



WORKSHEET

CAPABILITIES TO DEMONSTRATE FOR POSITIONS IN FINANCE/ACCOUNTING

Attention to Detail

Employers want to see that you are meticulous and thorough. Maintaining accuracy when it comes to financial information is not only important to the organization, but also to regulatory bodies, customers and stakeholders. Demonstrating that you understand this is the key to success in the interview.

Questions related to attention to detail might include:

What methods do you use to check for accuracy, especially when you need to meet tight deadlines?

Mention your ability to build a personal quality checking system and your pre-planned timeline to ensure accuracy throughout the project.

What is your greatest strength?

Be sure to explain how your attention to detail has led to your success so far in your career. The way you ensure you have good attention to detail is to keep organized and be methodical.

How do you ensure that you are able to deliver a project quickly, but maintain a good level of accuracy?

Focus the answer on how you double- or triple-check your work. Explain the importance of using a variety of techniques to check your work. For example, if you keep hard copies of your computer work, , say so.



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Finance and Accounting Knowledge

An expert understanding of financial and accounting practices is a must for a role within the finance sector. From accounting practice to financial jargon, you will need to demonstrate a confident application of financial knowledge and a deep understanding of industry regulations and practices.

Questions related to finance and accounting knowledge might include:

What types of accounting software are you familiar with? Which do you prefer to use and why?

Demonstrate your knowledge in navigating accounting software (such as QuickBooks, Microsoft Dynamic or NetSuite) by explaining the key features, challenges, and advantages to each, thus demonstrating your excellent expertise.

How do you keep track of incoming legislation and regulatory changes in the accounting and finance sector?

Demonstrate that you keep up to date through a variety of publications and professional networks, so that have a balanced and broad view of the industry. Be sure to mention the names of your sources.

How do you define the role of accounting and/or financial management to other people within the organization?

Explain the importance of the function to the success of the organization and your honed ability to break down detailed financial information to help stakeholders understand their role in maintaining the financial health of the business.



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Communication Skills

Demonstrating that you can deliver complex information clearly to your audience is an important skill required in a finance role and the interview is a good place to demonstrate those skills. When answering questions about communication you should demonstrate excellent written skills and confidence in delivering complex information.

Questions related to communication skills might include:

Give me an example of a time when you explained a complex situation or idea so that everyone understood what you were explaining.

Give specific details on how you communicated, what factors you needed to consider, and how you answered subsequent inquiries.

How do you communicate a financial message with impact?

Explain that you consider what is important to the audience receiving the message, you keep it simple and you ask for questions at the end to ensure understanding. Give an example of a message you have delivered previously.

How do you deliver financial information to non-financial colleagues?

Focus on explaining the tactics you would follow, such as avoiding financial jargon; simplifying the data through use of graphs, charts, illustrations, and pictograms; and checking for understanding throughout the meeting. Give an example of when you have done this in the past.



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Data Analysis

Prove your expertise in finance by using data to tell your story. Potential employers want to see that you understand how to use data to influence your audience and tell a story. Focus on building strong answers to the questions below.

Questions related to data analysis might include:

What would you do if you noticed a discrepancy between what your data was saying and what your gut was telling you?

Demonstrate your ability to identify trends in data and question anomalies. Show how you cope with unexpected occurrences.

How do you use data to persuade your audience to follow your approach?

Focus your answer on how you persuaded your audience and influenced their decision. Demonstrate how you used the data to tell a story that motivated the audience.

Tell me about a time you had to work with a large amount of data from a variety of sources. How did you approach the task?

This question is exploring your ability build a story or make a decision when using a variety of sources, options and points of view. Demonstrate that you understand how to assess what is relevant information and what is not. Walk the interviewer through the process of doing so.