

Competence balance sheet NRW.

Know your strengths – use your strengths

for Adolescents

Slightly adapted version of: **Competence balance sheet NRW.** Know your strengths
– use your strengths

(www.gib.nrw.de/service/downloaddatenbank/kompetenzbilanz_nrw.pdf)

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Use your strengths!

Whether you will be good at your job and enjoy your work greatly depends on how many of your skills you can use, how independently you can work and how sure you are about what you do.

For this reason, it is important to have a clear picture of your personal strengths and weaknesses. It should be easy for you to answer questions about your skills – what you can do, what you can achieve, and very important: what you want.

With the competence balance sheet NRW, we invite you to find your personal answer to these questions and think about yourself.

TIP

Write down your thoughts, because thoughts are fleeting. Your notes will help you to check where you stand later on.

The competence balance sheet gives you the opportunity to find out about your strengths. You will see that some of the questions sound similar. If your answers are always the same, you have found one of your real strengths – or a genuine weakness. However, if

you have the impression that your answers are always different, you should consider whether the skill is important to you or how much the strength depends on your environment.

The checklists are to help you use your strengths and weaknesses to reach your personal goals. We want to encourage you to use your skills for your own benefit and develop them further. You will find several suggestions for this. What you will not find is a comprehensive profile or personal recommendations for action, though.

Find out what makes you unique and distinguishes you from other people. Think about in which of your strengths you want to invest, on which weaknesses you want to work and what goal you want to achieve.

You have many strengths that are important for job life:

Do you use your strengths?

Get to know your strengths and use them!

“If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten.”

Henry Ford

Know your strengths!

You are increasingly challenged to use all your skills, knowledge and ability at your work life. The question of whether you can work in a team, whether you are ready and able to work independently, and whether you are flexible and responsible increasingly determines your professional success. These social and communication skills are a key to mastering your professional and private life in a fast-changing environment. Several of these key competences are listed here:

Key competences are...

... Skills that transcend technical skills and knowledge.

... Strengths that are generally not listed on a diploma.

- Flexibility
- Communication ability
- Ability to work in a team
- Ability to give and receive criticism
- Leadership ability
- Organizational ability
- Motivational ability

The objective of the checklists is to gain a better overview of your personal strengths and be able to formulate your own skills in such a way that others understand what you can do and how good you are.

How you evaluate yourself and your strengths is completely up to you. Answer honestly in order to get the most realistic picture of yourself as possible. In the end, you decide whether and above all with whom you want to talk about this. You determine whether you want to change something, whether you need advice or support, or simply continue as before - because you already know and use your skills.

Note

You can use the sample questions of the competence balance sheet to describe your strengths in different ways.

Example:

“Flexibility” also means “I can adjust quickly to new tasks”...

If you have to list your strengths for a performance review or an application, look through the checklists again.

Quick check

How do you approach a task? How do you perform a job? What is typical of your behaviour? How do you act at work and in your leisure time?

This quick check is to give you a brief overview of your personal preferences and behaviour. Check which of the statements apply to you.

I prefer to work alone.

I prefer to set my own tasks.

I can quickly adapt to new tasks.

I prefer to rely on myself.

I tend to decide quickly.

I am quick to approach others.

I prefer to assert myself.

I will not be dissuaded when I am convinced of something.

I tend to be quick to take risks.

Pressure tends to make me nervous.

I tend to be easily distracted.

I prefer to work with others.

I prefer to receive clear instructions.

I tend to have difficulties getting used to new tasks.

I tend to rely on others.

I tend to need time to make a decision.

I tend to be reserved.

I prefer to make compromises.

I accept suggestions and am easily persuaded by others.

I tend to avoid all risks.

I am not easily fazed.

I tend not to be easily distracted.

The difference between a dream and a goal is action!

Curious?

Use the checklists on the following pages.

Test yourself.

Have fun!

What comes next:

Each key competence is described with ten brief questions. Tick off how you assess yourself. For this purpose, you have the choice between the categories “I can do it very well” to “I cannot do it at all” or “Do not need it”.

Each checklist has an additional column: "Is important to me". *You should tick off this column for each question:*

- If you “cannot do it well” but it “is important” to you, you should think about what you should do.
- If you can do something “very well”, you will generally find that it is also important to you. Invest in this strength!

Tip

It is often the assessments of other people that make you aware of your own strengths in the first place.

What you can do afterwards:

It may be helpful to you if you discuss individual questions with another person whom you know and trust. Or you know someone who deals with the same topic. Take advantage of a conversation. You can point out each other’s strengths or find some new ones together. If you want another person to tell you where your strengths lie, give him or her a blank questionnaire. Ask this person to assess your strengths and weaknesses. When you compare your answers with those of the other person, you may discover things that you never considered and that surprise you.

For evaluating a checklist:

1. You can use a simple method for this.

Each checklist is structured so that the “strength” tendency dominates on the left and the “weakness” tendency on the right. If you have more than 6 checks in the two left columns, you have found your “strengths”. If there are fewer than 4 checks in the two left columns, you should consider whether you want to work on this skill.

2. The evaluation becomes more precise:

If you assign the following values to the columns “I can do it very well” to “I cannot do it”:

I can do it very well = 4
I can do it well = 3
I cannot do it well = 2
I cannot do it = 1

Add your points from the individual checklists:

34-40: Very pronounced strength (super!)
28-33: Well developed strength (good!)
22-27: Strength (solid basis!)
15-21: Strength capable of improvement (keep up the good work!)
0-15: Strength in need of improvement (Do something!)

There is only one proof of knowledge – doing!

“How flexible are you?”

Flexibility

How do you react to situations that suddenly change?
 How open are you to new things? How quickly can you make decisions and how well can you change your plans? How fast can you adapt to other people?

I can do it very well = 4
I can do it well = 3
I cannot do it well = 2
I cannot do it = 1

	😊😊	😊	😐	😞	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Seeing that changes are necessary					
Changing and rethinking					
Aiming for and planning changes					
Doing things that are not my responsibility					
Adapting myself to new tasks					
Adapting goals to new situations					
Doing several things at the same time					
Looking forward to new tasks					
Seeing changes as an opportunity as well					
Understanding things quickly					

“How well can you deal with and communicate with other people?”

How do you deal with people who have had different experiences than you? How do you express your opinion? How do you end a conversation while still remaining friendly? How clearly and precisely do you formulate your requests?

Communication ability

	😊😊	😊	😐	😞	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Approaching other people and starting a conversation with them					
Putting myself in other people's shoes					
Explaining complicated things clearly					
Listening to others attentively					
Expressing my views					
Justifying my actions					
Responding to arguments					
Allowing different opinions					
Expressing my feelings					
Not hiding behind other people					

“How good are you in a team?”

How smoothly can you work in a team? How successfully do you implement plans together? Do you know what your responsibility and your role in a group are? Do you know how the cooperation benefits you? What does it mean to work together with you? Can you set common rules?

Ability to work in a team

	😊😊	😊	😐	😞	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Offering my support					
Accepting help from others					
Listening					
Dealing with others without prejudice					
Mediating between others					
Planning and reaching agreements with others					
Making compromises					
Approaching others					
Assuming responsibility					
Following the thoughts of others and communicating my thoughts to them					

Dirk S.,
24 years old, Gütersloh
“I like working together with other people”

Junior cook at a health clinic

“I like to cook and play Irish music in a band. When I applied for the job at the clinic, they wanted to hire me right away because of my hobbies as well. Nowadays, cooking is my job, and I play with my band at the clinic every two weeks.”

“How do you deal with conflicts and criticism?”

How well can you take criticism? How quickly do you recognize problems and deal with a conflict? How willing are you to think about yourself and your actions? How well can you draw energy from conflicts and use it as a sign that something has to change?

Ability to give and receive criticism

	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹	Im- portant to me
Making compromises	4	3	2	1	
Accepting decisions					
Saying no or rejecting something					
Mediating conflict					
Defending my view					
Addressing touchy subjects					
Recognizing problems and facing them					
Expressing criticism so that it does not hurt feelings					
Understanding that other people think differently than I do					
Admitting faults and learning from them					

“How well can you lead people?”

How do you treat other people? How cooperative and consistent are you in dealing with them? Are your decisions understandable? Do you help others to assume responsibility? Do you trust others and do they trust you to do things?

Leadership ability

	☺☺	☺	☹	☹	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Asserting myself					
Motivating others for a task					
Checking whether others need support					
Making a decision and knowing its consequences					
Keeping an overview					
Intervening when there is a conflict and finding a solution					
Arguing with others to reach a goal					
Assuming responsibility when something goes wrong					
Recognizing the abilities of others and assigning tasks correspondingly					
Abandoning a futile task					

“How good are you at organising things?”

How many things can you do at the same time? How much time do you spend looking for things that you never find? Do you do the most important things first? Do you have a firm concept for your daily routine? Do you know where you can save more time?

Organizational ability

	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Coordinating different tasks					
Drawing up schedules					
Arranging and assigning tasks					
Saving time					
Setting deadlines					
Keeping an eye on goals					
Setting priorities					
Judging whether I was successful					
Improvising					
Checking what I would do differently next time					

“How well can you motivate yourself?”

Who tells you what to do and what not to do?
 Can you set goals for yourself? Do you feel energetic and do you have fun with your work? How much do others trust you? Is it easy for you to be enthusiastic about something? Can you work effectively on something over a long time and immerse yourself in it?

Motivational ability

	😊😊	😊	😐	😞	Im- portant to me
	4	3	2	1	
Making decisions spontaneously and independently					
Learning new things without external impulses					
Becoming especially interested in something					
Not letting myself get discouraged					
Taking care of things quickly					
Performing tasks even against resistance					
Not letting myself get distracted					
Accepting that certain tasks have to get done					
Concentrating on a task					
Adapting to situations					

Examples. Wherever you prove your strengths!

You have thought about everything you can do well. With such a balance sheet, we often think of our work life first. However, there are many more opportunities in which you prove or have proven your abilities and knowledge. Here you will find a few examples of how you develop and use strengths in your everyday life. Use the blank spaces to write down what **you** have accomplished!

Friends

"I often organise a trip for my friends"
(Organisational ability)

Family

"I raise my child alone and look for a full -time apprenticeship/ job"
(Assertiveness)

Church

"I sing in the gospel choir and take care of the notes"
(Ability to work in a team)

Leisure time

"I take dogs from the local animal home for a walk"
(Enthusiasm)

Neighbourhood

"I head the planning of parties for our local youth centre"
(Leadership ability)

Job

"I work in a coffee bar and supervise new staff, especially when they have problems with something"
(Communication ability)

Further training

"In my free time, I learn a foreign language for working abroad"
(Flexibility)

Club

"I coach the football youth twice a week"
(Motivational ability)

Balance. Using strengths and investing in skills

How can you use the result of your self-assessment now to continue or start something new? Take stock of yourself. How would you classify yourself today?

A) *I am satisfied with my competences! There are still a few things that I have always wanted to know, learn and do, though, e.g.:*

B) *I have the feeling that more knowledge and ability could help me in a few places. There are a few gaps that I have to close, e.g.:*

C) *I have discovered a lot of things that are important to me but I cannot do. There are a few things that I absolutely have to tackle, e.g.:*

D) *I am currently satisfied with my skills, but I do not know whether they will still be sufficient in ten years. I should think about a few things, e.g.:*

NOTE

Think about what consequences this balance sheet will have for you in the future.

_ What does an ideal day look like to you: What would you do? Who would you meet? How would you feel? How would you live? What would you own?

How it can continue:

Have you realized that there are things that are important to you that you cannot do? For each of the above-mentioned skills, there are a multitude of courses, literature and information that can provide you with assistance.

Or you can find your own coach, a role model, a person from your circle of friends or co-workers: someone who advises and helps you to implement your own plans and goals.

*When you know your strengths! -
Remind yourself of this when...*

... you talk to your trainer/ teacher /
counsellor the next time.

... you have your next interview for a
job..

... your club is looking for someone for
a particular task.

... your circle of friends and
acquaintances needs you for
something.

Or think about whether you would like
to take on new responsibilities,
become further qualified or whether
you would like to change something in
your life.

TIP

_ *Set yourself attainable goals*

_ *Write your goals down*

_ *Believe in yourself and what you can
do*

_ *Every person can reach his or her
potential – you too*

_ *Reward yourself when you have
attained a goal*

How do you learn? – Everyone learns differently

Each person is different and has his or her own method of learning. You also have your own way of studying and learning things. When you know more about how you learn and take that into account in learning processes, you can absorb information more quickly and sustainably, learn more effectively and have more fun learning new things. Pay attention to this when you plan further training for yourself.

I learn the best:

	true	not true
Alone		
With others		
Through pictures and tables		
When someone explains something to me		
When I write down or record something		
When I have understood the principle		
When I know all the details		
When I can try something out myself		
When I listen		
When I read something		

Winston Churchill

It is of great advantage to make the mistakes from which you can learn early on.

Action plan. Take your development into your own hands.

Use your momentum and write down your goals now:

It will cost this much time/money:

What are your goals? Note down your most important ones and then set priorities.

This has to be taken care of first:

My goals:

I will start on:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I will be finished on:

Decide on one goal:

There are the following checks:

This is the goal:

This is my reward:

This has to be done:

I want to do this because:

This will happen if I do not do anything:

This will be difficult:

This is what I need in order to do this:

You have to set things up so that a goal comes to you.

I have to clarify this first:

Theodor Fontane

Who can help me? Consciously look for help.

Creating and using a network is a good strategy when you want to change something. This is especially true for professional changes. It applies to every other goal as well when you cannot get ahead by yourself and could use help.

Note down who can help you with what:

Have fun!

Tip

Think about whom you would ask to find out about your own strengths.

Whom would you ask for help or advice?

Do you know anyone who can help you to obtain a particular piece of information?

Who has a similar goal? With whom can you work together on your goal?

**Teacher – Trainer – Counsellor – Supervisor - Family - Club – Neighbours -
Congregation – Acquaintances - ...**