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. Therefore, soft skills merit attention from schools. According to peer-reviewed research, research conducted by regional and national industry representatives, and a convening of regional employers in western Pennsylvania, employers look for the following soft skills in new hires.

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

- **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

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

- **Problem Solving**
  - Think critically
  - Be flexible
  - Be adaptable and resourceful

**SOFT SKILLS: Why do they matter?**

**Jobs are available, but good candidates are lacking.** 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.

**New hires say they have the right competencies, but employers say they don’t.** 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.

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