

YOU'RE HIRED!

The Skills Employers Seek in New Hires

Employers are increasingly noting that **soft skills**, in addition to academic and technical skills, are key to enabling employees to work successfully in an organization.¹ Therefore, soft skills merit attention from schools. According to peer-reviewed research,² research conducted by regional and national industry representatives,³ and a convening of regional employers in western Pennsylvania, employers look for the following soft skills in new hires.⁴



Self-Management

- Stay organized
- Manage your time
- Act professionally: be on time, be prepared, and do your work
- Be accountable for your actions



Teamwork

- Collaborate with others
- Be a good listener
- Have empathy



Problem Solving

- Think critically
- Be flexible
- Be adaptable and resourceful



Communication

- Write and speak clearly
- Maintain a conversation
- Give feedback
- Summarize what you know



Motivation

- Take initiative
- Have a strong work ethic
- Persevere through challenges
- Learn on your own
- Maintain a positive attitude



SOFT SKILLS: Why do they matter?

Jobs are available, but good candidates are lacking.⁵ In a recent survey, 60% of employers responded that they have job openings that remain open for three months or more due to a lack of qualified candidates, and the gap between the number of jobs posted each month and the number of people hired for them is growing.⁶

New hires say they have the right competencies, but employers say they don't.⁷ In a 2015 survey of hiring officials and new hires in western Pennsylvania, 63% of new hires felt they and their peers were extremely or very prepared in soft skills. When asked of their own perceptions of new hires' preparedness in soft skills, only 14% of the employers agreed that new hires were extremely or very prepared. Increasingly, good job candidates need to be adaptable, self-motivated, and flexible, as research indicates that workers must be prepared to succeed in dynamic organizations and changing work environments.⁸

¹ Cappelli, P. (1995)

² Cappelli, P. (2015); Gaertner, M. & Roberts, R. (2017)

³ National Network of Business and Industry Associations (2014); Allegheny Conference on Community Development and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016); Allegheny Conference on Community Development (2017).

⁴ "Employers Speak." Panel of Leading Southwest Pennsylvania Business Representatives, Bridges to Success Conference, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg, PA, October 9, 2017.

⁵ Cappelli, P. (2015); Cappelli, P. (1995)

⁶ CareerBuilder/Harris Poll (2017) "The Skills Gap is Costing Companies Nearly \$1 Million Annually." Rochester, New York: Nielsen.

⁷ Allegheny Conference on Community Development and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016).

⁸ Edwards & Morrison, 1994; Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999; Smith, Ford, & Kozlowski, 1997; Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000.

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/>

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