

Competencies

Skills, Knowledge, Traits

Your competencies are what you bring to an employer. Specifically, they are broad areas of expertise that encompass three major categories:

Skills: Specific things you can do and functions you can perform, such as "analyze risk factors" or "create marketing plans."

Knowledge: The functional and domain expertise you have developed, such as "small business market" or "valuation techniques."

Traits: The personal style and behaviors you display in your professional life, such as "calm under pressure" or "direct and assertive."

Documenting your skills, knowledge and traits is a helpful step to determine which career(s) you may be best suited for, and will help ensure that you clearly communicate your ability to contribute to potential employers. To determine your competencies and prepare to communicate them to a potential employer, take the following steps.

Step 1: Identify Your Accomplishments

Make a list of your accomplishments (both personal and professional). Give yourself some time to create this list. Don't discount personal accomplishments — these can be just as indicative of your competencies. The following questions may help you identify some of your professional accomplishments:

1. *What problems did you identify and solve?*
2. *What new program, product or system did you introduce?*
3. *How did you save the organization money or time? How much?*
4. *How much did you contribute to revenues or profits?*
5. *How did you effectively manage others?*
6. *In what decision making or planning did you participate?*
7. *What awards, bonuses, or promotions did you receive?*
8. *What challenges have you overcome?*

Step 2: Highlight Specific Accomplishments

1. *Most proud of*
2. *Most excited about*
3. *Really enjoyed*

Step 3: Analyze Your Accomplishments

1. *The skills you used; the actions you had to take to get these results*
2. *The knowledge that you gained or applied*
3. *The traits you demonstrated*

Step 4: Describe Your Competencies

1. *What can you do that is unique and sets you apart?*
2. *What is highly appealing to the marketplace and your potential employer?*
3. *What combination of skills, knowledge, and traits is required to achieve the specific results that a particular employer is looking for?*