EMPLOYERS: WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Technical Knowledge
Previous Experience

♦ Experience in the role and in employment shows that you can cope in a workplace environment and shows that you can do the job effectively

♦ Demonstrates you know how a workplace operates and how it differs to academia

Technical Knowledge
Quals & Certifications

♦ To show you have the knowledge required for the role, you may consider obtaining relevant industry qualifications

♦ This is especially important in the IT industry where there are many specialised job roles

General Skills
Literacy & Numeracy

♦ Everyday life relies on confident reading, writing and mathematic ability

♦ Being able to write an email or letter fluently allows you to communicate more effectively

General Skills
Problem Solving

♦ The ability to independently solve problems as they arise shows that you are motivated and dedicated to getting work done

♦ Of course, you should not be afraid to ask for help if you really need it!

Good Working Procedures
Following Protocol

♦ Following the correct protocols that the company has in place ensures you keep to potential regulations and perform tasks correctly

♦ Demonstrates your ability to interpret and follow instructions

Good Working Procedures
Conscious of H&S

♦ Keeping a workplace safe is a top concern for every workplace; being conscious of Health & Safety is a valued skill

♦ Having a First Aid qual will additionally make you appear more valuable since you can perform multiple duties

Technical Knowledge
Basic Troubleshooting
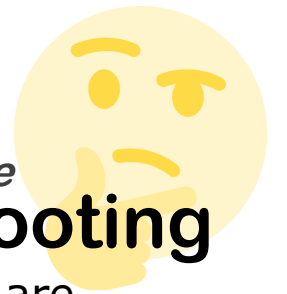
♦ Basic troubleshooting skills are essential for any job, not just in IT

♦ It shows that you are independent and have initiative

♦ It means you are able to help other colleagues without tying up anyone's time

General Skills
Punctuality

♦ If you are not punctual, you will not be seen as reliable

♦ Being punctual shows that you are good at time management and planning

Good Working Procedures
Documenting Work
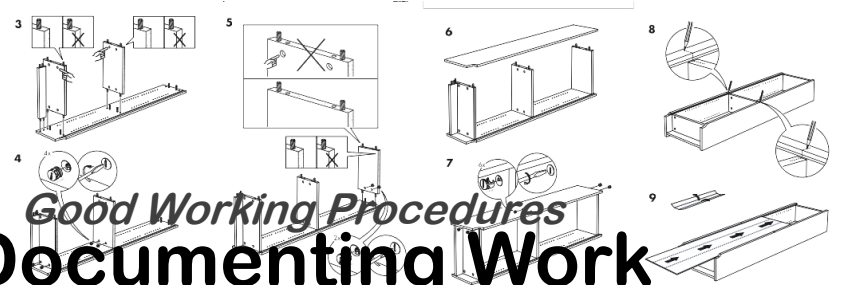
♦ Documenting tasks as you perform them shows that you fully understand what you are doing

♦ The documentation you create can help someone else in future

Personal Qualities

♦ Being **dedicated** will ensure that work is completed to the best of your ability

♦ An **organised** person is more likely to get work done efficiently

♦ Who doesn't prefer someone who is **friendly**, **respectful** and **supportive**?

Unit 1, Assignment 1

Task 2 – Effective Communication

Thomas Robinson

General Skills

What are they?

General Skills

- Qualities that can be applied to *all* methods of communication

- Both face-to-face (in person) and electronically

Adaptability

- Being able to adapt your content and delivery style to suit the audience is very important

- When addressing adults, you may use a broader, more sophisticated vocabulary that you would not use when addressing children

Adaptability (cont.)

• The same adaptability needs to apply based on skillset

• Using technical language when talking to someone who does not understand will only complicate the problem

• Including unnecessary, tangential information may overwhelm the other party(s) and make you harder to understand

Cultural Differences

- Different countries & religions have varying holidays (no one wants to attend a meeting on holiday)

- Those who are not native English speakers may struggle with complex vocabulary

- Many cultures will find some gestures or terms offensive

Reliability

- Whether given orally or electronically, all information should be accurate and up-to-date

- Passing on incorrect information can cause personal embarrassment and damage the reputation of the company you are representing

- Answering questions promptly and sticking to deadlines will ensure you appear punctual and professional

Interpersonal Skills

What are they?

Interpersonal Skills

- Apply when talking to people face-to-face

- Could be delivering a presentation, during a meeting or while assisting someone with a problem

Disability Accommodations

- If giving a presentation or speech, aim to provide a textual version of the scripts or notes to aid those hard-of-hearing

- Don't use exclusionary language or behaviour – be accommodating and inclusive

Delivery

- Appearing enthusiastic and confident helps keep the audience engaged

- Demonstrated through lively – but not excessive – body language and inflections when speaking

- You're unlikely to interest the audience if you deliver a speech or presentation in monotone while standing still behind a desk.

Audience Response

- Adapting to audience response based on their reaction is important

- Keep an eye out for those who look visibly confused and offer to clarify any points you may not have explained well

- Make use of audience participation to keep them engaged (also helps you make sure they understand)

Question Styles

When asking questions, keep in mind the different types:

- 'Open' questions have a longer answer and may invite further discussion

- 'Closed' questions only have a 'yes' or 'no' answer and offer little room for the conversation to continue

Written Comms Skills

What are they?

Written Comms Skills

- Apply when communicating electronically or in physical written texts

- Emails
- Letters
- Documentation
- Blogs & Publicity Material
- Chat (Teams, Skype for Business, Slack)

Templates & Brand Guides

- Before writing, make sure that your company does not have a standardised template for that type of document

- Helps the company's brand be more applied more consistently, appears more professional

Spelling & Grammar

- SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) should be checked before sending anything

- Make use of built-in spellcheck tools (Word, etc)

- Ask colleagues for feedback and to proofread

Mistaks & Structure

- Any mistakes in information or spelling/grammar may cause unnecessary confusion

- Well-structured documents and presentations are easier to follow – consider planning longer reports

- Excluding irrelevant information will make the piece easier to read

Tone

- See if the company has a tone-of-voice guide to find out what sort of language should be used
  For example, Monzo Bank aim to appear more informal with their use of emoji and simpler terminology

- If unsure, strive to appear as professional as possible – slang is unlikely to ever be deemed appropriate in a formal setting.

In Closing

- These skills assist in making all types of communication more effective and more efficient, no matter the medium

- Communicating effectively saves your time, your company's time and your audience's time

- Time = Money

Unit 1, P1 – Valued Attributes & Qualities

Thomas Robinson

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Thomas Robinson

Previous Experience in Role

Experience in the role is valued by employers since it shows that you are able to do the job effectively in a working environment, not an academic one. Additionally, it shows that you are knowledgeable and can adapt to the needs of the specific workplace.

Quals & Certifications

To show you have the knowledge required for the role, you may consider obtaining relevant industry qualifications. This is especially important in the IT industry where there are many specialised job roles.

Troubleshooting

Basic troubleshooting skills are essential for any job, not just in IT. It shows that you are independent and have initiative. It means you are able to help other colleagues without tying up anyone's time.

Conscious of Health & Safety

Keeping a workplace safe is a primary concern for an employer and knowing what that entails is a valued skill. Having a First Aid qualification will additionally make you appear more valuable since you can perform multiple duties.

Documenting Tasks

Documenting tasks is a valued skill since it shows that you fully understand what you are doing and can pass that knowledge onto others. The documentation you create can help someone else in future.

Maths & English

Everyday life relies on literacy and numeracy and so employers value your competence in these areas. Being able to write an email or fluently helps you communicate more effectively and in turn makes the work more efficient.

Punctuality

Being punctual shows that you are reliable and are good at timekeeping, which are both important in a workplace.

Thomas Robinson

Dedication & Flexibility

Dedication to your work is important, since not caring means you may not do the work to the best of your ability.

Following Protocol

Following the correct protocols that the company has in place ensures you keep to potential regulations and perform tasks correctly. It demonstrates your ability to interpret and follow instructions.

Thomas Robinson

Technical Knowledge	Good Working Procedures	General Skills	Personal Qualities
- Previous Experience in Role - Qualifications & Certificates - Troubleshooting - Health & Safety - First Aid	- Following procedures, protocols and rules - Conscious of health & safety - Proactive in reporting absence or issues - Keeping environment safe - Follow Data Protection legislation when dealing w sensitive information - Documenting steps and issues	- Maths & English - Problem Solving - Confidence - Punctuality	- Reliable & Trustworthy - Good Timekeeping - Respectful & Supportive - Motivated & Enthusiastic - Independence - Teamworking & Leadership - Good Role Model - Organised - Dedication & Flexibility - Perseverance & Hard-Wearing

Presenter's name Tom Robinson	**Reviewer Name**: Lewis Crichton	**Date**: 30/Sep/21

Planning

How did you think the presentation session was planned?

I do not believe it was planned much and it was more freestyled.

Did the presenter introduce themselves and the topic to you?

They introduced the topic, but not themselves.

From your observation did it appear that the presentation had a clear beginning, middle and end?

There was a clear beginning and end, but less so a clear middle.

Content

Was the content accurate?

Yes.

Did you notice any spelling mistakes?

Yes, but they were intentional to convey a point.

Did the presenter speak clearly?

For most of the presentation, the presenter spoke clearly and effectively, despite illness.

What did you learn about the topic?

I learned how to talk more effectively and present better.

Use of resources

How well have the slides been laid out?

The slides were clear and had a purpose.

Did the originator use a background colour or a built in design?

They used a black background and white text.

Aims and Learning Outcomes?

Have the aims of the presentation been met?

Yes.

Interest

Was the presentation interesting? about the presentation?

The presentation was kept interesting by demonstrating some of the skills.

Were you kept interested throughout?

Yes.

Evaluation

Strengths: what do think went well during the presentation?

The presenter demonstrated each skill clearly and effectively. They managed to present the presentation with minimal issue.

Reviewer signature:

Barriers to Communication & Overcoming Them
September 24, 2021

Unit 1, Assignment 1, Task 3 (P3) + Task 5 (M1)

There are many obstacles and barriers to being an effective communicator. Some problems may be out of your control, while others may be easy to rectify. This post aims to list a few of them, and also how to eliminate or lessen their impact.

Language Barrier

Not being able to speak the language of another party inhibits your ability to communicate effectively. Hiring an interpreter or using translation software are two ways to get around the problem, as well as simply learning relevant phrases from the other language. A problem with using an interpreter, is that that one may not be available, or it may be excessively costly.

Auditory Impairment

To assist those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, you may consider hiring a sign language interpreter. Providing a textual version of presentations or wearing a hearing-aid microphone are other options. A textual version may not be preferable (or possible) for a more informal, unscripted presentation or meeting. As with foreign language interpreters, one may not be available in the appropriate timeframe or within an appropriate budget.

Lack of Structure & Organisation

An unstructured document or presentation that contains a lot of tangential, unrelated information, will be difficult to follow. Lacking organisation, for example showing up late or hastily preparing your work in front of a crowd, will undermine what you had planned to say and should be avoided. You should get presentations or documents ready in advance.

Technological Failures

An example of a technological failure is a projector not working. You could mitigate this by preparing a printed version of slides.

Incoherence & Unclear Speaking

Being unclear when speaking—having a stutter, lisp or mumble—will hamper people's ability to understand what you are saying. Speaking clearly and confidently whenever possible will avoid this barrier.

Learning Difficulties

A learning difficulty inhibits one's ability to understand and learn new information. You may consider using simpler terminology and repetition to make the content easier to understand and be retained.

Lack of Understanding or Knowledge

If the audience does not understand the information you are giving, this will inhibit its effectiveness. You should use appropriate terminology when possible, however this should be adjusted based on the knowledge and skillset of who you are speaking to. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to predict how much the audience already knows, and this may need to be done on-the-fly. You could mitigate this by defaulting to simpler words, however this may come across as patronising to a knowledgeable audience.

Background Noise

Background noise, such as air conditioners or chatter, may make it harder for the audience to understand what you are saying. It may not always be possible to remove certain forms of background noise, in this case you may consider a quieter setting if they are a major barrier.

Distractions

A distraction, such as a phone call or someone walking into the room, will cause your audience to become disengaged from the content you are delivering. Mitigating this can be achieved by switching one's phone to silent and displaying clear signage at entrances that a conference or meeting is taking place. This may not always be possible, for example someone may disrupt the event by arriving late.

Lack of Enthusiasm & Poor Presenting

Not being interested or enthused in what you are saying will rub off on the audience; be it in a casual conversation or a major meeting. You should aim to appear lively and interesting to retain the audience's engagement. Appropriate body language, such as eye contact, will aid with this.

Thomas Robinson

Unit 1, Assignment 1 – Task Four Impact of IT on Society

Thomas Robinson

Thomas Robinson

Big Data
- What is it
- What is collected
- What are implications of the amount of data that is collected and stored

Big Data refers to dealing with and processing incredibly large and complicated datasets. This includes information such as website analytical tracking, IoT devices and logging. 'Big' alludes to the sheer scale and vast quantity of data that is being collected.

One of the main sources of Big Data comes from tracking individuals around the web. Big companies such as Google and Facebook create and control many components of websites and as such are able to use cookies and one's browser fingerprint to collate your browsing habits. Primarily, they use this information to serve more targeted advertisements and suggestions, which you are more likely to click on. Another source of Big Data is everyday websites such as eBay, Amazon or social media sites. They all need to store significant quantities of user-generated content – be it photos, text, video or something else.

Thomas Robinson

Physical & Mental Health

Technology has the power to bring us closer together, but it can also have several adverse effects. Social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have enabled us to instantly communicate with anyone around the world. This is obviously very convenient; however, the anonymous nature of such accounts opens the door to abuse and misuse. Additionally, one may begin to compare oneself to others – leading to self-image issues and other mental health problems.

On the other hand, many people find making friends, forming communication and general communication much easier online. Additionally, online mental health charities have made online therapy and counselling commonplace, and large communities have spearheaded societal change in areas such as LGBTQ+ acceptance and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Physically, the prevalence of online shopping and online communication has made us more lethargic; there is no longer a need to travel and see someone face-to-face to purchase necessities or have a conversation. Extended use of computers leads to eyestrain, carpel-tunnel syndrome and repetitive strain injuries. Constant dependence on screens also negatively impacts one's ability to sleep and can cause headaches. Technology has benefited us physically as well, however. Wearable smart devices such as smart watches can aid with fitness and online fitness services and meal planners can help one with their diet, exercise and general health. Global, collective research towards important diseases such as Covid-19 has accelerated our ability to fight them.

Thomas Robinson

Security

There are many security implications of having IT being so prevalent in our daily lives. The mishandling of PII (personally identifiable information) can lead to data breaches, exposing the personal information of users. This malpractice can lead to fraud and identify theft if significant information is breached. Stolen devices that are not properly protected with encrypted drives and passwords can be examined to access things such as emails, browsing history, social media profiles and messages. Carrying a camera and microphone around all the time on a phone opens the door to deeper surveillance by governments but also other malicious parties, allowing one to be blackmailed out of funds or dignity.

- Data breaches & mishandling of PII
- Stolen, unsecured devices (email, social media, browsing, messages)
- Malicious access anxiety (webcam, mic)
- Hacking, fraud, identity theft

Environment & Climate Change
- Monitoring (pos)
- Pollution from server farms (tho often offset)
- Increased use of electricity
- Production of devices using rare minerals and cheap labour

Environmentally, IoT-connected satellites, sensors and meters allow us to monitor and measure our planet more than ever possible. However, IT also has negative consequences. All the devices we use on a daily basis require vast amounts of electricity, which may not be renewably or ethically sourced. The production of our devices often makes use of rare-earth minerals mined in poor conditions with cheap labour in impoverished countries. At the end of life, the incorrect disposal and lack of reuse or recycling of devices produces copious amounts of 'ewaste.' While often generated renewably, server-farms use an enormous amount of electricity.

Unit 1, Assignment 1 – Task Six VAK Learning Styles

Thomas Robinson

Thomas Robinson

M3 - What are VAK Learning Styles?

VAK refers to the three primary senses. V refers to "Visual," A to "Auditory" and "K" to Kinaesthetic (touching & feeling). Most will have their preferred primary way of learning however many will prefer a blended mixture of the different types.

Visual

Visual learners learn through reading or through looking at information. They are either visual-linguistic—preferring reading, writing and things such as watching lectures—and visual-spatial, who prefer imaginative work and presentations with charts, videos and demonstrations. Many visual learners will be both.

Auditory

Auditory learners may not excel at reading and writing. They could talk to themselves and will prefer listening to instructions and being part of discussions. Often, they will excel at oral tasks such as giving presentations.

Kinaesthetic

Kinaesthetic learners prefer practical demonstrations and will learn through touching, feeling and experience. They could appear fidgety and struggle with hypothetical topics, but they often excel at tasks requiring co-ordination.

How can they help?

Knowing your preferred learning style can help you be more aware when choosing learning resources. For example, knowing you prefer visual learning, you may seek out books on a topic to gain knowledge - rather than alternative options.

Thomas Robinson

My Personal VAK Learning Style

=18

=19

=16
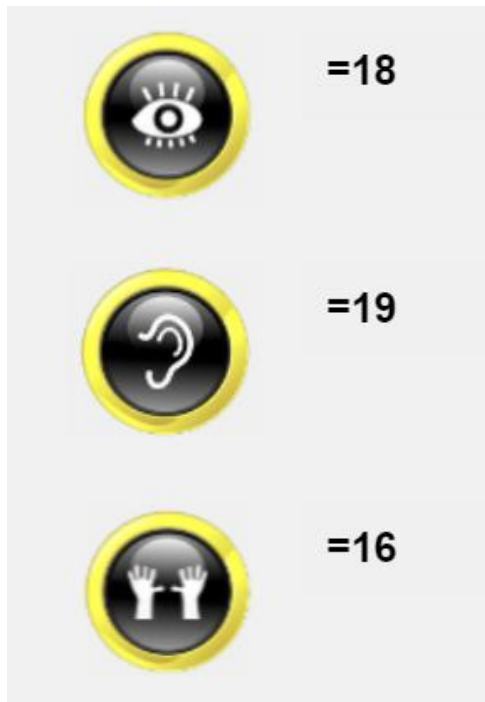
The results of an online questionnaire[1] show that I make use of all three varieties of VAK learning styles. I believe that this is accurate, since I try to absorb information in as many ways as possible when learning. I can use this knowledge to enhance my learning by making use of all the resources available to me, due to the variety of learning styles I favour.

Example

Through kinaesthetic learning as well as visual, I learned how to successfully piece together a computer. This will be useful in my future IT career as well as this course.

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[1] VAK Learning Styles Questionnaire | HFE