

### **Cheat Sheet for interview questions on:**

- 1) Critical Thinking
- 2) Communication Skills
- 3) What is one of your weaknesses?

#### **Critical Thinking**

I can:

- 1) identify and accurately define problems
- 2) ask the right questions to retrieve the right information
- 3) know where to get the information needed to solve the problem
- 4) be an efficient thinker
- 5) know how to apply logic and analysis to resolve problems

#### **Communication Skills**

- 1) My great communication skills have enabled me to get ahead where others who are less assertive may not succeed.
- 2) I am assertive and know how to ask for resources on the job so I can perform in outstanding ways
- 3) As a member of a team, I build trusting relationships with my teammates through effective communication. My teammates have historically admitted that I am worthy of their trust due to my reliability and credibility.
- 4) I am clear and concise when speaking
- 5) In communicating with others I always give them time to communicate their issues.
- 6) If the person I'm speaking to pauses, I paraphrase what they've said—repeating to them in my own words what they've said to me so they can see if I've listened accurately.
- 7) I can be empathetic to convey I care about the person in a genuine way and decrease their distress.

#### **A weakness of mine I've been working on is:**

- 1) Weakness: poor organization

Response: Being organized wasn't my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really helped my organization skills.

- 2) Weakness: Perfectionism

Response: I like to make sure that my work is perfect, so I tend to perhaps spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've come to a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time.

### 3) Weakness: Procrastination

**Response:** I used to wait until the last minute to set appointments for the coming week, but I realized that scheduling in advance makes much more sense.

Sometimes, I spend more time than necessary on a task, or take on tasks personally that could easily be delegated to someone else. Although I've never missed a deadline, it is still an effort for me to know when to move on to the next task, and to be confident when assigning others work.

### Assessing Your Strengths

Assess your skills, and you will identify your strengths. This is an exercise worth doing before any interview.

Make a list of your skills, dividing them into three categories:

**Knowledge-Based Skills:** Acquired from education and experience (e.g., computer skills, languages, degrees, training and technical ability)

**Transferable Skills:** Your portable skills that you take from job to job (e.g., communication and people skills, analytical problem solving and planning skills)

**Personal Traits:** Your unique qualities (e.g., dependable, flexible, friendly, hard working, expressive, formal, punctual and being a team player)

When you complete this list, choose three to five of those strengths that match what the employer is seeking in the job posting. Make sure you can give specific examples to demonstrate why you say that is your strength if probed further.

### Assessing Your Weaknesses

This is probably the most dreaded part of the question. Everyone has weaknesses, but who wants to admit to them, especially in an interview?

The best way to handle this question is to minimize the trait and emphasize the positive. Select a trait and come up with a solution to overcome your weakness. Stay away from personal qualities and concentrate more on professional traits. For example: "I pride myself on being a 'big-picture' guy. I have to admit I sometimes miss small details, but I always make sure I have someone who is detail-oriented on my team."

### Scripting Your Answers

Write a positive statement you can say with confidence:

"My strength is my flexibility to handle change. As customer service manager at my last job, I was able to turn around a negative working environment and develop a very supportive team. As far as weaknesses, I feel that my management skills could be stronger, and I am constantly working to improve them."

When confronted with this interview question, remember the interviewer is looking for a fit. She is forming a picture of you based on your answers. A single answer will probably not keep you from getting the job, unless, of course, it is something blatant. Put your energy into your strengths statement – what you have to offer. Then let the interviewer know that although you may not be perfect, you are working on any shortcomings you have.