



Network to Work Meeting

Resource Materials – March 2016

Employability Skills Employers Look For

For employers, getting the right people means identifying people with the right skills and qualities to fulfil the role and contribute to the organization's success.

Employers are often looking for skills that go beyond qualifications and experience. While your education and experience may make you eligible to apply for a job, to be successful in the role you will need to exhibit a mix of skills. This means that the specialized, technical skills ('hard skills') associated with different jobs may be less important than the 'soft skills' – known as employability skills - that can be transferred between different jobs and different employment fields.

Employability skills are the skills and behaviors needed for *every* job. They are your key to workplace success. These skills can be looked at as personal qualities, habits and attitudes that influence how you interact with others. Employers value these skills because they are linked to how you get along with coworkers and customers and to how well you perform your job.

When you have good employability skills, you can:

- communicate effectively with coworkers
- solve problems
- understand your role as part of a team
- make responsible choices, and
- take charge of your own career

Essential Employability Skills:

These are the qualities and behaviors employers want to see from you:

Foundational Skills

- Be organized.
- Arrive to work on time, or early.
- Be dependable.
- Have a positive attitude toward work.
- Work hard and persevere.
- Complete tasks on time and accurately.
- Seek out information to improve skills.
- Be flexible and adaptable.
- Complete all tasks, even if unpleasant.
- Understand dress code or uniform guidelines.
- Maintain personal hygiene.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are the skills we use to interact with other people. Good interpersonal skills allow you to be an effective team member, satisfy customers and clients' expectations, negotiate, make decisions, manage your time well, take responsibility, and work effectively with other employees. These skills help us to empathize and build rapport with colleagues and clients, leading to a better working environment which can be less stressful.

- Be friendly and polite.
- Respect supervisors and coworkers.
- Respond appropriately to customer requests.
- Ask for feedback.
- Take constructive criticism.
- Resolve conflicts calmly and appropriately.
- Be comfortable working with people of diverse backgrounds.
- Be sensitive to other peoples' needs.
- Take responsibility for own share of work.
- Contribute to team goals.

Communication Skills

Employers look for people who communicate well verbally and in writing. If you are applying for a job or looking for a promotion with your current employer, you will need to demonstrate good communication skills. The ability to communicate both verbally and in writing with a wide variety of people, maintain good eye contact, and write clearly and succinctly are essential skills that employers seek out. Good verbal and

written communication means you can get your messages across with less chance of misunderstanding.

Similarly, active listening skills involve not only hearing, but also gaining and understanding information. Listening is a basic requirement leading to fewer mistakes and a greater understanding of the needs of employer and client.

- Read and understand written materials.
- Listen, understand, and ask questions.
- Follow directions.
- Express ideas clearly when speaking or writing.
- Learn required technology and use appropriately.

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

The ability to solve problems and make decisions can be a huge asset to your employer. This involves gathering reliable information, evaluating it for a variety of solutions, and choosing the best option given the situation. Although the ability to solve problems and make appropriate decisions are critical in any job, people with these skills are especially helpful in customer service positions.

- Accept change.
- Be willing to start, stop, and switch duties.
- Work calmly in busy environments.
- Start tasks without prompting.
- Ask questions to solve problems and do the job better.

Personal Development

Personal development is all about having the right attitude about work and the organization you work for. Lifelong learners are always valued; to stay ahead of the competition, organizations need to continually learn and develop better ways of doing things. The employee who is open to learning and embraces change will be more successful than the person who is afraid of learning and resistant to changes in the organization. Most jobs involve change, some more frequently than others, and employers want people who are adaptable, flexible, and patient, and who respond well to change.

- Eager to develop and learn.
- Comfortable with change.
- Self-motivated.
- Good self-control in the face of personal or professional problems.

Ethics and Legal Responsibilities

- Take responsibility for own decisions and actions.
- Understand and follow company rules and procedures.
- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Act professionally and with maturity.

Adapted from Iseek Careers – Minnesota State Colleges and Universities career and education resource <http://www.iseek.org/careers/employability-skills.html> , and <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/employability-skills.html>