

## **Influencing / Communication skills**

Fashion touches every aspect of our lives – our latest phone model, hair style, colours we wear, music we buy.... The recruitment sector is no different and is subject to “what’s hot and what’s not”. So what are the latest interview trends and how do you best adapt your style to beat the competition?

Competency/ behavioural interviews (show link to previous article) have been the interview style of choice for a number of years and are used by organisations across all sectors. A survey recently conducted by “**Interview Techniques**”, showed that of all competencies examined, communication/ influencing skills feature consistently in the top three. With this in mind, what types of questions can you expect, and how should you best answer them?

***Give me an example of a complex process or task that you had to explain to another person or group of people.***

In your example, focus on your ability to express yourself clearly and adapt your language to your target audience. If for example you are explaining technical information to a non-technical audience, you’ll need to keep your language simple, giving examples and perhaps using visual aids to explain complex ideas. Actively encourage questions and periodically check for understanding by asking for feedback.

***Describe a situation where you influenced someone to accept an idea that they were initially reluctant to take on board.***

In your answer show how you explained your idea, clearly outlining its objectives, how you researched it and how you highlighted how it would benefit the company. Show how you anticipated objections and were able to overcome them. Outline how you listened carefully to the concerns of your colleagues, assessed the logic of their reasoning and challenged their assumptions. Also, make sure to highlight your ability to build a rapport with others, choosing the most appropriate communication style for each individual person.

***What types of people do you find it difficult to get on with?***

Your focus in this answer is to demonstrate how you are flexible in your ways of dealing with people, even those who are very challenging! So for example, you could say that you find it difficult to get on with confrontational people. The way you effectively deal with them is to focus on the task involved, remaining calm and never letting a situation becoming personal.

***Give me an example where your listening skills proved crucial to an outcome.***

Your listening skills are under the spotlight here and your example should include the following: your ability to actively listen, ask questions to clarify, rephrase information back to the sender to ensure an accurate and successful outcome.

## **Conclusion**

When asking these questions, an employer wants to see that you can communicate clearly and effectively. You need to show that you can make a strong case, can present persuasive arguments and keep cool under pressure. You’ll also need to show that you are happy to challenge other peoples' assumptions as well as defend and justify your own point of view.

Happy interviewing!

## **About the Author**

**Laura McGrath** is the owner of [Interview Techniques](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie), a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with *Recruit Ireland* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

Go to: [www.interviewtechniques.ie](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie)

Email: [info@interviewtechniques.ie](mailto:info@interviewtechniques.ie)

Call: 01 231 3003