

THE 9 KEY SKILLS™

... of effective people

Barry Hedley & Steve Arnold
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“The 9 Key Skills”

1. Self Awareness (SA)
2. Problem Solving (PS)
3. Enterprising (ENT)
4. Team player (TP)
5. Business Awareness (BA)
6. Decision Judgement (DJ)
7. Communication (COM)
8. Technology Appreciation (TA)
9. Self Management (SM)

**Designed and cross-correlated
with (for example):**

- Academic Research e.g. Characteristics of Highly Effective Employees (Hadzima, MIT Sloan School of Management, 2010)
- Graduate Employability Matrix/National Employer Surveys
- Deloitte’s Global Core Competency Model

These are invaluable *life* skills

“The 9 Key Skills” are supported by a wealth of evidence – academic, national/government agencies and business – as being important for essentially all aspects of personal success. What are they?

Your ***self-awareness***- how well you know yourselves and to what extent you're able to build that into your on-going personal development going forward.

How good are you at ***problem solving*** – all graduate participants are going to be pretty good at that – but at any stage of your career, the issue will be one of comparison with your peers!

How ***enterprising*** are you: not just commercially but equally, how enterprising are you in yourself irrespective of what you are applying yourself to?

Team player – do you understand how you can best contribute to teamwork, producing better results than any individual alone?

Business Awareness – how good are you at assessing commercial factors – important in almost all aspects of today's world. Can you determine how successful a business enterprise will be and how it operates?

Decision Judgement – how good are you at translating research and analysis data into clear judgements and decisions – even when the data are incomplete?

How good are you at ***communicating?*** – *listening* is as important a part of this as effective transmission of your own points of view!

What's your general ***technology appreciation?*** – partly IT but also how well can you see applications of “technology in the round” to real practical and valuable innovations?

And finally ***self-management*** – how well you can translate all the above into effective personal development actions and career progress.

PERFORMANCE TEMPLATES

The following templates give a guide to the range of traits that relate to each of the skills, giving word pictures of differing levels of performance from those where there is a clear developmental need, through typical levels of competence, to those exhibiting real strength. Consider these as you reflect on your own skill levels and behaviour, as well as those of the others with whom you work. They will also form a useful checklist as you think through the nature of prospective colleagues or even employers.

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
<i>Self-Awareness</i>	Struggles to understand own emotions - not confident about own identity and own beliefs – leads to career and organisational mistakes - does not trust own ‘gut instinct’, needs validity - finds it difficult to deal with pressure, criticisms and failures – does not feel competent enough to be able to lead others or take important business decisions on the spot- not convinced of own aptitudes nor aware of own ‘Achilles heel’.	Cannot always identify own feelings thus often indecisive about correct course of action in decision making – sometimes feels very confident but sometimes needs cheering up or re-assurance – reaction to pressure and criticisms depends on the situation or people involved i.e. at times cannot accept negative feedback but at times gracious about it – still a bit confused about own character and beliefs – can be a good leader if more assertive and greater conviction in own skills – has still some more self- appraisal to do to increase self- confidence and awareness of own emotions and behaviour.	Understands own emotions at all times – confident that you see yourself as others see you – fully aware of strengths and how to use them to reach personal aims – deals with pressure gracefully and demands from others diplomatically - takes criticisms as constructive feedback to better oneself – confident in own beliefs and capabilities - great self-management abilities – emotionally expressive but able to manage own emotions in most situations – aware of gaps in own aptitudes and ways to improve - shows great potential as leader with ability to inspire followers

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
Problem Solving	Struggles to develop innovative and practical solutions; does not currently show independence in spotting problems and resolving the issues – doubtful about own understanding of important concepts and ideas - finds it hard to trial a range of strategies to solve the dilemma – frequently grabs the first explanation that comes to mind and stops thinking about the problem - needs to understand the concept of continuous improvement - As Prof. Jeff Malpas says: “No problem is ever totally solved. Every problem has a solution, but every solution with it brings a new problem.” - needs to have more initiative and think 3 steps ahead...	Can master some aspects of the problem solving process but needs to show greater open-mindedness in understanding the ‘bigger picture’ – does not always find and interpret analytical data in the right way or probe further to fully understand the matter – shows strengths in some areas of the problem solving but needs to keep developing those skills and how to address recurrent areas of difficulty e.g. enhance specific knowledge areas or seek generic solutions to make sure those issues do not occur again – but overall on the right track showing intellectual potential linked with effective application of knowledge to practical problems.	Able to apply specialist knowledge to solve problems – skillful in analysing numerical data and other information to work out a solution – proficient in the use of technology to undertake necessary research to identify different approaches or solutions and to continuously improve the processes and plan for contingencies – shows creativity and initiative by coming up with a range of strategies to problem-solving – demonstrates rationality in addressing challenges and makes “value-maximising choices” – always aims to have an action plan to undertake in parallel with any necessary further research or analysis
Enterprising	Rarely comes up with a new idea or a new way of doing something – lacks “emotional intelligence” i.e. struggles to understand own emotions, aptitudes and thus cannot show much empathy – Taking initiative doesn’t come naturally and tends always to wait to be told – gives up easily instead of trying to overcome hurdles – finds it hard to accept other people’s ideas – most of the time, does not prioritise activities to maximise rate of generation of practical results – lacking in drive and ambition.	Has sound basic core skills of numeracy and problem solving but needs to improve – can be a good negotiator and have good people skills however needs to be more self-confident and assertive at times – sometimes shies away from projects that require too much hard work or long hours – only shows enthusiasm in tasks of own interest - Ideas are not always well-thought out and purposeful – awareness and knowledge of important aspects of resource commitment and risk taking need improvement.	Has creative thinking and is quick to generate innovative ideas – is self-aware and has very good interpersonal skills – always finds a way to add value and competent in identifying new opportunities and directions – Excellent awareness of linking activities undertaken to maximising real progress, whatever the field - and in touch with recent advances in relevant knowledge fields – demonstrates perseverance and determination in every task - ambitious and hard working – articulates and never loses track of the objective.

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
Technology Appreciation	Is not comfortable around technology – demonstrates basic technical skills and would often rather stick to traditional methods of undertaking tasks or work related activities e.g. manual records and hand written communication, task prioritisation and project management– lacks flexibility in adapting to new technology and processes –disinterested about applications of technology to commercial enterprise e.g., new markets or research – Does not understand the need for keeping up to date with latest scientific advances – Is uninformed about how far technology has reached and how much can be done with the use of the latest scientific methods and tools e.g. social networking, nanotechnology, flexible displays, latest advances in medicine – is unaware of how science can improve personal lifestyle or career prospects – normally has limited or no interest in science.	Demonstrates average understanding of technology as well as technical abilities - tends to rely on being taught how to use technology rather than taking the initiative to master technology skills that are vital to competitive environments, whether in research, teaching, or commercial activities – need to understand that improving technology know-how is part of personal development, crucial to improved efficiency in any work place – struggles with handling certain specialist software but shows ability in others – a need for better appreciation of how technology can significantly improve effectiveness and productivity in both research and commercial environments – shows some interest in the advancement of technology but not completely aware of the extent or the full implications of emerging cutting edge technologies – Understands innovative concepts widely spoken about or addressed by the media but limited understanding of scientific innovation in new cutting edge areas – Tends to show interest and enthusiasm more in well known and user friendly technology	Ability to use many different software applications to improve own capacity to get things done quicker, more efficiently and professionally – demonstrates the IT skills needed to succeed in any 21st century workplace – Makes use of technology to create, develop, implement new ideas and concepts– Understands the positive effect of mastering technology both in research and commercial settings – has high technological awareness – keeps up to date with developments in technology and demonstrates enthusiasm to try those out or to simply learn more about them – Does not feel intimidated to advocate or use new or complex technology

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
<i>Business Awareness</i>	Rarely links decision making to financial data – uncomfortable managing, organising and motivating staff – not good at prioritising the use of resources and deciding what to do and in what order, and sticking to it – cannot penetrate deeply into ideas probably due to limited commercial awareness – some difficulty in examining the business as a whole and understanding key success factors – not very shrewd in negotiations and debates.	Good in some business areas but not all – some difficulty in linking high level plans to action or in managing people or in quantifying likely results financially – struggles with interpretation of financial data although does get it right sometimes – Does not demonstrate sufficient knowledge to be able to audit the work of others – sometimes ignores the presence of secondary data when taking decisions – does not establish strong enough presence in negotiations and discussions.	Easily and frequently moves from high level strategic considerations to detailed operational and financial issues and actions – naturally translates objectives into tasks, responsibilities and timetables – equally at home with financial reports and HR development programs– able to identify business drivers and implement those successfully – Competent in addressing issues skillfully based on commercial awareness and principles – highly numerate and analytical and able to interpret financial data correctly-demonstrates good level of understanding of what is required for success in today's competitive commercial world – understands the importance of employee welfare and people management for the success of any organisation.
<i>Decision Judgement</i>	Finds it hard to integrate and process information from multiple sources – decisions often based on intuition without supporting data or analytical framework – rarely considers a range of solutions before making a decision – may take impulsive decisions rather than rational ones – struggles to formulate strategies to reach objectives – Does not seem to reflect on past actions and outcomes in order to learn from them – tends to avoid risk rather than managing it.	Reasonable command of data, analysis and argument though some tendencies for omissions or faults in conclusions – rarely explores multiple possibilities before reaching conclusions – sometimes struggles with choosing rational options over personal preference- Shows good understanding of some areas but needs further improvement to be able to understand decision-influencing issues in breadth as well as depth and take appropriate decisions – somewhat capable of risk management.	Comfortable simultaneously recalling and processing a broad range of information – good at selecting the most important points and basing decisions on them analytically – can show why selected action is the best of a range available – ability to reflect on past successes and learn from past mistakes – clear vision of objectives and appreciation of how different issues may affect those objectives – ability to remain unflustered under pressured decision situations – skilled in risk assessment and management and prepared to take balanced risks in decision making

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
<i>Communication</i>	Struggles with articulating own thoughts and opinions - reluctant to initiate discussions – finds it hard to get into or sustain debates – frequently “misses the point” through poor listening skills – Written documents are not well structured and presented and sometimes not very coherent – finds it hard to build relationships with people easily.	Reasonably clear verbally though sometimes diffident in self-presentation – rarely initiates new topics but can add reasonably to ongoing discussions – tends to be more vocal around timid persons – writing skills can be succinct at times but definite room for improvement – not always successful at influencing others.	Unusually concise and powerful verbally and in writing – happy to start new discussions and participates without dominating – listens well and plays back points for understanding and often adds immediate value with comments – very good at getting the message over in the right way – easily builds relationships with different types of personalities – very good at networking - able to influence others through the art of persuasion – great at negotiating.
<i>Team Player</i>	Not very good at working with other people – prefers to adopt the ‘loner’ position most of the time – does not voluntarily participate in team discussions or does not come prepared most of the time – prefers to sit on the sideline – not willing to share knowledge and experience with others – cannot express thoughts clearly in a group environment - has more of a negative/competitive streak than a positive/cooperative one.	Demonstrates team playing skills; sometimes, not always – depending on the task, - can be cooperative and add value or can adopt a passive approach – is not always aware of the team objective – at times finds it difficult to contribute to group debates and make oneself heard – tends to be a good team player when in group of friends but less so when with strangers.	Sees the team objective as a priority – speaks up in group discussions and contributes as much as possible by sharing knowledge and experience – happy to help team mates out to ensure team goal is reached – good listener to colleagues – takes criticisms gracefully and does not dominate or disrespect teammates – recognises the power of teams and happy to work with other people to produce better results than would be possible working on own.

Skill	Developmental Need (0-3)	Competent (4-6)	Strength (7-10)
<i>Self- Management</i>	Struggles to prioritise and organise tasks and manage time and resources to meet deadlines – often needs un-anticipated help from others to deliver work to a required standard and to a certain time frame – finds it hard to work under pressure – easily gets demotivated – not always consistent – does not demonstrate dedication to producing work of the highest standard – Does not see punctuality as important	Shows reasonable ability to organise and manage tasks but room for improvement – does not always meet deadlines – if motivated, will produce high quality work but does not bother too much if not in the right mood – is not very consistent in work performance – sometimes need to be encouraged – shows good managerial skills at times but not always.	Ability to reflect on past actions and adjust behaviour, high self awareness, shows great planning skills, manages time constraints effectively , demonstrates flexibility and ability for self appraisal - project manages well – exerts appropriate emotional control – is self disciplined and self motivated