDGMENT

Definition: Weighs alternative actions and makes decisions that incorporate opinions, facts, tangible and/or intangible factors.

Decisions are based upon logical assumptions that take into consideration the organization's resources. Many jobs require people to make decisions in several areas. Once all pertinent and available information has been analyzed and alternatives have been developed, individuals must consider the pros and cons of each alternative and select the best one. Judgment specifically deals with the quality of decisions based on given or available information. Judgment, therefore, is strongly related to analysis. If a poor decision was made because of inadequate information, evaluate Analysis, not Judgment. If the employee decided not to obtain or consider information and a poor decision resulted, look at Judgment.

Possible Questions – JUDGEMENT

1. Give two or three examples of good decisions you have made within the last 12 months. How do you know they were good?
2. Describe a difficult decision you have had to make within the last 12 months. What were some alternatives? Why did you choose the one you did?
3. Describe a situation in which you involved others in a decision making process. Why did you include the others?
4. Discuss the pros and cons of an important decision you made at work?

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5. Have you ever made a decision that had a negative impact at work? What caused the negative results? Why?

KNOWLEDGE

Definition(s): Knowledge - Professional: Achieves a satisfactory level of professional skill and/or knowledge in specific area(s) and keeps current with developments and trends in area(s) of expertise. NOTE: Where more than one area of professional knowledge is required, more than one Knowledge competency may be listed or specific needs may be documented in competency profile. For example, if a job requires engineering and biological knowledge, Knowledge competency factors may include Knowledge (Engineering) and Knowledge (Biology). Typically earned in an academic setting resulting in at least a four-year degree.

Knowledge - Technical: Achieves a satisfactory level of technical skill or knowledge in a specific technical area(s) and keeps up with current developments and trends in areas of expertise. May be acquired through academic, apprenticeship or on-the-job training or a combination of these. NOTE: Where more than one area of technical knowledge is required, more than one Knowledge competency may be listed or specific needs may be documented in competency profile.

State Agencies need employees who stay current on methods/practices in order to maintain expertise in their field (e.g. engineering semiconductors, physiology).

Possible Questions - KNOWLEDGE

1. What are the market conditions and trends in your field?
2. What resources do you use to maintain your proficiency and expertise in your field? What seminars or workshops have you recently attended?
3. What degrees, training, certifications, licenses, or continuing education credits do you currently possess?
4. How up-to-date is your knowledge of the mechanical and/or technical aspects of this field? Are you comfortable with the state of the art technologies?
5. To which technical or professional organizations do you belong? To which magazines and newsletters do you subscribe?

LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Definition: Using proper interaction skills and methods to guide individuals or groups to accomplish work.

Maintaining group cohesiveness and cooperation; helping group process and gaining agreement/commitment to ideas, plans, or course of action. Supervisors must be able to influence and be influenced by others. In doing so they must accurately assess the skills, feelings, concerns, and needs of others. They must explain government policies, procedures, and objectives. They must model the enthusiasm, hardworking attitude, competence, and commitment to quality and growth that they expect

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from others. With their own staff or groups, they must be able to build a cohesive and cooperative team while, at the same time, honestly confronting issues that occur at all levels of the organization.

Possible Questions – LEADERSHIP and INFLUENCE

1. What did you do to gain the cooperation of a difficult group?
2. How did you gain employees' commitment to a new policy or procedure?
3. What do you do to maintain trust and unity among employees?
4. How do you accurately assess the skills, feelings, concerns, and needs of others? What do you do with this information? How do you use this information to lead the group?
5. What do you do specifically to model energy, enthusiasm, competence, commitment, and a hard working attitude for others?

MANAGING WORK AND PERFORMANCE

Definition: Assigns work and establishes work rules and acceptable levels of quality and quantity of work; reviews work and measures performance of others, and develops individuals' competencies.

Research indicates that setting challenging, attainable program goals that are accepted by management and employees leads to high performance. Establishing Performance Goals (Objectives) will ensure that the performance of each employee contributes to your objectives and the plan of the organization. Goals help employees establish clear courses of action and remove any uncertainties about the job. Accomplishment of goals provides a sense of achievement.

Possible Questions – MANAGING WORK AND PERFORMANCE

1. Have you ever conducted the initial or interim review of an annual work plan with subordinates? How did you do it?
2. How do you gain an employee's commitment to your organization's goals?
3. How do you monitor and review the progress of employees towards program goals?
4. Have you ever involved employees in establishing program goals? How did you do it? What were the results?
5. Have you ever supervised employees who did not achieve their program goals? What were the causes of their failure? What did you do?

MANAGING WORK PROCESSES

Definition: Measures and evaluates work processes, services and products to achieve organizational goals. Redesigns process as needed using best methods and technology to meet or exceed business needs. Uses appropriate methods to identify opportunities, implement solutions, and measure impact.

All managerial and some individual jobs need people who can track and control activities, assignments, tasks, and projects. Monitoring devices include direct observation, requests for written or oral reports,

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and feedback and reporting systems. Information Monitoring is associated with Delegation because it deals with following up delegations to track effectiveness and determine where help is needed. However, Information Monitoring also applies to activities beyond those of employees. Effective information monitoring systems prevent surprises and letdowns because progress, trends, and changes are tracked, monitored, and reported.

Possible Questions – MANAGING WORK PROCESSES

1. How do you stay abreast of processes, tasks, and activities in your workplace?
2. What types of monitoring devices do you use to track and control activities in your job?
3. How do you follow up on responsibilities you have delegated to employees?
4. Have you ever had an employee who needed help to accomplish tasks? How did you reach the conclusion that the employee needed help?
5. How do you track the effectiveness of your employees' efforts?

NEGOTIATION

Definition: Confers with others to reach resolution; explores alternatives and positions to reach outcomes that gain the support and acceptance of all parties.

Some jobs require people who know when to give in on a point and when to stand firm. They know when to argue their case, raise questions, and make compromises in the best interests of all parties. Negotiation can be between peers and co-workers, supervisor and employee, or involve a citizen, supplier, or other outside agencies. Though related to Leadership/Influence, Negotiation focuses on the ability to deal with actual differences of opinion and conflicting interests.

Possible Questions - NEGOTIATION

1. Describe your most satisfying experience in gaining support for an action from a group who initially had a conflicting interest.
2. Discuss two instances where you had to compromise with other groups.
3. How do you handle co-workers, supervisors, employees, outside agencies, or private citizens who have a different opinion than you do about an important issue involving your program?
4. Explain how you settled a disagreement or problem among opposing parties.
5. Describe your action when your ideas were challenged during a presentation.

OBJECTIVITY

Definition: Is aware that personal prejudices, biases, and experiences can have an impact on making decisions; guards against allowing these factors to influence decisions.

Guarding against allowing these factors to influence decisions. Most people draw from experience when making decisions. However, letting only experience dictate the approach to a decision can lead to

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problems. Personal biases also can adversely affect judgment. Objectivity ensures that relevant information is properly and thoroughly analyzed, leading to higher quality decisions.

Possible Questions - OBJECTIVITY

1. How do you ensure that you are making sound decisions?
2. What personal biases do you have and how do you keep them from influencing your decisions?
3. Describe a situation when strong personal feelings spurred you toward a course of action. What did you do? What were the results?
4. How do you know when to offer an opinion or a judgment on an issue?
5. What do you do to separate fact from rumor in the workplace?

ORGANIZATIONAL SENSITIVITY

Definition: Understands the organization's mission, the function of the specific work unit and how it works with other work units to serve the customer/client. Understands the impact and implications of decisions on the community and other departments.

Individuals should be aware of how the decisions and actions of one department affect the rest of the organization and make decisions or requests for resources accordingly. This competency is a subset of Judgment; it deals with being aware of the needs of the community as well as the needs, expectations, or viewpoints of others. It involves the ability to see things from the "other side of the fence".

Possible Questions – ORGANIZATIONAL SENSITIVITY

1. What do you do to promote a positive image of State employees?
2. Describe a situation when you had to consider a proposed action's impact on others before implementing it.
3. How do the actions of your work unit affect other parts of the organization?
4. How do you insure other units' views are considered before you reach a decision and take action?

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING WORK

Definition: Develops plans to accomplish work operations and objectives; arranges and assigns work to use resources efficiently. Advanced planning is more of a strategic nature to develop plans, organizational structures, and systems to fulfill legislative or mission driven organizational goals.

Many jobs require people who can plan and organize for themselves and others. This includes setting goals, budgeting time, setting priorities, allowing enough time for activities, and being aware of how activities relate.

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Possible Questions – PLANNING AND ORGANIZING WORK

1. What methods and tools do you use to schedule weekly activities for yourself and your staff?
2. Describe a period when your unit had a backlog of work. What circumstances caused the delays? What did you do?
3. How do you distinguish between what is urgent and what is not when setting priorities?
4. How far ahead do you schedule your time? What is your schedule for the next 4 weeks?
5. How did you plan last month's activities for your unit?
6. Do you manage a budget for your unit? If not, how do you obtain resources for projects?

RESILIENCE

Definition: Handles disappointment and/or rejection while still working well.

Some jobs require people who can maintain motivation and professional standards despite long periods of disappointment, rejection of a point of view, or failure of a major project. This is particularly important in health and human services and regulatory jobs.

Possible Questions - RESILIENCE

1. What has been your biggest disappointment in your job? How have you responded?
2. Explain how you have maintained your motivation and professional standards during a period of heavy workload and/or a reduced workforce?
3. How do you maintain your patience and stay cooperative when dealing with irate, uncooperative people?
4. Have you ever experienced the failure of a major project or the rejection of your point of view? How did you respond?
5. Describe how you continued to persevere in your job when you experienced a lack of adequate funding or suffered equipment breakdowns.

SAFETY & HEALTH COMPLIANCE

Definition: Demonstrates an understanding of applicable policies and procedures, and maintains conditions that ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

AND

SAFETY & HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Definition: Establishes a culture of safety for employees and ensures that work processes are free from safety and health hazards, that employees are properly trained, and that programs are in place to ensure safety.

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Some jobs require people who know safety laws and regulations and recognize unsafe working conditions. Some jobs require people willing to act quickly to correct unsafe work habits and dangerous equipment or conditions.

Possible Questions – SAFETY AND HEALTH COMPLIANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1. Describe the Safety & Health regulations affecting you and your Agency.
2. What do you do to ensure the safety of your employees and the safe operation of workplace equipment?
3. Describe a situation when you discovered a safety hazard and corrected it to prevent an injury to other employees.
4. Do you have a written employee safety program? How often do you check the operation of safety equipment? How do you teach new employees the safe way to do the job? How do you inform employees about safety and health information?
5. How do you identify safety hazards and correct them before someone is injured?

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Definition: Uses a variety of information sources internal and external to the organization to identify issues and trends; studying financial, economic, and technical information to identify ways to achieve long-range goals or meet the vision of the organization.

Many employees must understand broad issues and trends, deal with unfamiliar information, and cope with unexpected changes. This requires them to use a wide general knowledge and to understand matters outside of their own professional or technical background.

This is a high-level version of Analysis, which emphasizes vision and the big picture of the organization and the outside environment.

Possible Questions – STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

1. What sources do you use to stay abreast of national and international affairs affecting your field of expertise?
2. What are the latest trends in your field? Your organization?
3. Do you work with other professionals in long term planning for your agency? What are you currently working on?
4. What technical and professional knowledge do you use to prepare plans?
5. Describe two instances when you used technical information to improve efficiency in your organization?

TEAMWORK (COOPERATION)

Definition: Actively participates as a member of a team to move toward the completion of goals.

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Active cooperation by every member is vital to team success. Team members cannot sit back and observe or allow others to do the work; they must work proactively to achieve group goals and facilitate cohesiveness. Effective teams are not just collections of people. Rather, they are an entity that is greater than the sum of its parts. This means that team members must work together closely and make every effort to support and cooperate with each other. Teamwork involves a work group, such as the people composing a self-directed work team or all the people involved on a special project.

Possible Questions - TEAMWORK

1. Describe some team projects in which you participated.
2. Have you ever served on a team that had experienced problems? What happened? How did you solve the problem?
3. Have you ever served on a team and had a different opinion than the rest of the group? What kind of agreement did you finally reach? Did you support the final decision?
4. How do you introduce your suggestions, opinions, and information to a team?
5. How do you receive information from others?

TENACITY

Definition: Stays with a job or plan until the desired objective is achieved or is no longer reasonably attainable.

Some jobs require people who when faced with obstacles, keep trying to achieve their goals. Tenacity is indicated by the number of attempts to achieve the goal.

Possible Questions - TENACITY

1. Describe a situation in which you had some difficulties in achieving desired results. How did you succeed?
2. What is a major obstacle you have had to overcome in the past 12 months?
3. Describe a situation where you had inadequate resources to accomplish your objectives and how you overcame the deficiencies to succeed anyway.
4. Describe a situation when you suddenly discovered that the results you were getting would not meet desired expectations. What did you do to rectify the situation?

TRAINING

Definition: Leads and guides others to develop new skills or knowledge that will enhance their work; designs, develops and/or delivers training programs.

BEHAVIOR-BASED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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Some jobs require individuals who can teach new workers how to use machines, complete forms, etc. Training can take place in a classroom setting or it can be on the job on an individual basis. This competency focuses on the ability to communicate technical information effectively.

Possible Questions - TRAINING

1. Describe how you trained another employee to use office machinery or to complete office forms.
2. How do you check for understanding when you are training someone?
3. If you train other employees, what is the typical level of education or experience of the participants? How do you use this information in the training?
4. What has been your most rewarding experience training someone? What has been the most frustrating?
5. What is the most difficult aspect of training for you? Why?

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING DETAILS

One theory relating to the behavioral interviewing system is the behavioral example or STAR technique. It is the most basic unit of information about the candidate. Behavioral examples are composed of the following parts:

- *Situation or Task* – The situation or task leading to the candidate's actions
- *Action* – Active attempts the candidate made to make a change or to influence events
- *Result* – The outcome of the candidate's actions

Not all behavioral examples are created equal. Only those that provide focused, job related information should be acceptable. Unusable behavioral examples (false STARS) fall into the following categories:

- Feelings or opinions: "I have always strongly believed in loyalty."
This may be a true statement, but there is no evidence that the candidate has demonstrated this. Further, is "loyalty" required in the target position?
- Theoretical statements: "If a team project were assigned, I would anticipate team supply needs."
This response gives no information about whether the candidate has actually done this before.
- Future-oriented statements: "I plan to complete the Public Managers' Program."
It doesn't count until you have done it.
- Vague statements: "My idea turned out all right and people were happy with it."
As an interviewer, ask yourself "Which idea?"
By what measure was it "all right?" Which "people" were happy and by what measure? Until the interviewer asks key questions that provide more objective information, this example cannot be used.

BEHAVIOR-BASED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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- Incomplete behavioral statements: “We were running 20% over budget. I made some changes to get the project back in line. As a result, we came in 5% under budget.”
This sounds good, but the interviewer needs to ask what the changes were. Certainly, taking unethical or illegal shortcuts would cast this example in a completely different light.

Seeking More Detail

The interviewer should seek more detail when the candidate does not provide enough of the specifics of a behavioral example to clearly illustrate the Situation or Task, Action and Result. The interviewer should:

- Clarify misunderstood questions or unclear candidate responses
- Encourage responses by reinforcing the appropriate level of detail such as “that is the kind of specificity we need. Thank you.”
- Use silence. Sometimes this technique encourages the candidate to speak.

Seeking Less Detail

Sometimes the interviewer gets more detail than necessary. This can prolong the interview or reduce time for questioning in other areas. When this happens, use the following techniques:

- Establish interview ground rules during the introduction. Ask for brief but detailed and focused answers to the questions.
- If the applicant response drifts, interrupt the candidate and redirect the discussion to a specific area.
- Summarize the discussion and transition to another area.
- Reinforce brief answers.
- Discourage lengthy answers.

Asking Follow-up Questions

- Frequently, the candidate does not give a complete behavioral example on the first question. This happens when the candidate is unfamiliar with behavioral interviewing. Remember that many candidates are accustomed to the traditional interview format and may never have participated in a behavioral interview.
- If the candidate offers a false STAR, ask a follow-up question to get a usable one.
- Even if the candidate reports a complete STAR, this can be an opportunity to seek another one to confirm or clarify the previous one.

Evaluating Responses

BEHAVIOR-BASED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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The interviewer(s) should use the same criteria in evaluating each applicant. Each candidate who exhibits the same level of effectiveness in a competency should be given the same credit. In evaluating the candidates the interviewers should pay close attention to:

- More significant behavior
- More recent behavior
- Behavior more related to the target position.