

SEVEN STEPS TO SPEAKING CONFIDENTLY ABOUT YOUR SKILLS



Finding comfort in speaking about your skills and the value they can add to a position may take some time, reflection, preparation and planning.

Below are seven steps that will help you be better prepared to speak confidently about the skills, knowledge and experience you have to offer to an employer.

Keep in mind that even though progress may seem slow, every minute you spend completing these steps will strengthen your communication skills and your ability to speak more confidently.

- 1. Identify and list your skills and abilities.** Create a detailed inventory of skills that includes not only the skills and abilities already included in your resume, but also additional skills you may not have thought of yet. Review NOC duties, job postings, and the documents included in this MY SKILLS section.
- 2. Organize your skills by category.** Once you have identified and listed a good number of skills and abilities, create groups of skills under various categories: technical, planning, time-management, problem solving, interpersonal communication, etc.
- 3. Be prepared to explain why a specific skill is important.** For each of your skills, strategize how you could best explain its importance. What are its benefits? What would be the possible negative consequences if you or another employee did not have that skill?

- 4. Plan what you would respond if asked to explain a skill.** Write down the main points as a reminder. Often, an interviewer may say:

“I see that you have experience doing _____, can you tell me more?”

“In your resume, you mention that you are flexible/adaptable, can you expand on this?”

- 5. Identify your top skills to create a skills-highlights summary.** Long lists are good as a background database, but in specific situations such as a job interview or an initial introduction, it is a good idea to have a well prepared summary.

→ **Within each category, reorganize the skills in a priority order** (more relevant/important at the top.) Then, highlight the 2 or 3 skills in each category that you believe are the most relevant or that best describe your strengths in that area. Use the highlights from each skills category to create a skills-highlights summary.

- 6. Include some or all the skills-highlights in your introduction.** Your “tell me about yourself” paragraph will be most effective if it reflects not only your background and technical skills, but also how you organize your work, what matters to you, how you relate to others, etc.

- 7. Think of positive examples for each skill.** You will be better prepared for interviews and for informal conversations if you can share concrete examples that illustrate your strengths.

Think of a time when you used a skill successfully and plan how you could tell a brief story about it, if asked. Then, write down the main points of the story as a reminder.

Remember; focus on +positive+ examples: tell what happened, what you did, and how your intervention contributed to the successful resolution of the situation. For each skill/ability/situation, think how you would include an example if you were asked:

Can you tell me of a time when you _____?