

Demonstrating your skills

It is essential you provide evidence of how you acted in real situations in the past in order to show you have the transferable skills required for the job you are applying for.

- 2 a** ▶ 5.4 After applying for a variety of positions at leading international pharmaceutical companies, Communications Manager Vicky Tang is invited to attend an interview at Clyde & Johnson's. Listen to an extract from her interview and answer the following questions.
- 1 Where is Vicky from?
 - 2 Where did she go to university?
- b** ▶ 5.5 Listen to another candidate for the same position, Pieter Volker, responding to the same question, and answer the following questions.
- 1 Where did Pieter do his first degree?
 - 2 What did he do at the University of St Petersburg?
 - 3 Where did he spend his student work placement?
- c** In pairs, discuss Vicky's and Pieter's techniques for tackling the question about their educational background. Whose technique is more successful?



d ▶ 5.5 Listen to Pieter's answer again. Which of the following competencies does he demonstrate or suggest?

- customer service skills
- flexibility
- organisational skills
- teamworking
- leadership
- decision-making skills
- goal orientation
- communication skills
- interpersonal skills

e In pairs, talk about your educational experience. Try to demonstrate or suggest several of the competencies in Exercise 2d. Try to guess what competencies your partner is focusing on.

f ▶ 5.6 Listen to another extract from Vicky's interview and answer the following questions.

- 1 What problem did Green Pharmaceuticals have?
- 2 What did Vicky do to tackle this problem?
- 3 What was the effect of Vicky's actions?

g Vicky uses the STAR method to structure her answer. Underline phrases in her response that describe the four sections.

- 1 Situation (the problem Green Pharmaceuticals was facing)
- 2 Target (the solution to this problem)
- 3 Action (what Vicky did to solve the problem)
- 4 Result (the results of her actions)



At the moment I spend a lot of time travelling between Asia and Europe working with regional teams organising educational events, so I use both of these skills on a regular basis. Let me give you an example. As you know, the Chinese market is growing in all areas, including pharmaceuticals. However, at the time, Green Pharmaceuticals felt they didn't have enough contacts in China. It was clear that the situation wasn't very good for us. We needed to improve things. So in order to increase our number of contacts in China I decided to organise a pharmaceutical conference in Beijing. It was my responsibility to ensure that all the right people were invited. I really had to use all my skills at communicating, in both English and Mandarin, to persuade people to participate. In the end my hard work resulted in a successful conference, with our employees meeting and talking to the right people. As a matter of fact this conference was such a success that it is now an annual event, and has led directly to closer professional relationships between Green Pharmaceuticals and key contacts in China.

h Add one phrase from Vicky's answer in Exercise 2g to each column in the following table.

Situation	Target	Action	Result
there was a time when ...	what needed to be done was ...	therefore I ...	this resulted in ...
I discovered that ...	it was very important that ...	I organised ...	this led to ...
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

i Add the phrases in the box to the table in Exercise 2h.

I agreed to ... I wanted to be a bit more ... probably the best example is ...
 so I ... So it all worked out in the end. the problem was ...
 there was one time when ... we actually ended up ...

j In pairs, take turns to ask and answer the following common competency-based question, 'Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a difficult situation.'

k ▶ 5.7 Listen to Vicky's response to the question in Exercise 2j. In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What was the problem?
- 2 What did Vicky do to solve the problem?
- 3 What skills did Vicky use to solve the problem?
- 4 Would you have handled the situation in the same way?

l ▶ 5.7 Vicky uses a range of expressions to structure her answer. Complete her answer using the phrases in the box. Listen again and check your answers.

Anyway, what happened was As soon as I managed to
I then In the end It was very important
So I decided to There was a time when
Unfortunately this meant that which I'd organised beforehand

Okay. (1) There was a time when I was organising a conference here in London. It was a couple of months ago, and it was a really important conference. (2) _____ one of the main guest speakers, who was due to give the opening address, had his flight cancelled and wasn't sure if he was going to make it on time. (3) _____ the participants were happy with the conference, and I knew they would be disappointed if he didn't show up. (4) _____ try and find another flight for the speaker. After a bit of negotiating with a different airline, (5) _____ get him booked onto a slightly later flight. (6) _____ even if he came straight from the airport, he would still be a bit late for the opening address. I took a risk and hoped that he wasn't going to be delayed any more. (7) _____ he'd landed I contacted him, and when I knew he was in a taxi and on his way, which was about five minutes before he was supposed to be on stage, I got up on the stage. (8) _____ told the participants about the situation and I invited them to have some coffee and cakes while we waited, (9) _____. Actually, they liked this, as it was a chance to network a little and get to know some of the other conference participants. When the speaker did finally arrive, it was actually difficult to get everybody back in the main hall. (10) _____ I managed to keep everybody happy and ensure that the conference went as smoothly as possible.

m Which tense does Vicky mainly use to give the key events of her story?

n In pairs, discuss what makes the following sentence from Vicky's answer memorable.

When the speaker did finally arrive, it was actually difficult to get everybody back in the main hall.

o Interview anecdotes are more likely to be interesting and memorable if they include some surprising information. In Vicky's anecdote in Exercise 2l she introduces a surprising fact with the word *actually*. You can also use *in fact* or *as a matter of fact*. Make the following sentences more memorable using *in fact*, *actually* or *as a matter of fact*. Several answers are possible.

- 1 My boss wasn't convinced that it was worth investing in India. However, my research managed to prove that it was.
- 2 As a result of my actions, what could have been a disaster turned out to be a big success.
- 3 My work had really helped, and I thought that I would be invited to join the marketing team permanently, but I was invited to lead the team!
- 4 I believed my suggestions would lead to bigger profits. What I didn't expect was that profits at the company would grow by nearly 20%!

p In pairs, take turns to ask and answer one of the questions in Exercise 1a on page 59. Use the STAR diagram you prepared in Exercise 1j and expressions from this section to structure your answers. Try to make your anecdotes surprising and memorable.