

# WHAT SKILLS DO EMPLOYERS WANT

Everyone talks about skills but, what are they and what do they mean?

- **People skills:** Teamwork; Leadership; Interpersonal Skills; oral communication; written communication.
- **Self-Reliance Skills:** Self-Awareness; Networking; Time Management.
- **Generalist Skills:** Problem-Solving; IT/ ICT / Computer Literacy; Flexibility / Adaptability; Numeracy; Commitment/ Motivation; Commercial Awareness.

You need to know what you are good at and have the evidence to prove it. If you record all your skills gained through your work experience, part timework, voluntary work or social activities, in or out of university, it makes it easier to complete CVs, resumes and application forms.

## People Skills

- **Teamwork:** The ability to work cooperatively with others to achieve shared goals, showing diplomacy and flexibility when there are conflicting opinions; supporting other people's performance to achieve the best possible results.
- **Leadership:** The ability to take control of a situation and to lead by empowering others into an effective team. Inspiring and energizing others to carry out tasks and achieve goals by displaying a clear sense of direction and values.
- **Interpersonal:** The ability to relate to, and feel comfortable with, people at all levels and to be able to make and maintain good working relationships.
- **Oral Communication:** The ability to verbally express ideas in a way that is easily understood by others who are unfamiliar with the topic; including delivering a presentation, giving accurate information or acting as a spokesperson.
- **Written Communication:** The ability to write concisely and convey meaning in a manner appropriate to different readers, presenting a persuasive argument.

## Self-Reliance Skills

- **Self-Awareness:** knowing your strengths and skills; having the confidence to put these across in a work setting.
- **Networking:** The ability to build and maintain contacts that are ready, willing and able to help you through your working life.
- **Time Management:** The ability to plan and prioritize your workload and to "judge" several tasks at once.

## Generalist Skills

- **Problem-Solving:** The ability to analyze problematic situations, seeking relevant data; diagnosing information in order to solve problems; generalizing alternative solutions to find the best solution.
- **IT/ICT/Computer literacy:** The ability to accept, learn and adapt to new technology.
- **Flexibility/Adaptability:** The ability to respond to, anticipate and manage change.
- **Numeracy:** The ability to handle numbers, gathering statistical data and being able to analyze, interpret and present it in a clear and accurate way.
- **Commitment/Motivation:** An enthusiasm in pursuing a project, task, subject or activity.
- **Commercial Awareness:** An understanding of the values of an organization; an understanding of an organization's goals, priorities, market position and future direction.

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# Skills Most Sought After by Employers

**Communications Skills (listening, verbal, written).** 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 applications.

**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/Organizing.** 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 Seek in Employees

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/Morality.** Employers probably respect personal integrity more than any other value, especially in light of the many recent corporate scandals.

**Adaptability/Flexibility.** 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.

**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.

**Dependability/Reliability/Responsibility.** 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.

**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.

**Positive Attitude/Motivation/Energy/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.

**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.

**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.

**Self-Motivated/Ability to Work With Little or No Supervision.** While teamwork is always mentioned as an important skill, so is the ability to work independently, 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.

## Final Thoughts

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. Once you have identified the sought-after skills and values and assessed the degree to which you possess, then remember to document them and market them (in your resume, cover letter, and interview answers) for job-search success.

# Skills Checklist

Go through the list of skills below and check all skills that you possess. These are valuable skills that can help you in many different jobs!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to work independently | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agreeable                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Alert               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Approachable        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Attentive           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic computer skills         | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic math skills   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Committed           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Curious             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detail-oriented               | <input type="checkbox"/> Determined          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathetic          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good Communication skills     | <input type="checkbox"/> Good listener       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good Reader                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Good sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Open-minded         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organized                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positive attitude             | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solver      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick learner       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-disciplined              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociable            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Versatile                     |  |

Additional skills & resources I have

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# CONFIRMATION STATEMENTS

Now that you have identified your skills, it is important to develop confirmation statements that will help you prove you have these skills. Select five of your strongest skills and write a statement that “proves” each one.

**Example:** I am punctual, because while working at Lucy’s Flower Shop as a delivery person, I always arrived early and always made my deliveries at the scheduled times.

1. I am / have \_\_\_\_\_ because while working/volunteering at \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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2. I am / have \_\_\_\_\_ because while working/volunteering at \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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3. I am / have \_\_\_\_\_ because while working/volunteering at \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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4. I am / have \_\_\_\_\_ because while working/volunteering at \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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5. I am / have \_\_\_\_\_ because while working/volunteering at \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise: Recognizing Your Strengths (SAMPLE)

<b>Recognizing Your Strengths:                      Translating Personality Strengths into Job-Specific Skills</b>		
Job Position and Title: Administrative Coordinator		
<b>Job Qualifications</b>	<b>Employee Skills</b>	<b>Personal Example of How My                      Employee Skills Translate into Job                      Qualifications</b>
1. Ability to prioritize work, meet deadlines, and great attention to detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organized</li> <li>➤ Flexible</li> </ul>	Everyday I coordinate my schedule with my children's schedule. I am able to change my schedule to pick up my children at school and take them to the doctor's office. I keep track of all my appointments in my date-book, which I carry around and consistently check.
Customer Service Oriented; Ability to work well with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Enthusiastic</li> <li>➤ Helpful</li> <li>➤ Friendly</li> </ul>	Everyday, someone new asks me about the current happenings in our neighborhood. The residents keep referring people to me because they say I am ready to lend a helping hand and always have a smile on my face.

Exercise: Recognizing Your Strengths

<b>Recognizing Your Strengths: Translating Personality Strengths into Job-Specific Skills</b>		
Job Position and Title: _____		
<b>Job Qualifications</b>	<b>Personal Skills</b>	<b>Example of How My Employee Skills Translate into Job Qualifications</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

# Exploring Your Career Options

Use this list of ways you can explore careers to help you find the right job.

- Go to the library for your research. You can use the book Occupational Outlook Handbook.
- Look for job titles using the O NET ([www.onetcenter.org](http://www.onetcenter.org)) and OOH ([www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)) databases.
- Visit the nearest Workforce Solutions Center for employment counseling.
- Contact the Small Business Administration.
- Read business magazines.
- Read the business section of newspapers.
- Attend training or apprenticeship programs.
- Ask relatives, friends, and others about their work and careers (called informational interviews).
- Try a job-sharing arrangement.
- Get internships.
- Make arrangements to watch another person while she or she is at work (job shadow).
- Do volunteer work.

## Set Career Goals

Deciding what you want to do and how to do it is setting goals. People's goals vary, depending on where they are in the job search process.

To set goals, think about what you want. Then think about what you need to do today (short term goal), next week, next month, next year (intermediate goal), and five years (long term goal) from now to get what you want. The job search goals you set today will help you decide what actions you need to take.

Keep in mind that a short-term goal for one person may be a long-term goal for someone else. For you, getting a job may be a short-term goal. For someone else who wants to go to school, getting a job may be a long-term goal.