

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR A COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEW
APPRAISAL COMPETITIONS
BC ASSESSMENT**

Why a Competency Interview Guide?

This competency-based interview guide has been developed to provide you with a better understanding of the competencies or demonstrated behaviours that are required of the Appraiser role. Further, it is meant to provide information about competency-based interviews (sometimes referred to as behavioural interviews) and help you prepare in the event that you are called to one of the upcoming interviews. Use of the guide will also help you structure your responses in a way that best demonstrates your abilities to fulfill the requirements of the Appraiser position.

What is a competency?

A competency is defined as a skill, knowledge, ability or behavioural characteristic that is associated with superior performance.

There are two basic levels of competencies: technical and behavioural. The first level, Technical Competencies are predominately about acquired knowledge and technical abilities and skills. These competencies are often easier to see, train and develop. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of applicable legislation and case law, knowledge of valuation methodology.

The second level of competencies are behavioural competencies, such as communication skills or team member skills. These competencies can be harder to see and develop, as they tend to be deep-seated qualities, which significantly affect how individuals approach their work. If these attitudes, traits and approaches are well understood and described, they are reliable performance indicators.

In identifying the competencies for BC Assessment, it is important that the competencies identified will add value to the organization. All competencies should be:

- 9 Observable
- 9 Measurable
- 9 Linked to job requirements
- 9 Linked to BC Assessment strategy and business needs
- 9 Future-oriented
- 9 Based on strong performance

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What are BC Assessment's competencies?

There are eleven (11) identified leadership competencies

Technical Knowledge

1. Legal & Legislation
2. Appraisal
3. Systems

Thinking Skills

4. Analytical Thinking and Judgment
5. Planning & Organizing

Personal/Professional Effectiveness

6. Communications Skills
7. Innovation & Change Management
8. Customer Focus
9. Professional Conduct

Team Skills

10. Team Member Skills
11. Team Leadership Skills

What is the difference between traditional and competency-based (behavioural) interviews?

Traditional hiring methods focus on education, qualifications and credentials.

The problem is that traditional methods merely elicit responses that address credentials, opinions and feelings. Rarely will a traditional interview question prompt the candidate to tell the interviewer about actual performance on the job, or about job experiences and accomplishments in specific situations. Answers given by the candidate do not focus on what a person actually did in a specific situation or in a previous job, how it was done and under what circumstances it was done. As a result, traditional interviews do a poor job of helping to predict how a candidate will behave in specific situations.

This poor predictive ability has been proven repeatedly in many research studies. Competency-based interviews achieve an accuracy of over 80% compared to approximately 20% for more traditional interviews and represent the highest accuracy found in contemporary interviewing methods.

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Why are we using a competency-based selection process at BC Assessment?

BECAUSE THE BEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE PERFORMANCE IS PAST PERFORMANCE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES

More specifically:

- The more recent the past behaviour, the greater its predictive power.
- The more long-standing the behaviour, the greater its predictive power.
- The greater the impact, the greater it's predictive power.

If you understand these concepts, you can understand why the competency-based interview is so powerful. This type of interview focuses on past performance, which will greatly increase our ability to predict whether a person will be the strong performer our organization is looking for. Predicting future performance requires an accurate assessment of skills, abilities and behaviour patterns.

What will be included in the Appraisal selection process?

A selection panel for the Senior Appraiser will be composed of 2 or 3 members; typically this will include a Field Manager(s), and/or a Human Resources representative.

A selection panel for the Appraiser II (or lesser) competitions will be typically composed of 2 members; this will include two field managers (Assessor and/or Deputy) and/or a Human Resources representative.

Questions will be focused on obtaining information relevant to the defined competencies of the job.

Competency-based Interview

Candidates will be asked questions to assess desired competencies for the job by providing detailed accounts of what they have done, have said, have thought and have felt in different situations. Candidates may be asked for more than one example of behaviour.

For example, instead of asking, "What is good Customer Focus?" a candidate would be asked, "Describe a situation when you have provided superior Customer Focus. What were the circumstances? What were your specific actions? What was the result?" The selection panel will take notes during the interviews and probe for further details when required.

Candidates should expect questions on the competencies previously identified.

The full competency profiles for each of these competencies is available on the [Internet](#). Included in these profiles are the definitions of each competency, their associated behaviours and the desired target levels of such behaviours for each level within the Appraisal series. The

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description of the target level noted within each behaviour. Target levels refer to what is expected of the Appraiser in his/her job performance within the local scope of his/her authority.

How do I prepare for the interview?

You will need to think of one or more strong, specific, examples for each identified competency, which best demonstrates your skills and abilities. For each experience that you will be describing to the selection panel, it is helpful to consider the following the **STAR** method:

Star - What was the situation? What was the background and context?

Task- What specific task did you need to accomplish?

Action- What specifically did you say and do? What were the actions you took?

Result- What were the results of your actions? What was the impact? What did you learn?

The target level of the 'ideal' candidate is noted within each competency. Using the STAR method, prepare some examples that you can use during the interview (*see example below*).

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Example: Customer Focus

1.	Follows Up and Maintains Clear Communications <i>Trainee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows through on customer inquiries, requests, and complaints• Keeps customer up-to-date about progress of inquiry (but does not probe customer's underlying issues or problems)• Maintains clear, effective communication with customer
2.	Takes a Customer Perspective <i>Appraiser I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes personal responsibility for solving customer problems• Demonstrates the ability to see issues from the customer's perspective• Flexible in approaching customer needs in order to come to a mutual understanding of the issues and potential solutions• Makes it easy to gain access to the organization
3.	Takes Action for the Customer <i>Appraiser II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the value of the customer to the organization• Takes actions beyond normal expectations• Takes on customer problems and resolves them—even if they were not originally one's problem, e.g. 'owns the solution'• Gives the customers options and choices when appropriate
4.	Addresses Underlying Customer Needs <i>Sr. Appraiser</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knows the customer's business and seeks information on the underlying needs of the customer, beyond those expressed initially• Matches customer needs to available products or services• Accurately assesses and acts on the trade-off of immediate benefit for the sake of long-term satisfied customers

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Question: Describe a situation where you have provided superior Customer Focus

Situation

Mr. Joe owns a number of strata apartment units in my area and in three neighbouring assessment areas. Approximately one half of the units are in my jurisdiction. I had just assumed area responsibility for strata apartments and had learned that Mr. Joe appealed all his properties each year for the last 5 years. Although Mr. Joe has had varying degrees of success with his appeals, the real issue is the different information he has received regarding his strata apartment units. I was also concerned that Mr. Joe may be using these appeals as a tactic to find inconsistencies in our valuation processes across the province. Mr. Joe is very well known in the community and is quite vocal about his dealing with BCA.

Task

My role was to develop a good rapport with Mr. Joe and provide him with the necessary information he needs to avoid unnecessary appeals to the PAAB. I realize that Mr. Joe may never be satisfied with his assessments; however, they must be uniform and equitable in all jurisdictions. We also wanted to anticipate issues that he could raise regarding inconsistencies in our valuation processes across the province.

Action

Initially, I developed a plan which outlined what information I thought we could provide to Mr. Joe on his properties within our jurisdiction. I then discussed this with my Senior Appraiser who in turn discussed this with the Senior Appraisers in the two neighboring jurisdictions. I provided my plan to the Senior Appraiser who then set up a conference call with other Appraisers.

When the task team had completed their review, I contacted Mr. Joe and requested a meeting with him. I explained to him that a review had been completed, presented him with the information that we had compiled and solicited input from him in an effort to resolve the problem. After some discussion, we came to a mutual agreement on the following actions:

- written correspondence with Mr. Joe, including spreadsheets will be provided in advance of any of our meetings.
- Mr. Joe will provide the necessary information to BCA which we had outlined in our plan
- I or my Senior Appraiser will be the contact for our office
- Agreement to review these processes on an annual basis
- Provide Mr. Joe with a continuing opportunity to contribute to the process

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Results

As a result of developing this plan of action, we have seen a significant change over the last two years in all offices. Mr. Joe is much more open to provide BCA with information and we are better able to understand his needs. He still appeals some of his properties, but I continue to meet with him on an annual basis on the properties within my area of responsibility to discuss his issues.

Use the following guidelines to prepare your interview responses

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR ANSWERS	WHAT TO AVOID IN YOUR ANSWERS
Always speak in the first person: <i>"I thought, felt, did"</i>	Avoid plural/indirect subject statements: <i>"In the region we..."</i> <i>"At the local level we..."</i>
Discuss events that have occurred and speak in the past tense: <i>"The way I handled the situation with the media was I first called my local contact..."</i>	Using hypothetical or future tense: <i>"What I usually do is..."</i> <i>"What I would do is..."</i>
Focus on what actually happened: <i>"At that time, I responded by..."</i>	Presenting thoughts on incident: <i>"I should have handled it by doing..."</i>

The following website provides some information on behavioural interviews:

http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html