

# ATHLETE

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS



Professional Services  
**PROFESSIONAL**

## What do we mean by Athlete?

This segment is about being a real professional at everything you do and doing it in the most effective way, with every Interaction. These are the behaviours that make you stand out from the crowd, where customers and colleagues get the wow factor by the way you go about things. On one hand you know how to navigate your way through the jungle and are able to read people and situations, and the associated politics and implications of behaviours; with very effective collaboration and relationship building at the core. Your relationship skills and personal interactions are stand out. On the other hand you are able to remain agile, bendy flexi whilst managing multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities.

You make things happen but do it in style. You make matrix management look easy as you make each stakeholder feel special. Your motto is goals in concrete, plans in sand.

## Why does being an Athlete matter in Professional Services?

The prime focus for professional services has always been the ability for an individual to be technically strong. The challenge is that the way you come across and the quality of what you do is equally important; so blending both skills is a real differentiator. People are hiring people that have the right attitude and fit in well, sometimes over ability, but the two together make for a well-rounded individual.



# I. Effective Time Management

Having a structured approach and method to managing time and prioritisation is really important in the real world you work in, and building a reputation that you are good in this area is key.

## Why does this skill matter?

Getting things done in effective time-frames and being able to juggle priorities is really important in portraying professionalism and being effective at the job. This is foundational in building up a solid reputation and credibility

## What am I doing if I'm good at this?

There are two sides to this. Firstly building a reputation for being predictably on time in every engagement and touch point, and secondly being able to scope effective time required to complete activities and competing priorities so you are able to meet expectations

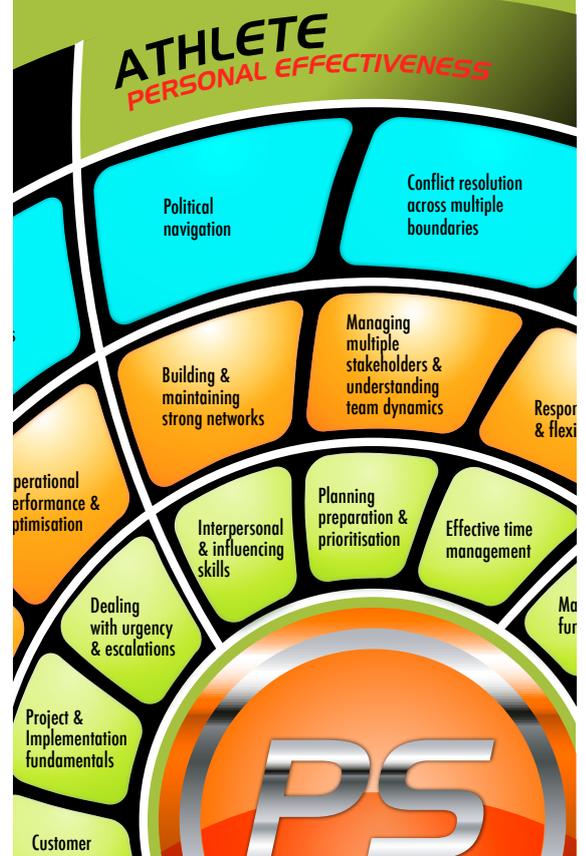


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## What are the foundations of being an Athlete?

The foundations of being an Athlete are about being professional in how you come across and in everything you do, and the foundation of this are your how well you plan and prepare, your time management and the way you build relationships which will effect your ability to influence people.



## 2. Planning, preparation & prioritisation

The ability to plan and prepare in advance everything you undertake and avoid winging it. You take the time to understand and prioritise all your activities to ensure where you spend your time makes the biggest difference

### Why does this skill matter?

Whether things go well or badly are a direct result of how well you plan prepare and prioritise what you need to do, its at this moment when you find out the corresponding activity or potential gaps required to get what you need done. This activity and skill is paramount and foundational to the following activity you will undertake

### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

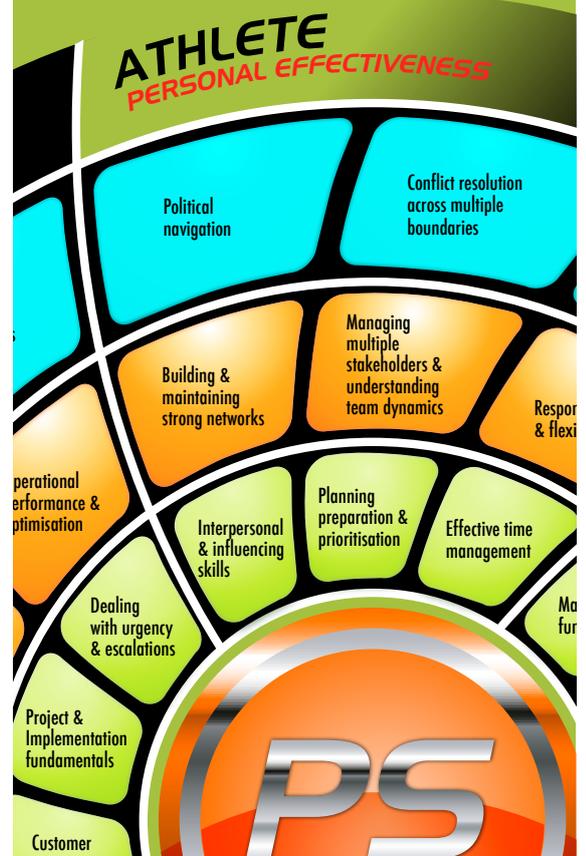
I'm really inquisitive about getting underneath the subject. What's the history, why are we here, what happened, who has done this before, how can I build good relationships by understanding the company and the individuals. Then taking this background knowledge being able to piece everything together into a plan that makes sense.



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### 3. Interpersonal & Influencing skills

Build strong relationship skills, understanding that everyone is different, and being able to develop and maintaining relationships. Building on these relationships by having the ability to influence different people in different ways.

#### Why does this skill matter?

Having good Interpersonal skills is key in PS and often not the strength of someone with strong technical ability. This is the foundation for most other skills as you will need to be very good at being able to bring people with you, and understand where they are coming from. If someone is strong in a given subject matter area not being good at this is very repelling and can miss being able to communicate the very thing that is your strength

#### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

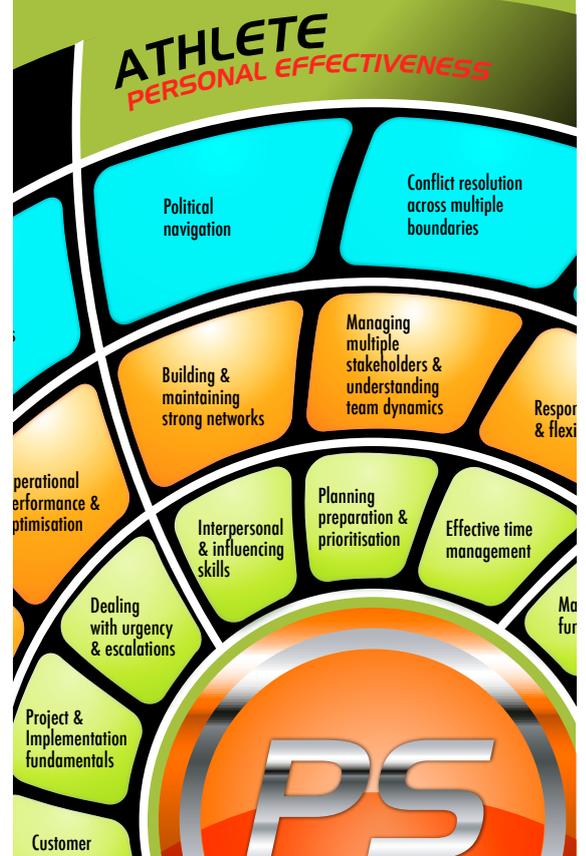
I am very empathetic, as in I take time to understand where someone is coming from, I'm good at listening, but most important of all I'm good at asking good questions that can get people to the point I'm trying to make on their own.



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# I. Responsiveness & flexibility

Every touch-point you have with anyone both internally and externally are where perceptions are formed, and the one thing that is the most annoying is when someone says they will do something and for some reason they don't. Therefore, when someone is responsive it stands out. This focuses on the ability to create an environment where you can be responsive and flexible within a framework that helps prioritise the important from the urgent, whilst allowing you to keep communicating and keeping things moving.

## Why does this skill matter?

This area is a massive differentiator. Being responsive and flexible builds confidence fast. The majority of interactions people have are the opposite so this gives you the opportunity to quickly gain credibility and confidence. Flexibility is more difficult but having the ability to appear to be bendy whilst maintaining a structure is key.

## What am I doing if I'm good at this?

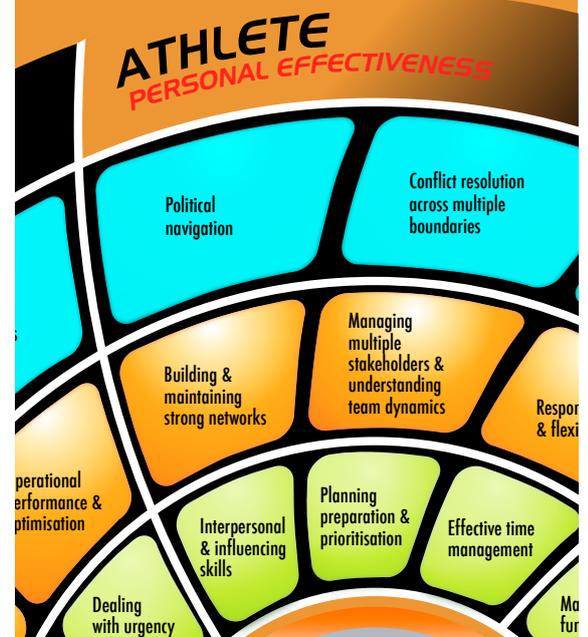
You are very good at setting and maintaining expectations. You are very customer driven, which means you are positive and courteous but you have earned the right to push back when appropriate. You ensure there is very little grey.

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## What does a professional Athlete know how to do?

Being a professional isn't just adding new skills it building on the foundations. A professional Athlete understands that relationships are in a matrix and has the art of making everyone feel that they are at the centre and the same time as continuing to consistently develop their Network to maintain their effectiveness and credibility. They have also learnt that most interactions lack responsiveness and flexibility and this skill enables an individual to build stronger credibility whilst getting more done.





## 2. Managing multiple stakeholders & understanding team dynamics

Welcome to the world of the matrix. You have multiple bosses and multiple stakeholders with conflicting priorities. This focuses on the skill to become a chameleon, to be able to treat everyone like they are you work for them at the same time as understanding the different personalities within this virtual group and how to ensure everyone works together in the same direction.

### Why does this skill matter?

Most PS engagements go wrong because this skill is not really understood. The ability to grasp this skill and be effective will make the biggest difference to your success in-terms of traction and results.

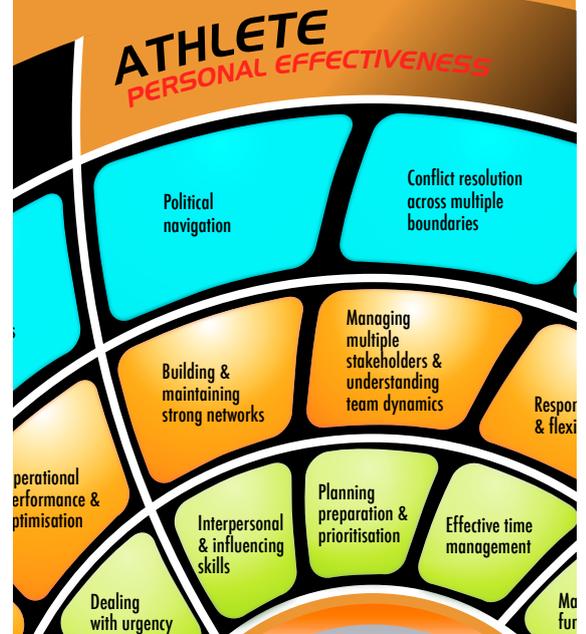
### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I'm a Chameleon. I make everyone feel important and understand that everyone has different motivational drivers. I am really strong at building relationships and ensuring the team have all the attributes it needs to be successful. I know how to overcome barriers and conflict and motivate people.

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### 3. Building & maintaining strong networks

Building strong Networks is about being connected and building a momentum around your personal brand so when people mention you it's in a good light. We're not talking about attending networking events but intentionally building a sustainable network of people across disciplines and functions that can help you be more effective and successful in whatever you do.

#### Why does this skill matter?

50% of the success of what you do is a direct result of the quality of your network, both internally and externally. There is a direct correlation of your ability to be good at this to the results you can achieve within your scope of work, both as a perception and reality of what you can do.

#### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

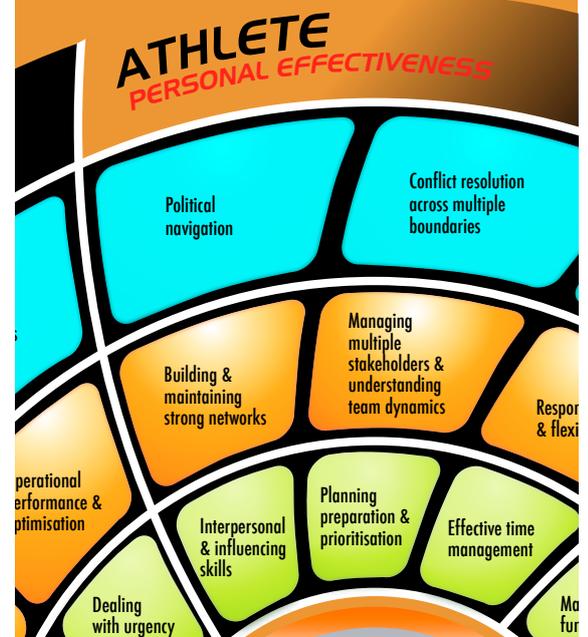
You are intentionally very good at networking. Not on a one off basis but a sustainable process for meeting people, understanding where they are coming from, by taking an interest in them, on a regular and consistent basis.

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# I. Coaching & mentoring others

Being a good coach is about having the ability to help people come up with the answers rather than telling them what to do. This focuses on helping you to coach others, knowing when they are ready to take advice and the balance between encouraging and telling. Mentoring is about transferring your experience and expertise to someone over time, and being able to blend your knowledge with there's and accommodate different styles when to be more direct.

## Why does this skill matter?

People want to be valued at work. If they feel valued they will be more productive ,motivated and able. Coaching people gives you the ability to unlock peoples potential and can act as a catalyst in what they are trying to achieve and the quality of the engagement. Mentoring enables you to learn from mistakes and improve and develop the way something is done.

## What am I doing if I'm good at this?

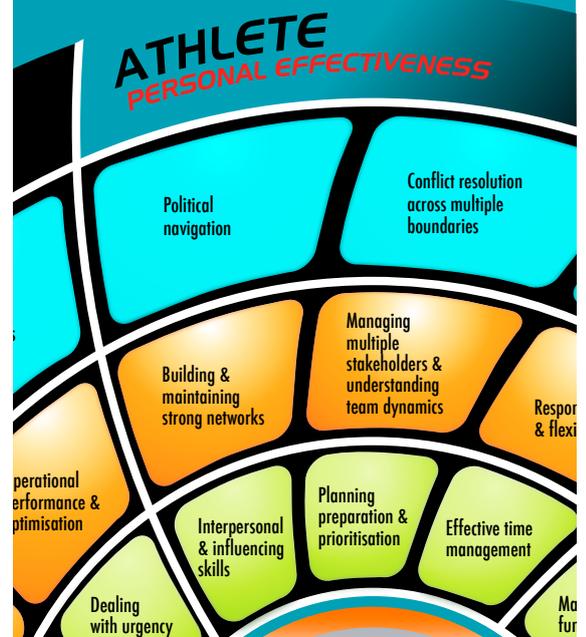
You understand that one size doesn't fit all. You take time to really understand people in a level of depth so you can coach them depending on their past present and future actions and needs. You ensure that time is allocated on a regular basis to ensure this happens consistently and you have a real interest in helping people develop.

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## What does mastery in terms of an Athlete look like?

Most people write-off politics as something they don't get involved in. The Mastery in Athlete embraces politics as a critical skill to be able to navigate the political jungle in order to build relationships, handle conflict and get things done. This will go beyond the local organisation and will stretch across different functions and geographical boundaries. They have now earned the right to help others and transfer their knowledge by coaching and mentoring others.





## 2. Conflict resolution across multiple boundaries

There is a great deal of complexity in organisations, mix this with people and you will inevitably get conflict. Being able to deal with this takes a great deal of skill and experience and this area is uncovered in a great deal of depth. Providing many ideas and techniques that are applicable within an international arena at all levels within an organisation

### Why does this skill matter?

Conflict is a fact of life in most organisations, driven by the growth of matrix organisations, complexity, multiple cultures and geographic boundaries together with conflicting agendas and priorities, therefore, there is a growing requirement to be able to deal with it will drive with a mature and unflappable demeanour.

### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

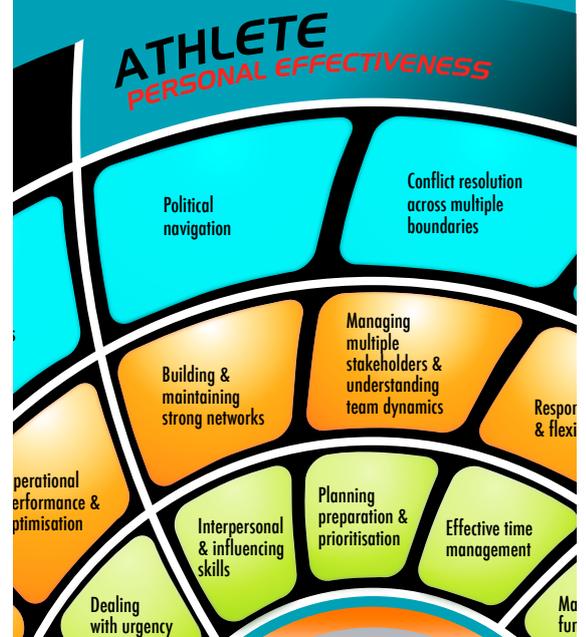
High level of maturity, visibly low reactor, but good at quickly understanding and being able to see the wood from the trees and come up with a solutions that brings people with you. High level of credibility

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### 3. Political navigation

Lots of people say they don't like politics, but the fact of life is that it exists in most organisations, and the more senior you are the more you need to be good at dealing with it. This area looks at how to navigate the political jungle and being really good at it without compromising your integrity.

#### Why does this skill matter?

Without this ability you won't get very far, but being good at this will propel your success and act as a catalyst making things happen. Most roadblocks occur because of the lack of understanding about how to be good politically rather than treating it as something we shouldn't be involved in.

#### What am I doing if I'm good at this?

I'm a good networker; I have a very good credibility and reputation. I do what I say, but I'm not afraid to have those difficult conversations. I'm a strong relationship builder and take time to understand where someone is coming from, and always look for a win-win.

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