

# What All Employers Want!

## The Top Ten Skills

What do employers want to see when they begin evaluating college candidates for employment? The entire package! Extracted from responses to the question, "What are the five most important skills or competencies that a candidate needs to possess in order to be considered for employment?", the "total package" that candidates should possess includes:



**The Total Package:** Candidates need to be academically prepared in their discipline as it pertains to their employment – this is considered a *given* by employers. *Plus* they need to demonstrate:

1. **Communication Skills** – solid verbal, written, and listening abilities.
2. **Computer/Technical Aptitudes** – computer ability is now perceived as a given core skill and expected ability levels continue to rise.
3. **Leadership** – the ability to take charge or relinquish control (followership) according to the needs of the organization/project/team.
4. **Teamwork** – working cooperatively and collaboratively with different people while maintaining autonomous control over some assignments.
5. **Interpersonal Abilities** – relating to others, inspiring others to participate, mitigating conflict between co-workers, ability to relate and work with people from diverse backgrounds
6. **Personal Traits** – demonstrating a combination of these is also integral:
  - a. initiative and motivation
  - b. hard-working (work ethic) and reliability
  - c. ability to plan and organize multiple tasks
  - d. flexibility in handling change and ambiguity
  - e. honesty and integrity
  - f. ability to provide customer service

**The Wrapping:** Several skills or experiences bind "the package" and are essential to holding it together. Employers believe without these skills, a candidate may not be able to deliver the package.

7. **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving** – the ability to identify problems and their solutions by integrating information from a variety of sources and effectively weighing alternatives.
8. **Intelligence and Common Sense** – enough said!
9. **Willingness to Learn** quickly and continuously.
10. **Work-Related Experiences** that provided an understanding of the workplace and served to apply classroom learning. (Do that internship! Shadow employers! Volunteer!)

*~ adapted from the Recruiting Trends Report,  
Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Michigan State University*



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