

ASSESSING YOURSELF THOROUGHLY FOR THE JOB SEARCH

Before you embark on your job search it is important that you assess yourself thoroughly. You need to know who you are in order to market yourself to a future employer.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Do you understand how your career thinking has developed up to the present? A prospective employer will be interested to know which factors influenced you in making certain career decisions and choices and how your career thinking has developed and changed over the years.

Consider how the following influenced your career thinking/ choices:

- (a) Your childhood dreams
- (b) Your parents' wishes and / or their careers
- (c) The views of family members and / or significant other people.
- (d) The media (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines)
- (e) Career Guidance received at school or your own career research.
- (f) Other factors such as financial limitations, lack of ability in certain areas, your values etc.

Change the World

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Enquiries

Student Counselling, Career and Development
Centre
Nelson Mandela University

<http://counselling.mandela.ac.za>

counselling@mandela.ac.za



mandela.ac.za



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WEAKNESSES

Everyone possesses weaknesses which may have a negative impact on job performance, for example, lack of patience, difficulty in dealing with authority figures, etc. It is possible to learn to minimize one's weaknesses in the job situation.

NOTE:

Do not deliberately raise your weaknesses in your CV or during the interview. If you are asked about them, mention weaknesses which you are attempting to overcome and attempt to be as positive as possible. For example, I'm inclined to procrastinate about tasks, but I try to overcome this by setting step-by-step deadlines for myself.

List the weaknesses that could potentially affect your performance in the job situation and state steps that you have taken or could take to overcome them:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____



STRENGTHS

It is important to be able to clearly describe your particular strengths and to provide examples of them.

Some of your strengths may be very evident to the interviewer from the way in which you come across in the interview, for example enthusiasm, confidence, communication ability etc. However, most strengths, such as, loyalty, motivation, leadership skills, determination, reliability, assertiveness would need to be illustrated, usually in the form of examples from your past experience.

Remember that you will need to highlight specific strengths that will be of value to your future employer.

WHAT STRENGTHS DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR?

All organizations have a need for specially qualified people with specific knowledge and skills. These are known as specialist skills e.g. Engineering, Accountancy, and Computer Programming.

Employers also place a great deal of emphasis on the more general skills such as problem-solving and on the personal attributes and qualities of their employees. Although employers value academic achievement, they do not only look for those people with the highest marks. They also emphasise the importance of finding people who fit into the organization's culture and contribute towards the organisation's goals.

1. **Interpersonal skills**
Your ability to relate to, and get along with, others and knowledge of appropriate behaviour for different work situations.
2. **Self confidence**
An ability to deal positively and effectively with situations and people and to be assertive in unfamiliar situations.
3. **Motivation**
Employers want energetic, enthusiastic employees who are willing to learn and contribute positively to the development of an organisation.
4. **Orientation / Focus**
An ability to identify goals that you wish to achieve in your personal life, your career and your education and to work towards achieving these.
5. **Initiative**
Employers value employees who can identify what needs to be done and who can take the lead when appropriate.
6. **Creativity**
An ability to come up with a new / imaginative approach towards tasks and the resolution of problems.
7. **Communication Skills**
An ability to express your ideas clearly and appropriately both orally and in written form and to listen effectively to others.
8. **Adaptability**
An ability to deal with change and to respond receptively to new ideas and situations and to exercise good judgement in difficult situations

9. **Time Management**

Employers value employees who can organise their time in such a way that tasks and activities can be completed successfully in the allocated time.

10. **Teamwork**

An ability to negotiate and work within a framework of respect for others, to take responsibility and carry out agreed tasks.

11. **Leadership**

An ability to empower others and make maximum use of people and resources within a group in order to achieve an overall objective.

12. **Conflict Handling**

An ability to resolve conflict in a positive manner and to work well under pressure.

13. **Self Discipline / Maturity**

Employers value employees who take responsibility for their own actions.

14. **Perseverance**

An ability to keep going in the face of difficulty, but also to keep going until tasks are completed.

15. **Critical Thinking**

An ability to think critically and conceptually about a problem.

16. **Balanced Lifestyle**

The existence of activities and interests outside the work environment where you can deal with stress and the problems of modern life.

State 3 strengths which you would like to stress in an interview, giving examples of each:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____