

Academic and Employability Skills

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The purpose of this report is to analyse my academic and employability skills in the workplace and how i can achieve this through research to gain an understanding and apply in the workplace.

This task sets out and focuses on the skills which i have attained and can utilise in order that i can develop or enhance my attributes to apply them to a prospective employer, the overall aim through study and research will gain insight into my knowledge and skills so that confidence, technique and understanding what a prospective employer may be interested in. Having attended the united kingdom in 2003 from a country where women are unheard of in the workplace it is often difficult and a potential barrier for me to penetrate, however through research, study and applying some life skills attained this can achieved.

Employability and academic skills will prove to be enough of a source of knowledge and skills that can assist with issues found in this assignment, through understanding the basis of progressing, and the tools required to becoming a prospective employee.

The overall paper will focus on techniques that i have currently and what i can develop in order to punch through that barrier with tools such as interview techniques, resumes, confidence building and job seeking not necessarily in that order.

To begin to understand what a potential employer may be interested i will need to explore relevant skills and understandings that i have of what it takes to become employable before i reach the employer stages of this paper, i would say the greatest hurdle for me would be the a lack of confidence due to having a second language, when faced with moment of confidence lacking a thought that picks this up is the following " To be a great champion, you must believe you are the best. If not, pretend you are." (Muhammad Ali) with this and a general resume the researching phase can begin. A general resume will detail my employability skills to prospective employers, at a glance they can gleam that i meet at least the basic criteria that they are looking for, due to my limited work experience this may be in the format of a chronological resume, the majority of my experience being educational rather than practical it would be prudent to combine this focusing on my education by making it more prominent, a good source for tips on creating resumes is detailed on the National Careers Service website. Social networking is now extremely common it is worth noting that this may be researched by the employer should their interest be peaked, although i have no issues with them researching this it may be worth revisiting this to ensure that it can be looked upon favourably, creating a linkedin profile may be beneficial as this is a potential starting point for most employers looking to recruit candidates, to

some this may seem unethical however recruiters may argue that social media is a public platform, unless the candidate makes it otherwise and that's their own choice to share the content that is available to anyone who searches for it. (Riley, HRZONE, 2014) .

The next point that i feel is the biggest hurdle is the interview stages, this is the point where i have an opportunity to apply my written resume and any prospective employer to meet any potential employees through sifting potential candidates and their resumes. Key to understanding the potential employer and the job role in order to prepare for the interview phase is paramount, however before this i will have brushed up on my interview skills by utilising a vast array of websites that offer their services, again the national careers service website along with Barclayslifeskills.com offer services, jobcentres also offer free courses and interview techniques which are invaluable. In order to be successful in any potential organisation and impressing the employer preparation is essential, one of the ways to do this is to list any questions that i may have and prepare any questions to the interviewer, this will provide me with the relevant confidence uplift and apply this by practising the questions and answers with family and friends, many organisations now have websites with goals or objectives and aims, focusing any questions around this may assist, referring back to my cover letter and resume to ensure that they fit the company and role profile would also be beneficial to reflect my understanding and of that of the employer, it is worth noting that many companies provide telephone interviews at first which will also have to be factored in to the preparation, a useful book would be the interviewers handbook (Bunting, 2007), by understanding what the employer is looking for this can be counteracted by the jobseeker.

Appropriate attire when attending can provide a moral boost, an interesting article from forbes details "to pick an outfit customary to your industry and taking it up a notch." (Zoller, Forbes 2010), psychologist E.L Thorndike studied a phenomenon in the 1900s whereby he cited that "when an individual is found to possess a desirable trait, that individual is found to have other desirable traits too." (Thorndike, 1911). Making a good first impression is key, from your attire right the way through to your body language, making eye contact, handshake, seating positions, right the way through to preventing any bad habits from creeping in, a weakness that i need to surpass is constant dryness of the mouths and looking away when being asked a question, however these are all non verbal body language that i may need to be consciously aware of and overcome them and not to be afraid or nervous to request water!

The majority of the interview should be relatively pain free as i would have practised the questions anticipated, researched youtube videos on interview techniques, however the questions may not be given in the format that i practised so i will need to be prepared for this, it is also pertinent to note that discussing weaknesses or failure that will not affect the position applied for may also be beneficial. (Crosby, 2000; Gray, 2011). Intimidating as the interview panel may seem it is worth considering and hoping that employers understand that during the initial phases all candidates will be nervous and this may be taken into consideration, but it is important to note that this should not be solely relied upon and if overcome play a positive role when considered for employment.

As explained earlier on the biggest weakness that i face is the interview stages as i am not accustomed to this environment or neither have i been exposed to this way of recruitment, however, with practise both physically with family members and friends and mentally through researching the employer and anticipation this can be achieved.

Having concentrate my efforts on what is beneficial for me, it is worthy of note as to what the employer is looking for, communication skills are important for a prospective employer along with organisational influence, resource management and other key areas, however this information can at times be gleaned from the job advert itself and tailoring questions and answers to steer in that direction may prove beneficial during the interview phase, a keen interest in the role profile may also assist this can be researched with looking at current employees but again through review websites such as Trustpilot or through companies house. Although my second language is bengali i see this as a skill set, by being bilingual i can turn this point into a strength and may steer me in their favour.

Once the interview is drawing to a conclusion it should be noted again that verbal and nonverbal communication are key, taking the time now to ask questions of the organisation, job role and employee profiles can have a bearing on the potential employer, again a firm handshake, eye contact and being polite throughout can all be taken in by the employer, being able to discuss or negotiate potential salaries within the role is also key, although this may seem a little daunting, this will give the employer a sense of good negotiation skills. A point to remember that may assist me in the future is that any interview is an experience in confidence for me, understanding the market and sector, this is also a time to take back the interview and self reflect, to see how i can improve myself in the future, one of these ways i can achieve this is to note down my thoughts and with pros and cons and to see how this can be achieved. "Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful." (Margaret J Wheatley).

In conclusion i have realised that it is not a question of applying for jobs and hoping for the best as i have done so in the past, preparation is key, by noting my weaknesses and strengths i can improve on my skill set and thus empowering me to achieve the relevant career or job that i wish to aim for. By writing this essay i have found through research hints and techniques that provides me to improve my job seeking prospects. It can be a time consuming part for the employer and therefore seeking out the ideal candidate to fit into their organisation through utilising tools such as requesting resumes, telephone interviews at times more than once and with different personnel in their organisations along with interview panels and rarely assessment centres, companies have even gone that further mile and request potential candidates to complete psychometric testing in order to achieve what they are looking for in a candidate, this needs to realised by the potential employee along with the costs involved by the employer, if this is realised than a little planning and preparation on part of the employee has no bearing on what the employer is facing, having looked at this in this perspective the pressure can be alleviated a little on me and provide the employer for the ideal candidate that they seek.

I have discovered that there is a vast array of employability skills that i can obtain to enhance my future job seeking prospects, i have detailed these through this paper, i have noted my weaknesses, which although seemed like a burden at the time now seem a little less burdensome through planning and preparation, there have been weaknesses that can also be considered strengths and strengths which may be construed as weaknesses. Utilising a good resume in order to gain the attention of the employer, realising that there may be hundreds of resumes that they are having to weed through the day and by making my resume stand out will allow this to be sifted in the relevant interview stages. Having researched various interview techniques has provided me with a broad understanding of what employers are looking for in an individual, however not all employers are looking for the same thing in a person and i have realised that i need to research the potential company to ensure that my planning and preparation fits into that organisations role profile, showing keenness, asking specific questions and looking to see if the employer is responding positively are all signs that may assist me .

I need to develop my communication skills a little more, i have determined that the best way forward for this is to attend the numerous workshops that have been made available, a good start would be the national careers website, and if suited locally then the job centre which is also a hub for all training schemes alike. I touched upon a more greater need to enhance myself at the beginning which is confidence building, however by taking all of the career seeking skills together as a whole is in itself given me an uplift in my confidence.

Thorough research, planning, organising, and practise i believe that i can achieve credibility in search of employment opportunities in the future. understanding the recruiter and what they desire are all elements that play a vital role to gain employment prospects.