

Skills employers want

Critical competencies for job success



No matter the role, the organisation or the industry, employers are looking not only for technical knowledge and skills, but also key transferable skills. Transferable skills are competencies that provide the foundation for individual and team success. Let's take a look at some of the critical competencies employers are currently looking for and assessing during the recruitment process.



Communication skills

Effective communication is essential in the workplace for conveying messages, collaborating with colleagues, presenting ideas, and interacting with clients or customers. Strong communication skills demonstrate professionalism, confidence, and the ability to articulate thoughts coherently.

Effective written and verbal communication involves:

- ✓ Expressing information or your ideas clearly and succinctly.
- ✓ Adapting your language, style, tone, level of formality and delivery to suit the specific situation and audience.
- ✓ Active listening techniques, such as questioning, rephrasing and paraphrasing to ascertain the information needed and ensure mutual understanding.
- ✓ Attention to detail, including accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Interpersonal skills and teamwork

These skills involve the ability to communicate effectively and interact well with others. This includes:

- ✓ Fostering positive relationships through building trust, rapport and demonstrating empathy, and understanding.
- ✓ Teamwork and leadership capabilities.
- ✓ Influencing and negotiation skills.
- ✓ Emotional intelligence – reading and responding to emotions by observing facial expressions, body language, and tone and volume of voice.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity, setbacks, or challenging situations. Resilience can help individuals cope with stress, change, and uncertainty. It involves:

- ✓ Maintaining a positive attitude, persevering through difficulties, and learning from failures or mistakes.
- ✓ Fostering a growth mindset, where challenges are seen as opportunities for learning and development.
- ✓ An optimistic outlook and a solution-focused approach.

Self-management

Self-management involves the ability to effectively regulate and control your emotions, thoughts, behaviours and actions to achieve desired goals and maintain overall wellbeing. It encompasses:

- ✓ Emotional intelligence and self-awareness – being attuned to your trigger points, negative thoughts and stress levels and actively maintaining good physical and mental health, a healthy work-life balance and resilience.
- ✓ Judgment and decision making skills.
- ✓ Time management skills to effectively deliver on responsibilities and workplace promises, through focus and motivation at work.
- ✓ Establishing and maintaining positive, productive and mutually enjoyable work relationships.
- ✓ Self-discipline, responsibility and the capacity to work effectively with minimal supervision.

Initiative and enterprise

Initiative refers to the ability to identify opportunities, take action and come up with ideas without being prompted or instructed.

Enterprise, on the other hand, consists of two distinct skill clusters:

- ✓ Enterprising skills: This cluster involves identifying problems as opportunities, generating ideas to address those problems, selecting the most viable idea, and identifying experts and supporters who can help develop and implement a usable solution.
- ✓ Business skills: The second cluster encompasses the skills required to turn a solution into a commercial success, such as developing a business plan, marketing, financial management, and logistics.

When combined with character attributes like risk-taking and resilience, these two skill clusters contribute to an entrepreneurial mindset.

Employees who demonstrate these qualities, can:

- ✓ Drive innovation, enhance productivity and efficiency
- ✓ Improve workplace processes
- ✓ Develop ideas for new products and services
- ✓ Contribute to problem-solving and overcoming challenges
- ✓ Support organisational growth and foster a culture of accountability and ownership.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI or EQ) refers to the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and reason with emotions – both your own and those of others. It encompasses attributes such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills.

Emotional intelligence is a highly sought-after skill in the workplace, as it enables effective communication, collaboration and decision-making. It enhances interpersonal relationships and teamwork, increases resilience and adaptability to manage stress, and contributes to effective leadership and decision-making.