

What do employers want from you?

Today's marketplace requires skills in addition to college degrees and work experience. According to a recent National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) study of employers, students who have been involved in extracurricular activities and have developed and demonstrated the skills below are valued candidates for employment.

Employer Survey Results 2003

According to employers, the top 20 personal characteristics they seek in job candidates are:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Honesty/Integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. Motivation/Initiative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
7. Analytical skills
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Detail oriented
11. Leadership skills
12. Organizational skills
13. Self-confidence
14. Friendly and/or outgoing personality
15. Tactfulness
16. Well mannered and polite
17. Creativity
18. GPA (3.0 or better)
19. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker
20. Sense of humor

Development of Valued Skills

Skills Employers Value Most	Classes or Training	Student Organizations	Internships	Volunteerism	Team Projects	Working With Others	Working Part-time	Athletics	Service Learning
Interpersonal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teamwork	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Analytical	X	X	X		X		X		X
Oral communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flexibility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer	X		X	X	X		X		X
Written communication	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Proficiency in Field of Study	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Multiculturalism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Entrepreneurial/Marketing Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Life Long Learning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cross Training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Basic Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Top Skills Lacking in New Graduates

1. Communication Skills
2. Realistic expectations/work ethic
3. Maturity/business etiquette

Communication Skills

Individuals who possess good communication skills can clearly and effectively communicate, verbally, non-verbally and in writing.

Interpersonal Skills

Workers will have to be able to interact, motivate and support colleagues in an effective way. Other examples of interpersonal skills are teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from diverse backgrounds.

Analytical/Critical Thinking Skills

People who have critical thinking skills can think independently, creatively and globally about solutions to problems.

Team Player/Teamwork- Self-managed teams are increasing in many businesses and because of this workers will have to be able to work effectively on teams.

Change Experience/Flexibility

Flexibility allows individuals to adapt to change in their work environment. These types of individuals will view changes in the workplace as opportunities for learning and skill development, not as unwanted work.

Technical Skills

Individuals who maintain current knowledge of computers, software programs and office equipment will be more employable than those who do not have technical knowledge.

Proficiency in Field of Study

People who are able to excel in their area of study will demonstrate to employers their interest and skill within their chosen career field.

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills include being able to manage, supervise, coach, and motivate others. Leadership skills are utilized and illustrated in team projects, student organizations, and involvement in the community.

Career-Related Experience

Career-related experience, such as internships, co-ops, service learning, volunteerism or part-time employment, gives individuals the opportunity to work in a career area of interest and allows them to develop professional skills while using knowledge that they have gained in classes.

Multiculturalism

Individuals with multicultural skills work well with people from varying backgrounds and cultures. Speaking a second or third language is a very desirable skill; having knowledge of culture and social etiquette is an additional positive quality.

Entrepreneurial/Marketing Skills

Individuals who are able to identify and foresee needed skills/qualifications in work and are able to develop those skills will be very successful in the job market. Also, individuals should view themselves as entrepreneurs and realize that they are solely responsible for their own careers and career development.

Life-Long Learning

With technology changing at such a rapid rate, workers will need to go back to school or get training (i.e. computer software) to maintain up-to-date skills and knowledge in their occupational fields.

Cross Training

With downsizing and re-engineering, people will need to be cross-trained in a variety of areas to make themselves marketable to employers.

Basic Skills

Workers must have basic reading, writing, mathematics, arithmetic, speaking and listening skills.

Independent Learners

Individuals are independent thinkers when they are able to distinguish between situations where they know when to take direction and when to act independently.

Other Desirable Qualities

Self-responsibility and accountability; self-confidence; time management; initiative; motivation; social skills; integrity; flexibility; academic success

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