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# SOFT SKILLS & RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Barbara Matovu 2019

# Soft skills defined

Soft skills are the more transferable skills of a candidate.

- **Communication**
- **Decision-making**
- **Collaboration**
- **Teamwork**
- **Time management**
- **Creativity**
- **Work ethic**

They're all very necessary for cultural fit and can be very good predictors of future job performance.

The background features a large, stylized blue silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right. Inside the head, there is a gear icon and a plant sprout. Surrounding the head are various icons: a heart with a hand inside, a gift box, a scale of justice, a cloud, and a leaf. The text 'KEYWEST CONSULTING' is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font across the top right. The word 'me' is partially visible in white text on the left side of the head silhouette.

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# Soft skills

## **NOT:**

- Quantifiable
- Measurable
- Taught

## **ARE:**

- Personal attributes
- Growth mindset
- Resilience
- Patience & emotional regulation



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# Related interview questions

## COMMUNICATION

- Explain to your 95-year old grandmother what you do for a living.
- Your colleague is publicly belittling your work achievements. What do you do?

## TEAMWORK

- Tell me how you would overcome a situation where a team is doing badly because members aren't getting along.
- Your teammates are all in agreement on how to approach a task but you disagree. How do you react?



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# Related interview questions

## LEADERSHIP

- You know your manager is 100% wrong about something. What do you do?

## FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- What is the most difficult change you've encountered in your career?
- Give me an example of when you've had to deal with a short notice request.

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# Related interview questions

## PROBLEM SOLVING

- Give me an example of a time when you've had to be creative or unconventional in solving a problem.
- Describe a time when you had to solve a problem in a crisis.

## CREATIVITY

- Give me an example of a business being creative in order to be successful.
- In what ways have you encouraged your team/colleagues to be more creative and innovative?



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# Related interview questions

## NEGOTIATION

- How would you change an institutional “this is how we always do it” mindset if you felt there was a better approach?
- How would you go about negotiating something with a manager or supervisor?

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Tell me about a time when you planned and executed a large project. What were the outcomes?
- How do you set long-term goals for your team? How do you evaluate performances?



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# The application process

**1** [keywestcvs.com](http://keywestcvs.com)



**2** Which role?



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1. Upload CV on the builder (guide notes available)
2. Apply through following sites:
  - [totaljobs.com](http://totaljobs.com)
  - [indeed.co.uk](http://indeed.co.uk)
  - [jobserve.com](http://jobserve.com)
  - [jobsite.co.uk](http://jobsite.co.uk)
  - [cv-library.co.uk](http://cv-library.co.uk)
  - [civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk](http://civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk)
  - [jobs.nhs.uk](http://jobs.nhs.uk)
3. Apply for roles as per preference



# Gentle

# REMINDER

## DO:

- Apply for as many as 30-40 jobs DAILY!
- Make your mentor aware ASAP when put forward for an interview
- Be respectful/considerate of their time

## DON'T:

- Ask they check job specs before you apply (wasted effort for both)

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# What to say...

## 3 Conversation with the recruiter

- a. Current situation?
- b. Your experience?
  - a. *(checking to see whether your experience matches that of the job spec)*
- c. Salary expectation (perm / contract)?
- d. Interview notice?
- e. Relocate / commute?
- f. Upcoming holidays?
- g. Notice period?
- h. References?
- i. SC clearance (public sector – MoD), CCJs / bankruptcy (finance sector)?



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Resume



# Interview invitation

4

- Email confirmation of interview
- Format (telephone, skype, face to face)
- Job specification/description
- Details (date, time, venue)
- Ask interview style (STAR / COMPETENCY / SCENARIO) to help you prepare better



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# On the day of the Interview



**Dress to impress**



**Maintain Eye contact**



**Firm shake**

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# Tell me about yourself...

- ❑ They want to know if you have the art of communication!
- ❑ Keep it brief – 1 to 2mins
- ❑ They're **NOT** interested in your life story!

## GOOD ANSWER:

I'm an experienced HR Executive who has managed all aspects of the HR function from recruiting to training to benefits.

## BAD ANSWER!

I grew up in Timbuktu. As a child, I originally wanted to be a firefighter, then later became interested in sharks....blah, blah, blah!



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# Use BUZZ words

*Achieved  
Coached  
Cultivated*

*Guided  
Implemented  
Headed*

I spent the last 6yrs developing my skills as a customer service manager for Megacompany Inc, where I won several performance awards and I've been promoted twice. I love managing teams and solving customer problems.

*Developed  
Enhanced  
Facilitated*

*Reduced  
Simplified  
Tracked*

*Led  
Managed  
Planned*

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The panel have asked all the questions they need to gather the information about you.

Your turn – here are a few to consider...



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The logo for Keywest Consulting features the company name in a clean, sans-serif font. 'KEYWEST' is in black, and 'CONSULTING' is in a light blue color. To the left of the text is a faint, light blue icon of a globe.



- a) Who are some of your major clients?
- b) What do you foresee the challenges to be for this role?
- c) How big is the team?
- d) What is the culture/office environment?
- e) What are the KPIs?
- f) What do you do differently to make you more successful?
- g) How many more people will you interview?
- h) How soon will I get feedback?

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# In summary

- 1. Know the company**  
Do your homework, review the company website
- 2. Prepare**  
Consider key interview questions and prepare answers,
- 3. Be inquisitive**  
Asking if the position is new, if not how has it evolved?
- 4. Mind your body language**  
A smile, eye contact transmits enthusiasm.
- 5. Final statement**  
Before you leave the room think about giving a 1 or 2 min “pitch” which wraps up your interest in the role.
- 6. Follow-up**  
Follow the interview up with a thank you email to your recruiter.



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