

Developing Self and Others: The Essential Challenges & Actions Framework Plus, Example Questions

If you haven't had a chance to watch my short video on Developing Self and Others (DSO) yet, it's a great way to bring this framework to life, here is the link:

[Developing Self and Others how to craft a strong answer](#)

As you may know I coach STCAR - where **C** are the key challenges you faced and identified in your task. You must tell the interview panel that you considered these before embarking on your actions – after all diving straight into any challenging situation and task before considering the challenges typically results in a dismal outcome! To get a full insight into STCAR watch this video:

[STCAR - Why and How it delivers better results](#)

I am often asked if these frameworks depart from the written descriptions in the Success Profiles document. In short, no, they bring the descriptions to life and no matter what grade you are, AA to SCS 3, the principles remain the same, it is simply the level of complexity and challenge faced within the example and strategic impact which increases with greater responsibility.

Unlike many of the CS behaviours, DSO questions can often be phrased using the 'How would you.....e.g. Inspire your team to seek out ways to improve their skills and knowledge?' approach as opposed to 'Tell us about a time when.....?'

To answer 'How would you.....?' questions, you should start by setting out a hypothetical list of the things you would do (see actions below for inspiration), followed by a brief STCAR example to back up your approach. In effect you should be listing the actions you would use in a STCAR answer.

At interview DSO offers the panel a wider range of options and avenues for questioning, hence depending on the essential requirements of the role (& grade), you should be ready to answer questions on the following:

1. When you have identified a need to develop your own knowledge and skills
2. When you identified a need for the team / organisation to develop their knowledge and skills
3. How you share knowledge with others

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4. How you create an environment where others share knowledge
5. How you help others realize their full potential.

I will be leaving you with 8 actions you will want to consider when selecting your example.

STRENGTHS:

This behaviour has four strengths associated with it and you should reflect on these as you select and craft your example answer:

#1 Enabler: You can see the potential in everyone and encourage them to learn to progress to develop

#2 Inclusive: You recognise everyone as an individual, accepting people for who they are and treating everyone fairly. You actively encourage and provide opportunities for others to share ideas and contributions

#3 Learner: You are inquisitive, you seek out new information and look for new ways to develop yourself

#4 Explainer: You communicate thoughts and ideas, verbally or in writing. You simplify complexities and adapt communication so others can understand

In considering these four strengths and how they interrelate will help you select strong examples which can also display these are your natural strengths. For DSO I always advise clients to prepare at least two examples.

What makes a DSO situation and task challenging?

TYPICAL DSO CHALLENGES:

Here is a list of the typical reasons why a DSO scenario might be challenging – think about which ones you faced in your example – the more you can include the better!

- Feedback on personal performance and skills has been ambiguous / sporadic / limited
- Everyone is under pressure and time to share knowledge is short
- Staff members / colleagues don't see the importance / relevance, they are happy with the way they do and see things
- Things are changing very quickly and therefore it's difficult to visualise what skills you're going to need in the future
- Lack of career planning / advice on how to develop your skills
- Lack of training resources

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Faced with such challenges, and possibly others unique to your situation, you must now demonstrate that you 'behaved' in the right way, in other words you understand **HOW** to approach this task and to do that you should consider this framework.

DSO ACTIONS FRAMEWORK:

The framework I have developed to help explain and provide the foundations upon which clients structure their DSO examples is 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 to successfully deliver and this is how you might think about taking a panel through your actions:

1. Identify gaps in your own skills and knowledge (and wider team if have team responsibility), be proactive, ask questions and listen to the people around you. Seek feedback
2. Put development plans in place
3. You see future knowledge and skills requirements and anticipate skills gaps
4. You are inclusive, include everyone in the learning culture, make space and time to reflect
5. You share your knowledge and create an environment where others can do so
6. Where you have staff you ensure others have exposure to new challenges which helps to build their skills, confidence and potential
7. You engage L&D teams to help you and your staff develop
8. You encourage use of any training budgets and plan to use your own early in the budget year so that you and the organisation see a real benefit early

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QUICKFIRE DSO 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 below.

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

How do you seek and respond to feedback?

How do you identify the development needs of team members?

What are some of the typical barriers to self and team development? What gets in the way?

How do you ensure your knowledge (necessary for the role) remains current?

How do you create an environment where everyone is sharing their learning and experiences?

DSO EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Positive:

What professional areas are you currently trying to improve, and why?

How do you ensure that your personal development aligns with your organization's goals?

What's the most important skill you have developed in the last year, and how did you go about it?

Give an example of a time you stepped outside your comfort zone to learn something new?

What is your approach to giving constructive feedback?

Negative:

When have you made a decision and realised it was the wrong one?

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When have you realised that the information you based a decision on was not robust? What action did you take?

When have you been part of a team which didn't have a culture of learning and development? What action did you take?

Experience:

When have you received feedback at work which surprised you in some way? What action did you take as a result?

Tell me about a time when your coaching led to a noticeable improvement in someone's performance?

Matt Eastlake : Founder and Coach at Interview Performance. Matt has successfully coached over 1000 civil servants across all grades and departments through applications and interviews since 2018.

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