

Human Resource Guide



Looking for a Job? Accentuate Top Skills Employers Want

By Lia Bosch, MSOD

When reading the classifieds, do you get the sense that employers are looking for the impossible? Ads seem to call for a near perfect individual with numerous technical qualifications and impeccable interpersonal skills. As most recruiters admit, finding the right person for a job is about fit. Technical qualifications are only the minimum requirements. "Does this individual have the personal qualities needed for the job? Will he be a good fit for the culture?" Or as Adecco's recruiting specialists ask, "Will this person be manageable?" These are questions that employers ask themselves when selecting between potential employees who are all technically qualified for the job. For this reason, soft skills like communication and teamwork are important to develop and continually hone.

As a job seeker, do you understand what employers want? Most importantly, can you demonstrate your proficiency in what employers seek?

What Employers Want

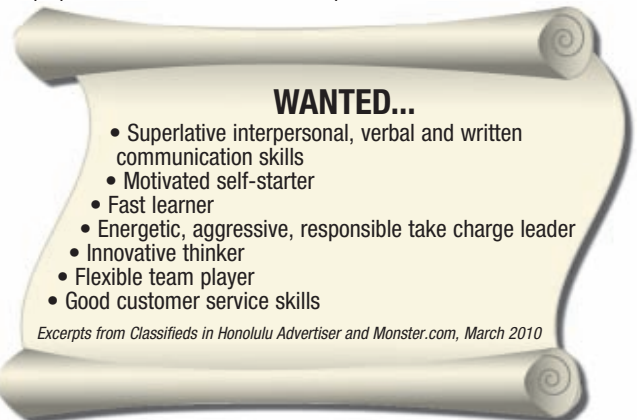
The demands of a particular job dictate the skills and abilities needed to perform the job well. To assist in recruiting, many employers develop competency profiles outlining what successful performers do and the skills they possess. Although some jobs have unique needs, a number of surveys and research studies have shown that employers look for some universal skills and personal qualities in potential employees that continue to be important throughout one's career. Table 1, below, distills top employer requirements.

Table 1	Most Frequently Sought Skills and Qualities (1)
	Communication (listening, speaking, writing)
	Analytical (problem solving, decision making)
	Teamwork/Cooperation
	Work Commitment
	Customer Orientation
	Technical/Functional skills
	Adaptability

(1) Sources:

- National Association of Colleges and Employers 2010 Job Outlook
- U.S. Department of Labor: "Skills and Tasks for Jobs – A SCANS Report for America 2000" – <http://wdr.doleta.gov/opr/fulltext/document.cfm?docn=6140>
- "Discover the DNA of Future CEOs" – Korn/Ferry Whitehead Mann – www.kornferryinstitute.com
- "Developing Talent: The Magic Bullets", Strategic HR Review, Volume 4, Issue 2, January/February 2005.

A cursory review of the classifieds in local papers also substantiates that employers have common wants with respect to skills and abilities:



Understand What Employers Want

A review of the job classifieds also shows that understanding the requirements for jobs can be confusing. For instance, what's a flexible team player? Is superlative better than excellent? When you peel away the adjectives, skills can be described in simple terms. A brief summary for each skill in Table 1 is listed below:

Communication:

- Expresses self well in groups and in one-on-one conversations; writes clearly and succinctly to get messages across with desired effect; listens to ideas and suggestions of others; shares information with others.

Analytical (problem solving, decision making):

- Identifies and defines the issues and causes; gathers and considers all relevant information; uses analysis, logic, experience and methods to choose best alternatives.

Teamwork/Cooperation:

- Works effectively with others; treats team members with respect; contributes to achieving group goals; accepts shared responsibility of projects; communicates openly with team members.

Work Commitment:

- Sets high standards of performance for self; takes initiative going beyond what is expected; pursues work with energy and drive; follows through on commitments.

Customer Orientation:

- Acts with customers in mind; interacts with customers to understand their needs; meets customer needs while balancing company's resources and limitations.

Technical/Functional Skills:

- Demonstrates depth of knowledge and skills to accomplish work; keeps knowledge and skills up-to-date.

Adaptability:

- Handles day-to-day work challenges confidently; is willing and able to adjust to multiple demands, shifting priorities, ambiguity and rapid change.

Demonstrate You Have the Skills

To get the job, prove you have the skills. Specifically:

1. Create a resume and cover letter that accurately reflect your talents. Demonstrate effective writing skills by being concise, clear and grammatically correct. Revise your resume and cover letter for different jobs to highlight specific skills sought.
2. In interviews, provide examples of how you have used the skills required for the job. For example, with analytical skills think of a problem you successfully solved in a past job. How did you identify the problem? What did you do to solve it? What were the results?
3. Ask friends, family and past co-workers to identify what you do well and how they have seen you demonstrate those skills. Also ask them about what you could do better – and LISTEN!
4. Inform references about jobs for which you have interviewed and the skills the employer is seeking. Ask references to discuss with potential employers examples of how you effectively demonstrated the skills.

Above all, be honest with yourself and employers about your talents. Employ your talents fully and you will thrive in the right job!

Lia Bosch, MSOD, is founder of Creative Edge Consulting & Books, with over 25 years of executive and management experience. You can reach her at bosch@creativ-edge.com

Healthcare Reform: What does it mean for Hawaii employers?

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8:30 a.m. - Registration
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Program

\$25 SHRM Hawaii members
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SHRM Hawaii Member Company Spotlight

Laughtrack Theater Company

What does improv comedy have to do with human resources? Everything! Whether it's a fun outing to build morale, a team-building workshop, or learning improv to improve presentation skills, Laughtrack Theater Company offers Honolulu something new, exciting and unique for you and your business.

Improv has gained national recognition this past year appearing on shows like MTV's The Real World, Bravo's Top Chef and Millionaire Matchmaker, TLC's What Not To Wear, and NBC's Thank God You're Here, to name a few.

Laughtrack Theater Company has an amazing group of artists who are great for office parties, team-building events, corporate entertainment, social outings and learning experiences. Laughtrack Theater offers a unique form of entertainment for your company's event with material that is clean and appropriate for all audiences.

The cast of performers will take suggestions from the audience and turn them into instant improvised entertainment. No two shows are ever the same and they can even perform customized shows tailored to you, your organization and your audience. Performances can be held at their 50-seat theater on Bethel Street in the heart of Honolulu's Arts district, or they can come to you.

In their Team Building Workshop your employees learn how to apply the Fundamental Rules of Improv to their daily interactions with customers, colleagues, direct reports and more. Participants learn to subtly shift their attention and communication patterns to be present, listen, acknowledge and respond. Improv skill sets that are covered during team building seminars have been proven to significantly produce more creativity and unity, along with encouraging collaboration and effective communication among its participants. Work groups can become more effective and productive, individuals can improve their presentation and interpersonal skills, and organizations can create a more dynamic, open corporate culture.

Laughtrack also offers public classes for people of all ages, in all professions, who find the art of improvisation enormously helpful in business and social situations. It helps improve confidence for those who go to casting sessions for theater, television shows and film, and for salespeople, trainers and attorneys.



Laughtrack co-owners Kim Potter and Shannon Winpenny, both originally from Hawaii, met up in Chicago in 2001. While Winpenny was studying at famed Chicago institutions such as the Second City and iO (Formerly Improv Olympic), and Potter at DePaul University for Communications and Marketing, they collaborated to bring an improv theater to Hawaii. In 2008 they returned to their roots in Hawaii and established Laughtrack Theater Company.

www.LaughtrackTheater.com
1123 Bethel Street, Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 384-3362 or (808) 384-3392