



TIP SHEET

DEMONSTRATE YOUR POWER SKILLS

You have done everything you can. You worked hard for your advanced business degree, and you earned the grades you wanted. You have relevant experience. So what is left? Now you have to demonstrate how you stand out.

The shift in ways of working in more recent years has demonstrated the intangible talents that your potential employer can't see, but they know are more important than technical skills. These “power skills” are critical for solving business problems and adding value to the company. They help us to effectively work alongside and lead others even in ambiguous and uncertain conditions.

Considering the changing nature of work, the ability to harness your power skills is more pronounced and more needed than ever, so take the time to study the key power skills below and ensure that you have a plan to clearly demonstrate them during your interview. We call these POWER SKILLS rather the more commonly used term “soft skills” because they should not be minimized and do not take a back seat to “hard skills”.

THE 5 POWER SKILLS:

- 1. Curiosity**
- 2. First-rate Communication**
- 3. Problem-Solving**
- 4. Persuasion and Influence**
- 5. Emotional Intelligence**



POWER SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

1. Curiosity

Studies show that curious people are better learners and creative thinkers. In fact, it's been proven by several studies and experts that you're better off being curious because it leads to being a successful employee. Also, they've found that creative thinking leads to innovation and better problem-solving skills.

Demonstrate these power skills in the following ways:

- When asking questions **avoid yes/no questions** like “Do you have a monthly meeting?” or “How many people do you have on your team?” Instead, ask something more thoughtful and specific. For example, instead of asking if they have monthly meetings, ask how often they meet or what the agenda is for each meeting.
- Demonstrate that you have **diverse interests**. Often an interviewer will ask you “what do you do outside of work?” or “what are your hobbies?” Demonstrating that you have a variety of interests implies that you can posture thinking which is beyond your silo of work or professional expertise.
- Demonstrate that you are inquisitive by **asking follow-up questions** to statements made by the interviewer. If the interviewer talks about new products or projects that are launching, ask follow-up questions to find out more about it. Some examples of follow-up questions are: “That sounds interesting, why did that happen?” or “What other options has the team explored?”



POWER SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

2. First-rate Communication

During your preparation stage, you will have built a strong answer to the question “How do you build relationships with stakeholders?” Now it’s time to demonstrate how good your skills are in real-time.

Demonstrate that you have first-rate communication skills by:

- **Being concrete and clear.** Think about what you are going to say before you say it so that you avoid stuttering, awkward pauses, and the use of filler words such as “um”.
- **Demonstrate active listening skills by repeating back some of the interviewer’s sentences.** E.g. “Thank you, that’s a great question that you ask about managing a heavy workload...”
- **Speak at a regular pace.** 150 words per minute has been proven to be an ideal number of words spoken to demonstrate confidence. Record yourself and listen back to ensure your pace is not too fast. You can use a smartphone with speech-to-text capability to count the number of words you speak per minute.
- **Take slow breaths to steady your voice.**
- **Ease any tension in your body language.**
- **Maintain regular eye contact with the interviewer.** You can look away briefly when thinking or taking notes. However, especially when you are listening to the speaker, you should hold eye contact to show that you are engaged. If your interview is a video interview, look into the camera when speaking.



POWER SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

3. Problem Solving

It is not enough just to know what needs fixing—you need to be able to show that you can come up with solutions, too. During the interview process, make sure you're asking insightful questions about what issues are keeping the company or team from achieving their goals, then share your ideas for how they might be solved.

Demonstrate that you solve problems by:

- Telling stories about how you've proactively solved problems in the past. Be sure to describe the outcomes of your problem-solving.
- Ask the hiring manager to describe challenges and problems the team is facing. (You may not want to do this with recruiters, as they will not know the full details of the challenges the team faces)
- Share your solutions with collaboration in mind. Ask for the interviewer's opinion after sharing your ideas.





POWER SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

4. Persuasion and Influence

If you want the job, then you will need to convince the interviewer why they should hire you over all other candidates. The way to do that is by gently persuading them that they are missing out if they don't hire you.

Persuade your interviewer by demonstrating:

- **Reciprocity.** Offer an unselfish gesture to the interviewer to solve a problem they might be having or a challenge they might want you to resolve. Kind of like “free advice.” This will subconsciously leave the interviewer wanting to reciprocate your generosity.
- **Commitment.** Humans are naturally people pleasers who do not want to disappoint. Gain consistent commitment from the interviewer by getting them into the “yes” frame of mind. For example, explain a change or process you changed previously and finish with a question like “is that something that would benefit you?”
- **Affinity.** We are more likely to buy from people who are like us. During the job interview, you can increase affinity by finding common ground. Do you both enjoy the same Netflix show? Did you attend the same school? Have you visited the same vacation destination in the past? Ideally, you'll want to find commonality with your values, beliefs and work ethic.
- **Authority.** Demonstrate your expertise in your industry to the interviewer. Explain how that knowledge would benefit the organization. If you can demonstrate thought leadership through published blogs or attending panels you will appear to be an expert in your field.



POWER SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE

5. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence commonly abbreviated as EQ is the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions in others. EQ is also often called “people skills”. Essentially, People like and trust you because of how you treat them and how you make them feel.

When it comes to demonstrating emotional intelligence in a job interview, there are three main things you need to keep in mind:

- **Demonstrate Active Listening.** Tailor your answer to the question rather than regurgitate a pre-memorized answer. Be sure to use the interviewer’s words in your answer. For example, “You asked how I delivered the project quickly. I did so by ...”
- **Show Genuine Emotion.** Demonstrate your passion for the industry by showing extracurricular activities you might partake in such as podcasts you listen to or blogs you write. Speak with intonation and a natural smile.
- **Ask about Company Culture.** Ask about the company's values and mission. Mention any informational interviews you completed as part of your preparation to demonstrate that you are interested in the culture. Share what you learned and show how learning about the culture made you more excited and passionate about the job.

The power skills we have listed are the top five power skills that interviewers want to see someone with an advanced business degree. Not only does the interviewer want to see you have the technical ability to do the role, but they also want to see that you have these powerful skills in your personal toolbox. These future-proof you as a hire and demonstrate your potential.