

Working Together – The Framework

THE KEY CHALLENGES:

Here is a list of the typical reasons why a working together scenario could be challenging – think about which ones you faced in your example – the more the better!

- The objective / task might be unclear or ambiguous (so you will need to seek clarification and understanding)
- The people you need to work with you in support of this work might be:
 - Unsupportive – they don't have time, it's not an important task for them, they are busy, they don't feel they have the skills and knowledge to help.
 - In a different location or spread across offices in the UK / International (Think communication limitations and timing)
 - Senior to you
- The task is urgent (but you must not put undue pressure on others to conform)
- You might be lacking other resources to complete the task
- You might need to upskill your knowledge and understanding to be able to present clearly to others / understand what's required
- The outcome might impact others differently, change might be required

Faced with such challenges, and possibly others unique to your situation, you now must demonstrate that you behaved in the 'right' way, in other words you understand HOW to bring others together to deliver on a difficult task.

THE ACTION FRAMEWORK – WORKING TOGETHER

The framework I have developed to help explain and provide the foundations upon which clients structure their WT examples is of course based on an interpretation of the descriptions provided in the Success Profiles document. The problem many clients face is how to interpret the description so it can be demonstrated in a real-life situation.

Across all roles in the public and private sectors I believe these actions - this framework, mirrors what people do in order to deliver a successful outcome.

- Identify the people you need to be part of the project / support the objective
- Research the work and share the objective with the key people you need to work with – select the most appropriate method depending on geography/timings e.g. Teams/Face-to-Face
- Listen to feedback – i.e. why people / teams might find this challenging
- Take away their comments and work on a plan, accepting a degree of compromise might be necessary – it's very rare in a difficult WT situation [which is hopefully what you are presenting], everyone will agree immediately to what you want, it's what makes the example necessarily challenging.
- Think about how you win the group over - You can present a well-researched case and appeal to the values of the organisation i.e. this is what we stand for, it's what we do. Hopefully you will be collaborating and showing cooperation.
- You must then be supportive and helpful throughout to ensure everyone knows what's required and the deadlines. Make sure you are visible, accessible and available.
- You are ready to step in if help is required and to keep everyone on track.
- In more challenging scenarios there could be an unexpected situation which you needed to deal with – for example, one part of the group fails to deliver.

QUICK FIRE WORKING TOGETHER QUESTIONS

How well do you understand the behaviour?

Test your knowledge of the behaviour with the quick-fire questions and then reflect on the longer interview style behaviour-based questions categorised into positive, negative and experience-based questions.

So here goes (hint: refer to the framework):

In a challenging situation where you need people to work together to get a project or piece of work over the line, what are some of the likely reasons this might be difficult?

When bringing teams / colleagues together how do you ensure everyone's voice is heard?

How do you ensure people don't feel pressurised into having to be involved/commit?

Where there is pushback from others what can you do to resolve the 'stalemate'?

What influencing techniques could you use to get others to accept your point of view?

What is the one unique thing you typically bring to a team project?

What is your role in the team to ensure everyone pulls together?

WT Interview Questions:

Positive:

When were you successful in bringing together a wide group to achieve a common objective?

When have you had to reach out for external expertise to deliver on an important piece of work?

When have you been able to improve the performance of a team by fostering greater team working?

Negative:

Describe a situation in which you were a member / leader of a team, and a conflict of opinion arose within the team, what approach did you take?

Tell me about a time you were working with stakeholders or colleagues who had a different perspective, how did you build consensus to deliver a project?

Experience:

What would be your approach to dealing with a group who were not supportive of working towards a common objective and their input was vitally important to the result?

Matt Eastlake : Founder and Coach at Interviewperformance.co.uk

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