

Guidelines for Application and Selection Process

Advice on completing the application form

Do

- Read the Person Specification and the job duties for each job you are applying for.
- Indicate on the application form to what extent you meet the person specification and the duties of the job. If your application does not directly and explicitly relate to the person specification and the job duties of the placement for which you are applying it is unlikely it will go forward.
- Focus on your achievements. This is particularly so for jobs like fundraising where the success of the role can easily be measured.
- Write lists (with bullet points) rather than large blocks of writing
- Explain all anagrams (CBO is an example of an anagram)

Don't

- Don't have an application form or CV that you just send out for every job you are interested in. Each application form and CV should be written for the job you are applying for
- Don't use 'etc.' You are asking us to guess – so remember we only make a judgement on what you have written.
- Don't use clichés to describe your work, for example 'I seed, weed and feed discussions'.
- Don't assume that if you say you had a certain role then we know what it entails. Describe what you did in that role but relate your achievements to the person specification and duties of the job you are applying for.
- Don't submit your application without checking the spelling, formatting and for any typing errors.

Remember that people doing short listing spend only a short period of time deciding whether to or not put the application forward. They usually have a lot to do! Remember you are writing to make it easy for the person doing the short listing to see the information about you quickly and easily.

Interview advice - Advice on answering competency questions

During the interview you will be asked some 'competency questions'.

These ask you to give evidence of your ability by giving an example from your past work or other relevant activities you may have done.

Most of these will relate to the Key Personal Qualities (KPQ) we look for in development workers. *These KPQs are on our web site.* If you are invited to have an interview with Skillshare International look at the KPQs and begin to think of examples that illustrate when you have demonstrated these qualities.

Competency questions usually begin

- 'Give us an example of
- 'Tell us about a time when
- 'Can you give some evidence for ...'

The interviewer wants to know what you did – so don't talk about 'we' or 'our team' - Use 'I'

You should pick an actual example and talk this through.

So you should not be saying 'Usually we do...' or 'Sometimes we ..'

The example does not have to have been a success! Lots is learnt where things go wrong and often they do! Being able to show you learnt from the experience is very valuable.

Don't forget too that when people work as a group not everybody can be the leader. Other roles are essential too, so if you need to give an example when you were not the leader then, providing it matches the question, that is fine. It may be that a non-leader role is a better example of the quality the interviewer is asking you about.

Here is an example of an answer to a competency question.

The question: Can you give an example of when you had to set up something new at work?

First outline the situation: We had been doing our accounts manually and on a very poor computer programme. The organisation had identified and purchased a new system.

Second say what your role was: My role was to train the staff in the new system.

Third, and spend most of the time on this, describe what you did: I had a good idea of the problems with the old system but I arranged to meet the people selling us the new system to make sure I fully understood how it worked and that the new system did the things we wanted it to do.

I then set up a meeting where we all identified what we needed from a system and where the real shortcomings were for the old system. These largely fitted with the good features of new system. I arranged for them to have lunch provided as people always like that!

I then demonstrated to them the new system and answered any questions making a note of things I was not sure about so I could find the answers.

I then set up a series of training sessions, with a pair of people so they could then support each other. There was also a session built in for each pair to be run three months later so we could refresh people's knowledge and make sure it was working properly.

At the end of the training I had a reasonable understanding of where the problems were so was able to prepare an 'easy access' support manual for each person to keep by their computer.

Fourth explain what the outcome was: Most people took to the system and there were few problems. There were some occasions when people got frustrated and annoyed as they did not know how to get immediate help. This spoilt the success of the introduction a little bit.

Lastly say what you learnt and what you would do differently next time (if anything): I learnt that there was a lot of skill amongst the staff. I wish I had spent time before beginning the implementation in identifying the level of skills with computers my colleagues had as some had computers at home and where quite good. I could have used them as trainers and, with their agreement, put a list on the wall of people who could help when there was a problem.

I also learnt that people need to be committed to changes. Next time I would involve them more in the initial stages of identifying which programme is best so that they would feel more ownership of the programme. Also as they are the ones to use it, they would have seen some of the problems in actually running the programme and these could have been altered before we bought the programme.