

What can I offer to employers?

INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, recruiters are gauging the following:

- Can this applicant do the job?
- Do they want to?
- Will they fit in?

In assessing the former they'll be looking, in part, at your **relevant skills and attributes**. Daunting? It need not be. We all possess skills and knowledge that we can offer to a potential employer - demonstrated abilities and a way of doing work. Everyone can follow a direction of continuous improvement, but you should set time aside to identify your attributes and to consider how you'll record these on paper and speak of them at interview. Employers will expect you to be able to recognise the skills that you have – in particular those that are needed to complete the requirements of the position. They are looking for people with skills and traits such as:

Communication
Time management
Flexibility

The ability to work well as part of a team
Problem solving
Relationship building and interpersonal

Before you can identify what you are good at, offer evidence and put this down on paper, you need to understand what is meant by - for example - analytical skills. Many CV writers claim skills and abilities which they cannot explain in an interview situation. Therefore know what **you** mean and have **your** own examples to illustrate what you say you can do.

The following sections will give some different examples of the skills you will need to illustrate when preparing your CV or in an interview situation – if **you** have them.

SECTION ONE

The following outlines some of the skills which employers of graduates need and expect from job applicants. The preparation & presentation of your CV needs to demonstrate a level of ability in:

- Research – an indication of your ability to research yourself, a particular job or organisation, or the employment market generally. Have you established clear & realistic goals which match what you have to offer?
- Analysis – identifying key needs & assessing your ability to meet them.
- Decision making – what is & isn't relevant to include.
- Planning & organising – preparing a clear, concise & relevant document.
- Communication – use of appropriate language. Getting information across convincingly & making a good impression.

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- Clerical/technical – demonstrating an eye for layout & design by presenting a document which is balanced and easy to scan or read thoroughly. Must also have perfect grammar, spelling & structure.

All the above can be conveyed simply through the way in which you select information and order it in your CV.

SECTION TWO – RELEVANT SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES & EXPERIENCE

The following is an example of what a 21 year old student has had successful experience in, as outlined in their CV:

Financial management & administration

- Kept books in association with accountant
- Monitored/reconciled cash flows & bank balances
- Prepared wages, PAYE, GST returns
- Took responsibility for cash register balances
- Controlled income/expenditure – bank transfers and loan repayments
- Filed documentation

Analysis, planning & decision-making

- Set up a computer-based cash management system
- Researched/analysed literature and statistics
- Evaluated irrigation systems proposals
- Controlled farm inventories & bar stock
- Arranged investment mortgage finance
- Organised machinery maintenance
- Planned cultivation & harvest cycles
- Scheduled work & met deadlines

Communication

- Listened & contributed in meetings & classroom discussions
- Capital property transactions
- Made public presentations to groups of 30+ people
- Handled enquiries & complaints
- Trained temporary staff
- Wrote reports, essays & proposals
- Negotiated direct sales with retailers for purchase of stock
- Worked effectively in group situations & followed instructions

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Leadership & supervision

- Employed services of lawyers, trades people & contractors
- Organiser & office holder in various clubs – including involvement in the set-up of an investors' club
- Supervised full & part time employees
- Coached/trained sports teams

Computing

- Microsoft Word
- Excel
- Power Point
- Quantitative Systems for Business
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Access
- C ++
- Java
- Minitab
- SPSS

SECTION THREE – COMPETENCIES

The following are examples of competencies that you may be expected to include in your CV (this will depend upon those required for the role):

Analytical skills (ability to):

- identify key components of an issue or problem
- relate practical applications to technical & theoretical knowledge
- recognise alternatives, problems & opportunities
- test assumptions & revise conclusions in the light of new experience

Innovative skills (ability to):

- anticipate needs
- bring in fresh perspectives & new ideas
- identify & develop opportunities to increase effectiveness
- think creatively, imaginatively & in abstract terms



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Decision-making skills (ability to):

- identify & give appropriate weighting to all relevant factors
- make logical & considered decisions & support with appropriate evidence or rationales
- ensure that decisions made are consistent with goals

Research skills (ability to):

- obtain information efficiently
- identify & use appropriate sources of information e.g. people, literature
- access scientific literature
- take & catalogue notes
- prepare bibliographies

Manual skills (ability to):

- use tools of trade safely & competently
- observe good work and housekeeping practices
- undertake the variety of tasks required of the job
- maintain equipment & tools of trade

Organisational skills (ability to):

- establish priorities & plan and organise work according to those priorities
- delegate work & allocate resources appropriately
- organise work either on an individual basis or as part of a work group
- monitor & evaluate performance & adjust to changed circumstances

Clerical skills (ability to):

- use appropriate office equipment as required
- follow common formats & layouts for correspondence & reports
- devise & access filing systems

Job knowledge:

- understanding of terminology, principles & practices applicable to the job
- able to follow required industrial regulatory or technical guidelines
- knowledge of issues, problems or necessary changes appropriate to the job
- demonstrate organisational and interpersonal skills
- recognise an employer's needs



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Specialist knowledge:

- detailed knowledge of equipment, systems or administrative procedures
- tertiary qualifications necessary to undertake duties of the job

Environmental knowledge:

- understanding of trends & attitudes prevailing in industry & the community
- knowledge of the industrial relations climate of an organisation

Interpersonal skills (ability to):

- gain the co-operation & acceptance of others – clients, colleagues & other professionals
- make an effective contribution as a member of a work group, team or task force
- represent & negotiate on behalf of an organisation
- provide sound leadership & motivate staff to produce results
- focus on performance rather than personality when relating to others
- be socially, culturally & ethically sensitive

Maturity (ability to):

- do a thorough job with limited supervision work within the constraints of an organisation's rules and regulations
- work effectively & remain calm and flexible under pressure
- seek assistance from others when required
- share & encourage the sharing of information about problems, successes & decisions
- be adaptable & make independent judgments

Motivation (ability to):

- set goals and reach them
- take the initiative and maintain a high energy level
- demonstrate a positive attitude to self and others
- enjoy challenges and take reasonable risks

Technical skills & specialist knowledge:

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| • project management | • wage law & employee benefits |
| • product knowledge | • computer programming |
| • EEO regulations | • real estate appraisal |
| • basic accounting/budgeting | • legal experience |



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Communication skills:

Written

- clear concise & accurate report writing
- publicity materials
- letters & proposals
- speeches/presentations
- Oral/interpersonal
- clarifying issues in a logical & concise manner
- negotiating issues
- giving clear instructions
- asking clear direct questions
- training others
- conducting interviews

Leadership

- inspiring enthusiasm in others
- handling crises & emergencies well
- willingness to take responsibility
- initiating new ideas & procedures
- Human relations skills
- ease in obtaining information from others
- counseling/coaching on individual basis
- ability to influence others to see your point of view
- understanding & using organisation politics
- resolving personal conflicts with others
- justifying your actions to subordinates

Administrative/planning and organisational skills:

- ability to implement decisions
- developing, implementing & controlling a budget
- attention to detail
- scheduling a sequence of events
- gathering accurate and pertinent data
- knowing how to evaluate priorities
- developing time-saving working procedures
- defining departmental goals within organisational goals
- ability to co-ordinate large numbers of diverse activities or events in a short period of time
- creating & maintaining files, data records, financial information
- gathering information and arranging it in a clear interpretable form
- ability to meet deadlines under pressure and to work at a fast pace.

