



SKILLS EMPLOYERS VALUE



JOB PERFORMANCE

What skills do employers value? What attitudes, traits and characteristics would most employers like their employees to possess?

Competence – Proficiency, expertise, ability to do the job well

Initiative - Working without constant direction or supervision

Dependability – Being reliable and consistent

Efficiency - Being accurate and capable, good results

Honesty - Being trustworthy and ethical, having integrity

Maturity - Behaving as an adult, being stable and even-tempered, maintaining composure

Communication - Ability to express oneself clearly and concisely through speaking and writing

Problem-Solving - Ability to resolve issues, explore options, settle uncertainties, make decisions

Cheerfulness - Being pleasant, optimistic and agreeable

Helpfulness - Willing to pitch in, to serve or assist with a sense of urgency

Teamwork - Working with others, being cooperative and unselfish

Perseverance - Determination and patience in completing tasks or projects

Responsibility - Taking care of duties, being accountable

Creativity - Being resourceful, imaginative, innovative

Enthusiasm - Being energetic, positive, self-motivated

Adaptability - Adjust to new situations, being flexible

JOB GROWTH

Professional development... getting ahead in your job...

improving your skills... enhancing your job performance...

making yourself more valuable to your organization...

expanding your opportunities... What are some ways you can contribute to your job growth?

Be aware of changes and new developments in the organization. Document your accomplishments. Take some risks. Take on additional responsibilities and assignments. Think like a manager. Foster partnerships. Adopt an organizational perspective. Avoid an adversarial relationship with your supervisor. Continue your learning, training and education. Cross train. Find a mentor. Continue to build a network of professional contacts. Be open to criticism and suggestions. Be positive, cooperative, and supportive in your interactions with co-workers, colleagues, and clients. Stay updated by reading professional literature and attending conferences. Stay active in your professional associations.



Also, ask yourself... Am I punctual? productive? focused? cost-conscious? cooperative? results-oriented? Do I save the company money? Do I offer solutions to problems? take pride in my work? set goals? see value in what I'm doing? Do I manage conflict in a mature and timely manner? Do I refuse to be involved in office politics and company gossip?

CRITICAL FACTORS

Employers consider three factors when vetting candidates:

Knowledge – Employers fully expect that all qualified candidates will possess relevant knowledge and credentials that derive from education and training.

Skills – Employers will more fully appreciate candidates who have applied their knowledge in practical settings. These candidates have experience that helped to build their functional and technical skills.

Attitude – In terms of best fit, employers seek candidates that possess more than just academic knowledge and hard skills. They value candidates with effective soft skills and the right attitude, motivation, and disposition.

"The new economy favors people with qualities like self-motivation, initiative, flexibility, ability to work with a team, and the capacity to learn and adapt to change."

-LAURENCE BOLDT

PRACTICAL ABILITIES

What intellectual and practical abilities are desired by employers?

- Ability to communicate orally and in writing (89%)
- Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills (81%)
- Ability to analyze and solve complex problems (75%)
- Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse group settings (71%)
- Ability to innovate and be creative (70%)
- Ability to collect, organize, and evaluate information (68%)
- Ability to work with numbers and statistics (63%)

(Source: Hart Research Associates, *Raising the Bar: Employers' Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Turndown*)



WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

The changing workplace demands a change in the skills workers will now need to develop. A new set of expectations are now associated with the new world of work.

They include learning skills, writing and speaking skills, computation skills, cognitive reasoning skills, interpersonal skills, team skills, customer relations skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, leadership skills, and computer and technical skills.

Also, the demands of the new workplace will require a greater multicultural understanding and competency in working with diverse populations.

FEEDBACK & CRITICISM

It can be difficult and uncomfortable, but learning to accept criticism is one of the best ways to grow as a professional. We can't improve without critique and evaluation.

We should not get defensive or resentful when someone offers us constructive criticism. We should be mindful and listen to what is being said. We should not let our emotions get in the way of the message and we shouldn't take it personally. We can learn from our mistakes. We must not view mistakes as failures, but as opportunities to grow and improve.

We do not need to make excuses. For our own good, we need to be honest with ourselves and have a positive, healthy attitude about receiving negative feedback.

RATING CANDIDATES

When asked to rate the most important traits possessed by candidates applying for professional positions, one employer provided this feedback. On a scale of 1 to 10, the following items were evaluated:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 Academics/Grades | 8 Maturity |
| 6 Skills/Knowledge | 8 Ability to Learn |
| 7 Communication Skills | 10 Work Ethic |

POOR PERFORMANCE

Sometimes your progress and satisfaction are impeded by factors that are not within your control. These *external blocks* result from office politics, organizational inconsistencies, the firm's financial constraints, layoffs, mergers, and other corporate activity outside of your control.

Otherwise, your progress and satisfaction are oftentimes impeded by factors that are completely within your control. These *internal blocks* originate from your own attitudes, behaviors, and actions. These examples of poor performance and inefficiency might lead to job stagnation, limited opportunities, or termination.

Examples include excessive absences and tardiness, too much attention to outside interests and concerns, not completing tasks, poor attitude, lack of initiative, disloyalty and dishonesty, irresponsibility, being negative and causing trouble, not being adaptable, carelessness, unwillingness to follow rules, and laziness.



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