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# USDS+<agency>+OPM Hiring Pilot Job Analysis: Day 2

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APRIL 2019

## AGENDA FOR TODAY: COMPETENCIES/PROFICIENCIES ➡ JOA ➡ QUESTIONS

- Review PD and job tasks against competencies (must be “rooted in the PD”)
- Resume review and competency refinement, ranking, and weighting
- See new USA JOBS format, draft your JOA
- Learn about and write structured interview questions
- Present breadth and depth questions and answers for feedback
- Refine questions based on group feedback
- Plan calendar of SME training, resume review, and phone interviews

# RESUME REVIEW AND COMPETENCY/PROFICIENCY REFINEMENT

- Rank/weight the competencies.
- Clarify if there is recency relevance for any of the competencies.
- Decide page limit (2-5).
- Confirm if all competencies are required or are some optional.
- See new USA JOBS JOA design.
- Write draft JOA as a group.

## QUESTION TYPES

- Past experience: “Tell me about a time...”
- Hypothetical situation: “Imagine we have a problem with...”
- Applicant’s viewpoint: “What do you think about...”

## BREADTH QUESTIONS

- The first interview tests the applicant's ***breadth of experience*** across the competencies.
- Breadth questions tend to take 5-10 minutes for an applicant to answer.
- Breadth questions test if an applicant has experience, knowledge, or exposure to a general topic.
- Breadth: Limit follow up questions to basic probe questions (i.e., "What was your role?" or "Can you tell me more?")

## DEPTH QUESTIONS

- The second interview tests the applicant's ***depth of knowledge*** across the competencies.
- Depth questions can take up to 10-15 minutes for an applicant to answer.
- Depth questions test how an applicant reacts and responds to changes in the presented situation.
- Depth: Mandated follow up questions that probe deeper (i.e., "Now imagine..." or "Tell me about a time you've experienced that hypothetical in real life.").

## EXAMPLE BREADTH QUESTION – MODERN ARCHITECTURE COMPETENCY

**Question:** You're brought in to an existing project with a three-tier web site: A web server front-end, an application server, and a database. Each is on its own single separate machine. We want to upgrade the database without taking the site down for “scheduled maintenance.” How can we do this?

**Acceptable probe follow-up questions:**

How does this affect the application server?

What happens next?

## EXAMPLE DEPTH QUESTION – MODERN ARCHITECTURE COMPETENCY

**Same question:** You're brought in to an existing project with a three-tier web site: A web server front-end, an application server, and a database. Each is on its own single separate machine. We want to upgrade the database without taking the site down for "scheduled maintenance." How can we do this?

### **Added depth follow-up questions:**

Before we made changes, the first request from a user took 1 second and subsequent requests took 100 milliseconds. We added a bunch of new application server instances behind a round-robin load balancer, and now many requests take 1 second. What's going on?

All of our load balancers do round-robin. What should the health checks in front of the front-end HTTP server test for?

## EXAMPLE BREADTH QUESTION – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT COMPETENCY

**Question:** Imagine you will be attending a chief executive briefing along with a number of senior leaders from your organization. These senior leaders have more experience and tenure in the organization than you have. In addition, they hold a view that is in conflict with yours. You need the chief executive to adopt your view. How would you prepare for this meeting?



## EXAMPLE DEPTH QUESTION – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT COMPETENCY

**Same question:** Imagine you will be attending a chief executive briefing along with a number of senior leaders from your organization. These senior leaders have more experience and tenure in the organization than you have. In addition, they hold a view that is in conflict with yours. You need the chief executive to adopt your view. How would you prepare for this meeting?

### **Required follow-up questions:**

Imagine the meeting does not result in the outcome you had hoped for, what do you do next?

Imagine the meeting did result in the outcome you hoped for, but the other senior leaders left the meeting with remaining concerns. Would you take any additional action with those stakeholders?

Tell us about a time when you experienced a situation where you needed to convince a chief executive of something despite the other leaders who did not feel the same way. What was the outcome and what would you do differently next time?

## QUESTIONS TO AVOID

**Brain teasers or puzzles:** These create stress for the applicant and don't test their skills.

**Self-assessing strengths and weaknesses:** These create disingenuous answers that don't relate to competencies.

**Questions about five year plans and future goals:** These don't test competencies and can reveal inappropriate information that introduces bias.



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# The End

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