In most cases, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Regardless of what role you’re hiring for or what values your organization or team embraces, there are three critical competencies that great employees possess. This guide contains a list of competency-based learning from experience interview questions that will help you assess to what degree a potential candidate has these three aspects.

Competencies and mindsets influence how we think and behave. They are often more difficult to learn or modify than hard skills which is why hiring for them is important. Employees with these particular aspects are often easier to manage, enabling you as their manager to focus on doing your best work.

List of competencies included in this guide:

* Self-Awareness
* Learning Orientation
* “How Might We” Mindset

For more information on competencies and Learning from Experience interviewing, check out [Episode 43: Learning from Experience Interviews](http://www.themodernmanager.com/podcast-043)

| Competency: | Self Awareness |
| --- | --- |
| *Strengths + Weaknesses:*  What is one of your greatest strengths? Tell me about a time when you overused this strength.  What is one of your weaknesses or something you struggle with? Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that relied on one of your weaknesses? | Look Fors:   * Can note the difference between a strength and an overused strength * Is capable of acknowledging both their strengths and weaknesses * Sought help or other ways to minimize the role of their weakness in accomplishing the work * Strengths are personal, not generic (e.g. smart, hardworking, team player) * Weaknesses are personal, not strengths in disguise (e.g. too high standards, perfectionist) |
| Notes: |
| *Experience of Others:*  Describe yourself through the eyes of your colleagues. (We all have colleagues we don’t jive with - how would one of those colleagues describe you?)  Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who you clashed with.  What is one thing that people often misunderstand or misinterpret about you? How do you handle this? | Look Fors:   * Shares a balanced description that includes positive and negative attributes * Is aware of how their approach/style doesn’t work for everyone * Sought a resolution by communicating directly with the colleague about the difference in style and/or * Was willing to adjust their own behavior for the sake of achieving the results or preserving the relationship. |
| Notes: |
| *Personal Reflection:*  What enables you to do your best work or be most productive? Under what conditions do you thrive?  What stresses you out and how do you avoid those triggers / work through that stress? Under what conditions do you struggle?  Tell me about a lesson you learned about yourself. Why was this important? What have you done with this knowledge?  Tell me about a time when you made a mistake. Why did this happen? | Look Fors:   * Can describe the settings or conditions in which they are most productive/unproductive * Can articulate specific stressors and strategies to reduce onset of stress and manage stress * Demonstrates acceptance of realizations of self and takes action on those learnings * Admits to making a mistake, not blaming others * Identifies where their thinking or behavior went wrong and why |
| Notes |

| Competency: | Learning Orientation |
| --- | --- |
| *Growth Mindset:*  Tell me about a time when you received feedback that you disagreed with.  Tell me about a time when something didn’t go as planned.  When was the last time you specifically asked for feedback? What did you learn from that conversation? | Look Fors:   * Appreciates feedback regardless of whether they believe it’s accurate. * Accepts failure or struggle as a natural part of life/work and an opportunity to learn/grow. * Demonstrates persistence / resilience when things aren’t going well. * Seeks feedback actively |
| Notes: |
| *Asks Questions/Seeks Help:*  Tell me about a time when you got an assignment you didn’t know how to complete?  Tell me about a time when you should have asked questions but you didn’t.  Tell me about a time when you asked a question that fundamentally changed the situation. | Look Fors:   * Asked questions when things are unclear * Sought help from appropriate people/resources * Acknowledges the importance of asking questions (even when uncomfortable) |
| Notes: |
| *Learning Style:*  Tell me about a lesson you learned - from experience, an article, podcast, etc - and how you applied it at work.  What is one thing you had to learn for your last role? How did you go about learning it? If you could do it again, would you use a different process, and why?  If I asked you to fly a plane, what’s the first thing you’d do to figure out how, and why? What other approaches might you take?  What’s something you learned quickly? What’s something that took you a while to learn? Why the difference? | Look Fors:   * Applies what they are learning * Can describe how they learn and what has worked, or not, in the past * Acknowledges different ways to learn and the context of learning * Can identify multiple things they’ve learned and how those experiences are different |
| Notes |

| Competency: | How Might We Mindset |
| --- | --- |
| *Solve Problems Proactively:*  Tell me about a time when your manager was unavailable when a problem arose. How did you handle the situation?  Tell me about a time when you identified a problem or issue. What did you do with that information?  Tell me about a time when you had too much to do and not enough time. | Look Fors:   * Proactively developed solutions or options, didn’t wait for someone else * Brought ideas or potential solutions to others for enrichment or approval * Sees problems and addresses them * Makes sound decisions independently * Is willing to make decisions within their authority |
| Notes: |
| *Creative Thinking::*  Tell me about a time when you hit a roadblock and had to work around it.  Tell me about a time when there were limiting factors e.g. time, budget, people, traditions, etc. that were impacting your ability to deliver on a goal / achieve results.  Tell me about a time when your creative idea failed. | Look Fors:   * Sees problems as opportunities * Generates / tries multiple ideas, solutions etc (doesn’t necessarily go with the first one) * Doesn’t give up on ideas / pursuing results because of limiting factors * Is willing to try creative ideas even if they don’t work out |
| Notes: |