

## MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

It may be a truism to say that there's a war for talent at the moment and that, for the best people, competition among employers is fierce. But it is still only the **best** people that will get the **best** jobs. So how can you make the most of what you have to offer and present yourself in the best light?

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses – the key is to play to your strengths – and to try, as far as possible, to turn your weaknesses into positives. Employers know that we all have weaknesses but handling them positively shows that you have found ways of overcoming them and developed strategies to tackle them. A good start is to sit down with a friend you trust and ask them to give you an honest appraisal of your personal strengths and weaknesses – and then relate those personal traits to the workplace. For example:

### Strengths

*I am decisive and make things happen.*

If I have an idea, I'll take it through the appropriate process and see it through to implementation.

*I am sociable, get on with everybody and take other peoples views into consideration.*

I am a good team player and can liaise with all levels of staff from junior through to management.

*I am never late and take timekeeping very seriously.*

I am an effective time manager and never miss deadlines.

### Weaknesses

*I have a tendency to be forgetful so have to have lists for everything.*

I'm a very organised worker and believe in having a written schedule which means if I'm away, it's easy for colleagues to pick up my work and see where we are.

*Sometimes I can be a bit too talkative and really enjoy the "water cooler" chat.*

I'm a good networker and pride myself on having my finger on the pulse.

*I can be a little arrogant and aggressive at times.*

I have a high degree of self belief and can put my points across strongly.

Once you have assessed your strengths and weaknesses you need to relate your answers to the following questions:

- What skill set do you bring to the table? Think about transferable skills, interpersonal skills, management skills and strategic skills like problem solving, communication, people management and vision.
- For each position you held, list three to five achievements. Be very clear on this and spell it out.
- How is your company better off since you joined their team?
- Have you been involved in designing and/or implementing new initiatives?
- What's my value added – what can I offer that no-one else can?

The point here is to start thinking about your career as a portrait of who you are professionally, and not just as a job. It's important to remember that employers will be asking themselves three questions – can this person do the job? Will this person do the job and will this person be a cultural fit into the company? The rest, as they say, is up to you!