

Employability skills
employability skills
categories education
essay



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These skills are also sometimes referred to as core competencies or generic skills which are demanded by employers today and which ultimately make you more employable. These are the basic skills that help you get, keep and do well on a job. They help employees in every part of their jobs, whether it is personal or interpersonal. Unlike technical skills employability skills are generic in nature and are necessary for the success of all types of jobs from entry to level the senior most positions.

Employability skills categories:

The employability skills identified by different researchers vary significantly in the way they are arranged. One research group named 36 skills and traits in eight categories known as SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills); another developer identified 76 different skills in a set of nine categories (Cotton, 1993). Poole & Zahn (1993) also identified 9 keys to employability.

I have considered three skills set identified by Robinson (2000) while adding another category of interpersonal skills due to its significance in the professional world. These categories are identified as;

Basic Skills

Higher order thinking Skills

Personal skills

Interpersonal Skills

Figure 1 Employability Skills

Basic Skills:

Basic academic skills are still essential for high job performance. This set of skills includes:

Communication Skills: written, verbal and non-verbal skills

Reading skills: understanding, interpreting written data.

Listening: understanding and analyzing information.

Information related skills: Proper use of IT while handling information.

Numeracy skills: mathematical skills, ability to handle money.

Higher Order Skills:

These skills are considered more important to job success by employers. The ability to think, analyze, apply logic, and make sound decisions is vital for employees who want to do well on jobs.

They include,

Problem Solving: identifying, analyzing and solving problems

Risk management skills: Predict and mitigate risks.

Learning skills: ability to memorize and learn.

Decision making skills: Specify goals, generate alternatives and chose the best ones.

Personal Skills:

Time management: Punctuality, Meeting deadlines

Self management: Emotional Quotient, stress management, self awareness,
Self progress, Adjustment, adaptability, Responsibility for my actions.

Ability to understand Work Ethics: Honesty, Commitment.

Interpersonal Skills:

Leadership Skills: Empathy, ability to give and take orders.

Conflict Resolution Skills:

Social Skills: Networking.

SELF ASSESSMENT:

It is important to be able to analyze strengths as well as the areas that need to be developed so that you can identify the opportunities and potential threats. Assessing ones employability skills is essential for two reasons: To Prove your skills and to Improve them.

This includes two activities; first I need to record my strengths (generic skills that I have) and weaknesses (skills that I lack); Second, I need to analyze opportunities (can I develop these skills overtime?) and threats (what are the potential threats in taking up opportunities?).

In order to better understand my strengths and weakness, I have taken a few self assessment tests. By analyzing the results of those tests as well as my

personal experience, I have summarized my strengths and weaknesses as below.

Strengths:

My Basic Skills:

My education. My interest in the business adds to my strength. Most people lack interest in their fields because they chose it randomly or due to external factors, but I have passion for this subject and will definitely enjoy my professional career in this field.

I can read, write and speak multiple languages. I believe I have good non verbal communication skills. I have an expressive and at the same time controlled body language.

Reading Skills. I can easily locate understand and interpret written information.

Information handling skills. I can gather, understand, organize, and disseminate information using information technologies.

My analytical Skills:

I have great risk management skills. I try to predict, analyze and mitigate potential risks before they do any damage. This is something I exercise in everyday life.

I have sharp learning skills. I try to improve my memory by daily exercises for example, by thinking about what I learnt today before going to sleep or talking to a friend about it etc.

Good Problem solving and decision making skills. I am very good at identifying problems and finding ways of solving them. I hurriedly come up with options and cannot stand delay. I believe in making the decisions quickly.

Good in critical evaluation of evidence.

Personal Skills:

I stay focused towards my goals. When I take a responsibility, I believe in perfection even if it takes a lot of hard work.

I believe in my own self-worth and have a positive view of myself.

High emotional quotient. After taking the assessment tests, I consider myself as emotionally stable. I understand my emotions and can control them.

I consider myself as Adaptable, adjustable in different personal and professional environments.

Strong will power and commitment to my work.

My interpersonal Skills:

I understand the position differences and have the ability to take orders without being defensive.

Good contacts and networking mainly because of extra curricular activities.

Positive attitude

Experience of socializing with people of different ages, gender and race.

Avoid conflict.

Weaknesses:

Basic Weaknesses:

Shy while giving presentations.

Lack expertise in some areas of IT.

Not an expert in mathematical analysis.

Bad listening skills.

Bad mathematical skills

Personal Weaknesses:

Bad time management. I set too demanding targets and then have problems meeting deadlines or otherwise don't get time to review.

I find it hard to work under pressure or tight supervision.

I avoid taking responsibilities.

I am not self motivated. I give more preference to appreciation than to sense of achievement.

Analytical Weaknesses:

I don't see myself as creative. I like following a systematic way for things and avoid taking risks by coming up with innovative ideas.

Impatient while taking decisions. At times it proves to be my strength but in some situations it ends in bad results.

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Interpersonal Weaknesses:

I like working individually than in groups, maybe this is because I find it hard to give orders.

Lack of leadership skills. In the sense that I find it difficult to take control of things.

Opportunities:

Take less work home. Complete assignments in class.

Getting more free time to engage in extra activities like socializing and making strong relationships with teachers.

Opportunities for learning computer software by fellow students and teachers in my free time.

Opportunities by enhancing my knowledge in the field of business. Studying other majors.

Diversity presents an opportunity to better understand different cultures that would help me in my professional career.

Building relationships and increasing networks.

Student assistance programs

Mentoring programs

Threats:

Time limit

Non supportive fellows.

Competitors with superior skills, experience, knowledge

Increasing number of students and lack of available faculty.

ACTION PLAN:

Krahn, Lowe & Lehmann (2002), in their research found out that most people see school as the most likely site for the development of basic and analytical/thinking skills. It is possible to learn and develop some of the generic and personal skills in the process of higher education (Bradshaw, 1985).

After my SWOT analysis, I have made an action plan to develop the skills that I lack, by setting up SMART objectives. These can be extended as;

S – Specific,

M – Measurable.

A – Attainable.

R – Realistic

T – time-based.

Acquiring Basic Skills:

Communication skills;

Volunteer for presenting assignments throughout the semester and getting regular feedback from fellow students and supervisors.

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Perceptions check technique to improve my listening skills. This means conveying my understanding of what was conveyed to me.

Keeping eye contact while speaking and/or listening.

Take a pause and think before saying, in order to choose the right words.

Present in front of my family members and friends to boost confidence.

Role plays with friends.

Taking communication skills courses. Getting help from the internet.

Information related skills:

Work in different computer related programs in my free time to better able to utilize them when needed.

Acquiring Numeracy skills:

Taking GMAT, SATs.

Acquiring higher order thinking skills:

When faced with a problem, I would come up with as many innovative solutions as possible and also ask friends to help me in this regard. When given a project or an assignment, will think on different creative ideas in completing it.

When faced with making important choices, I will write down pros and cons for each option and its affects on other things.

Analyzing case studies of different difficulty levels.

Acquiring Personal Skills:

In order to improve time management. Set reminders on my mobile phone for every small task. Set short deadlines for myself in order to complete the assigned work before time, so that I can also review it.

I will keep a log book to record my time management skills and monitor my own performance.

Interact with teachers and supervisors in order to get the sense of working under pressure. Getting frequent feedbacks from them.

Volunteering for additional work from supervisors and taking extra responsibilities.

In order to increase my self motivation, I will reward myself after completing a task. For example, going for a movie with friends after being an expert in using particular computer software.

Interpersonal Skills:

Working in groups for the next assignments and volunteer to be the group leader.

Try to work with students who are not close friends in order enhance my communication skills and build up confidence.

Volunteer for planning and organizing events at the college or else taking responsibility in helping.

Appendix 1 Personal Development Plan