

# Learn the Skills Employers Look for in New Hires

When it comes to a job seeker's skills/qualities, employers are looking for people who can make decisions and solve problems, communicate effectively within and outside the organization, and obtain and process information, according to employers who responded to NACE's *Job Outlook 2014 Spring Update* survey.

Employers who interview and hire new college graduates were asked to rank a job candidate's desired skills and qualities. Employers rated nearly all the skills listed as very important. Only two were rated "somewhat important."

## Employers rate the skills/qualities in new college hires

Skill/Quality	Importance Rating*
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.7
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.6
Ability to obtain and process information	4.6
Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work	4.5
Ability to analyze quantitative data	4.4
Technical knowledge related to the job	4.2
Proficiency with computer software programs	4.1
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	3.7
Ability to sell or influence others	3.6

\*Weighted average. Based on a 5-point scale where 1=Not at all important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; 5=Extremely important

How can you demonstrate that you have these qualities? Here are some things you can do during your college years to meet these demands:

- **Participate in extracurricular activities.** Being leader of a club or an intramural sports team or organizing a volunteer project will show that you've learned to make decisions and solve problems. Participating in extracurricular activities while maintaining a high GPA also will demonstrate that you have the "ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work."
- **Keep Your GPA High.** Good grades show that you have a good knowledge base—the "technical knowledge related to the job"—and demonstrates a strong work ethic—a quality that employers value.
- **Find an internship.** Another way to demonstrate your knowledge of the job is to have done an internship or two in your field. You'll have taken an opportunity to look at your future career close up while getting hands-on experience with any potential job. Your internship can put your "foot in the door" to a job opportunity with many employers and help you build a network of professionals in your field.
- **Make a Date With the Career Center.** The career center staff can help you go a long way in preparation for selling yourself to future employers. In addition to helping you choose a major and career direction, a career counselor can help you find internships, perfect your cover letter and resume, and develop your interviewing skills. Good interview skills will help you show a potential employer know that you can "verbally communicate" with people inside and outside the organization.

*Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.*