**Identify your skills – what can you do?**

The first step is to draw up a logical summary of all the things you can do: everything you have learnt and done. Take your CV as your starting point and add to it, including all of the subjects in your degree, your projects, all of the tasks performed in your jobs (student job, job, voluntary work), positions of trust and your hobbies.

You should then consider for each task which skills you applied to begin with, along the way (even if conflicts occurred) and at the end. Note the results of each task – large and small.

There are some examples in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Job/studies/hobby** | **Task/subject** | **Result/success story** | **Skills applied** |
| Thesis: Risk analysis of food-borne contaminants | The aim was to identify potential risks associated with contaminants in foods. This was done by identifying potential hazards and, finally, handling the actual risks threatening production.  | Analyses showed that there was a risk associated with the production facilities. This was subsequently resolved and regular quality controls ensured follow-up.  | Food productionRisk analysis and modellingQuality controlFermentationAnalysis of CCPsData collectionData processingQCLegislation |
| Internship in Tanzania | Develop infrastructure in collaboration with the villages. Water availability, adaptation of structures to the heat and local customs needed to be taken into account. Collect data from the local population about needs and challenges | Constructed a road system which made it easier for locals to collect water in periods of drought. This gained the recognition of the local mayor.  | Communication with local authoritiesConstruction knowledgeKnowledge about wastewater and local water conditionsSewage systems Design and analysis of roadsKnowledge about a variety of cement typesCooperation with the local populationTraffic analysesIntercultural understandingInternational experienceUrban development |
| Instructor: Basic statics and mechanics of materials | Share specialised subject matter, both by presenting to the entire team and in one-to-one teaching situations.  | The grade-point average for the team I joined was well above the average for the year group.  | Communication skillsIn-depth knowledge of statics and mechanics of materialsFEM skills3D CADICT toolsTeaching plansLearning plans |
| Tutor | Ensure that the new year group is thoroughly introduced to both the academic and the social side of the course. Make sure that all students are part of the community. Coordinate events, hold presentations and find sponsors.  | Although the intensive introductory programme lasted many days, we managed to motivate the students to continue to take an active part in sponsor presentations, to ensure that the sponsors had a good experience. The drop-out rate that year was lower than normal and evaluations of the introductory programme showed that the good start encouraged doubters to stay on. | CoordinationCommunicationEvent planningCommunication with potential sponsorsContracts with sponsorsMotivation of others |
| Treasurer, residential cooperative | Collection of proposals for renovation of balconies and backyards, budgeting, collection of permits from authorities | The first contractor went bankrupt but I quickly established contact to a new one so that the project was only delayed by five months. | Financial managementCommunication with authorities and lawyersUpdates for members of the cooperativeTake decisions under pressure |
| Role play | Game Master, which involved keeping track of participants between the ages of 7 and 53. Create the games and the stories linked to the games.  | More have joined while I have been Game Master, and some parents tell me that their children have gained in confidence. | OverviewStory-tellingEvent planningKnowledge of the woodsActing“creating convincing Ork make-up” |

This type of systematic presentation and review of your skills may take several days and cover more than five pages. You may need to refresh your memory by talking to fellow students, reading your curriculum and talking to former bosses and colleagues. You can also research on LinkedIn. Which skills do people with the same background as you possess? And check out the professional requirements in relevant job advertisements, then add these to your summary.

**Prioritise – what do you want to do?**

You now have an extensive and, perhaps, rather disorganised summary of your professional skills – and probably also some of your social and personal skills. The next step is to prioritise your skills. You can do this by rating them with stars on a scale from 1 to 5 in relation to your job content. Or you could take a more radical approach and make a prioritised list, from 1 to 100 (or the number of skills on your list).

**How do you make use of your competence profile?**

Once you have identified and prioritised your skills, you will have a competence profile. You will presumably now have a better understanding of what you can and want to do, and this will improve your ability to take control of your career.

If you are currently out of a job, you can use this competence profile to search for jobs that meet your requirements. It will also help you make your job search more efficient and targeted. As an extra bonus, the table includes good examples of your results, which you can talk about at a job interview.

If you already have a job, you can use this summary to draw attention to your results when you are negotiating salary, and you can use it at your personal development review to discuss with your boss the type of project you would prefer more – or less – of. If it is not possible to change the content of your job to achieve a better match with your competence profile, you should perhaps consider seeking a new job. You learn throughout your entire working life, and it is a good idea to update your competence profile a couple of times a year, adding new projects, results and skills, to prepare yourself for your next personal development review or a new job.