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PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Adaptability

Ability to maintain effectiveness in changing environments, tasks, responsibilities or people

1. How many times have you changed jobs? What change caused you the most difficulty?
2. What kinds of problems did you run into switching from X department to Y department? How long did it take for you to feel at home? How did you go about orientating yourself?
3. What have been the most significant changes in the last year within your job? How have you dealt with these?
4. Have you experienced a change of boss? (If so) how have you adjusted your style to fit with a new boss?

Risk Taking

Extent to which calculated risks are taken to gain recognised benefit or advantage

1. How do you weigh up issues?
2. What formal calculations would you undertake in assessing risk?
3. What, if any, standard measures would you examine in assessing risk?
4. Tell me about some risks you have taken in your professional life? (If necessary) how did you go about this?
5. Think about a major development with which you are or could be associated in your present role. What risks are associated with it?
6. What risks are associated with you moving to (new role)?

Flexibility

Modified approach/style to achieve a goal

1. What are the two most different approaches you use when "selling" ideas to clients/colleagues?
2. Describe your two strongest and weakest associates. In what way do you handle them differently? How?
3. Provide examples of the two most different approaches you have ever used in similar situations.
4. If you had a project to manage, how would you decide how to approach it? When might you use a different or modified approach?

Decisiveness

Readiness to make decisions, give judgements, take actions or commit oneself

1. What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?
2. How do you go about making an important decision affecting your career?
3. What was the last major problem that you were confronted with? What action did you take on it?
4. What was the last business decision you faced? How long did it take to make up your mind about what to do?
5. When (if ever) have you delayed a decision to give you more time to think? What is the longest time you delayed it?
6. What kind of decisions do you tend to make rapidly and which ones do you take more time on? Give some examples.
7. On which decision did you deliberate longest?
8. Provide examples of a situation in which you made up your mind too rapidly.
9. When have you declined to make a work-related decision? Why?

10. How do you determine problems in your work area? How do you determine priority for action?
11. Provide an example of where you have been asked advice in other people's decision making.
12. In what circumstances do you get input from others in making a decision?
13. What decisions at work would you pass on to others to make?

Independence

Actions based on own convictions, not "party line"

1. When have you had to go against general feelings or policies to accomplish a goal?
2. Describe the occasions when you feel you must consult your superior before taking action.
3. What do you like about your job?
4. Describe an incident in which you disagreed with your superior. How was it settled?
5. Were there ever any organisational policies you didn't agree with? What did you do about them?
6. What do you do in your job that isn't covered in the job description?
7. When have you had to go against traditions or policies to accomplish a goal?
8. What are the constraints on you in performing your job?
9. How do you cope with the constraints placed upon you in handling your job(s)?
10. Describe an incident in which you took matters into your own hands although it should have been handled by your boss.
11. What kinds of decisions do you make in your present job? Provide some examples of major decisions.
12. Provide an example of a project or idea you have accomplished in spite of considerable opposition or organisational constraint.
13. What are the limits of your authority in your job? Have you ever gone over those limits?
14. What sort of things do you "use" your boss for?

Integrity

Ability to maintain job related, social, organisational and ethical norms

1. What conflicts of interest have you experienced or could you experience in your present role?
How have you/would you resolve these?
2. When did you last prevent someone at work from doing something that you felt to be wrong?
Why was it wrong?
How frequently do you do this?
3. What are some important personal standards in your present organisation? What do you do to support these?
4. What sort of things might make you feel guilty at work? When have you experienced this?
5. When have you taken a stand against a group on what you felt to be a matter of principle?

Tenacity

Ability to stay with a problem/line of thinking until a solution is reached or no longer reasonably attainable

1. What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome to get where you are today? How did you overcome it?
2. Have you ever submitted a good idea to your superior and he/she did not take action on it?
What did you do?
3. Can you relate an experience in which you felt you persisted too long? How could the situation have been improved?
4. Can you relate an experience in which you felt you gained something because you persisted for a length of time?
5. What (college, school, university) course gave you the most difficulty? What did you do about it?

6. What difficulties have you experienced recently in your work? How have you tackled them?

Compliance

Conforms to company policy and/or procedures

1. Where, or in what ways, is your company policy captured or documented?
2. Tell me about a time when you have consciously gone against company procedures. Why did you do that? What happened?
3. How do you ensure compliance with company policy within your own area of responsibility?

Stress Tolerance

Stability of performance when under pressure and/or opposition. Controlled responses in stressful situations

1. We all get feelings of frustration and impatience sometimes, when did you last feel like that? What happened?
2. What situations make you nervous? Provide an example. What did you do?
3. Under what conditions do you work best?
4. What conditions make you work less well?
5. What has been the highest pressure situation you have been under in recent years? What did you do? (If necessary) explore sources e.g. complexity, conflict, deadlines.
6. When did you last lose your temper? Describe the reasons.
7. When in the last year have you been most upset with yourself?
8. When in the last year have you been most upset with someone else?
9. What things annoy you most at work?

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Sociability

Ability to mix easily with other people. Outgoing, participates

1. When you last found yourself with a new group of people to work with, how did you get to know them?
2. What types of social situation do you use to interact with customers/clients?
3. Tell me about some social interactions with colleagues in the last six months.
4. Have you ever felt anyone at work has taken advantage of a friendship with you? (If so) how? (If not) how do you guard against this?
5. What do you know about the personal interests of some of your subordinates?

Oral Communication

Effectiveness in conveying ideas in individual or group situations

1. What is the worst communication problem you have experienced?
2. Tell me about how you prepare for a major presentation.
3. What differing approaches do you employ in talking with different types of people? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of these approaches?
4. Tell me about the preparation for and results of meetings you have been responsible for conducting.

Teamwork

Participates as a full member of a team when not necessarily leader and contributes to team effort

1. What have you done to build good working relationships with others?
2. When you are working on a group task, how do you ensure everyone's ideas get a fair hearing?
3. Tell me about a time when you have resolved conflict in a group. (If necessary) from where did the conflict originate?
4. Tell me about a time when you have consciously participated as a group member rather than a group leader. What did you actually do?
5. Do you ever accommodate to awkward people in order to get the job done?

Written Communication

Ability to express ideas clearly in writing

1. Have you recently prepared (or currently preparing) a challenging report? Why was it/is it challenging?
2. What proportion of your working day is spent in writing? What sort of things?
3. What kind of personal writing have you done? Provide an example. How do you approach it? Tell me about the content and reaction.
4. Would you rather write a report or give an oral report?
5. How do you feel about the writing of reports as contrasted with collecting or analysing the data?
6. Have you ever been complemented on your writing? (If yes) tell me about that.
7. If an important report must be written, who is usually assigned the job in your department?
8. What is the extent of your participation in major reports that have to be written?

Listening

Ability to pick out information from oral communication, combined with demonstration of attention to speaker

1. Have you ever been told you are a good listener? (If affirmative) when? By whom?

2. What do you do to show someone else that you are paying attention to them?
3. Tell me about some times when you have been able to summarise key points from a complicated message.
4. Do you sometimes find your attention wanders and you lose the thread if you have to listen to someone boring?

Persuasiveness

Ability to convince others to own expressed point of view, gain agreement/acceptance of plans, activities or products

1. What was the best idea you ever sold to your superior? Why did he/she buy it? What was the best idea you ever sold to a peer level colleague? Why did he/she buy it? What was the best idea you ever sold to one of your subordinates? Why did he/she buy it?
2. What was the best idea you tried to sell to your superior that was not accepted? Why wasn't it? What did you do? What was the best idea you tried to sell to a peer level colleague that was not accepted? Why wasn't it? What did you do? What was the best idea you tried to sell to one of your subordinates that was not accepted? Why wasn't it? What did you do?
3. Describe your most satisfying (or disappointing) experience in presenting to, and gaining the support of, top management for an idea or proposal.
4. Tell me about your most difficult "selling" experience.
5. Tell me about your most satisfying "selling" experience.
6. What were the steps you took to be convincing?
7. What kind of "selling" situation gives you the most trouble? Why?

Interpersonal Sensitivity

Awareness of other people and environment and own impact on these. Takes into account feelings/needs of others

1. Maintaining confidentiality, what specific problems has a staff member brought to you recently? What happened? What did you do about his/her problems? What did you say to him/her?
2. What unpopular decision have you recently made? How did your subordinates respond? How did that make you feel?
3. Do you ever feel that people waste your time with a lot of unnecessary problems? Give me an example.
4. No one can always retain popularity. Can you tell me the last time you upset someone? What happened?
5. In joining a new organisation how do you get to know others?

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMPETENCIES

Delegation

Effective use of subordinates and other resources available

1. Describe the type of decision making that you delegate to your subordinates. Provide an example.
2. When you last went on holiday, what did you do before you went away to organise your work?
3. When you got back from holiday, what did you do to familiarise yourself with what happened?
4. How do you decide what to delegate and to whom?
5. Provide an example of some work you had recently that you felt you could not delegate?
6. Can you cite an example in your own experience where you have been faced with delegating authority? How did it work?

Task Leadership

Utilises appropriate interpersonal styles and methods in guiding individuals or a group towards achievement of a task

1. How frequently do you meet with your immediate subordinates as a group? Why? What do you do in preparation? At the meeting? After the meeting?
2. Tell me about a new policy or new idea which was considerably different from the standard procedure that you recently implemented. What approach did you take to get your associates to go along with the idea?
3. Have you ever had a problem in getting your subordinates to accept your ideas or departmental goals? What approach did you use? How effective was it?
4. Tell me about a task or project with which you have been involved. What was your role? What did you actually do?
5. Do you have any subordinates with performance problems? What have you done to get them to correct the problems?
6. What specifically do you do to set an example for your subordinates?
7. What sort of leader do your subordinates feel you are? How do you know? Are you satisfied? What have you done about it?
8. Is there an established chain of command in your area? Describe some situations where you did not follow it.
9. How often do you attend a meeting with peers? What role did you play at the last meeting?
10. Have you ever led a task force, committee or any group that didn't report into you but from whom you had to get work? How did you do it? What were the satisfactions and disappointments? How would you handle the task differently if you could start again?
11. Did you ever feel that you had an important impact on a group to which you belonged? What was the situation? How did you achieve the impact?
12. How often did you hold meetings with your subordinates last year? What did you cover?

Management Control

Awareness and maintenance of control over processes, people and tasks and actions to ensure control

1. Is the paperwork required in your present position necessary? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What methods do you usually use to keep informed of what is going on in your area of responsibility? What reports do you use? What controls do you have?
3. Have you experienced a situation that seemed to be slipping out of control? (If so) what did you do to correct it?

4. How do you decide what, if any, issues require your close personal involvement? (If necessary) please give an example.
5. What do you do when you find that your techniques for regulating activities are loosely adhered to by your subordinates?
6. What methods does your superior use to keep informed about your area? Is his/her method adequate?
7. What types of new upward communication systems have you established as a manager?
8. What changes have you made to handle delays in or failure to meet time schedules? Provide an example.
9. What kind of system do you have for keeping track of tasks or projects given to subordinates?

Planning and Organising

Ability to establish an appropriate course for action for self and others to accomplish a goal

1. What methods would you use for keeping track of matters requiring your attention?
2. Describe how you developed your unit's operating plans?
3. What has been the biggest problem you have had to overcome in introducing a change in working methods? What did you do?
4. In your present job, what is your top priority? How did you establish that?
5. Describe a reorganisation that has significantly affected you. Discuss your part in it. What effects did it have? What did you do about them?
6. What were your objectives for last year? Were they achieved? What action did you take when they were first established?
7. Tell me about a (strategic) planning activity in which you were involved that went well. What was your own direct involvement?

Staff Development

Developing skills/competence of others for current or future jobs

1. What techniques do you find most useful in developing subordinates? Tell me more.
2. How do you identify subordinates' needs and potentials?
3. If you are promoted tomorrow, do you have a replacement? What did you do to develop him/her?
4. To what extent do subordinates participate in decisions you make? Why?
5. Tell me about some of the people who have become successful as a result of your management.
6. Tell me about someone who you have helped to get better at something.
7. How are you helping your subordinates develop themselves?
8. Describe each of your subordinates and explain your goals for each.
9. How, if at all, have you involved subordinates in determining development actions?
10. Have you worked under a manager who was good at developing people?
Why were they good at it?
11. With your present subordinates, what new skills/competencies do you think they need to have in 3 years' time?

Organisational Sensitivity

Perceives impact/implications of decision and activities on other parts of an organisation

1. With what other departments do you frequently interface in your current job? How often and under what conditions?
2. Has your department ever had a problem caused by a decision made unilaterally in another department? Provide an example. How often does (did) that happen?
3. How do events in your area of the organisation affect other parts of the organisation? Please give explicit examples.

4. Have you ever made a decision that affected departments other than your own? What was the outcome?
5. How do you keep informed as to what is going on within the organisation?
6. How well informed do you feel you are in what is going on in other departments of the organisation? How do you keep informed?
7. What are the overall goals for your current company this year?
8. How do you go about setting goals?
9. How do you keep your colleagues informed of what is going on within the organisation?
10. How is your particular job affected by situations beyond your control in other parts of the organisation? Provide examples.
11. What organisational resources (services) do you most commonly use?
12. What type of training or information about these resources do you give to your subordinates?
13. Whom do you work with to accomplish your objectives?
14. What departments have you found to be of most assistance in helping you solve problems?

Organisational Process Design

Determines most effective organisational process(es) and/or structure to accomplish task

1. Tell me about some changes you have made in the way your department operates.
2. Have you ever carried out or been involved in a reorganisation? (If yes) what did you do? Why?
3. How do you organise your own day to day work?
4. How does your (secretary/PA/assistant) know what to do?
5. Tell me about a project you have managed and how you went about it.
6. Now tell me about a completely different project you have managed and how you went about it.

DECISION MAKING COMPETENCIES

Numerical Analysis

Ability to analyse, organise and present numerical data (financial or statistical)

1. What figures do you think about every day? Tell me more.
2. What numbers give critical signs of the "health" of your organisation or department?
3. Do you enjoy figure work?
4. What numerical analyses do you run through fairly routinely in your work?
5. (If necessary) how much of the actual analysis do you undertake yourself?
6. Tell me about some times when you have used a numerical or statistical presentation of data to make a point. How successful have you been at this?

Problem Analysis

Effectiveness in identifying problems, securing relevant information, relating data from different sources and identifying possible causes of problems

1. What problems are you currently working on that came as a surprise? How much advance notice did you have of the problems?
2. What range of information do you tune in to routinely?
3. Describe the biggest problem that you have found within the past year. How did you handle it? What were the steps that you took after you identified the problem?
4. When have you involved your subordinates in problem solving? Why?
5. What sources of information do you use to keep aware of the problems and issues within your organisation?
6. How do you stay attuned to potential problems?

Judgement

Developing alternative courses of action and making decisions which are based on logical assumptions and which reflect factual information

1. Provide two examples of good decisions that you have made within the last six months. What were the alternatives? Why were they good decisions?
2. When have you included subordinates in your decision making? Tell me about a specific example. How did you incorporate their input?
3. Have you ever ignored someone else's advice? Provide a specific example.
4. What is the biggest decision you made in the last year? What alternatives did you consider? Why did you do it that way?
5. Can you give me evidence that it is the right moment to change jobs? How did you decide to apply for this one?
6. In your present job, what decision did you have to think the longest on before you decided what to do? Tell me about it. Why was it difficult?

Creativity

Ability to come up with imaginative solutions in business situations. Innovative. Identifies radical alternatives to traditional methods/approaches

1. Can you think of a recent problem in which old solutions wouldn't work? How did you solve the problem?
2. What is the most imaginative or innovative task that you have done in your present position?
3. Do you sometimes see a way of doing something better when other people seem to be floundering or casting about?
4. Tell me about a new business idea that you have had in the last twelve months.

5. What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me about what you have devised.
6. Describe the last problem in your organisation that was solved in a highly imaginative manner. What part did you play?
7. What do you do differently from your predecessors in your present position?

Vision

Ability to stand back from day to day activities and see the whole, focusing on major goals rather than taking each issue as soon as it arises

1. What range of issues determines the success or otherwise of your present organisation?
2. Tell me about any strategic planning activity in which you were involved that went well? What was your own direct involvement?
3. How do you decide your task or project priorities?
4. How far ahead do you plan? What is your plan for (furthest timescale indicated)?
5. What are some of the goals of your present organisation? What part have you played in setting these?
6. What are some of your own personal goals?

Entrepreneurial

Sees and takes opportunities to make money, set up business, get into a new activity

1. What opportunities have you found during the course of the recession?
2. Tell me about some successful business initiatives that you have taken in, say, the last five years?
3. What things are exciting about this position?
4. Tell me about a time when you have followed an opportunity that others were doubtful about. What happened?

MOTIVATIONAL COMPETENCIES

Commitment

Belief in own job or role, and its value to the organisation, makes the extra effort for the company though may not be in own self interest

1. How is your present job important to your present organisation?
2. What do you do to ensure that the importance is realised in practice?
3. How do you think this position would be important to (new organisation)?
4. Tell me about some times when you have gone the "extra mile" for your organisation.
5. Tell me about some times when you may have subordinated your own interests to those of your company or organisation.

Energy

Ability to create and maintain a level of appropriately directed activity, capacity to work hard, drive, stamina

1. Tell me how you organise your day.
2. How do you catch up on accumulated backlog of work after a holiday or conference?
3. When do you do your best (worst) work?
4. What do you do with your spare time?
5. What do you do for exercise?
6. How many tasks do you like to tackle at one time?
7. How much time do you devote to sports, hobbies and recreational activities?
8. How many hours a day do you put into your work?
9. Do you participate in any sports?
10. What are good reasons to postpone things?
11. Give me some examples of projects or tasks where you postponed immediate action. Why?

Work Standards

Setting of high goals or standards of performance for self, subordinates, others and organisation.

1. In your position, how you define doing a good job?
2. How do you judge the performance of your associates? What distinguishes a good associate from an average associate?
3. Are you doing a good job? How do you know?
4. What are your standards of success in your job?
5. Are you satisfied with your department's performance? Why or why not?
6. Have you ever dismissed someone? What were the circumstances?
7. When judging the performance of your subordinates, what factors or characteristics are most important to you? Provide examples.
8. How are you capitalising on your strengths?
9. Have you taken any skills development courses recently? If yes, when? Where? Why? Who suggested it?
10. Who has been the most important person/what has been the most important event in your own self- development?
11. If you had more spare time, what would you do with it?

Self-Motivation

The importance of work in attaining personal satisfaction

1. Provide examples of experiences on the job that you felt were satisfying?
2. Provide examples of experiences on the job that you felt were dissatisfying?
3. What about your job excites you most?
4. What has been the most important event or person in your own development?
5. Describe when you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.
6. What are some recent responsibilities you have taken on? Why did you assume these responsibilities?
7. Do you ever come across days when you just can't get anything done?
(If necessary) tell me more.

Initiative

Actively influencing events rather than passively accepting them. Seeing opportunities and acting on them. Originating action

1. What have you done to make your job easier or more rewarding? What projects have you started on your own this year? Tell me about one.
2. What did you do?
3. How did you go about getting your last job?
4. What have you done about putting forward your ideas?
5. What has been your biggest achievement? How did you achieve it?
6. Tell me about some ideas you have put forward recently. Which of them have been acted on? (If necessary) by whom, when?

Service Orientation

Routinely thinking and acting in accordance with the needs of customers, external or internal

1. Who are your customers at present?
2. What do you do to find out about your customers' needs?
3. What do you do to find out whether your customers' needs are satisfied?
4. What have you done in the last year to improve customer satisfaction?
5. Can you think of a time when you turned around a complaint and the company received praise?
(If necessary) tell me about that.

Resilience

Ability to maintain effectiveness in situations of disappointment and/or rejection

1. Tell me about some disappointments you have had at work. How did you respond?
2. Have you ever had a run of bad luck at work? What happened?
3. Have you ever got all geared up for a major job or project that has been cancelled at the last minute? What did you do?
4. How do you ensure that difficulties in one work area don't take over everything that you do?
5. Tell me about a time when an idea or plan of yours was rejected. What did you do?

Tolerance of Ambiguity

Ability to operate effectively in situations characterised by uncertainty of events and/or responsibilities

1. Tell me about a time at work when you found that things were not arranged as you had expected or been led to suppose? What did you do? How did you feel?
How effective was your behaviour?
2. Have you ever worked in a job or on a project where it seemed to be "all chiefs and no indians"?

What did you do to produce results?

3. Can you think of a time at work where lines of communication or control were not clear?
4. Tell me about a time when you found yourself in a confused or muddled situation at work. What did you do to stay effective?
5. Can you tell me about a time when you were able to make a lack of clear guidelines work to your advantage?

