

# EMPLOYABILITY GUIDE



*career***tech**

**RCCTA** Resource Center for  
CareerTech Advancement

Employability Guide  
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# TOPICS INSIDE:

**COMMUNICATION**

**TEAMWORK/INTERPERSONAL**

**CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING**

**PROFESSIONALISM/INTEGRITY/RELIABILITY**

**ADAPTABILITY**

**DECISION MAKING**

**SELF-MANAGEMENT/SELF-DIRECTION**

**ATTITUDE/ENTHUSIASM**

## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# COMMUNICATION

Yes, it's true—writing skills still matter on the job. Many entry-level job applicants do not have these skills, which is why employers prize them so much. The easiest way to remain in the applicant pool is to use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Once you get the job, don't rely on spell-checking programs as a substitute for your skills. Always check your own writing before sending any message. This includes keeping sentences short, avoiding jargon, and getting to the point quickly. Employers want you to communicate with impact. Use the subject line of your email message to get







the reader's attention. Long sentences and paragraphs are especially hard to read using a mobile device, so stay on target with your subject. Write in the active voice using strong verbs. Use more, smaller text blocks than fewer, longer ones. Include your name and contact information at the bottom of your message. Re-read everything before you hit send.

You might be tempted to rely only on email and social media. Sometimes, a phone call or in-person meeting could be the better choice. Make sure that your nonverbal communication does not subtract from your message. Make eye contact, use a pleasant tone of voice, and listen carefully before responding. Never interrupt the other person.

Giving presentations is a common job task in many careers. Learn the basics of presentation design and delivery—and practice often. Know what to leave out of a presentation—too many slides, too much text, and too many transitions.

Make sure  
your nonverbal  
communication  
does not subtract  
from your message.

# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL



**These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:**

- Keep project samples that include instructions for other people to follow.
- Give presentations as a CTSO\* member or as a member of a club or association.
- Participate in CTSO competitive events.
- Give a demonstration or a persuasive talk to a group.
- Keep graded essays, reports, or speeches.
- Contribute to a newsletter or blog.
- Take a course in graphic design principles or learn how to use graphic design software.
- Design a brochure, poster or other document using graphic design tools.
- Get comfortable using PowerPoint or similar presentation software and keep digital samples of your work.

\* CareerTech student organization—BPA, DECA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA, and TSA

Contribute to a  
newsletter or blog.


- Keep a journal as a part of a class.
- Learn another language or sign language.
- Apply “plain language” guidelines to your writing.  
(You can look up the guidelines online.)
- Use feedback from other people to improve your writing.
- Create personal portfolios and e-portfolios to aid in job searching.
- Learn how to interview.



## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT



# TEAMWORK/ INTERPERSONAL



Most jobs involve working with other people at least part of the time. The better your interpersonal skills, the more value you have for employers. You may have picked up these skills as a member of a sports team or as an officer or member of a student organization or club. You probably learned how to contribute to the group's success and—more importantly—how to be somebody others want to be around. It shouldn't surprise you to learn that employers are looking for people just like you.

In your personal life, you can choose the people you hang out with. In the workplace, you may have to work with difficult people sometimes. Have you had to bring other people around to your point of view? Have you had to compromise on something small to achieve something larger? Are you somebody who keeps your cool in tough situations? Can you do your best without always being the leader? If this sounds like you, then employers may have a spot for you on their team!



The better your  
interpersonal skills,  
the more value you  
have for employers.

# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

**These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:**

- Make a habit of greeting people, making eye contact, and shaking hands.
- Start building a personal network, including names and contact information. Meet new people in your daily routine, strike up a casual conversation, and stay in touch.
- If given the option to work alone or on a team, choose the team option.
- Get experience in performing the different roles on a team.
- Keep a completed team project that shows what the team members did and that includes your instructor's feedback.
- Serve as a mentor to another person in school or at work.
- Teach a skill or concept to another person. Create a YouTube video that another person can use to learn a skill or concept.
- Join an academic or sports team.
- Show how you reached a group goal with the help of other people.






- Participate in an obstacle course activity with a group.
- Participate in a leadership camp for a group or CTSO chapter.
- Know the difference among I-messages, you-messages and we-messages.

**Show how you  
reached a group  
goal with the help  
of other people.**




## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# CRITICAL THINKING/ PROBLEM SOLVING



Life is full of challenges and opportunities. Using the right tools in the right way will help you to meet the challenge or seize the opportunity. It's that way in the workplace, too. Employers want to know that you can deal successfully with whatever comes your way. Besides being skillful with the tools and techniques required in your career choice, the skill that can set you apart for employers is your ability to apply a process to a problem or an opportunity.



Employers want to know that  
you can deal successfully with  
whatever comes your way.



# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

**These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:**

- Serve on a robotics team, engineering challenge or other competitive event team.
- Keep a completed project or sample that shows how you followed a planning process or a problem-solving process.
- Participate in a quiz bowl competition.
- Pursue hobbies or interests that involve making or doing things by hand.
- Keep work or project samples that involve responding to case studies or scenarios.
- Use a career information tool to set career goals and develop individual career plans.



## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# PROFESSIONALISM/ INTEGRITY/RELIABILITY

Succeeding on the job means showing up to do the work every day and following the rules. It means doing what you say you'll do. Not surprisingly, employers say they want people who believe and act this way. They view your professionalism as a sign of your maturity and self-confidence. Employers want to know that you will represent their company or organization in a positive way with customers and with the public. Employers spend a lot of time managing their image and their brand—do you do the same with your personal brand?

They say that a good way to become a leader is to first be a good follower. Employers want people who honor their commitments, are loyal to other people and to the employer, avoid negative talk, keep the trust that others place in you, respond to requests and messages promptly, discuss concerns directly and honestly, and respect the



roles and responsibilities of others in work processes.

Professionalism is all about the impression you make on others. Employers are looking for people who not only make a good first impression, but a good lasting impression as well.



Employers spend a lot of time managing their image and their brand—do you do the same with your personal brand?

# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

**These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:**

- Start a career portfolio to show to potential employers.
- Write your resume and keep it up to date.
- Keep skill mastery certificates for skills you developed that relate to your career or job.
- Add a completed certificate of training mastery or other competency profile in your career portfolio.
- Serve as the leader of a team or on a project.
- Be responsible for the budget of a club, organization, or your family.
- Try to accomplish any of the “Fifty Ways to Lead”\* every day.
- Serve as a CTSO member or officer.
- Meet or practice regularly for a CTSO, sports team, or competition.
- Manage your “digital dirt” online—your social media posts, photos, and responses to others’ messages. Tips include: using available privacy controls, being choosy about the personal information you share—and who you can share it with and removing any information and photos that might raise questions with employers.

\* See the list on the inside back cover

- Keep your social media accounts up to date with your most recent accomplishments and career information.
- Note any awards or other recognition from professional organizations.
- Send thank-you cards or messages to individuals.
- Know the dress code that is common in your career field.
- Know the personal protective equipment (PPE) that is required in your career field.
- Be aware of any code of ethics that applies to your career field.
- Join a professional organization related to your career field.
- Stay current about issues or events in your career field.
- Find a mentor.


Serve as the  
member of a team  
or on a project.



# SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT



## ADAPTABILITY




Today's workplace doesn't stand still. It is a dynamic environment with changing technologies, changing customer needs, and changing resources. The only thing constant about today's workplace is the prospect of change. Regardless of your career choice, your employer values people who can thrive in this dynamic environment. You may have to fill new roles, pursue new opportunities, or take new approaches. You've probably developed this skill in countless ways by now. When a plan didn't work out, you revised the plan. When the picture on the box didn't quite look like the parts inside the box, you figured out how to work with what you had. When a team member was absent, you filled in. Dealing effectively with change, whether it is planned or unplanned, is a skill vital to any employer.

**The only thing constant about today's workplace is the prospect of change.**



# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:

- Learn a new skill every six months and document your mastery of the skill.
  - Apply a new skill or new knowledge to a task or problem and document it.
  - Keep a project or work sample that you improved using the feedback of another person.
  - Work multiple shifts (if appropriate).
- 
- Document how you adapted to changes in your work or personal life.

## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# DECISION MAKING

Most workplaces give new hires some guidance about how to do the work. Beyond this guidance, employers expect people to make good decisions on their own and in teams. Succeeding on the job means planning and organizing your work, identifying and working through (not around) obstacles, identifying alternatives and making choices, solving problems, and being creative and flexible in response to the changing demands of a job. You can argue that good decision-making skills are really what employers are hiring in the first place. The question is, do those skills have your name on them?

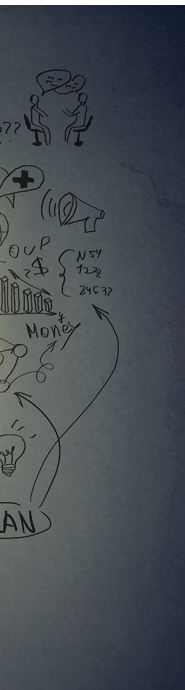




# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:


- Keep a completed project or sample that shows how you followed a planning process or a problem solving process.
- Participate in a service project as a CTSO or other organization member.
- Show how you modified a plan due to a significant change or unexpected event.
- Plan an event.
- Manage your budget to reach a long-term goal.
- Save work or project samples that include the use of specific decision-making tools, such as brainstorming, pros and cons, logic trees, flowcharts, fishbone diagrams, etc.



Plan an event.

## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# SELF-MANAGEMENT/ SELF-DIRECTION



Today's workplace often relies upon fewer people handling more responsibilities. Succeeding on the job means accepting more responsibilities when they are offered, learning more about your job, developing new skills, seeing things that need to be done and doing them without being asked, working to improve your performance, and identifying opportunities for yourself and your employer. Proof of your ability to be self-directed on the job lies in your plans for achieving and growing in the career you want. If you're planning a career change, can you show how you've prepared for that change?



If you're planning a career

change, can you show

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# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL



**These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:**

- Complete an individual career academic plan (ICAP) at your school.
- Use a career information tool.
- Keep project samples that show how you managed your time on tasks.
- Keep skill mastery certificates for skills you developed outside of school.
- Participate in any job shadowing opportunities through your school.
- Learn how to use a new tool or software, or a new procedure, every six months.
- Attend presentations by employers or contact employers about career options.

- Use spreadsheets or other documents to break a larger task into smaller tasks and to track your progress.



- Complete an online course or training program.
- Set goals for achieving a personal milestone, such as a fitness or savings goal.

Participate  
in any job  
shadowing  
opportunities  
through your  
school.



## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

# ATTITUDE/ ENTHUSIASM

Passion may be hard to describe, but it is easy to see. Do you really enjoy the opportunity to work in your chosen career field? Your employer hopes so, because your attitude about and enthusiasm for the work will not only enrich your life, it will also make a difference to your customers. Succeeding on the job means taking the concerns of other people seriously and responding to them promptly, being courteous and polite at all times, maintaining self-control, looking people in the eye, saying “please” and “thank you” often, and anticipating the needs of others.



# WAYS TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE THE SKILL

These are ways you can build and demonstrate the skill for employers:

- Visit with your school career/guidance counselor and with instructors and staff at your local career and technology education center or community college about career opportunities, courses available, and concurrent enrollment options.
- Serve as a CTSO chapter officer or member of a team.
- Remember how you overcame an injury or other challenge to reach a goal.
- Volunteer to assist individuals or organizations in your community.
- Look for work or volunteer opportunities that include customer service tasks.
- Use a career information tool to explore careers, set career goals, and develop individual career plans.
- Show up early.



# Show up early.

- Ask questions when you need more information.
- Research the skill and training requirements for jobs in your career field.
- Attend “manufacturing day” or other career day activities.
- Learn from the feedback you receive on workplace performance reviews or school projects.
- Serve on a robotics team, engineering challenge or other competitive event team.







1. Invest in yourself—Never stop learning.
2. Teach others.
3. Look for leadership skills in others.
4. Cultivate a positive environment.
5. Stick to your principles.
6. Be buoyant.
7. Think first.
8. Be a good follower.
9. Be confident.
10. Always be your true self.
11. Learn to like people.
12. Earn the respect and trust of others.
13. Choose good role models.
14. Recognize the accomplishments of others.
15. Let your excitement show.
16. Expect the best of others.
17. Keep your cool.
18. Be humble but proud of your achievements.
19. Be tactful.
20. Work hard at listening well.
21. Learn from others—their successes and their mistakes.
22. Search for answers.
23. Show a sincere interest.
24. Give more credit than you take.
25. Be consistent.
26. Be a team player.
27. Act as you believe.
28. Criticize constructively.
29. Take responsibility.
30. Learn from your own mistakes.
31. Share the ball.
32. Hear more than you say.
33. Stay positive.
34. Give praise in public, criticize in private.
35. Reach your own opinions about people.
36. Keep a confidence.
37. Be ready with reasons.
38. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
39. Take acceptable risks.
40. Appreciate a sense of humor.
41. Be ready to compromise.
42. Eat lots of moral fiber.
43. Lend a hand.
44. Know when to apologize—and do it.
45. Do the worst, first.
46. Show respect for different opinions.
47. Do the math on your own ideas.
48. Keep your promises.
49. Know when to change course.
50. Accept new challenges.

# CIMC

Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center  
Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education  
[www.okcimc.com](http://www.okcimc.com)

# Know where you're going and how to get there.

- Identifying possible careers
- Creating plans of study
- Defining your personal selling points
- Finding out about job opportunities
- Preparing for interviews
- Getting back to work

**SEE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR NEAREST  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER TODAY!**

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CareerTech Advancement

<https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/resource-center>