



Problem solving and creative thinking

The routine strategy of questioning to gather the information and ideas you need, which you learnt in Chapters 6 and 7, involves important employability skills. It shows employers that you have developed effective strategies to promote your abilities to think creatively and solve problems (no. 7 on our list in the introduction), and that you are organised and thorough in your thinking (no. 6). As a result, you are unlikely to overlook things. A job interviewer will be impressed that you have worked out an effective system that will generate all the information you need; a system that will overlook nothing. Indeed, in most jobs this is vital.

Equally important, as we discovered in Part 2, searching for the right problem sets you exactly the same challenge as problem solving, just in reverse. As a result, you used and developed the same creative skills. You generated your own ideas, created structures out of them and then adapted these structures to find the right problem. This process involved the imagination to empathise with others in order to gather ideas from their perspectives and on different levels. Once the ideas had been generated it was necessary to stand back from them to identify the patterns into which they were organised, so that you could work with these to find the most interesting problem.

Then, as you designed a viable plan for your project, you had to decide what techniques to use (quantitative and qualitative) and the tools that you would need to design (questionnaires, interview strategies, case studies, tests and so on). Making these decisions involved the ability to find the right solutions to problems and put together an effective strategy to gather information and use it creatively.