

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR STRENGTHS AND THE REQUIRED COMPETENCIES**

When applying for a position, it is important to remember that your potential employer is looking for what you are able to do as well as what you enjoy doing.

It is not always the person who answers all the competency questions well that secures the role. On occasions an employer will take on board an individual who demonstrates talent and enthusiasm for what they enjoy doing and the willingness to learn new things. With my recruitment experience, I have found that a balance of the above is what can get you the role.

Firstly we need to look at and understand what a **STRENGTH** and **COMPETENCY** is?

### **STRENGTHS**

Strengths based interviewing (SBI) looks for the areas that people feel passionate and enthusiastic about, within their work. Increasingly employers are finding this to be a more accurate measure of someone's future performance when matched to the necessary skills and strengths that a role requires. In an interview the strength is something that the individual does well and likes to do often. In an interview, the interviewer will ask questions for you to evidence the 'how do you do that?'

### **COMPETENCIES**

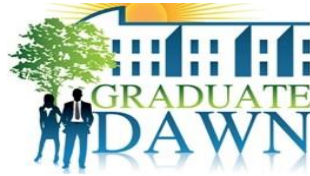
Potential employers will seek responses to different competencies, dependent on the role and type of culture they hold.

A competency question focuses on the interviewee providing examples of the ways that they have demonstrated their competency in specific areas that are important to the job. These responses come from or academic experience, previous roles or social experiences.

A competency question also allows the potential employer to understand the skills you possess and evaluate where these would be best placed.

The top 5 skills and competency areas that the majority of organisations ask questions on are;

1. **Problem Solving** - Problem solving requires two distinct types of mental skill, analytical and creative. A logical and methodical approach is best in some circumstances: e.g. you will need to be able to draw on your academic or subject



knowledge to evaluate the problem / challenge and identify solutions of a practical or technical nature.

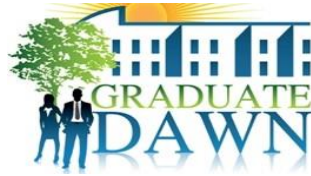
2. **Critical Thinking** - The key skills that we need in order to be able to think critically are varied include; observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, evaluation, inference, explanation, problem solving, and decision making. You need to be objective, evaluating ideas without bias.
3. **Collaboration** – How do two or more people (often groups) work together through idea sharing and thinking to accomplish a common goal? Collaboration put simply is teamwork taken to a higher level which is often observed as a physical joining of two people or a group to accomplish any given task – the gathering of ideas that get discussed in a positive and productive manner.
4. **People Management** – How you interact with people and which ultimately has a direct and profound effect upon work environment, productivity and performance? There are around 20 separate people skills that help people succeed at work including empathy, building trust, patience, positive communication, active listening skills etc. When applying for a leadership position these skills are paramount to be the best and to derive the best from your team.
5. **Creativity** – Thinking of new ideas or thinking of new ways of achieving things. Creativity is about observing things in a lateral way and using the knowledge, learning a new discipline and mastering a new way forward. What ideas have you come up with that has changed the way things were done?

Whilst seeking your answers, interviewers will also be looking at a further 5 skills / competencies from the responses you provide;

1. **Decision Making**
2. **Emotional Intelligence**
3. **Negotiation Skills**
4. **Judgement**
5. **Cognitive flexibility**

To outline these competencies in your interview and make the best impression we suggest using the STAR model.

- Situation
- Task
- Achieve
- Result



More information on the STAR model is covered in 'Preparing for your interview' and of course Graduate Dawn is here to help you prepare and make a great impression at your interview.

Contact us at [info@graduatedawn.com](mailto:info@graduatedawn.com) or call Christine on 07711562407 to discuss your requirements.