

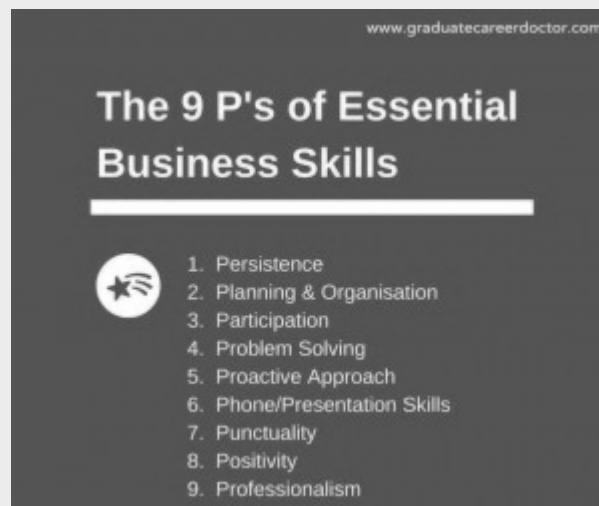
The 9 'P' Skills that Employers Love!

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Once you've secured a graduate position, what is it that employers want from you?

Having recruited graduates for blue-chip companies I have worked for, and latterly as my own business for the past 10 years, there is a 'theme' of what employers expect and want from their new employees.



This can be summed up as the 9 P's, that are easy to remember and simple for you to demonstrate in your new role from Day 1.

Once you've been through the recruitment process and secured the position, then the real hard work begins. You need to show that employer that they made the right choice in selecting you. There will be big expectations for you to fulfil their requirements. After all you are a graduate!

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1. Persistence

At university your time is 'managed' to a certain extent, however employers want to see that you can self-manage.

Self Motivation

- You'll need to show inspiration as well as perspiration!
- Don't wait to be told, get on with it
- Don't give up at the first hurdle

Self Management

- Evaluate and monitor your own performance
- Have confidence in your own ideas
- Take responsibility

2. Planning and Organisation

Businesses don't bumble along, they have a clear vision and goal of what they are aiming for. Your plans need to reflect this too.

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Self Planning/Organisation

- Manage your time well
- Use and manage all resources available
- Establish clear **SMART** goals
 - **S**pecific
 - **M**easurable
 - **A**ttainable
 - **R**ealistic
 - **T**ime-framed

3. Participation

Be seen to be getting 'stuck in'

Teamwork – You can participate in any number of ways, but employers want to see those great team-working skills you bragged about at interview, so remember to:

- Work towards a *common* goal
- Contribute but don't dominate
- Be aware that multiple talents make up the best teams (and that means you are all going to have different views). Be tolerant of everyone

Communication – Your communication skills are judged from Day 1 too, so remember communication is not only about the spoken word, it's also expressed in the way you:

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- Listen, show body language, and write
- Act and sound professional
- Make every effort to network with others, formally and informally, virtually and face2face
- Be curious about people, ask them about their role in the company, and find out how it impacts your role
- Don't wait to be introduced – introduce yourself!

4. Problem Solving

Just because the company is new to you, it doesn't mean you've not got the answers to their problems.

Show your initiative, never be afraid to throw in ideas for problem-solving. My favourite framework comes from what journalists use to write stories – **5 W's and one H**. Use this when problem-solving, writing reports, emails etc and you'll always be certain to cover all the points needed.

WHAT – WHY – WHERE – WHEN – WHO – HOW

- **What** – do you want to achieve?
- **Why** – did this problem arise/do we need a solution?
- **Where** – does it impact?
- **When** – do we need to act?
- **Who** – needs to be involved/informed?
- **How** – can I find out more?

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5. Proactive Approach

Employers like to see that you'll take the initiative and as well as making suggestions, become a self starter on projects.

- Get some ideas written down.
- Who you can talk them through with?
- Be able to articulate your vision/thoughts
- Practice on a colleague and then work up to the boss!

6. Phone/Presentation Skills

Our relationship with our mobile phone has changed over the years, but in some companies, it is not acceptable to have it as an appendage!

Policy – check your company handbook. What is the company policy on using your mobile in work time? Learn quickly and obey the rules – it could end up in a disciplinary situation, if you go against the company rules.

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Company Phones – answer it!! I've lost count of the time when a phone is ringing next to a graduate and they will do anything but answer it! Always take the opportunity to answer phones – you will not be expected to know the answers to all the questions, but you can help.

- **Taking messages** (using 5 W's and 1 H)
 - **Who** is calling?
 - **Who** are they trying to contact?
 - **Where** are they calling from?
 - **What** is their contact number?
 - **When** do they need a return call by?
 - **How** can you assist/help them?

Presentations – no-one ever did a presentation 100% perfect (and never will)

Even the most polished presenters can pick holes in their own performance so never beat yourself up. And remember, if you miss anything out, no-one knows except you!

Planning and **Practice** is the key to **Perfection!**

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Use the 5 W's and an H to structure your talk:

- **What** is the aim/what do you need to cover
- **What** timeframe/equipment is needed?
- **Where** is it to be held?
- **When** will it take place?
- **Who** will your audience comprise of?
- **How** big is the audience number?

7. Punctuality

All the corporates I have worked for have been strict time-keepers. Time is money! There's nothing more frustrating than people joining a meeting late, disrupting the flow and it's irritating for the people who got there on time.

Plus, what does it say about your personality if you are constantly late? It is bad manners.

The rule when I ran meetings was if you are late, (even 1 minute) you were not allowed to join my meeting. And you would then have to reply on a colleague to brief you about what happened. I only turned someone away once, and no-one was ever late for any of my meetings ever again!

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8. Positivity

We have two choices every day. To be happy and positive or to be sad and miserable. The trouble is, they are both infectious! Do you really want to be dragging the mood down? Is that what the employer hired you for?

Take the lead and be the ray of sunshine that every environment/company needs. It pays dividends in the long run for your career as a whole. How many miserable people have you seen in envious positions?

9. Professionalism

Imagine yourself as a brand. This is your face to the outside world and the one that your reputation depends on. It's called Professionalism – protect it at all costs.

Show your professionalism:

- On and off line!
- Company etiquette – interacting with customers and individuals (behaviours, dress code, manners, written/spoken communications)
- Introductions – handshake, smiles, eye contact
- Be a **Brand Ambassador** for the company, and for yourself!

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