



## How can I improve my marketability in this job market?

Good news! According to the latest reports, corporations are optimistic about the new year: growth in sales and profits, larger budgets to purchase new equipment and materials, healthier payroll and an increase in hiring. If you're currently out of work, this is a good time to job search.

And, as always, it won't hurt to secure your position if you are already employed by ensuring that you are viewed as indispensable.

With the state of the job market as it has been the past few years, employers have higher expectations for candidates. Beyond job-specific technical skills, certain skills are nearly universally sought by employers. They want people who are capable of driving the company in new dimensions of progress.

*Quintessential Careers*<sup>™</sup> provide a comprehensive list of values and attributes that employers look for:

- **Interpersonal Skills** — Being able to relate to co-workers, along with clients and vendors, is paramount. You must be able to build relationships which inspire productivity and creativity, and mitigate conflicts.
- **Communications Skills** — This really goes hand-in-hand with Interpersonal Skills and is, by far, most often mentioned by employers. This includes listening, writing and speaking effectively.
- **Analytical/Research Skills** — The ability to assess a situation, seek multiple perspectives, gather more information, and identify key issues that need to be addressed.
- **Flexibility/Adaptability/Managing Multiple Priorities** — Business today moves and changes at an extremely rapid pace, so the ability to prioritize and juggle multiple projects is increasingly important.
- **Problem-Solving/Reasoning/Creativity** — The ability to find creative solutions, using available information and resources.
- **Planning/Organizing** — Along with being able to assess and identify issues and solutions, employers want someone who can design, plan, organize, and implement strategies and projects within an allotted timeframe.
- **Teamwork** — Problem-solving and implementation often require working with multiple partners and/or teams. You should be able to function not just within your own team, but cross-functionally as well.
- **Computer/Technical Literacy** — These days, it's hard to find a job that does not require some basic understanding of computer systems.

- **Self-Confidence** — If you don't believe in yourself, your skill-set and abilities, why should a prospective employer?
- **Willingness to Learn** — Again, with the marketplace changing and evolving constantly, you must be open and willing to grow and learn with that change.
- **Leadership/Management Skills** — This skill encompasses all of the above. To lead and manage effectively, you have to build and manage relationships which inspire productivity and creativity and mitigate conflicts. You need to be open to hearing multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives in order to resolve complex issues. Goal-setting and delegating effectively is important to successful implementation. And no matter what your prior experience is, you must have the desire and humility to understand that there is always more to learn.

You may have noticed that all but one of the above are generally thought of as "soft" skills, the exception being Computer/Technical Literacy. This is significant! Employers today want a workforce that not only can get the technical pieces of the job done, but that can move their company forward in an innovative, progressive, timely manner; will build the business through strong relationships.

And employers, take heed — in order to retain your top talent, you must cultivate an environment that nurtures those skills. Employees want to work in a place where they feel truly seen and heard, a real part of the solution!

(Source: Jennifer Brewer, **Fierce, Inc.** [www.fierceinc.com](http://www.fierceinc.com) January 2011)