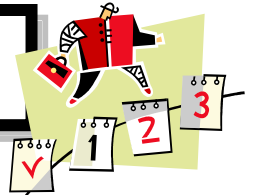


Workplace Qualities



Introduction: Employers are in business to make money (with few exceptions!). Companies make a profit by providing quality products and/or customer satisfaction--both of which are dependent upon having workers with positive personal characteristics or skills. Most employers expect the qualities listed below from their employees. They are listed, somewhat in order of importance, as identified through employer surveys and other business publications.

Desired Worker Qualities

- A. **Honesty/Integrity.** Employers expect their employees to be honest. Two examples of dishonesty are (1) stealing time by being late, quitting early, taking longer lunches and breaks than you should, gossiping, and (2) stealing money, property or supplies from the company.
- B. **Motivation/Initiative.** Motivation is looking for ways to use your time and skills for the betterment of the company; not waiting for someone else to tell you what to do, but seeing what needs to be done and doing it. A motivated person indicates someone who is willing to learn.
- C. **Communication Skills.** Reading and writing are essential communication tools, but it is through listening and speaking that we interact most frequently. In nearly every job you will need good communication skills to interact with your supervisor, co-workers and customers. This includes communicating your needs and desires as well as understanding those of others. Some employers rank good communication skills above all other skills and personal characteristics.
- D. **Self-Confidence.** This is the ability to know yourself and have assurance in your own abilities and self-worth. Having a positive self-image will help you interact with your supervisor, coworkers and customers more effectively. Believing in your own self-worth will help others believe in your worth also.
- E. **Flexibility.** Flexibility is the ability to adapt, to change to new things. You cannot do your job well without adapting to change, whether it is in the form of a new technology or added or altered job duties. This single characteristic, along with the willingness to learn, will be key in keeping your job and/or moving up the job ladder.
- F. **Interpersonal Skills.** These are the skills that help you get along with your supervisor, your coworkers and customers--being cooperative, courteous, respectful, reliable, friendly and helpful. It is knowing how to negotiate and solve problems. It is accepting others who are different and accepting other "ways" of doing things. Good interpersonal skills include the ability to accept criticism and learn from it.

- G. **Strong Work Ethic.** Ethics are principles or standards of conduct that govern our behavior. In general, a strong work ethic encompasses all of the personal characteristics mentioned in this unit. A strong work ethic includes being honest, dependable and cooperative, taking pride in one's work, accepting responsibility and accountability, interacting fairly with people, respecting confidentiality, being loyal, knowing the company's rules and following them, giving an honest day's work for a day's pay, etc.
- H. **Teamwork Skills.** These skills involve being a leader at times and a follower at other times. Very few workers work by themselves anymore. Teamwork is the ability to work with others to pull together and focus on a common goal regardless of different personalities, work strategies and behaviors. Each person must do his or her job correctly and on time for the team to be successful.
- I. **Leadership Skills.** A leader is often defined as a person who has the ability to inspire confidence and loyalty so that others follow willingly in order to achieve the desired goal. As a beginning worker, however, skills as a "follower" may be more important than skills as a leader. Skills to be a good follower are much the same as those needed to be a good team worker.
- J. **Other Skills.** Other skills that are in demand in the workplace today include basic computer skills--how to use e-mail and the Internet. Some employers also like employees to have basic word processing and spreadsheet skills. Workers need to be able to identify and solve problems. All workers need to be able to follow directions and ask questions