

## 85 Key competences for consulting

Summarised by Andrew Gibbons

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Where are your needs, and what do you do well now?

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### General skills

1. Thinking before I talk.
2. Being comfortable with my education background.
3. Being brief and concise.
4. Understanding my motivation for working in a helping profession.
5. Reading group processes accurately.
6. Separating personal and work issues.
7. Listening actively to others.
8. Appreciating the impact of my own behaviour.
9. Dealing with conflict and anger.
10. Building and developing an atmosphere of trust and openness.
11. Having a clear and substantial theory base.

### Sensing and diagnosing

12. Helping clients to discover their own problems.
13. Asking direct questions.
14. Inspiring the client's confidence in my ability to do the job.
15. Showing and feeling real interest in client issues.
16. Taking client rejection without harm.
17. Offering to find answers to questions.
18. Drawing others out.
19. Encouraging clients to be self analytical.
20. Helping clients generate solutions to their own problems.
21. Accepting the client's perception of problems and issues, even when these contrast with my own views.

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## **Contracting**

22. Talking about money and fees without awkwardness.
23. Promising only what I can offer.
24. Assessing accurately and early assignments that ought not be taken on.
25. Working under pressure of deadlines and time limits.
26. Setting realistic goals for myself and the client.
27. Presenting my biases, values and beliefs, and being true to them.
28. Working comfortably with senior decision makers.
29. Letting others take the credit and the glory.
30. Working with people I do not particularly like.
31. Giving in to client restrictions and limitations.
32. Helping to set and agree realistic and meaningful outcomes.
33. Assessing and owning personal needs that influence acceptance of the contract.

## **Problem solving**

34. Agreeing and stating objectives clearly.
35. Summarising discussions.
36. Selling ideas effectively and in order to meet genuine needs.
37. Challenging ineffective solutions.
38. Making appropriate and ethical use of past experience.
39. Seeking and accepting help from others.
40. Having a pool of people with relevant and valuable help and experience.
41. Evaluating possible solutions critically.
42. Differentiating between symptoms and causes.
43. Having a variety of techniques to call upon.

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### **Implementing**

- 44. Attending to details.
- 45. Helping client's make good use of their own strengths and resources.
- 46. Taking responsibility.
- 47. Changing plans in response to emerging issues.
- 48. Giving feedback honestly and positively.
- 49. Inviting feedback, and taking this positively.
- 50. Controlling anxiety and managing stress.
- 51. Admitting errors and mistakes.
- 52. Trusting others.
- 53. Recognising defensiveness.
- 54. Managing time and prioritising skilfully.

### **Evaluating**

- 55. Assessing your own contributions realistically.
- 56. Acknowledging failure, and learning lessons.
- 57. Feeling comfortable with clients reviewing work and giving advice and observations.
- 58. Devising evaluative documentation.
- 59. Attributing positive changes appropriately.
- 60. Taking notes, and writing up what was done.
- 61. Closing an assignment clearly and definitely.
- 62. Arranging next steps and follow-ups.
- 63. Accepting critical feedback, and learning from this.

### **Communication skills**

- 64. Writing clearly, analytically and concisely.
- 65. Speaking to small groups of key people.
- 66. Believing your own message.
- 67. Observing groups and individuals analytically.

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- 68. Noting tension and diagnosing causes accurately.
- 69. Sensing feelings.
- 70. Recognising and acting upon non verbal cues.
- 71. Controlling irritation.
- 72. Thinking before talking.
- 73. Praising sincerely and with positive effect.
- 74. Disagreeing directly and with comfort.
- 75. Managing emotions.
- 76. Asserting with effect, and without aggression.

**And...**

- 77. Continuously and deliberately developing skills and knowledge in targeted priority areas.
- 78. Networking extensively with others in various roles in similar and in very different organisations.
- 79. At all times behaving with integrity, and ethically.
- 80. Marketing services to create and later satisfy, future needs.
- 81. Being a model of the practices and behaviour sought in others.
- 82. Recommending others wherever this is the most effective way to meet client needs.
- 83. Constantly monitoring current and prospective client organisations and units to identify possible needs.
- 84. Maintaining contact with clients beyond assignment completion in a way that is valued by them.
- 85. Connecting clients to establish/develop mutually beneficial relationships as a means of sharing learning.

This inventory was adapted from the 'consulting triads: self-assessment' activity, within the structured experience kit 1980. University Associates, San Diego.

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