



What Do Employers *Really* Want?

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Top Skills and Values Employers Seek from Job-Seekers

Employability skills and personal values are the critical tools and traits you need to succeed in the workplace - and they are all elements that you can learn, cultivate, develop, and maintain over your lifetime.

Numerous studies have identified these critical employability skills, sometimes referred to as "soft skills." We've distilled the skills from these many studies into this list of skills most frequently mentioned. We've also included examples describing each skill; you can adapt these examples for your resumes, cover letters, and interview talking points.

Top skills employers want ...

Communications Skills

By far, the one skill mentioned most often by employers is the ability to listen, write, and speak effectively. Successful communication is critical in business... *"Exceptional listener and communicator who effectively conveys information verbally and in writing"*.

Analytical/Research Skills

Deals with your ability to assess a situation, seek multiple perspectives, gather more information if necessary, and identify key issues that need to be addressed. *"Highly analytical thinking with demonstrated talent for identifying, scrutinizing, improving, and streamlining complex work processes"*.

Computer & Technical Literacy

Almost all jobs now require some basic understanding of computer hardware and software, especially word processing, spreadsheets, and email. *"Computer-literate performer with extensive software proficiency covering wide variety of application"*.

Flexibility/Adaptability/Managing Multiple Priorities

Deals with your ability to manage multiple assignments and tasks, set priorities, and adapt to changing conditions and work assignments. *"Flexible team player who thrives in environments requiring ability to effectively prioritize and juggle multiple concurrent projects"*

Interpersonal Abilities

The ability to relate to your co-workers, inspire others to participate, and mitigate conflict with co-workers is essential given the amount of time spent at work each day. *“Proven relationship-builder with unsurpassed interpersonal skills”.*

Leadership/Management Skills

While there is some debate about whether leadership is something people are born with, these skills deal with your ability to take charge and manage your co-workers. *“Goal-driven leader who maintains a productive climate and confidently motivates, mobilizes, and coaches employees to meet high performance standards”.*

Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness

There is possibly no bigger issue in the workplace than diversity, and job-seekers must demonstrate a sensitivity and awareness to other people and cultures. *“Personable professional whose strengths include cultural sensitivity and an ability to build rapport with a diverse workforce in multicultural settings”.*

Planning/Organising

Deals with your ability to design, plan, organize, and implement projects and tasks within an allotted timeframe. Also involves goal-setting. *“Results-driven achiever with exemplary planning and organizational skills, along with a high degree of detail orientation”.*

Problem-Solving/Reasoning/Creativity

Involves the ability to find solutions to problems using your creativity, reasoning, and past experiences along with the available information and resources. *“Innovative problem-solver who can generate workable solutions and resolve complaints”.*

Teamwork

Because so many jobs involve working in one or more work-groups, you must have the ability to work with others in a professional manner while attempting to achieve a common goal. *“Resourceful team player who excels at building trusting relationships with customers and colleagues”.*

Personal values employers want ...

Of equal importance to skills are the values, personality traits, and personal characteristics that employers seek. Look for ways to weave examples of these characteristics into your resume, cover letters, and answers to interview questions.

Here is our list of the 10 most important categories of values.

Honesty & Integrity

Employers probably respect personal integrity more than any other value, especially in light of the many recent corporate scandals. *“Seasoned professional whose honesty and integrity provide for effective leadership and optimal business relationships”*

Adaptability

Deals with openness to new ideas and concepts, to working independently or as part of a team, and to carrying out multiple tasks or projects. *“Highly adaptable, mobile, positive, resilient, patient risk-taker who is open to new ideas”*

Dedication/Hard-Working/Work Ethic/Tenacity.

Employers seek job-seekers who love what they do and will keep at it until they solve the problem and get the job done. *“Productive worker with solid work ethic who exerts optimal effort in successfully completing tasks”*

Reliability

There's no question that all employers desire employees who will arrive to work every day - on time - and ready to work, and who will take responsibility for their actions. *“Dependable, responsible contributor with committed to excellence and success”.*

Loyalty

Employers want employees who will have a strong devotion to the company -- even at times when the company is not necessarily loyal to its employees. *“Loyal and dedicated manager with an excellent work record”.*

Positive Attitude & Passion

The job-seekers who get hired and the employees who get promoted are the ones with drive and passion -- and who demonstrate this enthusiasm through their words and actions. *“Energetic performer consistently cited for unbridled passion for work, sunny disposition, and upbeat, positive attitude”*

Professionalism

Deals with acting in a responsible and fair manner in all your personal and work activities, which is seen as a sign of maturity and self-confidence; avoid being petty. *“Conscientious go-getter who is highly organized, dedicated, and committed to professionalism”.*

Self-Confidence

Look at it this way: if you don't believe in yourself, in your unique mix of skills, education, and abilities, why should a prospective employer? Be confident in yourself and what you can offer employers. *“Confident, hard-working employee who is committed to achieving excellence”.*

Self-Motivated

While teamwork is always mentioned as an important skill, so is the ability to work independently, with minimal supervision. *“Highly motivated self-starter who takes initiative with minimal supervision”.*

Willingness to Learn

No matter what your age, no matter how much experience you have, you should always be willing to learn a new skill or technique. Jobs are constantly changing and evolving, and you must show an openness to grow and learn with that change. *“Enthusiastic, knowledge-hungry learner, eager to meet challenges and quickly assimilate new concepts”*

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