

## **Sample Supplemental Questionnaire Responses**

A supplemental question response should include the following:

- Describe the knowledge, skill, or ability (competency) we are seeking.
- Tell us how you gained the competency.
- Tell us where you gained the competency.
- Tell us when you gained the competency.
- You may want to give a specific example that demonstrates your skill as well as when and where you gained the skill.

Competencies can be demonstrated through educational experiences, personal/volunteer experiences, and/or professional experiences.

## Question 1

Describe how you have achieved working-level oral communication skills – the ability to convey information orally according to the needs of the audience, and receive and understand spoken information, as well as when and where you gained this competency.

<b>Good Answer</b>	<b>Poor Answer</b>
<p>As a recruiter with the Employment Security Department (2010 – present), I have utilized my oral communication skills daily. I communicate with internal stakeholders (managers, supervisors, teammates) via telephone and in person in order to provide guidance and advice about human resource issues related to recruitment and hiring for the agency. Often I must educate managers about laws and collective bargaining agreement rules related to recruitment and hiring and ensure that our agency staff is in compliance. In addition, I communicate with job seekers/applicants who are often angry about recruitment results. I am always professional and courteous with business communications, use reframing, repetition, and questioning to ensure that I understand the depth and breadth of the issue(s); when possible, I present options. When options are not available, I explain why a decision has been made in order to provide future understanding of our agency's recruitment and hiring processes and procedures. This typically does diffuse upset customers. Sometimes, I will request the caller's contact information, conduct research, and provide prompt follow-up.</p>	<p>I can follow the rules of the English language regarding grammar, word usage, and sentence structure.</p> <p>I am able to actively listen to what people say, can take time to understand the points being made, and avoid unnecessarily interrupting others; able to paraphrase and asks appropriate questions to clarify information heard.</p> <p>I understand basic interview and observation skills.</p> <p>I can clearly and concisely explain or present information to individuals or groups using language the audience will best understand.</p> <p>I have the ability to validate what has been expressed by others before making comment or adding opinion or fact; can deliver negative and/or positive information in a timely manner.</p> <p>I can effectively persuade others to voluntarily accept recommendations or advice for the purpose of bringing them into compliance with regulations or policies.</p> <p>I can apply multiple questioning and feedback techniques to access in depth information.</p> <p>I have the ability to diffuse angry and hostile situations.</p> <p>I gained these skills in my position with the Employment Security Department from 2010 – present.</p>
<p><b>Critique:</b> This response demonstrates working-level oral communication skills by describing how and where the skills were gained. It provides examples via job duties, describes specific communication techniques, and hits several matrix points.</p>	<p><b>Critique:</b> This sample response does not tell the recruiter about the applicant's real skill set. The response is a cut and paste of the information directly out of the question. It only says that the applicant can do things, but it does not demonstrate how the applicant does things.</p>

## Question 2

Describe how you have achieved working-level writing skills – the ability to convey information in writing according to the needs of the audience, as well as when and where you gained this competency.

<b>Good Answer</b>	<b>Poor Answer</b>
<p>I have a bachelor's degree in literature with a minor in writing. I have published several (about ten) news articles and editorials in the UW student newspaper from 1990 – 1994.</p> <p>In addition to gaining basic grammar, spelling, and sentence structure from my education, I write correspondence via e-mail and US mail to internal and external stakeholders. I also write reports and project proposals to supervisors and managers about human resource recruitment issues. I have also responded to inquiries from the Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Office, and from the Washington Federation of State Employees; these responses include outlines of timeframes, an overview of the situation, the decision made, and an explanation of or the foundation of the decision (based on RCW, WAC, policy and/or procedure); supporting documentation is often attached; these complex responses must be written in a logical order that are clear, concise, and easy to read.</p>	<p>I have been writing since elementary school and have used writing skills throughout my life experience and career.</p>
<p><b>Critique:</b> <i>This response demonstrates work-level or higher writing skills. It specifically describes how and where the skills were gained. It provides examples via education and job duties, describes specific types of written documents and the components or key writing factors, and hits several matrix points.</i></p>	<p><b>Critique:</b> <i>This response does not show the recruiter when or where the competency was gained. Nor can the recruiter determine the level of skills this person has.</i></p>

### Question 3

Describe how you have achieved awareness-level knowledge of business relationship building and networking, as well as when and where you gained this competency.

<b>Good Answer</b>	<b>Poor Answer</b>
<p>I have been an Outreach Specialist for People Helping People for the past 26 years (1984 - July 2010). The bulk of my duties included reaching out to local businesses, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations in order to develop relationships and solicit contracts for services. People Helping People's mission was to provide on-the-job training opportunities or volunteer work development opportunities for individuals seeking employment transition. Specifically, I researched the Yakima area's top twenty industries, created a working list of top employers in each of those industries, and was responsible to make initial contacts with new employers, and maintain contacts with established employers. I conducted cold calling, created brochures and presentation materials about People Helping People's services, and presented partnership opportunities. By routinely touching base with business owners and other organization's staff at business association meetings or by drop-ins, the goals of our organization flourished; positive marketing developed into long term community relations and a great reputation for People Helping People. The goal of this position was to solicit contracts in order to provide more opportunities and more diverse opportunities for individuals to utilize in order to obtain new job skills.</p>	<p>I have been an Outreach Specialist for a People Helping People for 26 years. I have outreach and networking experience, as well as experience building and developing business relationships.</p>
<p><b>Critique:</b> This response is fleshed out and shows how the applicant conducts business relationship building and networking. The experience demonstrates this skill at a working to mastery level by describing specifically how he/she does the job. The response also clearly includes when and where the experience is gained.</p>	<p><b>Critique:</b> This response does show that the person has been doing networking and business relationship development, as well as when and where the skill was gained. However, it does not demonstrate the actual skill as for as 'how' or provide any details. There is no depth or breadth. The response just says "I do it."</p>

#### Question 4

Describe how you have achieved awareness-level workload management skills – the ability to plan and organize assignments to create timely, accurate work products; and, work efficiently, remain focused, and handle interruptions effectively, as well as when and where you gained this competency.

<b>Good Answer</b>	<b>Poor Answer</b>
<p>As a Travel Agent for ABC Travel from 1980 – 1984, I was required to organize my client accounts; I had at least one hundred corporate travel accounts at any given time, and within each corporate account, there were individual accounts that I had to track and manage. I was able to respond to all of my clients in a timely manner by creating and maintaining both electronic and paper files. I organized electronic and paper files by client name, and set up ticklers using Outlook by date due. Because of my organization skills and ease of access to my client files, I was always able to meet or exceed deadlines for scheduling travel, taking payment, making final reservations, changing reservation in time for refund etc. Also, when a client called, I was able to smoothly transition from one client account to the next.</p>	<p>My experience as a travel agent in a high volume agency refined my ability to perform multiple tasks while remaining pleasant focused and organized.</p>
<p><b>Critique:</b> This response specifically describes how the skill was gained, what the skill set is, when the skill was gained and where the skill was gained. It covers some of the matrix points, and the recruiter can easily determine the proficiency level.</p>	<p><b>Critique:</b> This response does not describe the workload management skill; it describes multi-tasking, but does not demonstrate 'how', 'when', or 'where'. The recruiter cannot determine the level of skill.</p>

## Question 5

Describe how you have achieved working-level customer service skills – the ability to build and maintain customer relations and satisfaction, as well as when and where you gained this competency.

<b>Good Answer</b>	<b>Poor Answer</b>
<p>I have gained working-level or higher customer services skills at my position as a Customer Service Representative with the Attorney General of Washington in 1995 – 1998. My daily duties included extensive mediation with disgruntled consumers and businesses. Most mediation services were initiated by a customer via telephone. Customers and business representatives were responsive with varying degrees of emotion. provide courteous, professional telephone etiquette, utilized rephrasing and reframing skills to ensure that I understood the customer's complaint or the business response, utilized diffusing techniques to ensure progress towards resolution, discussed potential solution options, made recommendations and/or appropriate referrals based on the specific issue(s), and did any and all follow-up work with parties involved in the mediate in a timely manner. Most disputes were successfully resolved; those that were not resolved with referred on to appropriate next steps. I have carried the customer service skill learned here throughout my career.</p>	<p>See resume.</p> <p><b>Critique:</b> <i>This is an incomplete response. While the recruiter does cross-reference the supplemental question responses to the education section and work experience section of the application, as well as any attached documents such as letters and resumes, the response must demonstrate the skill.</i></p> <p>I believe that customer service is the key to success in every job. Positive customer service provides business solutions. Customer service is the backbone of every business and is essential to each position. Without customer service, one cannot build positive relations.</p>
<p><b>Critique:</b> <i>This response specifically describes how the skill was gained, what the skill set is, when the skill was gained, and where the skill was gained. It covers some of the matrix points, and the recruiter can easily determine the proficiency level. It provides examples of job duties and techniques used.</i></p>	<p><b>Critique:</b> <i>This is a philosophical statement. This response does not describe an applicant's customer service skills. There is no demonstration of how the skill was gained, where the skill was gained, or when the skill was gained. The recruiter cannot determine what the actual skill is. This type of response only demonstrates that the applicant thinks that customer service is important.</i></p>