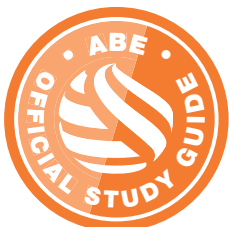


Your road to success

LEVEL 4 EMPLOYABILITY AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT



© ABE 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or held within any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher or under licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited. Further details of such licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Limited, Barnard's Inn, 86 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1EN.

This study guide is supplied for study by the original purchaser only and must not be sold, lent, hired or given to anyone else.

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this study guide; however, no liability can be accepted for any loss incurred in any way whatsoever by any person relying solely on the information contained within it. The study guide has been produced solely for the purpose of professional qualification study and should not be taken as definitive of the legal position. Specific advice should always be obtained before undertaking any investment.

ABE cannot be held responsible for the content of any website mentioned in this book.

ISBN: 978-1-911550-10-5

Copyright © ABE 2017
First published in 2017 by ABE
5th Floor, CI Tower, St. Georges Square, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4TE, UK
www.abeuk.com

All facts are correct at time of publication.

Author: Carrie Foster
Reviewer: Jacqui Bishop BA (Hons), MA, PGCE, Dip M, Dip MRS, MCIM

Editorial and project management by Haremi Ltd.
Typesetting by York Publishing Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked, the Publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

The rights of Carrie Foster to be identified as the author of this work have been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1998.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce the following copyright material: p10 Asier Romero/ Shutterstock.com; p14 Andrey_Popov/ Shutterstock.com; p24 Monkey Business Images/ Shutterstock.com; p34 joingate/Shutterstock.com; p41 Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com; p47 pathdoc/Shutterstock.com; p54 EHStockphoto/Shutterstock.com; p57 Daxiao Productions/Shutterstock.com; p66 MikeBiTa/Shutterstock.com; p70 Orientaly/Shutterstock.com.

Contents

Using your study guide	iv
Chapter 1 Concept of Employability	2
1.1 Employability and the attitudes, skills and behaviours that are required by employers	3
1.2 Selection criteria in the changing workplace	11
Chapter 2 Assessing Your Own Skillset	18
2.1 Your skills versus the employability skills sought by employers	21
2.2 Assessing your skillset to write a CV and complete job applications	27
Chapter 3 Demonstrating Your Employability	36
3.1 Demonstrating your employability during the recruitment and selection process	38
3.2 Maximising your potential to a prospective employer at interview	42
Chapter 4 Establishing Yourself in a New Role	50
4.1 Using employability skills in a new job	52
4.2 Integrating with and becoming an effective contributor to a team	56
Chapter 5 Creating a Personal Development Plan	62
5.1 Maximising your value as an employee	64
5.2 Career goals and aspirations	69
Glossary	74

Using your study guide

Welcome to the study guide **Level 4 Employability and Self-Development**, designed to support those completing an ABE Level 4 Diploma.

Below is an overview of the elements of learning and related key capabilities (taken from the published syllabus), designed to support learners in assessing their own skillsets in terms of employability, and in creating their own personal development plans.

Element of learning	Key capabilities developed
Element 1: Concept of employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of what employability is and why employers are looking for these skills in addition to qualifications and experience <i>Commercial awareness</i>
Element 2: Assessing your own skillset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of own skill set in terms of employability and how to develop and use it to write the documents that are required when applying for jobs <i>Self-awareness, self-reflection and being objective about self, integrity, writing objectively and succinctly, desk research, matching own skills with those required for specific job roles, networking, IT skills</i>
Element 3: Demonstrating your employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of tools and techniques used in the recruitment and selection process and how to utilise skillset to maximise employability prospects <i>Self-confidence, interview skills, listening, verbal and non-verbal communication, independence, emotional intelligence</i>
Element 4: Establishing yourself in a new role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilising employability skills for a smooth transition into a new job and to integrate effectively with the team <i>Communication skills, collaboration, openness, responsiveness, appreciation of diversity, respect for others, interpersonal sensitivity, time management and accountability, commitment</i>
Element 5: Creating a personal development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being responsive to feedback in order to maintain value to the organisation and maximise future career potential through self-development <i>Self-development, openness, responsiveness, proactivity, commitment, life-long learning</i>

This study guide follows the order of the syllabus, which is the basis for your studies. Each chapter starts by listing the syllabus learning outcome covered and the assessment criteria.

L4 descriptor

Knowledge descriptor (the holder...)	Skills descriptor (the holder can...)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has practical, theoretical or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.• Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.• Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work.• Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined.• Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

Contained within the chapters of the study guide are a number of features which we hope will enhance your studies:



'Over to you': activities for you to complete, using the space provided.



Case studies: realistic business scenarios to reinforce and test your understanding of what you have read.



'Revision on the go': use your phone camera to capture these key pieces of learning, then save them on your phone to use as revision notes.



'Need to know': key pieces of information that are highlighted in the text.



Examples: illustrating points made in the text to show how it works in practice.

Tables, graphs and charts: to bring data to life.

Reading list: identifying resources for further study, including Emerald articles (which will be available in your online student resources).

Source/quotation information to cast further light on the subject from industry sources.

Highlighted words throughout and **glossary terms** at the end of the book.

Note

Website addresses current as of June 2017.

Chapter 1

Concept of Employability

Introduction

Employability covers the key skills, behaviours and attitudes that you should demonstrate to employers to become more employable. Employability skills enable individuals to transfer from one job to another more easily because, often, employers value these generic skills as much as experience, technical skills or qualifications. Employers increasingly demand employability skills when recruiting staff because they help to distinguish between employees and serve to highlight those individuals that are most likely to succeed in a new role.

This opening chapter reviews the concept of employability, the shifting demand in skillset and the employability skills that employers favour, in order that individuals may understand the relevance of employability skills to their future career success.

Learning outcomes

On completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 Explain the concept of employability, and its relevance and value to both employing organisations and individuals.**

Assessment criteria

- 1 Explain the concept of employability, its relevance and value to both employing organisations and individuals.**
 - 1.1 Explain what is meant by employability and the attitudes, skills and behaviours that are increasingly demanded by employers when recruiting staff.
 - 1.2 Summarise the relevance and value of this shift in selection criteria for new staff in relation to the changing workplace.

Level 4 Employability and Self-Development

Background

The nature of work is changing: the business environment is becoming ever more global and, consequently, the skills required for work are also changing. In the past, getting a job based on qualifications and technical experience was the norm. Today, employers are increasingly looking for people with commercial awareness and a 'can-do' attitude, together with skills and behaviours that will enable them to quickly become part of an effective team and **add value** to the organisation. These **soft skills** enable staff to make a positive contribution to the organisation from an early stage; work as part of various teams that are likely to be cross-functional in nature; and contribute more effectively over time as they recognise how the skills they have, and the additional skills that they are willing to develop, can benefit the organisation.

The changing structure of work and the workplace is also significantly impacting the career framework of individuals entering the workforce. Globalisation, technology, reduced levels of employment security and the speed of change means that the **psychological contract** has shifted away from traditional ideas of a job for life, to individuals enjoying several careers over their life time. One of the major challenges for individuals entering the workforce today is to remain employable and establish a firm foundation of **interpersonal skills** which allow them to flex and adapt to the requirements and needs of the employment market.

The use of the concept of **employability** by government policy makers, education establishments and employers highlights the important role that **employability skills** play in the economy and the labour market. The increasingly complex business environment means that organisations are required to respond to challenges quickly in order to stay competitive. To do this, they need employees who are prepared and able to be flexible and adaptable in a constantly changing environment.

1.1 Employability and the attitudes, skills and behaviours that are required by employers

Definitions of employability

Employability is one of those words that people use a lot but is little understood. For many people it is little more than a buzzword, but the concept continues to increase in importance, both for the employer and the employee.

Definitions of employability vary according to context. However, there are three elements that are captured within the concept of employability.

The first element focuses on a number of interpersonal skills and behaviours that makes an individual employable. In this respect the Higher Education Authority provides a definition of employability as *“a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.”*

“ Some 20 million young people are out of school and not looking for work. As such, they have dropped off the radar of their country’s education, social, and labour market systems... What lies at the root of this unacceptable waste of human potential? Among other things, **too many young people leave education without having acquired the right skills and so have trouble finding work.** **”**

OECD Skills Outlook 2015

The second element is related to the idea of an individual having a fruitful career throughout their working life due to maintaining a relevant skills base, which makes them flexible and able to add value to an employer who requires an **agile workforce**. McKenzie and Wurzburg (1997) stated that *“lifelong employability is the capacity to be productive and to hold rewarding jobs during a working life, and to be equipped with up-to-date skills and competences”*.

The final element is linked to the ability of the individual to get a job and stay in employment regardless of the changes that take place in organisations and the wider economy. Brown, Hesketh, and Williams (2003) define employability as *“the relative chance of acquiring and maintaining different kinds of employment”*.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study guide employability will be defined as a set of interpersonal skills and behaviours, which provide employers with a flexible and adaptable workforce and contribute to an individual maintaining a productive career throughout their lifetime.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 1: Defining employability

What does the concept of employability mean to you personally and how would you describe it to someone else?

The value of employability skills

Regardless of the industry you work in or job that you do soft skills are a key requirement. Although technical skills, experience and knowledge enable you to do the job, it is the employability skills which will enable you to do the job effectively.

Transferable skills (cross-functional)

Transferable skills are skills that can be developed by the individual in one job role and organisation, which can subsequently be transferred to another job role or organisation. From an employer's perspective, transferable skills help to increase workforce **flexibility**, enabling individuals to take on new tasks when required.

Being able to identify and give examples of the transferable skills that you have developed will go a long way to persuading your employer that you are a good fit for the organisation now, and in the future.

Increased productivity (added value)

It doesn't matter what job role you do; employers believe that behavioural and interpersonal skills contribute to business success. A key result of the CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2016 was that "employers don't just value what people know: they value what they can do." The majority of employers emphasise employability skills as a key area of concern because they believe that these skills contribute to business performance.

“ We must develop the skills that people need now because people need jobs now. But we must be working just as hard to develop the skills that our people will need tomorrow. The future of our country – the prosperity of our society, the happiness of our people – depends on it. ”

Deputy President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa – National Skills Conference March 2017

Increased **productivity** is supported by enhanced employability skills within the workforce. Ensuring work is done in a timely fashion requires self-management skills. Being proactive in the face of unexpected complications in completing a task requires thinking and problem solving skills. Delivering a task that relies on cooperation with other people in the business requires working together and communication skills. On-time delivery requires individuals to understand the business and to use their functional skills to deliver tasks to the required quality standard.

Flexibility and adaptability

Employability skills have a direct impact on the long-term survival of an organisation. Having skills which can be used in different contexts means that the employer can be confident in someone being effective if their role changes, or if they are moved to a new role. This increased adaptability allows the organisation to respond to market changes and competitive pressures more easily. Regardless of the role you occupy now, there is an opportunity for you to add even more value to the organisation in different roles in the future. Whilst your existing soft skills will enable you to contribute to working together effectively with other employees to achieve the organisation's goals, developing your skills will enable you to identify new opportunities in the market place and develop strategies to respond appropriately. From an employer's perspective the greater the degree of employability skills within the workforce, the more flexibility they have with the resources of the organisation to meet market needs.

 OVER TO YOU

Activity 2: Transferring to a new role

What transferable skills do you have now that could be used in a different role in the future?

For example: Current role – customer service representative, handling complaints can be transferred into a role where I will need to negotiate, persuade and influence people.

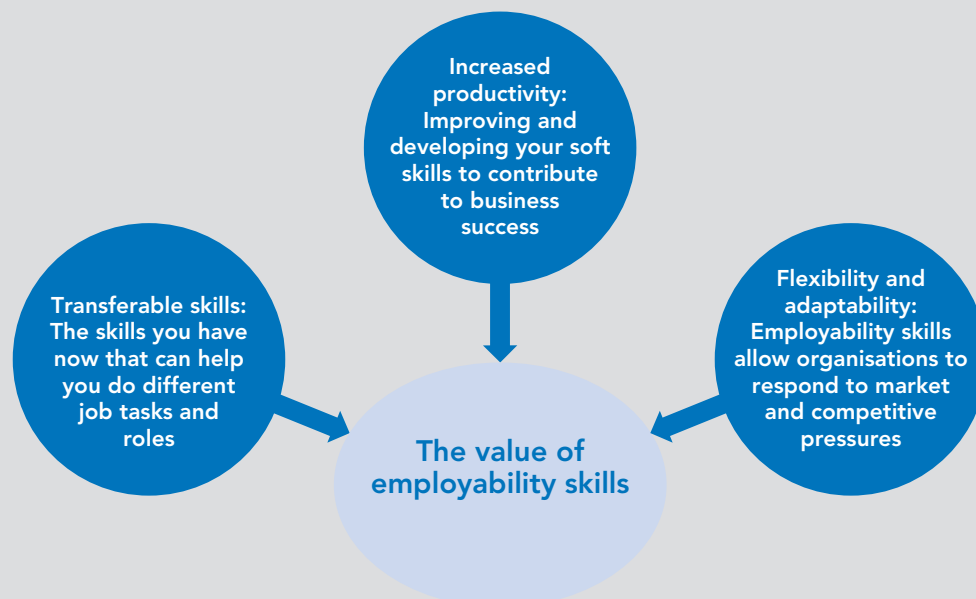
The value of employability skills


Figure 1: The value of employability skills



Employability skills demanded by employers

It is clear that there are a number of employability skills that employers think make a good employee and are applicable across a wide range of job roles. There are frequent reports of business leaders complaining about the lack of key employment skills in new employees. The employability skills that are most frequently desired by employers are:

Self-management skills	
Effective self-management is a key life skill, which involves individuals monitoring, controlling and directing aspects of work and work life for themselves.	
Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuality • Time management • Planning and organising 	Demonstrates dependability and reassures the employer that you will do the job, do it well and do it on time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Honesty • Integrity • Reliability 	Demonstrates reliability and shows the employer that they can trust you and the work you do.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Can-do' approach • Enthusiasm • Commitment 	Demonstrates that you are motivated and have a real interest in the job.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good personal presentation • Coping with pressure • Emotional intelligence 	Demonstrates that you can recognise, control and adapt your emotional reactions and responses appropriate to the situation.

Thinking and problem-solving skills	
Solving problems on a daily basis at work, and in our personal life involves individuals being able to evaluate information or situations, consider various solutions and decide on an appropriate resolution.	
Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to detail • Negotiation • Decision-making • Reflection 	Demonstrates that you have the right analytical and creative skills to consider and respond to workplace challenges, research and implement change and find a better way of doing something.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative • Achievement drive • Drive 	Demonstrates that you have the perseverance to get a task done, without relying on other people to draw appropriate conclusions.

Working together and communication skills

Working together with others requires that you can contribute positively to productive relationships and work as a member of a team. You have the ability to get your message across clearly, to a diverse audience. Everyone can understand what needs to be done.

Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Cooperation • Tact and diplomacy • Conflict management 	Demonstrates that you can get on well with others to get the job done.

Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Responsiveness • Appreciating diversity 	Demonstrates that you can make good connections, adapt to new situations and develop positive relationships to get a task done.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking responsibility • Being accountable 	Demonstrates that you are honest at all times and that you are willing to say what, how and why you have completed your work in a particular way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to learn 	Demonstrates that you are able to adapt easily to change and motivated to improve your skills and learn new skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal communication • Non-verbal communication • Active listening • Telephone skills • Giving and receiving feedback • Presentation skills 	Demonstrates you are able to work together with other people to complete work tasks. Having good skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening are essential to good communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and leadership • Delegation skills 	Demonstrates that you can set direction, helping yourself and others to do the right things required to perform well and be successful.

Understanding the business

Developing skills to maintain and grow the business that you work for improves the chances that you will contribute to business success.

Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial awareness • Customer focus • Service orientation 	Demonstrates that you are able to understand how to provide customers with high levels of service, and your part in delivering the organisation's promises to the customer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate social responsibility (CSR) • Ethicality 	Demonstrates that you conduct yourself and business activities with moral and socially responsible behaviour.

Functional skills

Contributing to the effective execution of tasks requires that you have skills at levels relevant to professional practice.

Elements	Important to employers because it...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numeracy Language ICT 	Demonstrates that you can operate independently and effectively at a professional level within the workplace.

Developing the right skills will help to make you more employable in the job market. Employers will use a job interview or performance review to assess your job specific and employability skills. Being able to recognise the employability skills that are most important for the job you are applying for, and communicating how your skills match those required, will improve your chances of success. Having desirable employability skills will increase the likelihood of you getting the job that you want, being able to perform well in that job and progress your career in the long term.



CASE STUDY: USING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TO STEP UP

Understanding the business

Julia worked as a Learning and Development Co-ordinator in the national office of an energy company. Halfway through the financial year, her line manager went on maternity leave and Julia was given responsibility for leading a key flagship customer service programme.



Situation

Although her manager had completed the initial work on the objectives for the customer service programme, Julia was tasked with designing and delivering the programme.

Task

To understand fully what customer service issues the call centre, service centres and engineers were facing, Julia put together a design team, which included members from across the business and the lead trainer. This helped Julia to understand the needs of the business and the intricacies of how each part of the business worked with each other to deliver products and services to the customer.

Activity

Following the initial pilot, Julia walked the Board of Directors through the programme to gain their buy-in. The programme was delivered to over 200 members of staff and was followed by monthly newsletters and **toolbox talks** to embed the learning.

Result

The programme contributed directly to exceeding a key corporate metric to increase the customer service satisfaction. In addition the evaluation of the outcomes from the programme demonstrated a significant return on investment, improved motivation of staff and a 'right first time' culture, resulting in fewer repeat breakdowns.

Employability skills demonstrated

- Collaboration
- Cooperation
- Commercial awareness
- Customer focus
- Service orientation
- Decision-making

 OVER TO YOU**Activity 3: Demonstrating working together and communication skills**

Think about an example where you have demonstrated managing and leadership skills either in work or outside of the workplace. Use the structure in the case study:

- **Situation:** What were the circumstances?
- **Task:** What did you need to do?
- **Activity:** What did you do?
- **Result:** What happened as a result of what you did?

1.2 Selection criteria in the changing workplace

Employers use **selection criteria** to rank and determine which candidate should be chosen for a job post. However, if we were to compare the selection criteria today with that used even ten years ago there would be a noticeable difference. The changing workplace has increased demand for flexible skills which can withstand economic, social and political pressures. Whereas job experience and qualifications would have stood you in good stead in the past, in today's job market selection criteria is weighted in favour of interpersonal and behavioural **competencies**.

Value of employability skills to employers

Although having qualifications is important in your job search, employability skills helps employers differentiate between people with similar qualifications and experience during the recruitment process.

“Employers don't just value what people know:
they value what they can do.”

Rod Bristow – President, UK and Core, Pearson

Having relevant qualifications and/or industry experience may mean you are eligible to apply for the position, and that the employer will consider you as meeting the criteria to be invited for interview. You will need to demonstrate in your **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, application form and interview that you have the necessary soft skills to carry out the work to the required level. Employability skills are a key ingredient which will determine whether or not the business recruits you.

Tipping the Balance

Employers consider employability skills to be the key to closing the gap between qualification and experience and the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

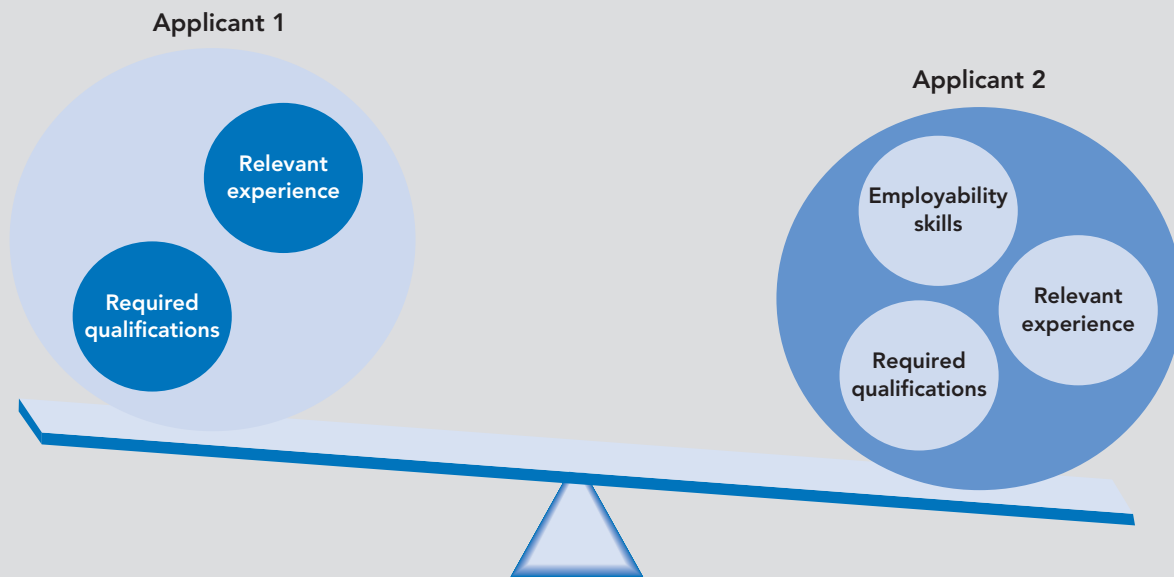


Figure 3: Tipping the Balance



Assessing and developing your employability skills will open up new opportunities for you to achieve employment, develop your career, progress earning potential and make the move into more highly skilled work.

When selecting a candidate, the key responsibility of the recruiting manager is getting the right people for the business into the right job. They are concerned about identifying individuals who can perform in role and contribute to the success of the organisation. **Hard skills** may indicate that that you are able to do the job, but soft skills will increase your chances of being hired by the employer who is seeking a more rounded candidate.

Being able to demonstrate that you have a good work ethic and are responsible, reliable, honest and enthusiastic will make you an attractive prospective employee for any employer.

A prospective employer will notice the effectiveness of your communication at every stage of the recruitment process, from the quality of your CV and covering letter, to conversations and over the phone and face-to-face encounters.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 4: Comparing you with you

Compare your employability skills from 12 months ago with the employability skills you possess today. Put yourself in the position of a recruiter. What is it about your current employability skills that would make you a better selection choice than in the past? Why?

Doing things right the first time

Once you are employed, there will be an expectation that you will be **proactive** in your role. Organisations require their employees to be both **effective** and **efficient** in delivering their job tasks in order that the organisation may be profitable. They require that the tasks you have been assigned will be done correctly so there are no delays or errors and the right tasks are tackled to help the organisation achieve its goals. Doing things right first time not only helps you perform better, but also supports the organisation in achieving its objectives. Taking the time to do things right the first time means that you will always save time and possibly money for the organisation.

Inevitably, your job tasks are interlinked with the job tasks of your colleagues in the workplace. If you make a mistake, then someone else may end up facing the consequences of that mistake. Taking ownership of your responsibility and being accountable for delivering what is required will ensure that you won't be letting down those who depend on you. Doing things right the first time is less about your technical abilities but instead it is about your employability skills. For example, ensuring work is done in a timely fashion requires self-management skills as we discussed earlier.

CASE STUDY: RUBBISH IN, RUBBISH OUT

Khalil learns the value of doing things right the first time

Khalil is working as a Business Analyst on a **change project** for a soft drinks manufacturer. Part of the project requires Khalil to deliver technical training to the commercial teams on how to use the new customer relationship management (CRM) system. The commercial teams add details of product promotions and these in turn link to production, supporting the manufacturing process.

The problem was that the commercial teams are not aware of the impact that bad data is having on production, and instead are trying to get through the data input process as quickly as possible. The result is that not enough product is produced of some lines, leading to out of stocks for the customers, and too much product is produced on other lines, leading to costly levels of unsold stock.



Changing attitudes

Khalil was tasked with fixing the problem and, having investigated the problem, realised the issue was that the commercial teams did not realise the impact of entering bad data onto the system.

Further investigation revealed that a 5% variance in forecast accuracy led to a 20% variance in profit. This was very important information for the commercial teams because their bonus was calculated on profit.

Armed with this data, Khalil delivered a new behavioural change programme called 'What is Expected of Me?' which focused on accountability, ownership and responsibility of ensuring the accuracy of data/obtaining accurate data and inputting information right first time. The results were immediate and directly impacted the profit performance of the organisation.

Ownership and accountability

Employers need individuals who are willing to be answerable for their decisions. We all have the power to make choices that either contribute to the success of the business or lead to failure. Sometimes these choices are unintentional but taking ownership of our actions and decisions is important in building trust with our manager and colleagues.

Use of initiative within boundaries

The ability to show initiative and assess what opportunities there are to take actions within the boundaries of your job role or allocated task enables you to demonstrate additional value to your employer. Although your job description will cover many of the requirements of your job, it cannot cover every eventuality. Understanding what additional tasks or activities you can take part in will be seen as resourcefulness and demonstrates that you will contribute to business success.

Innovation and creativity

As an employee you will be expected to contribute to developing innovative and creative products and services to improve customer satisfaction. Whether you develop a new method of doing a task, which makes a process more efficient, or help develop an idea, which leads to a new product or service it is creativity, which is the lifeblood of continuous organisational success.

Flexibility

Transferable skills can be used in different roles and project teams, contributing to the individual effectiveness. The changing business environment means that organisations must be able to flex and change. If an individual is to remain employable, they must be able to move to where their skills and experience will be of greatest value to the organisation.

Responding to changing market and customer needs

A key feature in a competitive marketplace is **that the organisation is** responsive to changing market and customer needs and secures repeat business. Being responsive to these competitive pressures requires employees to have transferable skills in order to avoid their skillset becoming redundant, or their organisation’s products or services becoming obsolete.

Creating loyalty and commitment

A sense of employee contribution and value creates loyalty and commitment, and; reduces staff absence and turnover. By improving your employability skills, you will become more successful in your role, and experience personal fulfilment and personal satisfaction from a job well done. As you experience more success you will feel greater levels of engagement; research shows that the more engaged you are, the less you will miss work compared to those of your colleagues who are disengaged.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 5: Investigating the impact of interpersonal and behavioural skills

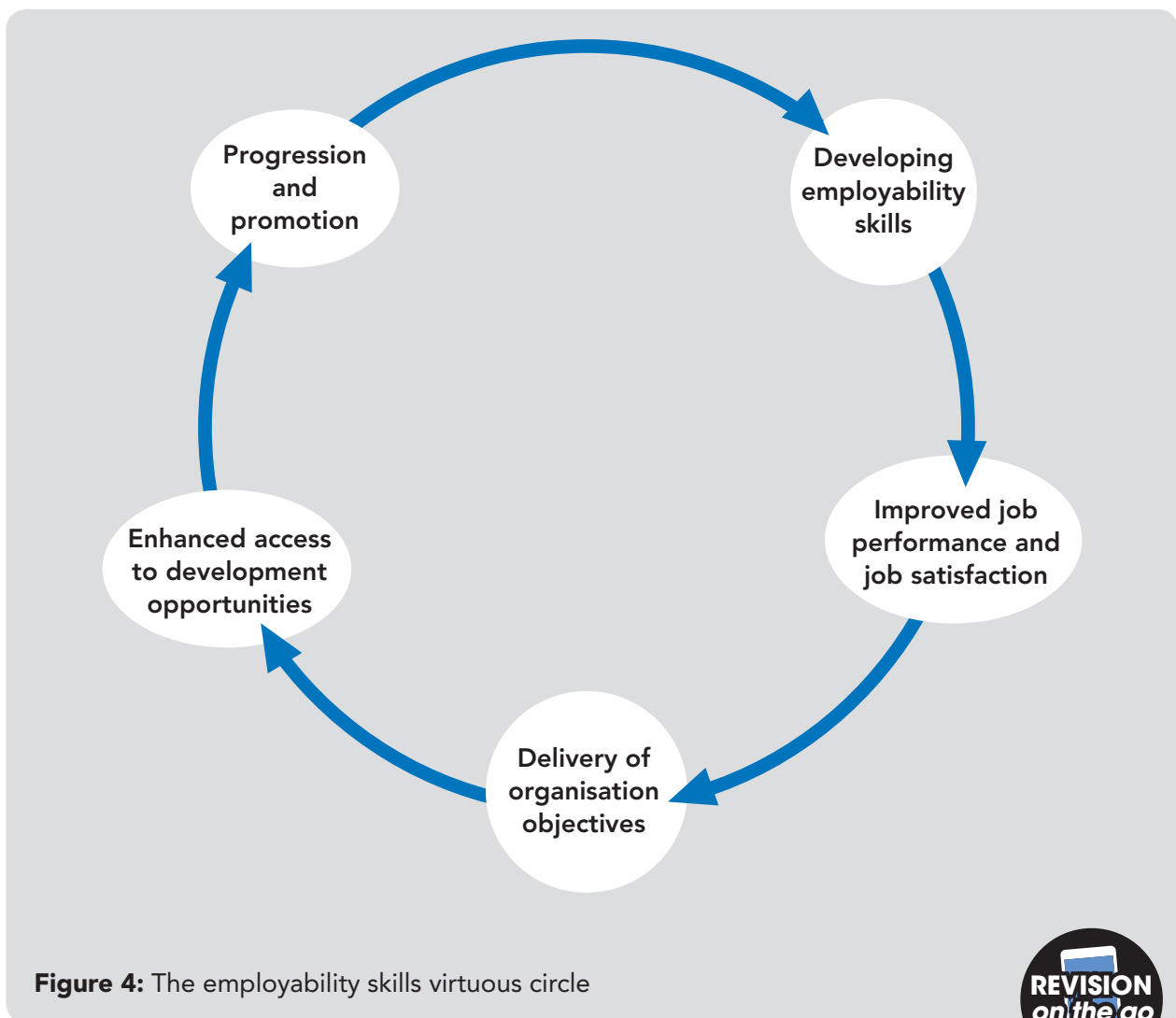
Review your current performance in work or in your education. What impact would enhancing your interpersonal and behavioural skills have on your outcomes?

Employability skill	Enhancement required	Outcome
<i>For example: self-management</i>	<i>Struggle to stay focused when under pressure so begin avoidance behaviours which leads to procrastination over important tasks and difficulty in managing time. Need to commit to tackling difficult tasks head on without time wasting.</i>	<i>Don't end up with more pressure because I have procrastinated so I have even less time to complete the work. Less stress and better quality work</i>
Self-management		
Thinking and problem-solving		
Working together and communicating		
Understanding the business		
Functional skills		

Value to individuals

Developing your employability skills isn't simply about helping the organisation achieve its goals. No one goes to work to do a bad job and we all feel good when we do a job well. Since employability skills are essential to you being able to do a job well, they are an important ingredient to helping you feel good about work. Therefore, having the right skills can increase your capacity to contribute to the delivery of your organisation's goals, and the sense of achievement you draw from this can give you improved job satisfaction and renewed commitment to the job. This in turn will likely result in result in your progression and promotion within your organisation.

Furthermore, from a career progression perspective, developing your employability skills makes you more employable. This enhances your opportunity to transfer from role to role and will help with future employment prospects, whether with your current employer or with another organisation.



READING LIST

- Chris Collet, Damian Hine, Karen du Plessis, (2015) "Employability skills: perspectives from a knowledge-intensive industry", *Education + Training*, Vol. 57 Iss: 5, pp.532 – 559
- Mukta Kulkarni, Mark L. Lengenick-Hall, Patricia G. Martinez, (2015) "Overqualification, mismatched qualification, and hiring decisions: Perceptions of employers", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 44 Iss: 4, pp.529 – 549
- Apex Leadership Ltd (2013) *High-impact interpersonal skills: How to be a persuasive leader*. Bookboon.com

Summary

Employability is a set of interpersonal skills and behaviours which provide employers with a flexible and adaptable workforce and contribute to an individual maintaining a productive career throughout their lifetime. These skills are valued by employers over and above qualifications and experience for several reasons: they are transferable, enabling the individual to use them cross functionally; they increase productivity, adding value to the organisation; they also provide the employer with an agile workforce. This contributes to flexibility and adaptability of the human resources within the organisation.

The employability skills more desired by employers include: self-management, thinking and problem solving, working together and communicating, understanding the business and functional skills.

Employers value employability skills because they have relevance in the shifting selection criteria for new staff because of changes in the modern workplace. Being able to demonstrate employability skills enables the employer to differentiate between people with similar qualifications and/or experience and deliver a culture of doing things right first time.

Finally, the individual themselves benefits from the employability skills virtuous circle as they contribute to improved job performance, job satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, they help the individual become more employable, increasing opportunities for progression and promotion.

Chapter 2

Assessing Your Own Skillset

Introduction

A critical component of developing your employability skills and progressing in your career is to have a clear awareness of your existing skillset, strengths, weaknesses and personal preferences. Whether searching for a new role, developing in your existing role or seeking to progress your career, assessing your own skillset in terms of employability will contribute to the establishment of a robust personal development plan.

The assessment of your skillset enables you to use your skills more effectively in order to maximise your potential value to an employer. It also provides the foundation upon which you are able to develop a unique CV for completing relevant job applications and to provide examples of your transferable skills in a recruitment process.

This chapter provides guided activities for you to begin the process of comparing your own skillset with the employability skills sought by employers, identifying gaps, establishing a personal development plan and completing the documents required for applying for jobs.

Learning outcomes

On completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- 2 Assess your own skillset in terms of employability and use it to write a unique Curriculum Vitae and complete relevant job applications, emphasising your potential value to an employer**

Assessment criteria

- 2 Assess your own skillset in terms of employability and use it to write a unique Curriculum Vitae and complete relevant job applications, maximising your potential value to an employer**
 - 2.1 Compare your own skillset against the employability skills sought by employers in order to identify gaps and plan how you might address these through personal development plans.
 - 2.2 Utilise your skillset effectively and creatively to complete the documents required when applying for jobs.

Level 4 Employability and Self-Development

Background

Some jobs require that you complete an **application form**, which is the recruiter's own template that job seekers are required to fill out. Application forms typically cover the same information as a **CV**, including previous work experience, education and contact details. You should complete an application form if asked to by the employer.

There are three golden rules when presenting what you have to offer:

- 1 Check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.** Simple mistakes make you look careless, and create an unfavourable impression.
- 2 Ensure your presentation is clear and uncluttered.** Today, most application forms are electronic, but if you do have to hand write an application form, write neatly. Make your CV and application letter easy to read.
- 3 Do not lie.** If you secure a job by lying, it is highly likely you will lose your job because you lied in your application. Lying about qualifications and grades is a serious offence and could have far more serious consequences such as a prison sentence for grade fraud.

Of course, neat presentation of your CV will be a complete waste of time if the content that is in the CV or application form is completely irrelevant to the job you are applying for. You will need to make sure that you include information that is appropriate for the job you are applying for.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 1: Career autobiography

On the chart below complete a career autobiography. Think about your life as a series of learning experiences – include activities, education and your work life. What have been the major periods of change? As you progress through time, capture your peak experiences. These are experiences where you have felt happy, successful and fulfilled. Also plot your trough experiences, which may not have been positive but were a key transition point. Plot these on the chart below and reflect on the following questions:

- **What do your peak and trough experiences tell you about your preferences?**
- **Why was this a peak or trough experience?**

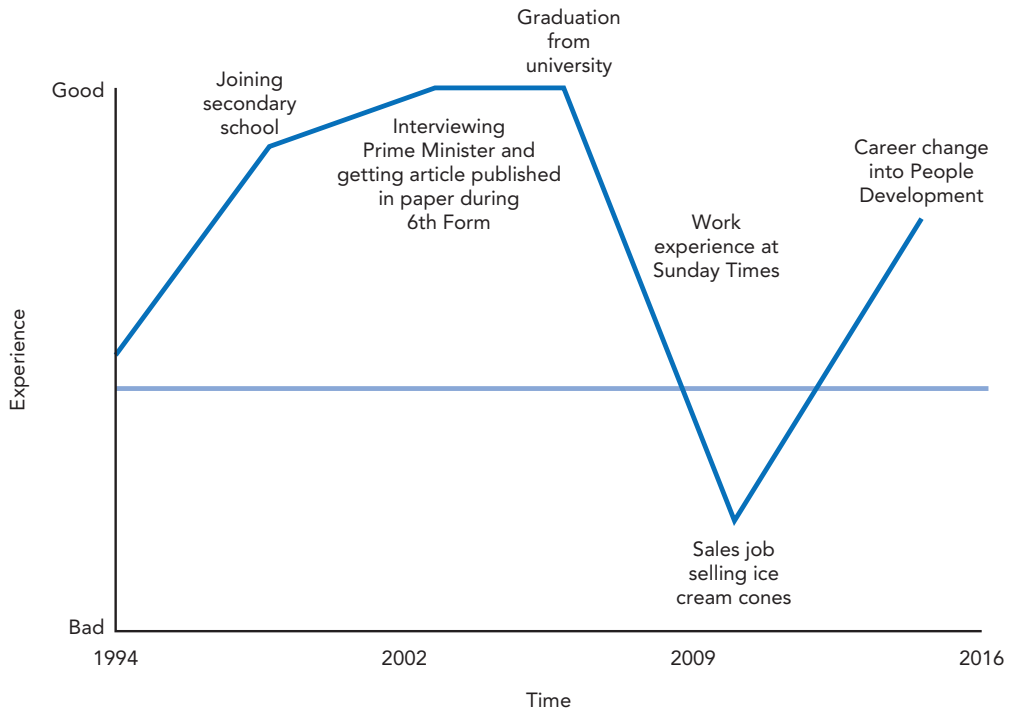


Figure 1: Career Autobiography – example

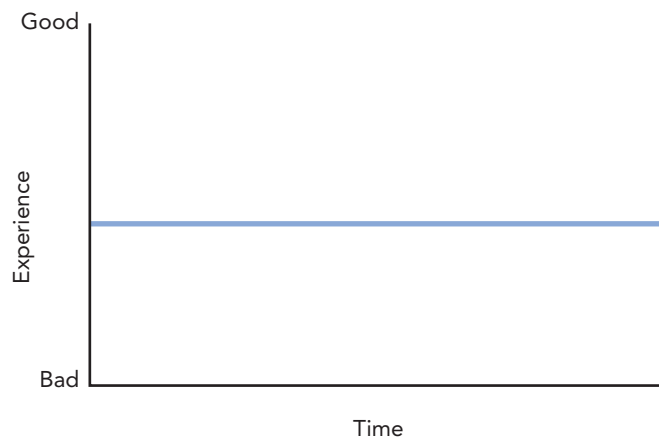


Figure 2: Career Autobiography – chart

Description of experience	What does this tell you about your preferences? Why was this a peak or trough experience?
Example – Graduating university with a 2:1 degree	Really enjoy the opportunity to learn and the feeling of accomplishment of finishing something. Felt proud of achievement.

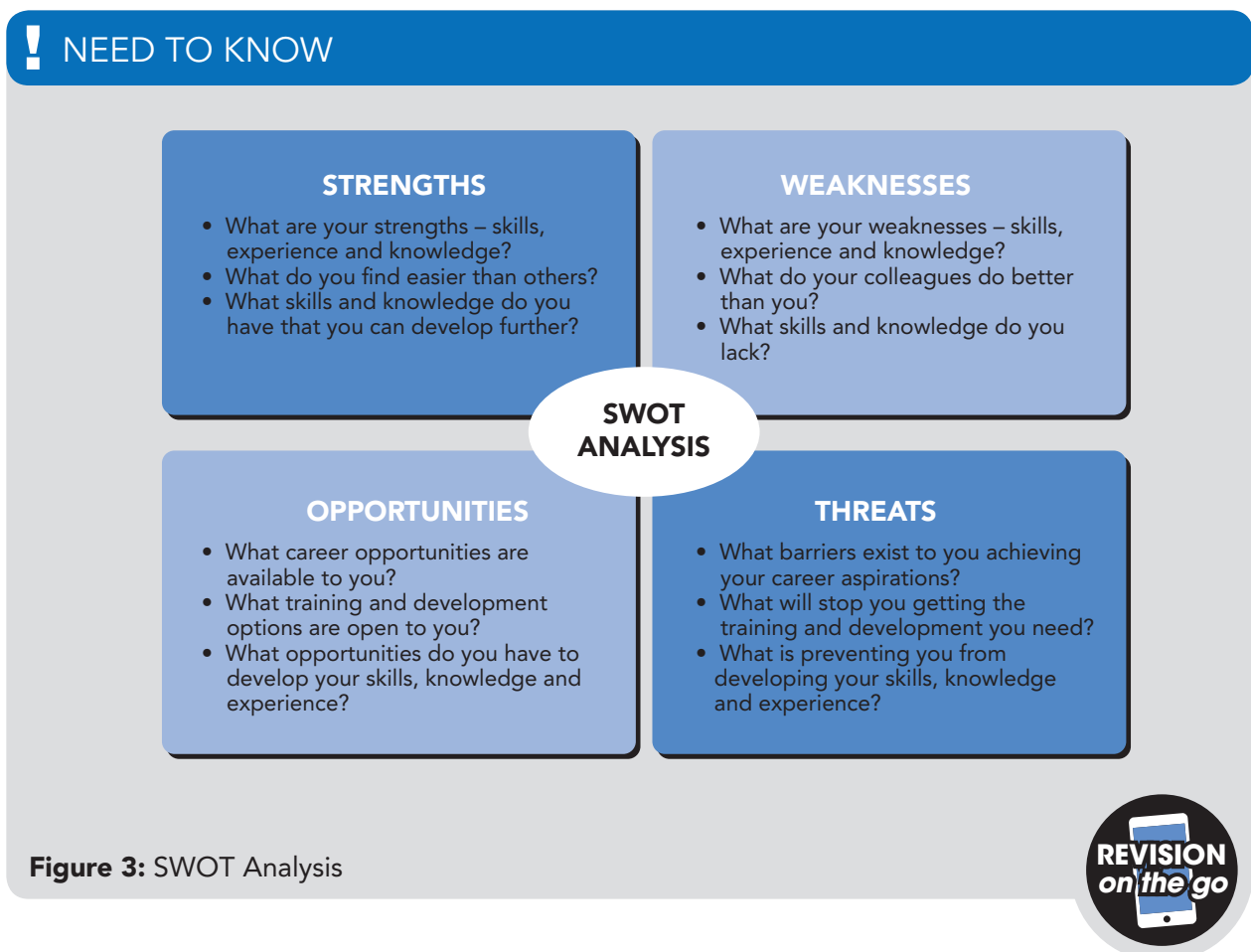
2.1 Your skills versus the employability skills sought by employers

Regardless of your background, you have developed a skillset. However, because acquiring skills is often the result of an evolving rather than a planned process, it is not until we begin to assess our skillset that we become aware of our current skillset and are able to identify gaps where development is required. Appreciating your strengths, addressing your weaknesses, having a clear awareness of your preferences and identifying gaps in your skillset will give you confidence when communicating what it is you have to offer.

Assessing own skillset

Assessing your own skillset to identify your strengths, weaknesses, preferences and gaps will enable you to establish a personal baseline of employability skills. The first step is to detail your current employability skills, strengths and weaknesses. You also need to consider what opportunities are there are for you to develop your strengths further and overcome your weakness. In addition, you need to identify the threats to your personal development.

A personal **SWOT analysis** provides a simple tool to set personal development objectives and establish a personal development plan. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and provides a useful framework for personal development decision making as shown in Figure 3.



 OVER TO YOU

Activity 2: Personal SWOT analysis

Complete a personal SWOT analysis focusing on your employability skills: Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities and Threats. Refer to the list of employability skills demanded by employers outlined earlier.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Once you have completed your Personal SWOT analysis there are four actions you need to take:

Take advantage of strengths	You will get a greater return on investment if you spend time developing your strengths. Look to build on your strengths, and to expand your skills and knowledge in areas. 80% of your development plan should be focused on making more of your strengths.
Develop strategies to overcome weaknesses	You need to spend enough time on your weaknesses so that they do not get in the way of playing your strengths. Where possible see if you can get support from other people so you can both play to your strengths. Take time to identify gaps and develop strategies to overcome your weaknesses. You should also consider your weaknesses when seeking opportunities.
Take control of opportunities	Create them, make them and take them. Opportunities for developing your strengths and developing strategies to overcome weaknesses through self-development, training and/or work experience exist in every organisation. Establish a mentoring relationship with someone who can support you in becoming more attractive in terms of employability. Don't let fear of rejection get in the way of asking. Ask about skills development, projects, secondments , additional job responsibilities, work shadowing, etc.
Manage threats	Threats may be outside your control and there is no point worrying about what you can't control. Being aware of possible threats helps you prepare to respond appropriately should the threat become reality.

Identifying gaps

Identifying gaps requires you to examine the difference between your employability skills baseline and those required for specific job roles. These can be weaknesses you have identified when reviewing employability skills in Chapter 1, section 1.1, or skills that you don't yet possess. This can be achieved by conducting a gap analysis between your current skillset, and the skillset required. This can be achieved by:

Understanding business needs	Revisit the requirements of the job role, and review what you are being asked to do by the organisation. Determine the direction in which the business is going and what skills will be required.
Knowing what skills you have	Understand which skills you currently have that match the business needs.
Identifying what skills you are missing	Identify the skills, knowledge and experience which you need but don't have that are required if you are going to be able to do the job successfully.
Filling the gaps	Identify what development activities you need to undertake and create a plan for how you will close the gap between the skills you have and the skills you are missing.

Identifying opportunities to close the gap

To close employability gaps through self-development, training and/or work experience requires you to identify possible development opportunities, which will help you develop the qualities and skills required to enable you to meet your development objectives. A range of development opportunities can be used including:

Work experience	Work experience can be informal, such as job shadowing, or formal, such as work placement or internship. Work experience provides you with an opportunity to gain experience and explore what a particular job role is like.
Training	Training can also be informal or formal. On-the-job training offers you an opportunity to learn from a colleague whilst you are working in role. Formal training might include e-learning courses or classroom based workshops, which involve a series of lessons, lectures or activities focused on developing particular skills.
Self-development	Self-development can take many forms. This may include study such as classes, books, seminars or blogs to develop specialist knowledge, critical thinking skills, organising and planning skills and self-management. This does not necessarily have to be expensive. There are multiple affordable and flexible self-development opportunities that can be accessed, many for free, including seminars in the local community or online (e.g. www.ted.com), free e-book downloads (e.g. www.bookboon.com) and massive open online courses (e.g. www.mooc.org).

CASE STUDY: IDENTIFYING A TALENT

Aleksander discovers his a talent

Aleksander had been working as service engineer for a few years. He had struggled at college and found it difficult finding work, but had shown an aptitude for engineering work which had seen him successfully progress in his job responsibilities. However, he continued to lack confidence, and suffered doubt when his line manager suggested he apply for team leader position.

After some friendly discussion with the training officer at work, Aleksander recognised that he had already demonstrated managing and leading competencies on a number of occasions. In conversation with his line manager and the training officer, suitable work experience and training opportunities were identified to help Aleksander build confidence and experience.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 3: Close your gaps

Explore online seminars in an area you have identified as a gap that you wish to develop. Watch at least one seminar and write a brief synopsis and reflect on what you have heard.

For example https://www.ted.com/playlists/301/why_we_do_the_things_we_do

Addressing gaps through personal development plans

Personal development plans (PDPs) provide a template for taking consistent action to enable you to continuously improve your skills, knowledge and behaviour throughout your career. PDP's provide the foundation stone of supporting your development as a well-rounded person. This means that you are investing in a range of different activities, which enable you to develop your confidence, relationship building skills, professional conduct and creative thinking.

Presenting yourself as a rounded individual means addressing the gaps that you identified earlier in regards to skills, knowledge and experience and overlaying these development plans with activities which develop and expand your **character traits**. There are a number of different activities that you can engage in to develop character, these include:

Professional	Professional development covers a variety of training opportunities, which are recognised as advancing professional knowledge, competence and skills levels. Very often these opportunities are supplemented by formal education and developing specialised professional knowledge.
Social	Social development is something developed within cultural boundaries. It involves learning about how to relate to other people in order to contribute effectively in the work environment.
Personal	Personal development is a process of assessing your personal skills, setting goals and establishing opportunities to close the gap.
Developing views	As an individual progresses their career their viewpoint will be sought on a number of problems and opportunities. Developing a view requires observing and building understanding in order to extract relevant insights and provide focus for new ideas.
Opinions and values	Opinions need to be built on relevant knowledge, and a critical reflection of the values and beliefs that shape our thinking. Self-awareness and reflection on the opinions and values you hold enables you to defend them, and where necessary consider their validity.
Lifelong learning and development	Lifelong learning is a motivation to learn beyond what is required for an existing role. Individuals are responsible for their own individualised learning and development.
Reflection	Reflection is an activity whereby the individual examine their thinking about their work practice, ideas and situation. It enables an individual to explore and explain why things have happened, feelings about what has happened and examining what has gone well and what has not.
Learning from experience	Learning from experience is a form learning through doing.

Building a personal development plan (PDP)

There are plenty of tools available online to support personal development planning, however Activity 4 provides a simple template for you to use. It is important that SMART objectives are set to enable you to continually focus on your personal development priorities. The acronym SMART provides a simple five-step framework for setting a development activity:

Specific	What area for improvement/development has been identified?
Measurable	How do you know when success has been achieved, and how will you measure it?
Achievable	Is what is being asked within your control and capability?
Relevant	Does the goal support your performance objectives and career aspirations?
Time bound	What is the specific time frame for improvement?

! NEED TO KNOW: EXAMPLE SMART DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Achieve a customer satisfaction score of 90% by the end of the financial year by processing customer orders with an accuracy rate of 95% on an ongoing basis.

Learn effective library search techniques to reduce time searching for resources from 16 hours per assignment to 12, without compromising quality of sources, by the end of the first semester.

By January 2018, design and pilot a new outreach strategy using social media to increase by 25% the student membership of the Debate club.

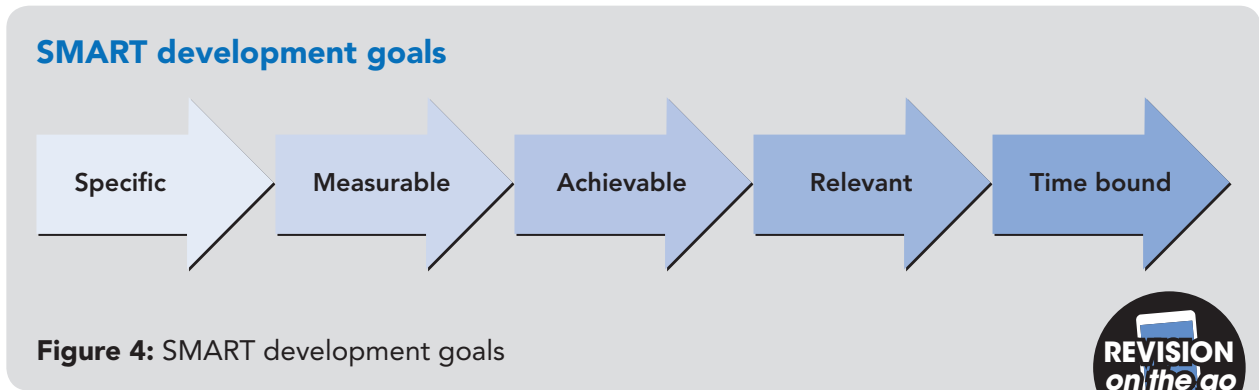


Figure 4: SMART development goals



OVER TO YOU

Activity 4: Personal Development Planning

- Complete a personal development plan to close any gaps you identified earlier, develop your skills set further and to increase your value to potential employers
- Consider different opportunities to develop your skills.

My SMART goal:

Development goal – What are you going to do?	How? What action will you take?	What resource or support do you need?	When are you going to do it by?

2.2 Assess your skillset to write a CV and complete job applications

Knowing what skills you have is just one element of understanding how employable you are. The next step is to understand what skills employers are looking for and how you match that requirement. Utilising your skillset and releasing your potential in the job market requires you to conduct a **gap analysis**. This involves an honest examination of the difference between your personal baseline of employability skills and what is required for specific employment positions.

This chapter takes you through the process of applying for jobs and preparing you for each step. This includes developing a personal profile and professional CV in order to sell yourself positively.

Developing a personal profile statement

The **personal profile** is the introductory paragraph to your CV and provides an opportunity to present who you are and what you can offer to a potential employer. The purpose of the personal profile is to make a clear statement about who *you* are and what makes *you* different from competing candidates. In addition to being the first section of your CV you can also use it as a professional profile description on business social media sites such as LinkedIn.

Like all elements associated with completing your job application, the personal profile must be authentic whilst aligning to the job you are hoping to pursue. It is recommended that you develop a short paragraph of approximately four sentences to avoid boring the potential employer. At the same time you want to capture the interest of the potential employer to want to find out more about you.

What are your qualities and characteristics?

Adaptable	Fearless	Kind	Positive
Analytical	Friendly	Level headed	Reliable
Assertive	Frank	Logical	Resilient
Committed	Genuine	Loyal	Resourceful
Conscientious	Generous	Mature	Self-confident
Creative	Genial	Methodical	Self-motivated
Decisive	Helpful	Measured	Sincere
Dependable	Honest	Objective	Thorough
Diplomatic	Innovative	Observant	Tenacious
Entrepreneurial	Interested	Open-minded	Tolerant
Enthusiastic	Independent	Personable	Understanding
Experienced	Keen	Persuasive	Versatile

Table 1: List of personal qualities and characteristics



 OVER TO YOU

Activity 5: Developing a Personal Profile

Write a personal brand profile for yourself. Consider the following structure:

- Describe your essential qualities in three or four words. "A [quality] and [quality] individual, I have [quality] and [quality]."
- What do other people recognise as a core skill? – "Known for..."
- What are you looking for – "I am seeking..."
- What opportunity are you looking for? "I am looking for the right opportunity to..."

For example: A highly motivated and committed individual, I have a positive attitude and a keen interest in science. Known for my logical and methodical approach to work, I am seeking an apprenticeship as a laboratory technician. Using my enquiring mind, I am looking for the right opportunity to bring my practical and technical skills to help carry out tests, research and investigations.

Developing a Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A CV or **résumé** outlines your skills and professional experience. It should help you demonstrate to a potential employer that you meet the requirements for the position you are applying for.

CV	Résumé
Detailed document outlining education, qualifications, experience and achievements.	Concise summary of you CV focusing on specifics relating to the employment opportunity.
Expected to be used in the UK, Ireland, Europe, the Middle East, Africa or Asia. Also used in USA in academia and medicine.	Frequently used in USA and Canada.
At least two or three pages long.	Typically one page long.

Table 2: The difference between CV and résumé



The terms CV and *résumé* are sometimes used interchangeably in other English speaking countries.

Your CV is a marketing document which you use to market yourself. It needs to be written to 'sell' your skills, qualifications and experience to potential employers. You can use your CV to make **speculative applications** for vacancies that have not been advertised.

There are many templates available for writing your CV online, and there is not a single correct format. How you choose to structure your CV and what you include will depend on how you want to market yourself. However, unless you are applying for a creative job, avoid adopting a gimmicky format.

When writing and reviewing your CV put yourself in the shoes of an employer and think about what impression your CV will be making about you as a potential employee.

What the employer wants to know

Who are you? How can I contact you if I want to interview you?

Personal details: name, address, telephone and email.

A CV just detail facts that could be about anyone, can you tell me something about yourself that lets me know about you as a person?

Personal Profile: a brief personal summary to help you stand apart from the competition.

What can you do?

Key Skills: Highlight your employability skills and technical skills which are of relevance to the job you are applying for.

What have you done? What experience do you have that is relevant to the job you are applying for?

Work Experience: Highlight your key achievements on what you have actually done in previous roles, and the end result achieved. Use accomplishment statements constructed beginning with a strong action verb and then capture the result of that action in terms of an outcome.

What do you know? What qualifies you to do this job?

Education and Qualifications: Include qualifications by title, where you studied and the grade you achieved. List from most recent first and any qualifications you are currently studying for, with an anticipated completion date.



Buzzwords

An **accomplishment statement** describes your key achievements in a role. It is recommended that you use buzzwords, which include strong action verbs which express your skills in regards to actions you have taken.

Example Action Verbs

Achieved	Ensured	Improved	Reduced
Arranged	Facilitated	Investigated	Researched
Convinced	Fulfilled	Managed	Solved
Developed	Gained	Persuaded	Supported
Delivered	Introduced	Planned	Tested

Table 3: Example action verbs



It is also recommended that you research specific buzzwords that are relevant to the industry and/or role you wish to apply for. This has several benefits:

- Where relevant, if you use words in your CV that are in the job role advertisement or description your application will, in the mind of the recruiter, match what they are looking for.
- If you register your CV with an online job board then the key industry terms will be found when recruiters search an online CV library.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 6: Develop a CV

Develop your CV refining your personal profile from Activity 5 in Chapter 2. Use the following section headings:

- Personal details
- Personal profile
- Key skills
- Work experience
- Education and qualifications

Developing a LinkedIn profile

Social media is a significant tool used by recruiting managers for finding potential candidates. Therefore, spending time on making your professional LinkedIn profile is essential for making a great first impression.

! NEED TO KNOW: COMPLETING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Can I find you?

Personal details: Name, headline and head shot. Keep it simple and keep it professional. LinkedIn is searchable so make sure your headline helps people find you easily. For this reason, customise your URL to make it easier for people to search by your first and last name.

Tell me about yourself

Summary: Add your personal profile statement, which you have developed for you CV.

What can you do?

Experience, Skills and Expertise: Avoid cutting and pasting from your CV, but use these sections to build a clear picture of the skills and talents you possess. Add images and videos if relevant and request recommendations from connections. Focus on your accomplishments, not just job responsibilities.

Who are you connected to?

Connections: LinkedIn offers the opportunity to increase your network; not only can you maintain contact with your first connections, but you can also be introduced to people they know.' Be strategic; recruiters will often look at who you are connected to judge your credibility. Don't accept connection requests from everyone and request introductions to widen your network of opportunities and potential employers.

What groups are you participating in?

LinkedIn Groups: Recruiters will often check out participants of industry-related groups to find talent. You need to actively participate in groups to help make new connections and highlight your skillset.

REVISION
on the go

Looking for jobs

Knowing how to search for jobs is a skill in itself. There are lots of different places that you can look for jobs. These include:

Online	Look at job sites to find relevant vacancies. Also look at LinkedIn Jobs. Post your CV online, so recruiters can find you!
Newspapers	Read the jobs pages in local newspapers and job supplements in national newspapers.
Journals	Review the job vacancy section in journals relevant to your a specific sector. If you aren't sure of the journal for your industry research this in your local library or online.

Agencies	Sign up with recruitment agencies relevant to the sector you are targeting. Meet recruitment agents to discuss your job aspirations and ask to be kept up to date with any positions that come up.
Job Centres	Get job-hunting support, review information on local employers with vacancies and employers in the local area that you could target speculatively.
Noticeboards	Employers advertise on college and university noticeboards. Take time to scan the noticeboards to see if there is anything relevant.
Websites	Identify organisations you are interested in working for and visit their websites. Review the current vacancies and information relating to careers.
Networking	Make a list of people in your network; you would be surprised at how big your list is. Then reach out to your network to let them know you are looking for a job. Don't ask for a job, instead ask for advice.

Setting up job alerts is one of the easiest ways to look for jobs. Alerts will notify you when a job matching your job search criteria is posted. Early notification gives you an opportunity to apply for jobs before other people.

Where to find jobs



Figure 5: Looking for jobs



Conducting desk research

The good news is that a lot of your job search can be done without leaving your desk. Preparing for applying for a job involves desk research, which uses secondary data to find out information about specific organisations. This information can be found in your local library, online, or through your personal contacts who may work for the organisation already.

Presenting your skillset

As you become more familiar with your own skillset, you may begin to consider options for future job positions or career progression. Assessment of your skillset provides a baseline for you to be able to place your skillset into the context of potential employment positions.

Matching and presenting skillset requires you to become familiar with two documents which are used by employers in the recruitment process:

Job description	Lists the general tasks and responsibilities of a job position.
Person specification	Description of the qualifications, skills, experience and selection criteria that are required in order to fulfil the job duties.

A job advert will typically include the following information:

- Company name and information
- Title of job
- Expected salary
- Location of job
- Job description
- Person specification
- How to apply

The job advert is a goldmine of information, which you can use to adapt your CV to demonstrate that you are the right person for the job. Couple key details in the advert with the information you discovered in your desk research to establish the most important things that the employer is looking for. Review your CV and revise it to highlight your skillset and experiences that best match the requirements set out in the job advert.

Job applications

Your job application is an opportunity to demonstrate to employers that you are the right candidate for the role. The purpose of the job application is to create enough interest to encourage the recruiter to shortlist you for an interview.

Application letters and/or covering emails

The application letter is as important as your CV. A bad letter will likely mean that the recruiting manager will never read your CV. Your letter should invite the recruiter to view you as a potential candidate for the position. The three key features of a well written covering letter are:

- It is tailored to the job you are applying for.
- It demonstrates that you understand the post that is being advertised.
- Clear and error free language and professional presentation.

What every covering letter needs

Who are you? How can I contact you if I want to interview you?

Your details: Your name and postal address, in the top right hand corner.

Who is this letter for?

Addressee details: Title (Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss) name, job title and address of the person you are sending the letter to. In emails, full postal addresses are not required. If you don't know the person's name, write Dear Sir/Madam.

What job are you applying for?

Job Details: Include a job reference number, and/or a given job title.

How should you begin the letter?

Introduction: Open your letter. For example: Please find enclosed my CV in application for the job of [insert job title], advertised in/on [publication or website]. I believe that I have the required skills and experience [and particularly my experience in [insert outline experience], or my ability to [outline key skill] make me the ideal candidate for this post.

Why are you suitable for this job?

Develop a suitability statement: Structure the main section of the covering letter around the job description. Describe what experience and skills you have that make you suitable for the job. Use examples and be specific on your role in achieving a desired outcome.

How will you close the letter to leave a lasting impression?

Closing: As well as wrapping up what you have said, it is important that your prompt the recruiter take action. For example: "I hope this satisfies you that I have the necessary skills and experience for the role of [insert job title]. I look forward to hearing from you."



When you've finished drafting your covering letter, carefully review. Ask someone you trust to check it for you. Check that you are sending the letter in the correct format, and before the deadline. When you are satisfied, send the letter.

📄 CASE STUDY: GOT IT COVERED

Maria applies for a customer service role

Dear Mrs Box,

Please find enclosed my CV in application for the position advertised in The Post on 15th February.

The nature of my college course (retail, customer service and hospitality) has prepared me for this position. It involved a great deal of study of the business of retail and required initiative, self-motivation and a wide range of skills. For one course, the retail selling process, an understanding of the fashion industry was essential. I found this subject very stimulating.

I am a team player with a keen eye for detail and I should be grateful for the opportunity to progress to customer service representative. I am available to start this position immediately and have the passion and determination to ensure that I make a success of it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this application and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Miss M. Tremblay



 OVER TO YOU

Activity 7: Draft a Covering Letter

Develop a covering letter, remembering to include:

- Your details
- Addressee details
- Job details
- Introduction
- Suitability statement
- Closing

References

When applying for a job you will be asked to provide **references**. The best people to include for references are those people who like and respect you and who can recommend you based on experience of your capabilities, credentials and character. Make sure you contact the people you are including as your references to gain their permission and prepare them for a potential employer contacting them. As a courtesy keep them informed of the progress of your job application and thank them for their support.

READING LIST

- Ruth Helyer, (2015) "Learning through reflection: the critical role of reflection in work-based learning (WBL)", *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, Vol. 7 Iss: 1, pp.15–27
- Asher Rospigliosi, Sue Greener, Tom Bourner (2011) *Graduate Employment: 333 tips for finding your first job as a graduate*. bookboon.com
- Donald English, Edgar J. Manton, Laura Covarrubias, and Stephania Schirru. (2012) "Workplace qualities: Views of College of Business Deans and Human Resource Managers." Aabri.com

Summary

An analysis and development of your skillset should be a planned process. Appreciating your strengths, addressing your weaknesses, having clarity of your preferences and identifying gaps will give you confidence when communicating with possible employers about what it is you have to offer.

Knowing what you have to offer is one element of understanding how employable you are. Company information and job adverts provide clues as to what it is that employers are looking for. This knowledge will enable you develop your understanding as to how you match that requirement.

Utilising your skillset and releasing your potential in the job market requires you to develop a personal profile and professional CV and online profile in order to sell yourself positively when applying for jobs.

Chapter 3

Demonstrating Your Employability

Introduction

Entering into the recruitment and selection process can be quite daunting even if you possess good qualifications and technical skills. Successful job-hunting involves ensuring that you can demonstrate to possible employers your full potential in order that you can achieve the level of employment you desire. This chapter builds on the previous two chapters by highlighting different screening processes you may need to navigate and how to impress a prospective employer at interview.

Learning outcomes

On completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- 3 Outline how your skillset can be used to demonstrate your employability during the recruitment and selection process**

Assessment criteria

- 3 Outline how your skillset can be used to demonstrate your employability during the recruitment and selection process**
 - 3.1 Outline the different screening processes that may be used as part of employee selection and how you would use your skillset to navigate this screening effectively
 - 3.2 Reflect on how you intend to use your own skills and experience to maximise your potential to a prospective employer at interview.

Level 4 Employability and Self-Development

Background

Recruitment and selection screening processes and interviews can make the job applicant feel overwhelmed. Fear of failure can leave individuals feeling anxious about their prospects and contemplating the chance of rejection.

These fears are normal, regardless of the job position being applied for. We all want to feel successful in our endeavours and unsuccessful job applications are never nice.

If you have completed the activities in the previous chapters you will have a good understanding of what skills you have to offer an employer. Remember, if you lack confidence in what you have to offer, why would a recruiter have confidence in you?

Securing a job isn't about luck but persistence. By applying for as many jobs as possible, you increase your chances of getting interviews. The more interviews you have, the better you be at interviewing. The result will be an improved chance of getting a job offer. Continued effort will usually result in success.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 1: Researching recruitment and selection processes

- **Conduct an online investigation into the role of interviews in the selection process.**
- **How many different interview types can you identify?**
- **What tips would you share with other job seekers?**
- **List them below.**

3.1 Demonstrating your employability during the recruitment and selection process

Organisations develop a number of tools and techniques to use during the recruitment and selection process. What you experience will depend upon the type of organisation, the size of the organisation and the type of role you have applied for. Familiarising yourself with the types of activities you might get involved in will enable you to approach the recruitment and selection process with confidence and enable you to concentrate on the really important task of demonstrating how your employability skillset matches what the employer is looking for.

Screening tests

Some organisations use screening tests during the recruitment and selection process. These tests are designed to enable recruiters to eliminate unsuitable applicants as part of the pre-employment screening. There are two main types:

Personality tests assess your traits to predict the likelihood of you performing your job in a certain way.

Aptitude tests test your ability to do specific job tasks in different situations. Test types include; numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, logical reasoning, general ability, mechanical reasoning and spatial awareness. For example, if you are applying for a job in design or engineering you might be asked to complete a spatial awareness test which assesses your ability to mentally manipulate images.

Practising to take these tests will help you become familiar with the types of questions being asked and comfortable with the format of such tests.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 2: Have a go

Search for aptitude and personality practice tests on-line and try a few practice tests.

For example: www.practiceaptitudetests.com/ or www.psychometricinstitute.com.au/Free-Personality-Test.asp

Assessment centres

Assessment centres are used by some organisations during the recruitment process to observe how candidates perform in a variety of situations modelled on real work situations. Assessment centres can be designed in different ways depending on what it is that the recruiter is looking for in a candidate. An assessment centre may be used to assess a number of candidates where there are multiple positions which need to be filled, or when the organisation is looking for specific competencies to be demonstrated by the candidate during the recruitment and selection process. Depending on the position, applicants may be asked to participate in group work, presentations, interviews and tests.

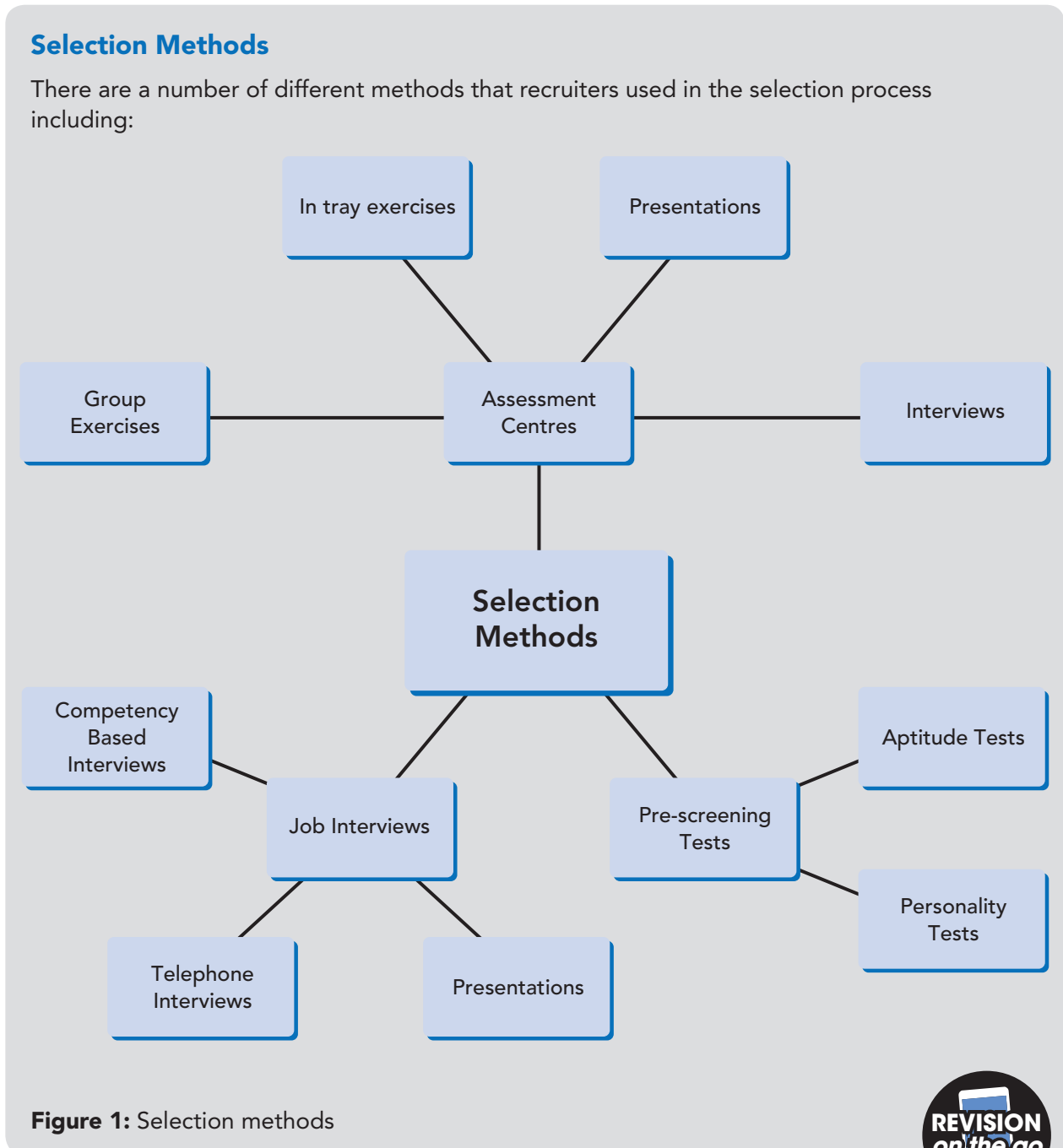


Figure 1: Selection methods



Applying your skillset

Assessment centres provide a great opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have what the employer is looking for. Don't worry about competing with other candidates, instead focus on what you can contribute and demonstrate your skills in action. For example you can use the following activities to demonstrate your skillset:

Presentations	Presentations in assessment centres are rarely about testing your subject knowledge but provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your planning and organising skills, verbal communication, non-verbal communication and of course, your presentation skills. Make sure you breathe to help control your nerves and speak clearly. Show your time management skills by keeping to the time limit imposed and ensure you practice your presentation beforehand so that you are confident in your delivery.
Case studies	For specific roles such as technical and management roles you may be presented with case study questions which provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your thinking and problem solving skills. Pay attention to the details in the case study and use the case study to show your initiative and commercial awareness in make business decisions. Prepare to clearly answer difficult questions and also defend your position. It's okay to disagree with the person conducting the test as long as you can back up your decision from facts you have drawn from the case study material.
In-tray and e-Tray exercises	These are business simulation exercises in which you are expected to complete tasks that employees would be expected to complete on a busy day. You will be given a selection of letters, emails and reports to read and action. These exercises again provide an opportunity to show your ability to prioritise, plan and organise, but more importantly demonstrate your capacity to cope with pressure.
Group exercises	Group exercises can take a number of forms. Some of these are informal activities such as building towers, others will be more formal, with designated roles. Unsurprisingly these activities are seeking to test how you work with and communicate with others. Therefore make sure you make a positive contribute to the group task and get involved. Don't be afraid to disagree with others but make sure any challenge is constructive and respond appropriately if your ideas are challenged too.

Applying your skillset in this way means that you must prepare for an assessment centre. Make sure you read any information you are sent from the employer carefully so you can develop a plan for demonstrating the competencies being tested and prepare anything that you are required to in advance, including preparing a presentation.

 OVER TO YOU
Activity 3: Have a go

Search for assessment centre practice tests on-line and try a few practice tests.

For example: www.assessmentday.co.uk/in-tray-exercise.htm

 CASE STUDY: AN ASSESSMENT CENTRE EXPERIENCE
Tabia demonstrates her presentation skills

Following an online application, screen tests and a first round interview, Tabia was invited to an assessment centre for a pharmaceutical company. The assessment centre lasted for two days and included several group exercises, a role-play, presentation and an interview.

At the beginning of the assessment centre the candidates were briefed that they would be giving a presentation on “the greatest achievement of my life”. They were provided with preparation materials and were allocated time during the first day to prepare for the presentation.

**Planning Stage 1**

Tabia used the initial period of time to think about what she wanted to say and brainstorm ideas and themes she wanted to cover in the presentation, making brief notes covering the main topics she wanted to talk about in each area.

Planning Stage 2

In the second preparation period, Tabia reviewed her ideas and selected the ideas, which she believed were the strongest, rejecting topics which were weaker and decided on the order that she wanted to present the ideas.

She used the remainder of her time creating a presentation.

Using her free time

Rather than going to the hotel bar that evening, Tabia worked on ensuring her slides were clear and impactful. Inviting some friends to join her on Facebook Live, she filmed herself running through her presentation to practise the timing and delivery and made some changes based on feedback from her friends.

One last run through

Having requested permission from the assessment centre assessors, Tabia used the equipment and room where the assessment centre presentation was to be given for a final practice run before breakfast on Day 2 of the assessment centre.

The feedback

Having planned and prepared as much as she could in the time she had, Tabia received positive feedback from the assessor not only for the content of her presentation but the way in which it was delivered. The assessors had observed her organisation and planning, commenting that her ability to deliver a compelling presentation was a result of her rehearsal and professional approach to preparing to give a presentation.

3.2 Maximising your potential to a prospective employer at interview

Developing your employability skills will contribute to your success in securing a new position. Employers will assess your job specific and employability skills through conducting job interviews. Being able to identify the key employability skills that are being sought for the position you are applying for and communicating how your skills match those required by the employer during the interview will improve your chances of success.

Matching your own strengths and abilities

If you have been invited to interview for a new job, all the hard work you have put into your job application has paid off. However, you now have to plan in order to make the best impression you can for the interview stage.

Interviews are a two-way process so your preparation needs to focus on matching your strengths and abilities with those sought by the organisation and also preparing to find out whether both the organisation and the role are right for you.

If you have been invited for interview it is likely that you have already demonstrated that your skillset matches those that the organisation is seeking. However, you can further explore matching your skillset against the competencies outlined in the job description and person specification.

During the interview you will be asked to provide examples of when you have displayed specific competencies. For example, you may be asked to describe a situation where you have had to work on a project to demonstrate the competency of collaboration. The STAR outline used in Activity 3, Chapter 1 can be used to help you prepare for such questions.

 OVER TO YOU

Activity 4: Prepare examples of your competencies

Research an organisation and job role that is of interest to you. Identify three competencies sought by the organisation for this type of role. Prepare examples using the STAR framework of when you have demonstrated the required competencies.

Interview skills

Interviewing is a skill which you can develop and improve with practice. Prepare and think about how to position your skills and experience in advance. Consider ways in which you can position your skills and experience in a succinct and clear manner, which will interest the interviewer. Once in the interview you need to use a number of skills including;

Listening	Practising active listening techniques requires you to focus deeply on what the interviewer is saying, both in terms of what the words they are saying, and also reading their body language.
Clarifying what is required	If you aren't sure what the interviewer meant by a question, paraphrase the question to confirm what you believe the interviewer wants to know before answering the question.
Re-phrasing	Expressing an idea in an alternative way can help clarify a point you are trying to make or emphasise a skill without repeating yourself.
Using knowledge, skills and experience effectively when answering questions	Answering the question asked is essential but don't forget to explain exactly how your skills and experience match the job description and person specification.
Supporting answers with relevant evidence and examples	Interviewers will have interviewed many candidates give generic claims as to how they meet the requirements of a position. Standing out from the crowd requires you to provide the interviewer with specific examples to support the claims you make.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 5: Grab the attention of the interviewer

Consider the following generic claims that might be made in an interview situation. Write a specific example to back up these statements.

- I am self-motivated
- I am very organised
- I work well with others
- I deliver good customer service

For example: I am self-motivated. I have a huge amount of drive to succeed. I bring that same drive to managing my priorities and delivering to deadline. In my college work I have successfully completed a number of projects in advance of deadline, and volunteered for the role of student representative to support my peers, communicating with members of staff and improve the learning experience for students.

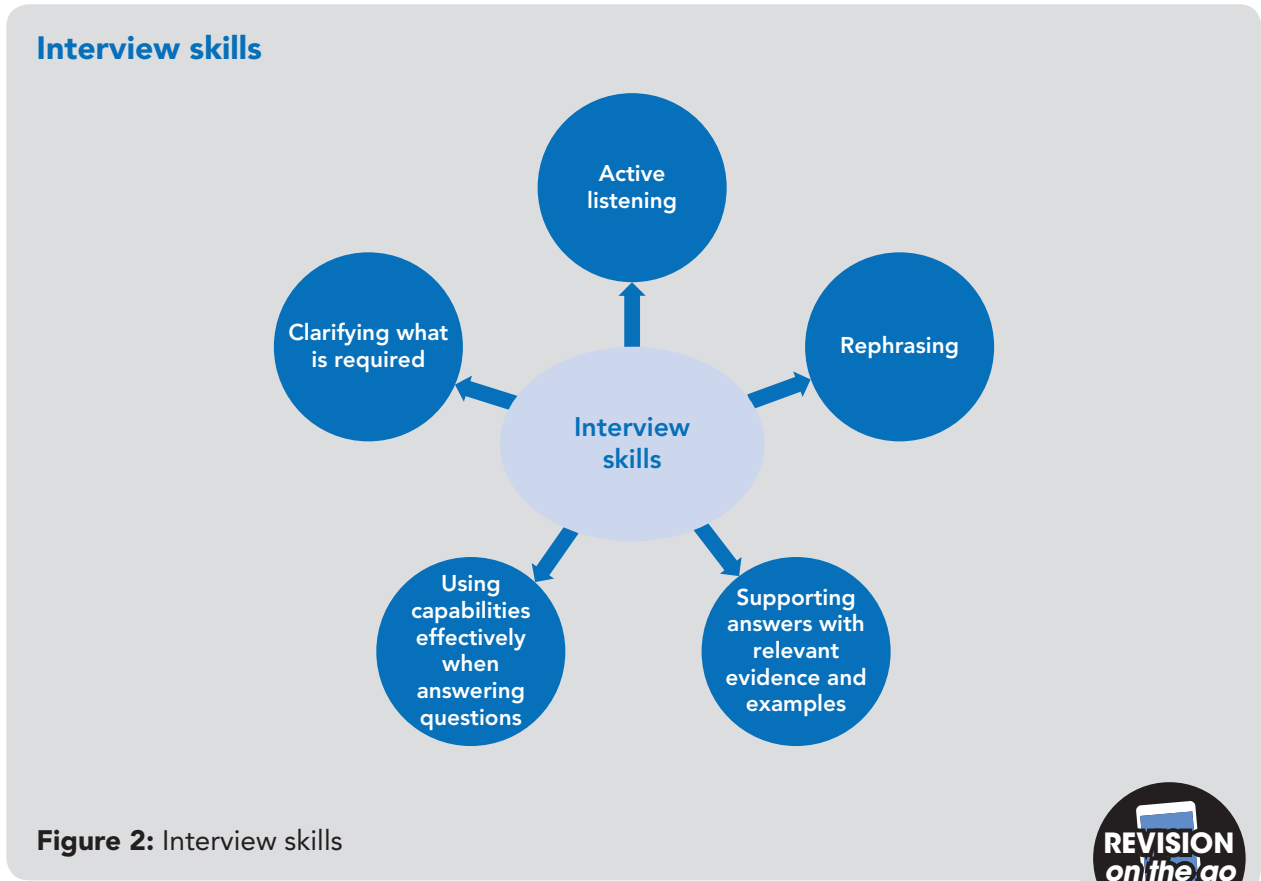


Figure 2: Interview skills



Presenting yourself effectively

The hard work that you put into writing your CV and cover letter has impressed the recruiting manager enough that they want to interview you. A similar level of preparation is required in order that you present yourself effectively at interview. This means not only saying the right things, but doing the right things right as well. Your preparation will need to include:

Reviewing your CV	You may have applied for a number of jobs at the same time. Revisit the adapted CV that you sent to the employer, the job description and person specification and the organisation information you found during your desk research. Consider how you will articulate your skillset to match the needs of the employer.
Preparing to answer and ask questions	<p>Research common interview questions and practise answering them. A mock interview with a friend or family member might be embarrassing but it'll help you fine-tune your answers.</p> <p>Remember that you are also interviewing the employer to check that the organisation and job is right for you. Write down any outstanding questions you have and use them during the interview.</p>
Planning your route	There is nothing worse than travel stress when going to an interview, except perhaps arriving late. Plan your route carefully and make sure you know exactly where your interview is taking place. Some office buildings are hard to find, so if you are not sure make time to check it out before your interview. You want to arrive at the interview a few minutes early so you can appear calm and unflustered.

Managing your appearance

Plan your outfit before the interview so you don't end up in a panic. There is nothing worse than discovering that your planned outfit has food stains, missing buttons or damage, or that it no longer fits properly. You want to look smart and professional whilst wearing something you feel comfortable in.

Think also about the impact your hairstyle, body-art, clothing choices and general appearance will have on the recruiting manager. You have to manage the tension between being your authentic self and dressing appropriately to fit in with the organisation's workplace culture.

**OVER TO YOU****Activity 6: Common interview questions**

Conduct a search online for common interview questions. Consider how you will answer some of these questions.

For example: <https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/free/competency-based-interview/CompetencyBasedInterview-Questions.pdf>

During the interview

Interviews provide recruiting managers with a very short period of time to get to know you so the impression you make during the interview will be crucial in deciding whether you get offered the position. Throughout the interview you will be giving non-verbal signals to the interviewer about your appropriateness for the job position. Consider the following:

- 1 **Introduce yourself confidently** – Stand tall, give good eye contact and a firm - but not vice-like grip – handshake. Smile at the interviewer(s) and greet them pleasantly.
- 2 **Control your breathing** – If you don't breathe you will struggle to speak normally or clearly.
- 3 **Body position** – Don't slouch in the chair, lean slightly forward and show interest. Don't forget to keep eye contact.
- 4 **Be timely** – Time is short and you want to use that time wisely. Avoid rambling.
- 5 **Thank the interviewer** – at the end of the interview don't forget to shake hands with the interviewer and thank them for their time.

CASE STUDY: WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN ATTENDING AN INTERVIEW

An author's tale

I might be writing a study guide which provides a framework for how to interview well but like most people I have, in my past, an experience where I have interviewed particularly badly. Twenty years on, it is a laughable example of what not to do when attending an interview.

The highlights of a single interview experience were:

- Spilling breakfast down my suit and not having a spare so going to the interview with a stain on the front of my skirt.
- Discovering almost all of my hosiery had holes in them, and then ripping the only decent remaining pair meaning I had to dispose of them for the interview.
- Getting caught in traffic so not having any spare time to find what turned out to be a difficult to spot office building.
- Not being able to contact the recruitment agent or the employer by phone to inform them I was running late because it just went to answer phone... and my phone messages getting increasingly desperate.
- Finally finding the building 5 minutes after my interview was supposed to have started and discovering the address I was given by the recruiter was the wrong one and almost sobbing when I found out.
- Getting lost on the way to the actual building taking a further 20 minutes to drive "5 minutes away".
- Being asked if I would like a glass of water whilst I completed a numerical reasoning test and replying; "No thank you, or I'll need the bathroom." Yes I actually said that out loud.
- Calling the recruiting manager by the wrong name throughout the interview.



- Stumbling badly on my high heeled shoes when being escorted from the office I was taking the tests to the interview room, knocking over a table full of company brochures and breaking a glass in the process.
- Inadvertently throwing a pen at the interviewer trying to get the lid off.

Not my finest hour when job-hunting.

! NEED TO KNOW: WHAT TO DO OR NOT IN A JOB INTERVIEW

Review the following link for tips on what to do or not in a job interview.

<https://th.careercross.com/en/article/what-to-do-or-not-in-a-job-interview>



Asking for feedback

Receiving communication from a prospective employer informing you that you have been unsuccessful following an interview can feel devastating, especially if you walked away from the interview thinking it had gone well. Rejection is never easy, but finding out why you have been rejected plays an important part in helping you to be successful in the future.

Asking for feedback enables you to place your rejection in context. It may be that you were a close second, and it was a simple case of a better candidate on the day. Bad luck, but it will give you confidence that you are doing all the right things.

Alternatively, the employer may highlight areas where they perceived that you had experience, knowledge or skills gaps. This gives you actions that you can add to your personal development plan, or it can provide insight into areas where you are not selling your skillset well, which you can use to plan for your next job interview.

READING LIST

- Sarah Simpson (2015) *Ace that interview: How to Answer the Top Ten Most Asked Questions*. Bookboon.com
- Fiona Setch (2014) *The art of interview skills*. Bookboon.com
- Megan Hodge, Nicole Spoor, (2012) "Congratulations! You've landed an interview: What do hiring committees really want?", *New Library World*, Vol. 113 Iss: 3/4, pp.139–161

Summary

Being confident and responding appropriately to the various tools and techniques used by employers during the recruitment and selection process will provide you with skills you need to respond appropriately and professionally in any given situation. It is important that you are able to use your skillset to navigate screening processes effectively and demonstrate how your employability skillset matches what the employer is looking for.

Job interviews are a key tool used by employers to assess your suitability for a job position during the recruitment and selection process. Developing your employability skills will contribute to your success in securing a new position. For you as a candidate the purpose of the interview is to demonstrate that your key employability skills match those that are being sought for the position you are applying for. It is essential that you are able to communicate how your skills match those required by the employer during the interview in order to improve your chances of success.



Chapter 4

Establishing Yourself in a New Role

Introduction

Despite possessing good qualifications and technical skills, many new recruits find it difficult to integrate and establish themselves in an existing team when starting a new position. This can have an adverse impact on their productivity and performance during the early stages of their employment. This chapter reviews what it takes for new employees to become fully established and highly effective in their team roles. It focuses on the use of interpersonal skills and team work as key enablers of effective employment.

Learning outcomes

On completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- 4 Appraise how employability skills can help establish you in a new job role and become part of the team.**

Assessment criteria

- 4.1 Explain the usefulness of employability skills when starting a new job and how these could be evidenced during a probationary period.
- 4.2 Describe how employability skills can help a new employee integrate with and become an effective contributor to a team.

Level 4 Employability and Self-Development

Background

Joining a new team can be a daunting experience, especially when you are also starting work for a new organisation. It is normal to be anxious about whether you are going to get on well with your new colleagues and whether you will be able to do your job well.

As a new recruit it is important that you take time to establish yourself positively within your new team. Interpersonal skills and team work will allow you to develop effective work relationships. These skills will also enable you to be able to be friendly in a professional way, without being over familiar and confident without appearing arrogant.

Team work is when everyone is able to combine their strengths and efforts in order to deliver an effective and efficient coordinated action. In a corporate environment this requires individuals in the team helping each other and creating a workplace environment where people are able to reach their potential.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 1: Good and bad team members

Think about your experiences of being part of a team in the past. This might be at work, as part of your course or perhaps being part of a sports team. Consider the qualities that make a good team member and what makes you think someone is a bad team member.

How could this help you to be a good team member in your new role?

Good Team Member	Bad Team Member

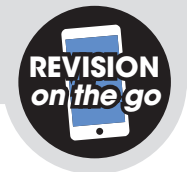
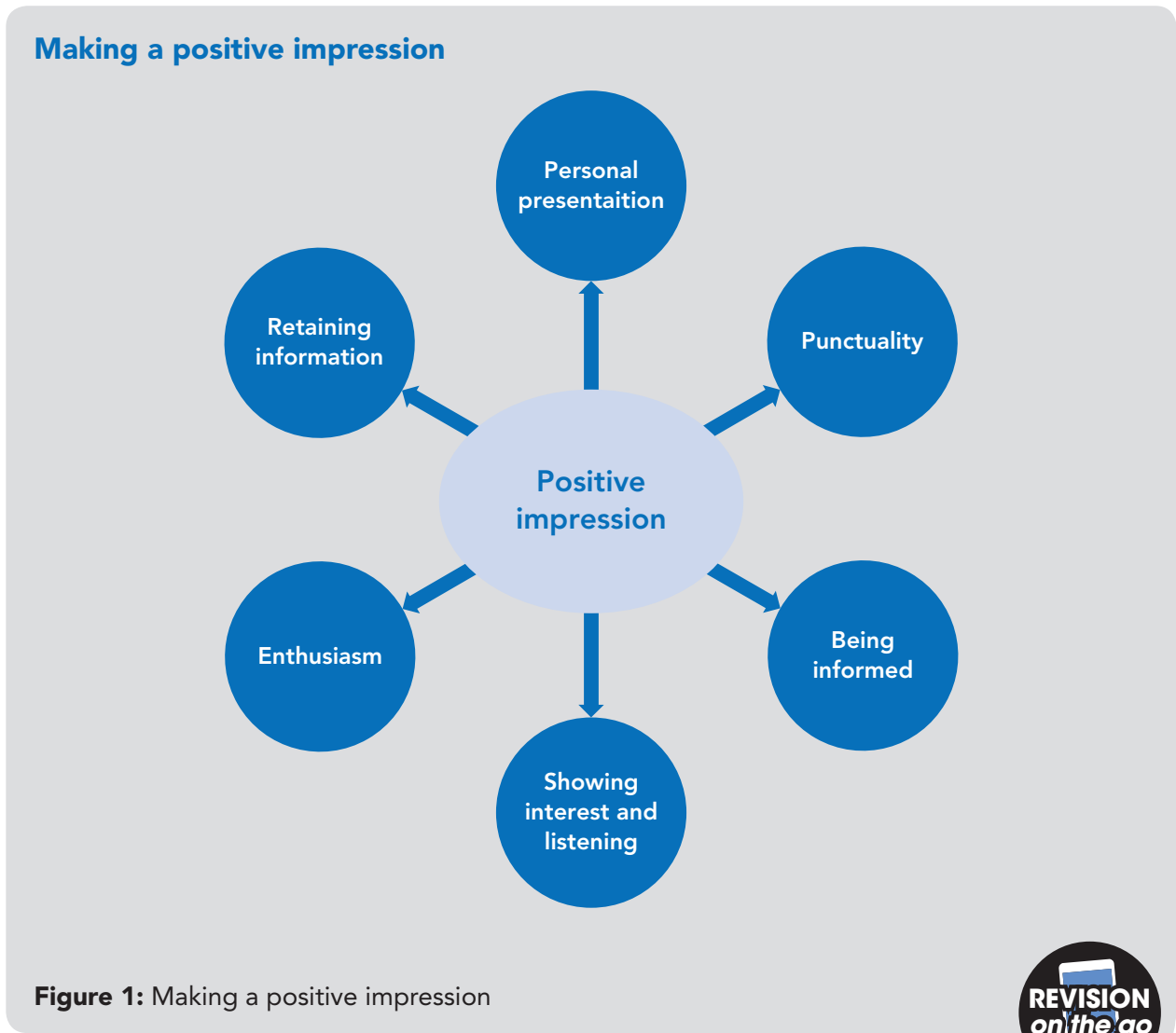
4.1 Using employability skills in a new job

A good first impression is important because it establishes your reputation and relationships with your co-workers. It will shape other people's opinion about you, your potential and your future opportunities within the organisation.

Making a positive impression

Making a positive impression during your initial period of your employment is essential to ensure that people take you seriously in your new role. There are several elements to making a good impression:

Personal presentation	Dress professionally, even if the organisation has adopted a casual dress policy. Image matters. Being well groomed and dressed appropriately is associated with professionalism and reliability. How you look and dress matters.
Punctuality	There is nothing that creates a bad impression more quickly than poor time keeping, as it suggests disorganisation, disrespect for others and laziness. Be on time for work and meetings. Return from lunch in a timely fashion. You can't be professional and late.
Being informed	You may have done research in preparation for your interview, but once you work for an organisation there is a lot more to learn. Information is everywhere. The employee handbook, company reports, technical manuals, employee newsletters. Become well-informed about your organisation and your job.
Showing interest and listening	There is no expectation that you will know everything when you start a new job. Ask questions, be curious and listen to your colleagues. Doing so not only ensures that you do your job tasks in the right way, but also demonstrates that you have an interest in your job and the organisation you have joined.
Enthusiasm	There is an expectation that you are interested in your new role and are enthusiastic about the opportunity given to you by the organisation. Show it. Smile when you enter the room. Be alert. Be positive in your responses. Be enthusiastic.
Retaining information	Make sure you take notes. In your first few weeks you will be given large amounts of information, which will be very difficult to retain. The information provided is being given for a reason, because you need it to do your job. Making sure you have that information to hand will help you to be effective and efficient more quickly.



Making a positive contribution

Asking how you can make a positive contribution in your job sounds like something that you might be asked at a job interview but it is a legitimate question that you should be asking yourself. Making a decision to make a positive contribution is the difference between you being a liability to your team and being a valued (and valuable) team player. This includes:

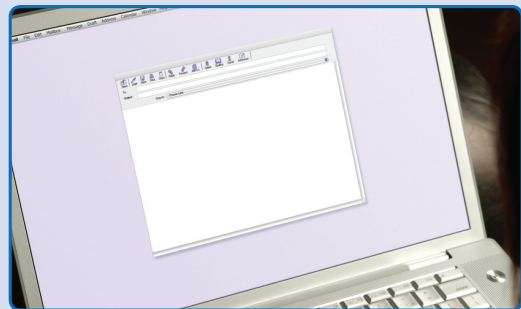
Listening to instructions	It can be more difficult to listen and follow instructions than you think. You might have your mind on other things, be distracted or think that you already know. If you have one ear on another conversation, or an eye on your computer screen it is possible that you are not listening attentively and might miss instruction. But failing to listen to instructions might result in a project failure, or worse still threaten the safety of other people in the workplace. Take notes to ensure you remember any instructions given to you.
Clarifying understanding through questions	In organisational life there is often lots of complex information being shared, and a lot of this will be in organisational shorthand that you may not know. If you are not quite sure what has been requested or what the information you have been given means, use questions to check what has been said to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Don't assume you can guess what was meant, clarify.

Applying skills diligently	You sold your skillset at the interview stage, now you need to use those skills in your job. Being diligent in applying your skills is simply about being effective at work. Review how you are you doing your work, make sure you are managing the demands being made so you use your time to manage competing priorities.
Meeting deadlines	Being organised is the most important ingredient to being productive. Be clear on when different tasks and projects need to be completed then plan and manage your work load so that you deliver to deadline. This will help build your reputation as being reliable and increase trust between you and your colleagues.
Checking work carefully	It is all very well delivering a piece of work on time, but if what you are delivering is of a poor standard or contains inaccuracies not only are you wasting your time, but that of your colleagues. Doing things right first time is far more valuable than people having to correct your mistakes.
Responding positively to feedback	Good feedback is easy to respond positively to. But feedback that is pointing out where we have gone wrong is challenging. It is worth remembering that it is harder for someone to give corrective feedback. Regardless of whether feedback is positive or negative thank the person for their feedback because it provides you with an opportunity to grow and develop. Seek clarity if you need more information on what you could do better next time. Then act on it.

CASE STUDY: A NEW JOB, A DIFFERENT EMAIL CULTURE

Accidentally upsetting others

Tarish had just begun a new job in a new organisation. In his previous organisation the subject line of emails was used so that others in the organisation could filter the emails by priority. Tarish would start his subject line with 'Urgent Action' if he needed the email acting on immediately, Action, if action was required but not urgently and Information only if no action was required.



After a few weeks at work his manager asked if he could speak to him. His manager explained that his use of the subject line was causing a negative reaction in other teams, and that he'd had several senior managers expressing their frustration at an unknown person demanding urgent action.

Tarish apologised to his manager for the complaints and explained his use of the subject line. The manager understood but suggested that, because this was not the email culture of the organisation, those subject headings came across as aggressive. Tarish thanked his manager for the feedback and stopped using the subject line in this way.

 OVER TO YOU

Activity 2: Seeking out feedback

Soliciting feedback is a great way to understand the impression you give and whether the contribution you are making is valued. Seek out three people that you work with, or who know you well and ask for feedback. Ask them:

- What was your first impression of me? Why?
- What three things do you value about my contribution?
- What three things would you like to see more of from me?

Reflect on the feedback you receive and consider what you need to do differently going forward to create a great first impression and deliver a positive contribution.

Achieving goals

At the beginning of your employment it is likely that you will have a probationary period. At the end of the **probationary period** your performance will be reviewed. Therefore, the first thing you need to understand is what goals your performance is going to be measured against. Ideally you will be given SMART goals as outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.1. If you do not have clear goals it will be difficult to know what you will be judged on. If you are not sure what your performance will be measured against ask for clarity from your line manager. These goals should become your priorities and you should work to achieve goals set for the probationary period.

At the end of your probationary period your manager should meet with you to review your performance. If you have achieved your goals you should secure your job permanently.

 **NEED TO KNOW: PREPARING FOR YOUR PROBATIONARY REVIEW**

- 1 Read through the job description to refresh your memory of what is expected.
- 2 Review your performance against the objectives set at the start of your probationary. How did you do? Make notes of areas where things have gone well and also where you have struggled.
- 3 Think about possible performance goals going forward. Write down some draft SMART goals to share with your manager.
- 4 Think about what skills, knowledge or experience you would like to develop and write some draft personal development and career goals to discuss with your manager.
- 5 Prepare yourself. You want to approach the meeting with an open mind and a positive attitude. The feedback from your manager will be valuable in your development as an employee.



4.2 Integrating with and becoming an effective contributor to a team

Having a clear understanding of your workplace responsibilities will help you to feel secure in your job role and contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction. When you start in a new team you will want to make a good impression on your team members and this requires you to understand how you, and your role fits into the team dynamic. Understanding how to integrate yourself into the team and how to establish yourself as a valuable team player will help you become an effective contributor to your team.

Accepting your role and working within boundaries

Having clarity about the larger organisational purpose will help you to understand how your role fits into the bigger picture. It is essential that you are able to work within the boundaries of your role, that you know where your role ends and someone else's role begins. This goes beyond the job tasks in your job description and includes acceptable interpersonal and behavioural norms, such as respecting personal space or interactions within the team. Understanding your designated role and working within guidance within your new team requires proactive communication and learning where boundaries exist.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 3: How do job roles fit together?

What do you know about where a job role fits into the bigger picture and how the responsibilities of the job would interact with those of other team members? Find the following documents and review them:

- A job description
- Copy of the organisation's mission, vision and values
- Organisation chart
- Team or department strategy document

In small groups discuss where the job role fits into the wider organisation and capture your thoughts as to what guidance this gives you in regards to how you would work and act in the role.

For example: the organisation want to double its growth in 5 years but the workforce isn't going to double. This means we have to be able to do more with less. This means that when I do my work I need to consider how I can continuously improve the way I do things.

Effective use of own skills

Having confidence shouldn't be mistaken for always knowing everything. Truly self-confident people are open to the fact that they might not know everything there is to know on a subject. The more you know and the more skilled you become, the more you understand how much more there is that you can develop.

Confidence is a willingness to learn. It means you have a **growth mind-set** while feeling able to perform your role and job tasks.

You can improve your confidence by planning and preparing for new or potentially difficult situations. This may include speaking to colleagues and gaining their feedback. Responsiveness to criticisms and compliments from your colleagues and line manager will ensure you are able to recognise how others see your strengths and weaknesses and take action to develop your skillset. Increasing your awareness about what is expected will enable you to identify areas where you have knowledge or skills gaps and request support and training to close them. Discussing openly your strengths, and encouraging team members to talk about their own will provide the opportunity to utilise those strengths more often. Therefore to effectively use your own skills, invite feedback, actively listen and remain open to different ideas.

CASE STUDY: SELF-CONFIDENCE AT WORK

Meiying needs reassurance

Meiying's first year at work had brought its fair share of challenges. The new job meant she had to move to the city from the small town where she grew up. She was used to having people around her who she knew and who shared her beliefs and values, but she found that the people she worked with had different backgrounds and therefore a different perspective on life. Moving away from friends and family meant that she felt lonely and spent a lot of time feeling uncertain about her place in the world.



When she started her job she realised that there were aspects of the work that were completely new to her and she had no idea whether she was doing things right. She didn't receive any formal training so was picking up information and knowledge as she needed it. Furthermore her line manager did not give her any feedback on her work so she had no idea whether she was performing or not. Over time she began to doubt herself more and more, which led to her withdrawing and not speaking up during meetings.

A performance review

After three months Meiying had her probationary performance review. The line manager was pleased with her work and gave her lots of positive feedback on her performance but also highlighted some areas where Meiying needed to improve. Meiying highlighted her lack of training in these areas. Meiying and her line manager worked on a personal development plan to close her knowledge and skills gaps.

The performance review left Meiying feel more confident that she was able to do her job well and supported by her line manager in getting the development she needed to close any gaps.

Several months after the performance review one of Meiyong's colleagues commented on how Meiyong seemed to have changed from being quiet and withdrawn in the first few months to showing positivity and confidence in her work now.

Meiyong knew that the turning point was getting feedback and support and that she felt more motivated and successful as a result.

Valuing diversity

Diversity in teams isn't just about dimensions such as culture, sex, age, race etc. but also understanding that each member of the team has a variety of strengths and talents which contribute something of value to the team. By being aware of and valuing the diverse skills, knowledge and experience within the team it is possible to operate at high levels of performance.

Belbin Team Roles

Belbin (<http://www.belbin.com/>) is a tool, which identifies nine possible team roles that individuals play within the team based upon different types of behaviour and performance. Understanding and developing the behaviours and team roles within the team can improve a team's performance. Belbin proposes that if a team is constructed of individuals who exhibit all nine types of behaviours between them then the team will be highly successful. The nine roles identified by Belbin are:

Resource investigator	Seeks out and finds new ideas, opportunities and resources for the team. Enthusiastic but can lose interest and be over-optimistic.
Team worker	The versatile diplomat of the team, who encourages the team to cooperate and gets work done on behalf of the team. Avoids conflict and can be indecisive.
Co-ordinator	Keeps the team aligned to its goals and tasks are delegated to meet objectives. However might over delegate and not take their full share of the workload.
Plant	Creative and will find novel solutions to problems. Generates ideas but can be forgetful and fail to communicate effectively.
Monitor Evaluator	The impartial judge who is strategic, logical and weighs all options. Dispassionate but can be uninspiring and at times critical of others.
Specialist	The specialist who has expertise in a key area, however their focus is narrow and can produce information overload.
Shaper	Provides the drive to keep team momentum moving forward. Overcomes obstacles but can sometimes offend in pushing to get things done.
Implementer	Practical and strategic, turning ideas into action and organising work. Reliable but can hold tightly to the plan demonstrating inflexibility in the face of change.
Completer Finisher	Effective at finishing work off and checking for errors. Conscientious quality controller but can let perfect get in the way of good.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 4: Belbin Team Roles

What team role(s) do you play? Search online for a free Belbin team role assessment. Completing the test will increase your self-awareness and provide a useful start point for discussing your personal development.

For example: <http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3113>

Belbin team roles

Figure 2: Belbin team roles



Meeting team objectives and responding to feedback

Being able to work effectively in a team is an essential employability skill and you have a key role in contributing to the delivery of team objectives. When you join a new team, there is a lot to take in. First of all, you need to understand what your job role is, but also how you fit within the organisation. There will be gaps in your knowledge, both in terms of what needs to be done and how things are done. You must take responsibility for learning from others and not being afraid to ask for help if you are not sure. No one will think less of you for acknowledging that there are areas of the job, or team objectives that you are unfamiliar with. Seeking, being open to and responding to feedback from others is an essential part of being an effective team member. If the team's objectives are to be met sharing knowledge, supporting each other, working together and holding team members accountable to one another are all necessary.

Going the extra mile

Demonstrating your commitment and enthusiasm at work takes more than arriving at work on time and meeting your own performance goals. Going the extra mile takes initiative, deliberately learning new and better ways of working and supporting your colleagues in solving problems and delivering projects on time. Going the extra mile won't be written in your job description, and it isn't about you taking on so much you feel overwhelmed. It is an ongoing process of noticing where additional effort and help is appropriate and being willing to do extra when needed.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 5: Where can you do more?

Reflect on your current workload, and that of your fellow students or colleagues. Are there areas where you can give support and help someone out? If so, how do you propose to offer support?

For example: Having finished my tasks on a project, there has been a meeting, which have resulted in some revisions needing to be made to get the final project approval. Although it is not my responsibility to complete these revisions, I have asked my colleague if he needs any help.



READING LIST

- Ajay Singh, Bindu Gupta, (2015) "Job involvement, organizational commitment, professional commitment, and team commitment: A study of generational diversity ", Benchmarking: An International Journal, Vol. 22 Iss: 6, pp.1192 - 1211
- Apex Leadership Ltd, (2013) There's no I in Team. Bookboon.com
- Robert J. Trent, (2003) "Planning to use work teams effectively", Team Performance Management: An International Journal, Vol. 9 Issue: 3/4, pp.50-58, doi: 10.1108/13527590310482235

Summary

Employability skills contribute to a smooth transition of a new employee into a new job and help them to integrate effectively to become a fully established and highly effective member of their team. These skills allow you to develop effective work relationships and be friendly in a professional way, without being over familiar and confident without appearing arrogant.

A positive first impression and your contribution to the team objectives will ensure that people take you seriously in your new role.

Chapter 5

Creating a Personal Development Plan

Introduction

Getting a new role is just the beginning of releasing your full potential. Employability skills are required throughout your working life to maximise your value as an employee and to develop your career progression. This requires an element of on-going personal and professional development – not just ‘growing with the job’ – but also reflecting on your performance and planning your development so you can achieve your career aspirations.

The concluding chapter of this unit focuses on the concept of lifelong learning and personal development planning. This includes building a career development plan that proactively maps out the skills development opportunities required to progress your career. This is a practical element that, if successfully executed, will have lasting implications for each learner’s employability and future career development

Learning outcomes

On completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- 5 Using a process of self-awareness and self-reflection, summarise opportunities for personal development planning in order to ensure you maintain your value as an employee and advance your career potential**

Assessment criteria

- 5 Using a process of self-awareness and self-reflection, summarise opportunities for personal development planning in order to ensure you maintain your value as an employee and advance your career potential**

5.1 Utilise feedback on performance to maximise your value as an employee.

5.2 Appraise the value of feedback on performance with your own career goals and aspirations.

Level 4 Employability and Self-Development

Background

Self-development is a practice, which is under-utilised within organisational life. Too often individuals will believe that they do not have **talent**, or will have a limited understanding of their talent. This is not only unfortunate for the individual, who has no self-awareness of their true potential, but is also damaging for the organisation that does not get to benefit from a full appreciation of an individual's **capabilities**.

Self-assessment of your skillset provides the opportunity for an honest appraisal of what you have to offer. Individuals can underestimate the breadth of skills they have because our strengths are things that we find easy, and therefore are, to us, of no consequence. Equally, without self-assessment we may fail to reflect upon areas of weakness, remaining ignorant of areas where there are shortcomings in our performance. In such cases, it is not unusual for our weakness to get in the way of us playing our strengths, further disabling our ability to release our full potential.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 1: WWW and EBI

Think about a recent piece of work that you completed. It might be a college report, a work project or even a task you did in your personal life. Reflect and give yourself some feedback on the work using the following framework:

- **WWW – What went well with the work? Be specific about the things YOU did and about the experience that worked well.**
- **EBI – It would be even better if..... Reflect on the work YOU did and the actions you could you have taken that might have made the work or experience even better if you had done them.**

WWW – What worked well	EBI – Even Better If
<i>For example: I finished the work ahead of deadline because I had a work plan and stuck to it.</i>	<i>For example: I found some days I would work on other things that were more interesting or easier, wasting time by procrastinating when I should really have done the project first.</i>

5.1 Maximising your value as an employee

It is sometimes difficult to consider ourselves in terms of value. Lisa Quast suggests that individuals consider themselves in terms of a product. Organisations continuously upgrade and improve products and in doing so meet the needs of the market. .

“ Think of yourself as a product. That’s right! View yourself as a competitive product with features, benefits, assets and liabilities – all waiting to be improved upon year over year, carefully differentiating yourself from others and creating your personal brand. ”

Lisa Quast – Career Coach, Contributor Forbes

Maximising your value as an employee requires you to embrace opportunities to receive feedback and reflect on your performance in order to provide information on areas where you can improve your skills, knowledge and behaviour. To remain valuable you must continually be willing to be open to reviewing your performance in order to develop and improve.

Probationary Reviews

When you begin a new role many organisations will ask you to complete a formal probationary period (see Chapter 4, section 4.1). At the end of your probation you will review your performance with your line manager. This probationary review is an opportunity for you and your line manager to assess how well you are getting on in your new role. It is a chance to get some formal feedback and gain support for any improvement needed.

Formal Performance Reviews

Done well, a formal **performance development review (PDR)** or **appraisal** has the potential to have a hugely positive impact on your performance and your personal development goals. It is an opportunity to highlight your accomplishments and the contribution you are making to the team and the organisation in your job role. It is also an opportunity to have dedicated time with your line manager to discuss your job performance and formally record your achievements and career aspirations.

The key to a positive PDR is preparation.

- **Look Back** – Consider your progress since your last performance review. Remind yourself of your achievements and your contribution.
- **Look Forward** – Your line manager will want to set performance objectives for the next performance period. Consider what these might be, and develop your own objectives.
- **Learning opportunities** – Review the learning opportunities you identified in Activity 4 in Chapter 2. What opportunities are there for projects you would like to be involved in or training from which you would like to benefit.

 OVER TO YOU

Activity 2: Conduct an analysis of your job performance

Consider your job performance using the following dimensions:

- **Expected performance** – Take into account your job description, team goals and organisational priorities; how would you rate your performance?
- **Desired performance** – Consider your career ambitions and development plan; how would you rate your performance?
- **Potential performance** – In relation to your true talent potential, is there more that you could be doing that you are not doing in your job role? How would you rate your performance?

For each dimension consider what room there is for improvement and write one action you are going to take to improve your performance.

Expected Performance				
Excellent	Good	Neutral	Could do better	Poor
One action I will take to improve is...				

Desired Performance				
Excellent	Good	Neutral	Could do better	Poor
One action I will take to improve is...				

Potential Performance				
Excellent	Good	Neutral	Could do better	Poor
One action I will take to improve is...				

Informal feedback mechanisms

Feedback doesn't have to wait until your formal PDR. Ideally, you will receive regular feedback on your performance from your line manager to avoid any surprises in your formal PDR.

It is recommended that you take time to ask your manager for feedback on your performance. You may also ask for support for work tasks that you are working on. For example you may ask your

manager to review how you plan to tackle an upcoming meeting, provide feedback on a practice run through of the presentation or review progress on a project you are working on. You can also ask for some post-action feedback when you have completed particular job tasks or at the end of a project.

Reflecting on Feedback

Reflection is a key component of learning. By reflecting on our actions we are able to consider what we are doing well, and what areas we need to work on in order to improve performance. When you receive feedback you can react in a variety of ways: you can choose to ignore it, you can acknowledge it but not act on it, or you can consider what it means, how it applies to you and how you can action it.

Ideally, feedback will be used to close the gap between what you currently understand in regards to your job performance and what the person giving the feedback wishes you to understand in order that you have a shared understanding about satisfactory performance and the changes that need to be made in order for you to get there.

Failure to act on feedback, especially if the person receiving the feedback doesn't understand what is meant by it, will result in a one-way process where no change takes place. Responding to feedback is a proactive process, which empowers you to take ownership of your own development and learning.

! NEED TO KNOW: HOW TO ACTION FEEDBACK

Be clear what needs to change. Sometimes feedback can leave you confused. If you are not sure what was meant by the feedback ask for clarity.

Prioritise. In a performance review meeting you could receive a lot of feedback. Take time to identify two or three areas of improvement to work on.

Plan. Once you are clear on what to improve, create an action plan to make it happen. Consider different options for development and learning.

Get support. Review your personal development plan with your line manager.

Take action. Make your plan happen, and make sure you review progress with your line manager.



📄 CASE STUDY: COULD DO BETTER

Luke needs more information

Luke had worked hard on the project report he was tasked with delivering. The report was over 50 pages long, and included information from a number of different departments. A large quantity of data had been collated and presented in various sections of the report. Luke submitted the draft report to his line manager for review. His line manager wrote at the bottom of the report:

"I'm not happy with the way you handled the project."



Luke wasn't quite sure what his line manager meant. The feedback could be interpreted in several ways:

- 1 His line manager was unhappy with the way the report had been written – the format, content and written report itself.
- 2 His line manager was not happy with the way Luke had conducted himself when writing the report, perhaps with his communication with other team members.
- 3 His line manager didn't think that Luke had managed the writing of the report well, in terms of his attitude toward writing the report, and behaviour whilst writing.
- 4 The conclusions in the report did not meet the manager's expectations. Perhaps Luke had not gone into enough detail or had presented information which was not supported by the data.

Getting clarity

Luke asked for a meeting with his line manager to clarify what it was he could have handled better. The manager explained that Luke had not formatted the report in the correct way, and some of the data was incorrectly displayed. His line manager was more than happy with the content of the report, and delighted at the way Luke had worked with different teams to gather the relevant information. It was just that there were specific guidelines for report formats, which Luke was not aware of.

Once Luke understood what was wrong with the report he was able to reformat the report and the line manager was happy for him to submit the final.

Striving for excellence

Being professional in your job requires you to try and deliver everything you do to a high quality. Striving for excellence, therefore, is about your attitude toward achievement and wanting to excel in everything you do.

“*We don't get a chance to do that many things, and everyone should be really excellent. Because this is our life.*”

Steve Jobs

No one can make you excellent. You have to choose to take responsibility for closing gaps between what you can do and what you need to do in order to achieve great results. Learning new skills requires that you observe what is happening around you, both in the workplace and in the wider context. Be curious and ask questions about how things are done, why they are done the way they are and consider options for how you can do things better.

Asking for and responding to constructive feedback will demonstrate that you are not content to remain at your current level of performance and that you are checking the quality of your work against expectations and set standards.

Finally, taking responsibility and being **accountable** for your own learning and development is essential for professional growth and development. Seek out, and take up opportunities for learning in order to learn new skills and improve your capability.

Closing gaps and striving for excellence – learning by observation and by asking questions, asking for and responding constructively to feedback – will give you the chance to take up opportunities for professional growth and development.

 OVER TO YOU**Activity 3: Excellence Journal**

For the next week, at the end of each day write an entry into an excellence journal. Consider the following questions:

- Did I do everything to the best of my abilities today? What could I do better?
- What one question could I ask tomorrow, and to who, that will help me be better than I am today?
- What have I learned today that I didn't know yesterday? What do I still need to know?

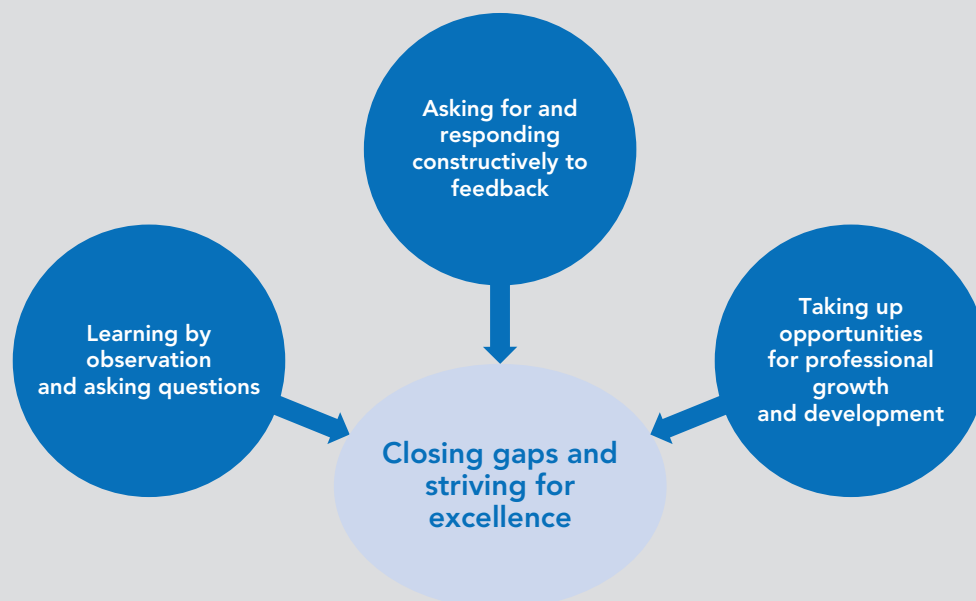
Striving for excellence

Figure 1: Striving for excellence



5.2 Career goals and aspirations

Taking time to appraise the value of feedback given by our line managers and colleagues in regards to our performance provides the opportunity for the individual to review the reality of their current performance and their own career goals and aspirations.

Developing your employability skills will increase your desirability to recruiting managers and increase the likelihood of you getting the job that you want, staying in a job and progressing your career.

Personal development plans

Identifying what career you would like to pursue will enable you to begin to build a career development plan. Review your current skillset, your preferences and your natural team role to identify the types of roles you might be suitable for and that also appeal to you.

At this stage don't dismiss possible prospective career choices just because you don't tick all the boxes. Think about what you would like to do. Identify the skills that you need to develop into that career role.

Consider also short-term and long-term aspirations. It may be that there are several steps required to get to the job you really want in the long term. In understanding what you really want to do, you can research different career paths to get to your ultimate goals.

It may help to review your thoughts with a careers service, or someone in your network who may already be enjoying a career that you desire. Take time to research different options. The key is to have a career development plan.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 4: SMART objectives for your career plan

Review the SMART objective framework in Section 2.1. Set SMART career goals at three levels:

- Short term – next 12 months
- Medium term – 12 months to 2 years
- Long term – 2 years to 5 years

Short-term career goal – next 12 months

Career goal – What are you going to do?	How? What action will you take?	What resource or support do you need?	When are you going to do it by?

Medium-term career goal - 12 months to 2 years			
Career Goal – What are you going to do?	How? What action will you take?	What resource or support do you need?	When are you going to do it by?
Long-term career goal – 2 years to 5 years			
Career goal – What are you going to do?	How? What action will you take?	What resource or support do you need?	When are you going to do it by?

CASE STUDY: CAREER PATHWAYS

Aarav changes career

When Aarav left university he thought that he would pursue a career in business, but didn't have a clear idea of what work he would like to do. He began working in the family business, a food production manufacturer, starting as a production manager.



After a few months Aarav realised that he had developed a curiosity for where the produce came from.

In his role he had the opportunity to speak to a number of suppliers who produced the raw ingredients for the products that the family business produced. He was particularly interested in how food was grown on an industrial scale and the technology behind helping farmers grown healthier crops.

Short-term goal

In the short term Aarav decided that he would like to transfer from production management into supply chain management specialising in working with the farmers and suppliers for the business. This gave him the opportunity to visit farms. In this role he began to learn a lot about the skills, technology and science behind growing food.

SMART goal: Meet with six medium and two large supplier farms in **Q1** developing knowledge and experience in soil testing and how these tests provide an estimate of the plant-available concentrations of plant nutrients. Examine how these results impact the choice of fertiliser used by the supplier farm.

Medium-term goal

This experience helped him to understand the career possibilities open to him. His business background gave him an opportunity to consider a role in an agricultural business and study a Masters in Applied Farm Management, developing his knowledge of environmental sciences and engineering. During his Masters studies, he was able to secure a job with an agricultural business vendor, which specialised in farm systems, soil fertility and productivity.

SMART goal: Work with a career counsellor at university to complete the documents needed for applying for job and securing employment in the agriculture industry, which uses the knowledge gained from my Masters in Applied Farm Management by the end of July 2014.

Long-term goal

Aarav's long-term goal is to become an agronomist, a plant scientist and crop advisor. In his current role, he is using his transferable skills related to business understanding to provide vendor solutions relating to agronomic data, irrigation management and sustainable farming management. At the same time he is gaining insights into how agro-industrial companies work, advancing his understanding of farm management economics and developing his knowledge of how processes of soil and plants change with different management practices.

SMART goal: Complete soil management projects working closely with 3 agro-industrial clients, tailoring sustainable farming solutions to their individual requirements in Q4 2017. Work with finance department to adapt mechanisms to monitor the financial impact of the proposed solutions to report on a quarterly basis throughout 2018.

Utilising development opportunities

Once you have identified your career aspirations you will have identified areas where you need to develop specific qualities and skills. You can then identify a number of development opportunities, which you can utilise to develop as a professional. These include:

Shadowing	This is an informal form of short-term work experience where you have the opportunity to observe someone doing a role in order to understand how they do their job.
Face-to-face training	Face-to-face training involves a series of lessons, lectures or workshops focused on developing particular skills.
Online training	Online training programmes offer lectures, webinars or e-learning sessions focused on particular skills or knowledge which is delivered online, rather than in a classroom.
Training on the job	On-the-job training is where training takes place whilst you are work. This may be sitting with a buddy whilst they walk through a particular process or a form of instruction as you are completing a work task as part of an apprenticeship programme.

Transferable skills

Remember that your employability skills which got you the job that you have now can be developed to progress your career into another job role. Even if you are not working in a particular field of work now, you can entertain different types of work because transferable skills are flexible and can be used in different ways to deliver different job tasks.

Review the transferable skills that you have developed in your current role and consider how they can be transferred into the role or career that you would like to progress into.



OVER TO YOU

Activity 5: Transferable skills check

- **What transferable skills did you identify when you started your current role?**
- **What transferable skills have you acquired or developed during this module? Think about extra-curricular activities as well as skills you have developed in your current job.**
- **How do these map to the skills you require for your next role?**

For example: Prior to my current role I had never managed any projects. I have now developed some managing and leadership skills including setting direction, developing a work plan, delegation and monitoring work.

Lifelong learning

Committing to continuous professional development and life-long learning is essential to keeping your employability skills up-to-date and relevant. The labour market and the world of work are constantly changing. As such the skills that employers are looking for are constantly changing too.

Lifelong learning, therefore, has an important part to play in supporting your career plan. If you want to develop your career and maintain your employability in the marketplace, you must manage your learning alongside your career development. The quality of your career choices will depend on the quality of your learning activities.

No one is going to make you pursue learning opportunities, so it is up to you to volunteer yourself to ongoing development. This could be as simple as keeping up to date with the latest information in your industry, developing your skills in work and attending training workshops when they are offered. You may also look to develop a professional career and take part in further education opportunities, networking and attending regular conferences and seminars. There is no right way to develop.

READING LIST

- M.S. Rao, (2015) "Debunking the myths of career success: It all comes down to attitude, aptitude, abilities and awareness", Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 23 Iss: 7, pp.38–41
- Peter Greenan, (2016) "Personal development plans: insights from a case based approach", Journal of Workplace Learning, Vol. 28 Issue: 5, pp.322-334, doi: 10.1108/JWL-09-2015-0068
- Jan Reuter, (2013) "Five steps to a recession proof career", Industrial and Commercial Training, Vol. 45 Issue: 1, pp.60-63, doi: 10.1108/00197851311296719

Summary

Self-awareness of your transferable skills not only benefits your current employer but also helps you to get a full picture your capabilities and plan for your future.

Utilising feedback to examine your strengths and areas where there are shortcomings in your performance will enable you to maximise your value as an employee.

Developing your employability skills will increase your desirability to recruiting managers and increase the likelihood of you getting the job that you want, staying in a job and progressing your career.

Glossary

Accomplishment statement A bullet statement highlighting an achievement and describing action you took in a particular role.

Accountable Where the individual is expected to take responsibility for and justify their decisions and actions.

Add value The increase in value that your skillset adds to a job role.

Agile workforce A work force which can adapt quickly and easily to the demands of the market.

Application form A form that must be filled out by an individual seeking employment.

Appraisal A formal assessment of employee performance.

Aptitude tests An exercise or challenge that is designed to determine a person's ability, skills or knowledge.

Assessment centre An employment process where candidates are tested and assessed for suitability.

Capabilities The ability of an individual to do something.

Change project Helping an organisation make significant changes, such as resources, processes and operations.

Character traits Characteristics that a person possesses and distinguishes them from others.

Competencies Abilities that enable an employee to do a job successfully.

Curriculum Vitae (CV) A document in which you market yourself to an employer.

Diversity A range of individual differences.

Effective Successfully doing the right things to produce the required result.

Efficient Doing things with minimal wasted time or effort.

Employability Doing work which is recognised as adding value, enhancing your ability to get work.

Employability skills Transferable interpersonal and behavioural skills that make you more attractive to current and future employers.

Flexibility Employee population which can develop and grow to meet the needs of the organisation.

Gap analysis Comparing current skills level with desired performance.

Growth mind-set A belief that your most basic abilities can be developed.

Hard skills Specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured.

Interpersonal skills Skills used to interact with other people in order to get the job done.

Life-long learning Learning activity that you engage in throughout your life.

Performance development review A formal annual discussion about your performance and development to set an action plan for the next period.

Personal development plan An action plan based upon goal-setting and planning for personal development for the purposes of career improvement.

Personal Profile A personal summary at the start of your CV to introduce who you are to a potential employer.

Personality tests Questionnaire designed to reveal character or personality of an individual.

Proactive Someone who makes things happen, rather than responding to things happening to them.

Probationary Period A short process of ensuring your fitness for a job role.

Productivity Efficiency of an employee population.

Psychological contract Unwritten expectations that forms part of the employment relationship between employee and employer.

Q1 The first quarter of the calendar or fiscal year.

Reference An individual who is a source of information regarding an individual's employability.

Secondment Temporarily transferring a worker into a differing position.

Selection criteria The knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience a person needs to do the job.

Self-development A process an individual goes through to development themselves.

Soft skills Interpersonal attributes that help you to interact effectively with other people.

Speculative application An application for a job which has not been advertised.

SWOT analysis A study of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Talent Natural skill or ability.

Toolbox talks A short presentation that highlights one particular topic to a workforce.

Transferable skill A capability that has been developed that can be used in different situations.