Employer needs

Letter to supportive employment companies

I would appreciate 30-45 minutes of your time to discuss and get feedback on my project of creating a pre-employment program for youths that have either dropped out of school or are high school graduates that have no career direction.

My purpose is to encourage the potential value in these young adults and integrate them into societal and business organizations. In addition, I hope to assess if a partnership with your organization would be beneficial to all.

The program includes training these young adults to be "Thinking Technician", who are productive employees by learning life skills in a project and mindset learning environment. Our goal is to get the students to **think like an owner** and understand how corporations and organization work. ~~(the good and the problematic).~~

Our emphasis is on teamwork, interpersonal skills, thinking skills (creativity, critical thinking, system thinking), use of thinking tools, problem solving skills, social/emotional learning and developing a positive attitude in the student which continuously improves both for the organization as well as student.

Our uniqueness is mindset thinking (ownership, engineering, branding) and having the student in control of their learning plan. The program I am developing is a 4-month period of projects and classes and continuous monthly follow-ups. Our process is a hands-on approach where we form teams and work on community problems and present the results back to the community. I hope to provide inputs from our partnership relationship as well. I would like to do this in conjunction with trade organizations in order to get their input and support.

You can see more about what I am planning at https://www.wolfsons.com/

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Why Soft Skills Matter And The Top 3 You Need

Jan Bruce , CONTRIBUTOR

I write about stress and success, risk, balance and business.   Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

What's the formula for building a company that can not only withstand the climates of change and uncertainty we're living in, but transform and innovate? It used to be that the formula was to build a team that had the technical expertise and work experience to execute on "the plan." Also known as building a team around hard skills: statistical analysis, SEO/SEM marketing, software development, data mining, network and information systems, and so on.

Now, a major coalition of businesses, policy experts, trade groups, and academics are demonstrating that soft skills—specifically interpersonal skills, the ability to manage and control your emotions, communication skills, leadership, adaptability, and problem solving—are critical. And they are bringing about a whole-scale reevaluation of their value. In fact, a new study from Boston College, Harvard University, and the University of Michigan found that soft skills training, like communication and problem-solving, boosts productivity and retention 12 percent and delivers a 250 percent return on investment based on higher productivity and retention. (less churn in new hires and better productivity)

Today, as companies increasingly need to become more dynamic, interconnected and flexible, soft skills are critical. According to Deloitte's 2016 Global Human Capital Trends report, executives now consider these skills important to fostering employee retention, improving leadership, and building a meaningful culture. In fact, 92 percent of Deloitte's respondents rated soft skills as a critical priority. They noted that an HR leader's mission has shifted from that of "chief talent executive" to "chief employee experience officer."

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The good news is that soft skills are learnable. In fact, resilience training experts, who specialize in teaching and training in the soft skills, would go further to say they are foundational to creating strong employees, teams, leaders and organizations. Here are the most critical soft skills to build resilience, and how to develop them in your team:

1. **Problem Solving**

The ability to get into "problem-solving mode" and stay in it for long periods of time—in other words, persist until a problem is solved instead of disengaging and giving up—is key to dealing with the inevitable challenges that come with any role more efficiently and effectively. It comes down to managing our "Explanatory Style." Our Explanatory Style determines how we "explain" why things happen to us and whether we see difficulties as fixed, external, and unsolvable, or temporary and fluid. Research shows that many employees have less resilient Explanatory Styles: They become unfocused and cast broad, external blame when confronted with a challenge or change. I teach companies to help their people modify their Explanatory Style by viewing problems as fluid and short-term. Resilient workers can evolve and adapt to challenges without casting blame or catastrophizing.

2. **Emotion Control**

Getting control of our emotions is the single most important soft skill we can learn. In fact, there's a high correlation between emotion regulation and our ability to manage our stress and stay productive under pressure. Anxiety (which is generally the fear of future threat), frustration (the feeling that you don't have sufficient resources), and anger (the feeling that something or someone is violating your rights), are the most common emotions people bring to work. They can impair our ability to accurately assess and react to what is going on in adverse and stressful situations. The key is to develop awareness of our stress triggers—change in project scope, an unhappy client, and so on—and catch ourselves before spiraling into a habitual emotional reaction. In addition, I teach leaders and managers how to spot these emotions in their team and coach them to return to calm and focus. Getting a handle on emotion control can be a game changer.

3. **Purpose**

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Feeling connected to a mission beyond ourselves and our own self-interest works as a wellspring to carry leaders and their teams through tough times, which invariably happen at work. Developing purpose can be taught and involves learning how to reframe our work in a larger context and focus on personal contribution to the overall mission of the organization. This involves developing a mindset in ourselves and our team that is habitually asking: What is the larger mission? Why do I come to work each day? What type of legacy might I leave? In a changing environment, an employee with an overarching attachment to an organization's mission is more willing to stay focused and persevere—to see their role bigger than any one problem, challenge, or project they may be dealing with day to day.

We're entering a new frontier in the workforce. By framing soft skills as a teachable discipline, we can position our companies to thrive in an atmosphere that runs on resilience just as much as technical know-how.

Jan Bruce is CEO and co-founder of [meQuilibrium](#), the digital coaching platform based on the science of [resilience.](#)

Interpersonal Skills and Today's Job Market

Jobs requiring high levels of social interaction are growing. What does that mean for schools?

BY:Leah Shafer

POSTED:October 3, 2017

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Teachers know all too well the collective groan associated with announcing a group project. Endless gripes and grievances can follow — "But he's not doing his work!" "She's not listening to my ideas!" and ultimately, "Can't I just work alone?"

The answer to that last question should usually be a resolute "no," according to a forthcoming article that reveals the increasing importance of social skills in the contemporary labor market. Professions requiring high levels of social interaction — such as managers, teachers, nurses, therapists, consultants, and lawyers — have grown by nearly 12 percentage points as a share of all jobs in the United States economy in the last 30 years. Math-intensive but less social jobs shrunk by 3.3 percentage points over the same period. The pay for more social-intensive jobs is increasing at a faster rate as well.

For educators, it's a reminder that working through those tricky group dynamics may have significant value for today's young people.

People with strong interpersonal skills can do more than collaborate effectively. They're able to vary how they act and what they contribute. They notice the strengths and weaknesses of others in their group, and they adapt.

A Focus on Collaboration, Perspective-Taking, Flexibility

The reason for this shift in the labor market, as economist David Deming has described in a previously published working paper, is that social interaction is difficult to automate. Computers can increasingly perform single-task jobs and complex programming work, but they can't adapt to changing needs or unforeseen circumstances, and they can't collaborate with others to overcome those obstacles.

People, however, can excel in these types of situations — if they have the right social competencies. So what social skills precisely do they need?

"When you use the phrase 'social skills,' people often have in mind something like social graces or etiquette, or even something like extraversion," says Deming, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "I don't really think about it that way."

What's more important, he says, is the ability to "put yourself in somebody else's shoes and coordinate with them so that the two of you can work together, so that everybody is doing the thing he or she is best suited to doing, given the composition of the group." He adds, "That often

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requires knowing when to be a leader and when to be a follower, knowing when you're the data specialist in the group versus when it's time for you to be the writer or the presenter."

People who have these interpersonal skills are the people who can vary how they act and what they contribute. They notice the strengths and weaknesses of their group, and they adapt.

Takeaways for High Schools

Schools don't yet have reliable measures for how to develop and assess so-called "noncognitive" skills like these, although a number of researchers and educators are working on approaches, reflecting a growing recognition of their importance not just on labor market outcomes but on educational attainment. But for high schools, this research at least suggests that educators should think more about *how* students are learning, rather than just *what* they're learning.

"You want the classroom to reflect the richness of real-life interactions, and to give people experience in the kinds of settings that are going to be useful to them when they leave school," says Deming. Assignments and curricula should integrate opportunities to work collaboratively.

Group projects, for example, are valuable learning opportunities. Long-term project-based work, in which students work as a team, receive feedback, and revise together, are also important experiences. And when assessing students, teachers should take teamwork into account, signifying that the ability to collaborate is just as important as the content students are learning or producing.

Takeaways for Colleges and Universities

In the higher education sphere, professors and administrators should encourage students to seek out real-world experiences. "If you want to be a good employee, find a situation that mimics those settings," says Deming. "Practice the thing you want to do, instead of learning about it."

Deming suggests that colleges and universities ask students to work collaboratively in the classroom and pursue internships and volunteer opportunities outside of it. Students should also look for critical growth opportunities within their extracurricular activities, rather than just viewing them as resume-fillers. Clubs and sports teams can equip students with valuable teamwork skills, if students choose to focus on those dynamics.

Finally, suggests Deming, students should be diversifying their interests, so that they can be useful to different groups of people. "Try to be good at a lot of different things, and particularly things that don't often go together," suggests Deming. Students with unusual combinations of skills, such as computer programming and writing, will become employees with valuable assets to bring to the table, to no matter what type of team they're working on.

Additional Resources

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The Payoff of People Skills

The Growing Importance of Social Skills in the Labor Market, by David Deming

Social Skills are Increasingly Valuable in the Jobs Market, from Journalist's Resource

Need by the corporation & the students... *Demonstrate your understanding of the client needs*

Corporation: *We aim to create a new category of a "technician - exploration of the mind"; Who thinks like an owner and evaluates situation using question to learn new things*	Companies need employees who can think independent and take ownership of problems and work in a team environment. They need to think both creatively and critical in their work. They need such life skills as SEL Interpersonal skills, communication skills, Goal setting, Decision making and Time management. These organizations need a program that can demonstrate long term positive value to their success.
Students:	• The skills needed in our vastly complicated world, whether to earn a decent living or to be an active and informed citizen, are radically different from those required historically. • Quite simply, the world has changed, and our schools remain stuck in time. "Knowledge workers" have become obsolete. What the world demands today are "smart creatives," the term that Eric Schmidt and Jonathan Rosenberg use to describe the kind of people Google needs to hire in their book How Google Works.. ... Wagner, Tony; Dintersmith, Ted

	(2015-08-18). Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era .
McKinsey & Company	We have found the best workforce-development solutions happen when leading employers come together to address the talent problem for an entire sector. Assuming there are no antitrust issues, such collaborations can be attractive to industry competitors because the training costs are shared and the risk of poaching is limited. Such efforts typically take three forms: down a supply chain, with an anchor company taking the lead in encouraging its suppliers to participate; by a functional profession (for example, mechatronics) that is in demand by employers in different industries in the same location; and by sector, with competitors collaborating because they all face the same talent problem. One example of the latter is the Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative, which includes 19 automotive companies and 26 community colleges in 13 states.

Mission Statements

Broad ongoing enduring philosophy and direction:
Examples: **Mission:**

The mission of The Project Academy is to advance the development in spirit and mind of students drawn from diverse cultural and social backgrounds and to inspire in them a commitment to the best self in the community, education and business world.

- To create a cultural system in our organization that supports the community.
- To be a leader in learning systems around skill training.
- To help make our students successful in life.

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Objective Statements	Perceived changes of state to accomplish missions:

Examples:

- To create a highly technical trained work force
- To achieve a high national financial rating
- To become a leader in industrial chemical production |
| **Goal Statements** | Specific planned targets as quantifiable values and time periods to meet objectives:
E **Goal:**

- **Achieve >90% acceptance rate in two years by our team members into the corporate world**
- **Be recognized as a world class pre-employment training organization in 5 years**
- **Be seen as an important community resource in 5 years**

The goal of the school's program is the formation of skilled and discerning minds in preparation for higher education, careers and lifelong learning. Students will understand that problems are opportunities. "The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity" (*Vinod Khosla*). Through its learning and collaboration, Project Academy also educates its students for service in the community and in today's global civilization. |

The Project's objective and scope …the end results the client can expect from choosing this approach… How does it satisfy the need?

The objective of this program is to create a holistic learning environment that includes the needs of the community as well as the individual in a

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successful long-term employment. Our approach is to use project based learning while infusing life skills and mind-set thinking. The student will be a partner in the learning process.

The scope will focus on training skills and mind-set thinking that provides success in multiple industry sectors. We aim to create a new category of a "technician of the mind"; Who thinks like an owner and evaluates situation using question to open up new avenues of learning.

Describe our approach: … How are we going to achieve the objectives and scope?

The following steps will be followed and used to engage the students:

Steps:	*Actions:*
Culture & Value system with the student & family	Initial responsibility Commitment to each other. Thinking like a supportive team member and not just for themselves.
Understand the business & community systems	Build an organization of your company
Project based learning with life skills embedded	Doing a world or community problem and presenting the results to the community
Reflection and testing	Using questions to learn and improve what we do.
Reporting & Celebration	Inform the community of your results. Use the elevator pitch outline
Continuous learning follow-up	Continuous improvement/ Our products and process, ourselves (Always innovate)

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List of deliverables:

Documents:	- Pre-employment curriculum - Marketing Plan - Assessment Plan/Quality
Out-reach to business *Their needs*	Questionnaire ..***Their needs and involvement.***
Out-reach to community/ Students	Questionnaire ..***Their needs and involvement.***
Plan	- Financial - Facilities - Equipment - Team - Partnerships with other organizations - Holistic follow-up

List of benefits:

Benefits of Pre-Employment Training to the community:
- **Building a community and culture of a learning team:** Learn about and how to develop a learning culture that is like a sports team. How to handle disagreements and work together to solve a problem.

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Area	Benefits
Society: become an active member of their community	Character traits, Problem solving, Design thinking, Soft-skills, Social & Emotions learning (SEL)
Citizenship: See this as a responsibility of being a member of their community	Thinking skills (creative and critical thinking, questioning, reflection), Values, Character development
Work: Using ownership mindset thinking and skills, advance in the community of work	Process methods, Collaboration, Innovative thinking, Financial understanding
Lifelong learners: See learning as a way of improving yourself,	Excitement in learning, Risk taking, Feedback, Values

- **Life skills:** Thinking and acting like an owner

Attitude: Positive, Flexible' Focus
Team-Work: Respect, Listening, Conflict resolution, Cultural values
Social: Time management, Customer focus, Work ethics
Leadership:, Risk taking, Business focus, Design outlook
SEL: of self

- **Taking each activity** and looking and questioning it from multiple perspectives … What have we learned?, What would we change to improve?

The projects organization and staffing:

The training will be organized in classes of two teams' of 4/5 people in each team. The teams will work independent but can critic the others approach, methods etc. as learning tools.

Staffing will be three facilitators for the two teams & leadership.

Cost and timing:

Cost:	Our goal is to make this a free cost program for the students. A possibility might be to have a payback system of future work in the community or this program improvement. We hope to raise the funds thru non-profit organizations. Overall cost is estimated to be: • Rent: $60k/year • People $200k/year • Equipment $50k/year • Supplies: $ • Utilities: $
Timing;	• One-month for set-up • Four months training classes • One-month follow-up and support Plan to do two programs / year.

Our qualifications:

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New type of employee: *We aim to create a new category of a "technician - User of the mind"; Who thinks like an owner and evaluates situation using question to learn new things*

• Customer driven / Business owner	• Facilitates processes within the organization
• Self-motivated	• Personal / Business skills • Shows up
• Inter-personal Communication	Team/ Problem solver; Team focus- not self
• Risk-taker; learns from failure	• Uses questions & curiosity to explore all learning opportunities
Business	• Balanced scorecard • End to End processing • Customer focus

Training a different type of employee- Skills & Tools needed for today's work environment. Customer driven world.

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Learning	How
Project based learning,, **learning thru doing**	• Team-work • Solving a real-world problem
Life-Skills	Infused during activities
Tools • Info-mapping • Flow-diagrams • Mind-mapping • Balanced scorecard used in financial measurements	Practice methods to manage projects, processes and visualization • Critical thinking • System thinking • Questioning • Creative thinking • Process design • Decision making
Mind-set thinking • Ownership • Engineering cultural • Growth mindset	Learn to think like an owner of your own business using design thinking skills.
Holistic learning environment	• Student centered • Long-term commitment
	•
Unique skill areas…covering how these technologies fit into a corporate world	• Data visualization • A.I integration • Robotic processing

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Learning Format	15 min. of class learning /discussion video's , tutorials	
	30 min. of Exercise / Activities by the teams	
	Break	

Introduction:

Our pre-employment program is designed to give young adults, who dropped out of school or have graduated HS but have little direction, the life skills and attitude training to become a successful part of the community.

The program is designed to include the community and business partners to ensure success for the individual. Needs of the young adult will be assessed, such as transportation, family commitments, legal and others to make the training possible and successful.

We look for young adults that have:
- o a positive Attitude:
- a good Aptitudes **for doing certain** kinds of things easily and quickly.

Our approach is to train young adults to be productive and great employees with skills that make them valuable in most service or industrial jobs. These new employees have the life-skills that companies need to be successful in addition to the technical skills to do the job. The program is over a 16-week period and provides a holistic environment to the student.

Students are shown how to be an owner of their own business; what's involved with their customers, suppliers and staff. Thinking like an owner allows you to interface and understand your boss and constantly improving your skills.

Owners mindset thinking:	Students are shown how to be an owner of their own business; what's involved with their customers, suppliers and staff. Thinking like an owner allows you to interface and understand your boss and constantly improving your skills.
Engineering mindset thinking	Activities around the process that cover all the details to make it successful. Its assuring that all the team are aware of items, deliverables are met, problems solved, and the customer is informed.
Growth mindset	Brain Plasticity… The brain is like a muscle … Use it or lose it.

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Elevator speech:
Present education leaves many students bored, not engaged in learning and finding it difficult to manage the complexities of life relating to the interface of society, schools and business.   Our program will provide a fun environment around project based learning for these young adults.
We will demonstrate to the students that learning can be engaging by solving real world problems and provide the missing skills (LIFE SKILLS) like problem solving, Team operations, thinking skills, growth mindset, character development, financial literacy and societal values needed to succeed in today's environment.
Assessments of skills and learning will be analyzed by how the student used innovative approaches in problem solving and involvement of the community, businesses and educational organizations.

Mission:

The mission of The Project Academy is to advance the development in spirit and mind of students drawn from diverse cultural and social backgrounds and to inspire in them a commitment to the best self in the community, education and business world.

Goal:
The goal of the school's program is the formation of skilled and discerning minds in preparation for higher education, careers and lifelong learning. Students will understand that problems are opportunities. "The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity" (*Vinod Khosla*). Through its learning and collaboration, Project Academy also educates its students for service in the community and in today's global civilization.

Values:
The school will foster a community-based culture of a learning environment, use of visual thinking process with all treated as adults and with respect. A school vest will be worn to signify connection to each other. Key words are: Empathy, Trust, Listening, Curiosity, Kindness, Persisting, Flexibility, Innovation, Entrepreneurship Continuous learning, Humor and Taking responsible risk.

Needs:

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- The skills needed in our vastly complicated world, whether to earn a decent living or to be an active and informed citizen, are radically different from those required historically. Quite
- simply, the world has changed, and our schools remain stuck in time. "Knowledge workers" have become obsolete. What the world demands today are "smart creatives," the term that Eric Schmidt and Jonathan Rosenberg use to describe the kind of people Google needs to hire in their book How Google Works.. ... Wagner, Tony; Dintersmith, Ted (2015-08-18). Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era .

We are still using the same method we did 100 years ago
We need to provide an education that interests our students and gets them deeply engaged in their own learning, and that teaches all of our students what they need to be successful in their 21st-century lives.

To change, that is, both how we teach and what we teach, in ways that reflect our current and future realities. Changing the "how" means creating a pedagogy that works for today's students. Changing the "what" means creating a curriculum that is future-oriented and engaging to today's students, while remaining useful and rigorous.

How to Teach – Changing Our Pedagogy to "Partnering"
We need to move from the teacher talking and the students taking notes. ("My teachers just talk and talk and talk" is by far the students. biggest complaint about school.) *In partnering, the students do what they do – or can do – best, which is finding information, using technology and other resources, and creating. The teachers do what they do best, which is asking the right questions, ensuring quality and rigor, vetting, and adding context and appropriate scaffolding.*
- Use project base learning where students have ownership of their learning

What we teach
Knowing our students … education plan for the student
In the current system – or at least the public portion, which is most of it – there is an almost total lack of curricular emphasis on character, i.e., becoming a good person in addition to a good student
- Children need to feel successful and do it with community
- Communication and Problem Solving

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- Character and Passion
  - *Empathy*
  - *Ethics*
  - *Values*

Organizational support:
Community and state organizations are fostering after-school programs to supplement competency-based schools with learning for college and career readiness Young people need a range of knowledge skills, abilities and deposition in order to be successful. Schools cannot do the work along. This provides opportunity for Project academy to provide an after-school program that makes students successful at the intersection of society, education, and business. In Massachusetts, the following is happening:
- The bill (H4033) endorses summer learning and studies
- http://www.summerlearning.org/page/2016FundingGuide
- http://www.massafterschool.org/

The school will focus on the following skills with learning happening using project-based activities in a collaborate environment:
- Problems solving
- Collaboration
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- Thinking skills (critical and creative thinking, questioning, reflection)
- Character skill development
- Study skills
- Financial literacy and business skills
- Quality processing and measurements
- Learning using assessment and feedback
- Brain plasticity, Growth mindset
- Web tools for blogging, portfolio management and presentations

Customers …**various market segments**
The age of the potential students is those that are between High School and their career or college.
The School will service the following potential customer base:
- After school parents
- Home school parents to supplement their content based learning

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- On-line learning organizations that need a face-face learning facility
- High school drop outs
- Career changing adults who are re-entering the work force
- Existing after school programs
- Industrial work force programs

Uniqueness:
Provide supplementary soft-skills, collaboration skills, Problem solving to students that are an afterthought in present schools. These skills are not subject matter skills but life skills to support the student in work, dealing and interface with society, businesses and citizenship. The school will have a learning culture where projects are owned by the students and set their own project learning targets. Students will be provide with a group of mentors who they can choose for support as needed.
- On-line community support for continuous education after school ends
- Building on the strengths of the students

Products:
The school will offer the following courses brought on line gradually based on community support and needs:
- Present proposed plan
- Year-long college preparation
- Individual half year courses focused on Work, Society, Financial literacy and Thinking skills.
- Focus on senior citizen's needs.

Partnerships:
The school will establish partnerships with commercial (business) organizations and non-profits that have tools that can be used for learning. This will be an integrated part of the learning curriculum.

Process & Operations:
 A set of meeting will be held with the community to determine perceived needs. The school will focus on providing learning around developing character skills; business processes, financial understanding and doing collaborative project based learning exercises. The school will have a learning culture where projects are owned by the students and set their own project learning targets. The school will use commercial tools that are used in industry for support of their projects as well as connection to companies and community organizations. Students will have ownership of the planning and managing the relationships.

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How are we going to organize ourselves?	
Setting the environment for the students: 🟡 Imagination 🟡 Have doubt and wonderment 🟡 Testing / failure 🟡 Quality processing 🟡 Consultation / collaboration 🟡 Extensions, refinements and elaboration 🟡 Synthesis 🟡 Thinking skills development (creative, critical, questions and meta-cognitive reflection) 🟡 Guidelines for working together 🟡 Students are viewed as active authors of their own development	
Which problem will we work on?	
What is the problem we are going to solve?	
Frame the problem and write it down	Your frame is how you narrow and pinpoint what you choose to solve. Better framing leads to better solutions.
What facts do we know?	• What are the constraints / requirements? • Areas of discussion and inclusion • How do we integrate social skills, emotional skills and thinking skills into this project?
What do we need to know more of?	
Finding lots of options	Reflection. Creative thinking, Iteration of tasks
Narrowing the choices (Shaping) • Mundane • Innovative • Magical	• Critical thinking • How are we going to test our approach? • What requirements do we have to achieve?
Decision making	Using the requirements and weights pick the best choice

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How do we know we are successful?	• Develop rubrics (learning targets) and review requirements
Incorporate in the learning	• Thinking skills • Character/Strength's • Social skills
Sketch and Map the best fits	Test
Update the possible solution	Review other approaches, <mark>Test and Reflect</mark>
Report and defend work, using verbal, art and written media	Reflection

Uniqueness of the program:
- Teachers do development/ assessment and research on learning
- Organization structure is non-silo based
- Students do their own assessment on how to judge projects and their learning
- Focus on students strengths
- Learning by developing solutions to real issues verses a scripted approach
- Focus on stretched goals/objectives
- A culture of support for the students
- Availability of mentor support

Mentor support option:

A team of mentors from different business and social organizations will be available to support the student. A mentor fair will occur where mentors present themselves to the students. The student will have to opportunity to pick someone they would like to get support from. These mentors will be trained in our program and how they can support a student.

The teachers as the facilitator:

We need to focus on modeling for the students the way to ask questions based on the desired outcomes to demonstrate that learning is achieved by getting the students to understand how they gathered the data & use skillful thinking to make a conclusion.

In addition, we need to model the meta-cognition aspects on how we arrived at a learning point. By providing examples & engaging students in role playing, we can demonstrate how we arrived at a particular point. The teacher will be able to identify the expected outcome and question the

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students on how they achieved this outcome. In addition, the students will assess themselves on their compliance with the ground rules that were established in the beginning of the project.

The goal for the teacher is to create an environment that supports learning and construction of knowledge by the student. **It is not about teaching but student learning.** There is too much data to know it all.

Students will be part assessment strategy in participating in setting the learning targets with the teacher. Learning targets will be by skill level with students and community giving the feedback. ==Badges as translators of competency==

Create skills targets (==badges==) like:

•

How to Hire for Soft Skills

Posted on November 26, 2018 by Carmen Bryant

Whether you're a busy recruiter or a hiring manager, bringing on the right people takes creativity, resourcefulness and (sometimes) a little luck. Candidates may have their hard skills locked, but what about things like team spirit, or conflict resolution?

Work, at its core, is a social endeavor. Most of us have to interact with colleagues, clients or customers. And all the AI in the world isn't going to change that: a recent Deloitte 2018 Global Human Capital Trends study shows there's still high demand for complex problem solving, cognitive abilities and social skills.

==Trouble is, while it's relatively straightforward to screen for hard skills, how do you assess for things like empathy==? This can pose a challenge to even the most experienced interviewers, although it's the soft skills that can be most crucial to a candidate's post-hire performance. Let's take a look at some ways to tackle this.

What are they?

Everyone has some idea of what soft skills are. Some call them interpersonal or people skills.

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Soft skills are attitudes and behaviors that translate into how we are at work and how easily we interact with others.

They can help improve productivity and strengthen communication. Vetting for soft skills helps crystallize an employee's fit into company culture. And a unique mix of these traits among employees can help diversify and enrich the organization.

Here are just a few of those elusive soft skills you might want look for:

1. Communication
2. Conflict resolution
3. Creativity
4. Critical thinking
5. Dependability
6. Empathy
7. Flexibility
8. Problem solving

Communication, conflict resolution and problem solving help staffers address issues. Creativity and critical thinking help you find new solutions to challenges. Empathy and flexibility mean workers are easy to get along with. There are dozens more — from accountability to leadership to work ethic. So take some time to think about the soft skills needed for the jobs you're looking to fill (our screening tool Indeed Assessments also has some modules related to soft skills that you may want to check out).

Asking for soft skills

It's easy to *ask* for certain skills when advertising an open role, but how do you make sure people actually have them? When responding to job postings, candidates should address the soft skills you're seeking by including examples in their cover letters and resumes.

Do they highlight instances of collaboration, or do they present themselves as unique super geniuses? If they highlight team spirit, that's a good sign. If you ask for learning agility, do they highlight recent classes or certifications?

Here's where cover letters can be especially interesting. Not everybody includes them these days, but they can still be useful as applicants have to describe what it is about the job that aligns with them as a person.

Of course, nobody is going to reply to your job ad stating that they hate people and are totally unreliable. To really drill into soft skills, you have to wait for the interview.

Interview for soft skills

Here's the good news: You can assess soft skills without directly addressing them. For instance …

- Arriving on time shows punctuality and dependability.

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- Maintaining eye contact and asking good questions show active listening.
- Telling stories that correlate to job requirements shows effective communication.
- Giving due credit to team members shows integrity.

To dive deeper, you can conduct [behavior-based interviews](). Using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action and Result), ask candidates to tell you stories to elicit how they handled various scenarios. Listen for whether they weave soft skills into the Situation, Task, Action and Result. Did they include the skills you need? Did you hope to hear something they left out?

Here are some questions you can tweak for the roles you're trying to fill.

Conflict resolution: Describe a major issue with others at work and how you helped resolve it.
Answers reveal work habits and how they approach issues.

Creativity: How might creativity be important to this role?
Most jobs require creativity. If the candidate dismisses it, they are missing the point.

Critical thinking: Think of an assignment you were given that was unclear or off-base. Why did you think this, and how did you handle it?

Answers reveal logical reasoning and analysis skills, plus how they handle delicate matters.

Empathy: Why did you leave (or are you leaving) your previous employer?
You're looking for answers that position their former employer in a positive light.

Problem solving: Tell me about a time you averted disaster in a work crisis.

Savvy candidates will tell a story about how they averted disaster *before* the crisis occurred.

Beyond the interview

Of course, you should always check references — and don't just ask for references from managers. Former coworkers may be more likely to focus on their colleagues' soft skills. So ask candidates for both types of references.

Managers can share valuable information about an employee's technical skills, their industry knowledge, and their performance and coachability. Former peers may share information about how a colleague handled stress, their collaboration style and whether the candidate was dependable.

Collecting insights into both sides will help you paint a fuller picture of the candidate.

Conclusion

Hiring for the right blend of soft skills takes a measured approach. It also requires an investment of time, which is a precious resource for all of us. But since soft skills are so crucial to success in any role, it's unquestionably worth taking the time to get it right.

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So make sure to think carefully about how you can learn more about your candidates as people interacting with other people, and to put into practice some of these tips. It will pay off in the long term.

Soft-Skills …How can we help high school drop outs and young workers to achieve better lives? Teach them the soft-skills of work. See work as a career that you continuously get better. The training will be integrated with a "mindfulness approach" (You have control over your actions):
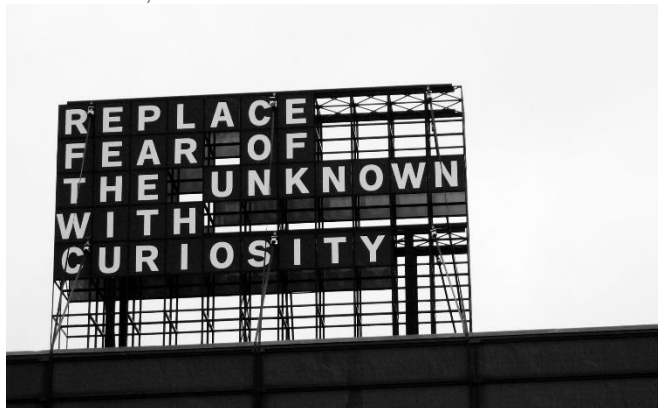
Objective: Offer a course that demonstrates the fundamentals of the various soft-skills and a follow up method for success.

3 Business Leaders Share the Most Important Soft Skills They Look for in a New Hire

[Maxwell Huppert](#)

October 18, 2017

It's hard to imagine Google having hiring problems, but in the early 2000's the then CEO Eric Schmidt realized they had an issue—they weren't hiring people that would lead the company to success.

Google was hiring "glue people," said Eric in a recent [Masters of Scale](#) podcast. These are people people who may be pleasant and competent but "who sit between functions and help either side but don't themselves add a lot of value," he said.

It was at this point that Eric realized they need to revamp their hiring process— they needed to make sure they were screening candidates for the specific soft skills that would lead Google to success (see these below).

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While hard skills can be learned and developed, the soft skills of a potential hire are what could make or break the company. That's why it's important to focus on identifying which soft skills are most important for your role or your company and screen for them.

Here are the most important soft skills according to some top executives:

Google's Eric Schmidt looks for candidates with persistence and curiosity

Google is famous for its tough puzzles and hiring tests, but ex-CEO Eric Schmidt believes that persistence and curiosity are the most important soft skills that a candidate can have.

"I would suggest—and this has since been confirmed by many studies—that persistence is the single biggest predictor of future success," says Eric.

Eric is right that studies have shown [a major element of success, including creative thinking, boils down to showing up and never giving up.](#) Adam Grant, bestselling author and Wharton business professor, [sums up the same concept powerfully.](#)

"Persistence is one of the most important forces in success and happiness," says Grant. He mentions the many artists who brushed off early rejections and plowed ahead with their ideas. "If they had quit, Harry Potter, Disney, and the Beatles wouldn't exist."

For Eric, persistence is most powerful when it's paired with a genuine curiosity about the world and the way things work.

"The combination of persistence and curiosity is a very good predictor of employee success in a knowledge economy," says Eric.

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When it comes to screening for these traits, there are various ways you can go about it. For example, to determine persistency, you might ask the candidate to tell you about a time when they remained persistent even though everyone else around them had given up. For curiosity, you can ask them to give you an example of how they keep up with the industry—you want to feel that they have a desire to continue to learn and build their knowledge base.

Becca Brown, co-founder of Solemates, values communication and resourcefulness above all else

Becca Brown is the co-founder of Solemates, a Shark Tank-backed startup that sells heel protectors—but she learned some of her most useful recruiting lessons while working at Goldman Sachs after college.

"I interviewed anywhere from 20 to 30 job candidates a year," says Becca. "And this was the one trait I looked for in every candidate: Strong communication skills."

For Becca, the ability to communicate clearly is the foundation of success, at Goldman Sachs or in her own company. Communication skills also support another key soft skill for Goldman Sachs' hires—resourcefulness—which Becca defines as the ability to either answer a question, or commit to finding the answer quickly.

"One of the tenets of the culture at Goldman is resourcefulness, and communicating that resourcefulness to others," says Becca.

Becca isn't alone in her priorities, either—according to one study, more than 73% of employees consider written communication skills a must-have in the hiring process.

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Soft skills like communication and resourcefulness are notoriously difficult to screen for, but there are strategies that work. For example, for written communication, a writing sample is often the most useful test, although the candidate's emails can also provide some clues. And when you're measuring a candidate's verbal communication during an interview, don't forget to consider body language carefully.

Marcus Lemonis seeks out team players who know how to put their egos aside

We often picture the most successful leaders as standing above—and apart from—their employees, but Marcus Lemonis, investor and star of The Profit, rejects candidates who are too focused on their own success. Instead, he believes that top performers are team players who make the success of everyone around them a top priority.

"Most people think [business] is a race where they have to win," says Marcus."There's really not a winner or losers. It's about the company winning."

Marcus's approach comes from his strong belief that teams work more effectively than individuals. As a result, he prefers to hire candidates who know how to set aside their own egos to get the job done.

"[Egotistical employees] are setting the company up for failure," says Marcus. "They're setting themselves up for failure and they're potentially going to make a decision that's going to impact other people."

You can partly measure a candidate's ability to work with a team by asking questions about their previous experience with teams and colleagues, but Jonathan Roger, Operations Director at AndPlus, a software firm, has found a way to bake team skills into his hiring tests.
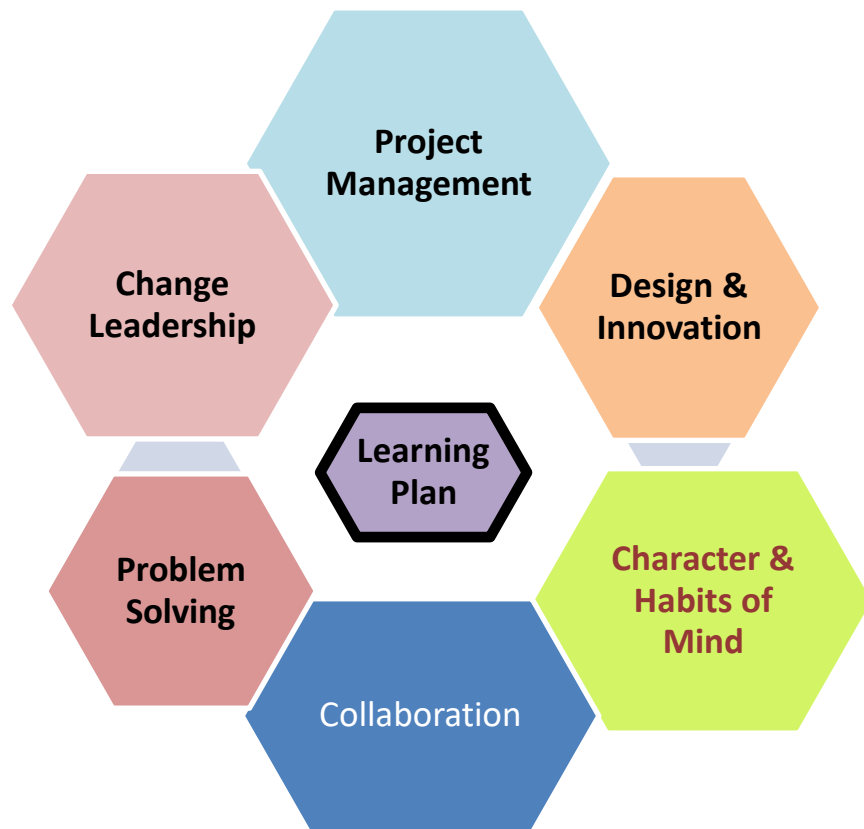
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"A key part of our interview process is having the candidate come in and build a simple application with a couple of our senior engineers," says Jonathan. "Some candidates grow frustrated when offered suggestions, which often leads to a no-hire decision. Candidates who are receptive to criticism and treat our engineers like resources and teammates, rather than annoyances, always seem to be our best team players."

In the end, there may not be one single trait that makes a great hire—finding the right person will always depend on the role and your company culture. But these leaders' favored traits can help you decide what truly matters in a crowded, changing landscape.

*Image by Mike McNally

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The hexagonal diagram shows "Learning Plan" in the center, surrounded by: Project Management, Change Leadership, Design & Innovation, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Character & Habits of Mind.

The top four skills needed to get a good job are: … The

Global Achievement Gap, Tony Wagner, co-director of the Change Leadership Group, Harvard School of Education

- Critical thinking and problem solving,
- Collaboration and leadership,
- Agility and adaptability,
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism

Most faculty understand the need to help students develop these abilities, but feel that they are being pushed into coming up with short-term strategies (such as grading rubrics) to improve student performance in the classroom at the expense of developing sustainable, higher order thinking skills.

Examples of the Soft-Skills:

- Work in Teams … Collaboration, decision making, brain writing

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- Communication Skills… Presenting yourself, empathy for the other person's view, customer focus, thinking with clarity and precision
- Problem framing and solving, understanding what is the true problem and tinkering with ways to solve the problem
- Habits of Mind … Persistence, problems as opportunities, finding humor, accuracy in your work, remain open to continuous learning
- Respectful dealing with others (Professionalism)
- Dialogue … 6 Hats How to create dialogue and not shouting matches.
- Entrepreneurships / Innovation, business processes
- Brain Plasticity … we continuously are able to learn new things
- Thinking skills … Questions, creative and critical thinking, meta-cognitive reflection and system thinking. Quality focus and feedback

Focus on education … Grow the bottom.

Content

Soft-skills

- **Job training**
- **Internships**
- **Technicians**
- **Apprenticeships**
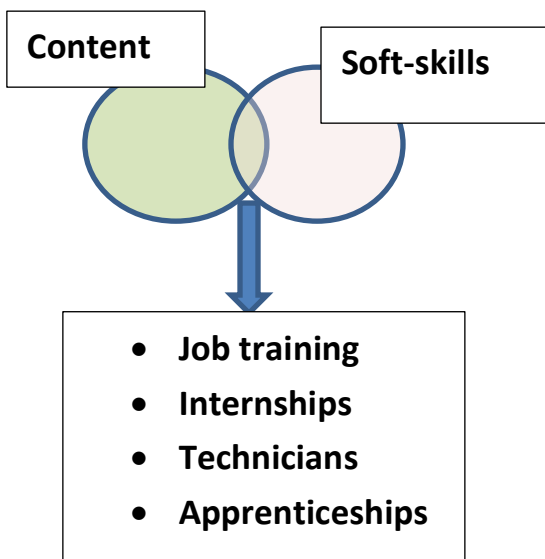
Implementation: hands on learning

- **Feed the World**
- **Power the World**
- **Heal the World**

From WPI

- Get a partnership with industry that provides career opportunity if we provide a person with good soft-skills. Retail stores, Warehouses, etc.
- Relationship with non-profits that focus on this area.

Course Details:

Session	Major area	Theme

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1	Introduction / Creating a learning collaborative in the classroom / pre-Assessment of their knowledge and thinking skill awareness	Attributes, Values, Teacher Skills and the relation to excellence in academics and the larger world of work. Developing the outcome goals for the class.
2	Work in teams	Part of Team Project …Collaboration, decision making, brain writing (brainstorming)
3	Problem framing and solving Empathy	Part of Hands on Learning … understanding what is the true problem and tinkering with ways to solve the problem
4	Creative and critical thinking skills around the design process	Learn the tools of brainstorming, brain-writing, and decision making for divergent and convergent processing skills
	Project Planning, Execution and Measurement	
5	Brain Plasticity • Carol Dweck, Ph.D • Claude M. Steele Ph.D Mindfulness	… we continuously are able to learn new things Two 30 minutes discussions spent on a single idea: **that the brain is a muscle**. Giving it a harder workout makes you smarter.
6	Habits of Mind	Built into projects and continuous discussion
7	Infusion of thinking skills	Create an appreciation for life-long learning by providing opportunities to develop creative and critical thinking skills
8	Dialogue	… 6 Hats How to create dialogue and not shouting matches. Using dialogue question
9	Professionalism	Respectful dealing with others

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10	Entrepreneurships / Innovation	Business processes… Persistence, **problems as opportunities**, finding humor, accuracy in your work, remain open to continuous learning
11	Conclusions, Self-Assessment Quality focus	Understand why you did certain things, What can you learn from your actions to improve How can you use data to improve?
12	Community support **Job training** • **Internships** • **Technicians** • **Apprenticeship**	• Get a partnership with industry that provides career opportunity if we provide a person with good soft-skills. Retail stores, Warehouses, etc. • Relationship with non-profits that focus on this area.

In her research, Duckworth examines two traits that predict success**: grit**, the tendency to sustain interest and effort in pursuing long-term goals, and **self control**, the regulation of behavioral, emotional and attentional impulses. To Duckworth, grit allows people to pursue challenges over the course of years. Self control, on the other hand, helps us battle "hourly temptations."

Reference Documents:

Habit of Mind

Persisting	5. **Metacognition**	9. **Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision**	13. **Taking responsible risks**
2. **Managing impulsivity**	6. **Striving for accuracy**	10. **Gather data through all senses**	14. Finding humor
3. **Listening with understanding and empathy**	7. Questioning and posing problems	11. **Creating, imagining and innovating**	15. Thinking interdependently
4. **Thinking flexibly**	8. **Applying past knowledge to new situations**	12. Responding with wonderment and awe	16. **Remaining open to continuous learning**

http://www.habitsofmind.org/content/back-back-strategy-used-enhance-habits-mind

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Another View		
Appreciation of beauty and excellence	Curiosity	Grit (persistence and resiliency)
Bravery	Fairness	Hope (optimism)
Citizenship	Forgiveness and mercy	Humility/modesty
Creativity	Gratitude	Humor
Integrity	Kindness	Leadership
Love	Love of Learning	Open-mindedness
Perspective	Prudence/discretion	Self-control
Social Intelligence	Spirituality	Zest (energy and enthusiasm

Course outline: The course will follow the **Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness** Approved by Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on February 26, 2013; Massachusetts Board of Higher Education on March 12, 2013.

All high school students should develop a foundation in the academic disciplines identified in the MassCore course of study,1 build competencies for workplace readiness as articulated in the Integrating College and Career Task Force Report,2 and focus on applying academic strategies to problem solving in diverse professional and life contexts, appropriate to individual student goals

1) Workplace Readiness
2) Work Ethic and Professionalism
3) Qualities and Strategies
4) Brain Plasticity
5) Problem definition and solving

Workplace Readiness

Student preparation for college and career should emphasize career awareness, exploration and immersion as well as development of the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to successfully navigate the workplace. College and career ready students will demonstrate:

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Work Ethic and Professionalism

- Attendance and punctuality expected by the workplace
- Workplace appearance appropriate for position and duties
- Accepting direction and constructive criticism with a positive attitude and Response
- Motivation and taking initiative, taking projects from initiation to completion
- Understanding workplace culture, policy and safety, including respecting confidentiality and workplace ethics Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills
- Oral and written communication appropriate to the workplace
- Listening attentively and confirming understanding
- Interacting with co-workers, individually and in teams3

Proficiency in these skills is common for success in all workplaces and should be viewed as the foundation upon which additional workplace and career skills are added based on the specifics of any job.

Qualities and Strategies

Preparation for college and career should help students develop a wide range of quantitative and qualitative abilities that go beyond the minimum levels of competence needed for entry-level college courses and employment. In high school, students should demonstrate:

- Higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation
- The ability to think critically, coherently, and creatively
- The ability to direct and evaluate their own learning, be aware of resources
- available to support their learning, and have the confidence to access these
- resources when needed.
- Motivation, intellectual curiosity, flexibility, discipline, self-advocacy, responsibility, and reasoned beliefs

Strengths of character … From The KIPP School

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Challenge! Zest

Zest: Actively participates. Shows enthusiasm. Approaches new situations with excitement and energy.

Challenge! Grit

Grit: Finishes what is begun. Sticks with a project or activity for more than a few weeks. Tries very hard even after experiencing failure. Stays committed to goals. Keeps working hard even when feeling like quitting

Challenge! Self Control (School Work)

Self Control (school work) - Comes to class prepared. Remembers and follows directions. Gets work done right away instead of waiting until the last minute. Pays attention and resists distractions. Works independently with focus

Challenge! Self Control (Interpersonal)

Self Control (interpersonal) - Remains calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked. Allows others to speak without interruption. Is polite to adults and peers. Keeps temper in check.

Challenge! Optimism

Optimism - Believes that effort will improve the future. When bad things happen, thinks about what could make it better next time. Stays motivated, even when things don't go well. Believes that you can improve on things you're not good at

Challenge! Gratitude

Gratitude - Notices when other people help. Shows appreciation for the good things in their life. Expresses appreciation by saying "thank you." Does something nice for someone else as a way of saying "thank you."

Challenge! Social Intelligence

Social Intelligence - Able to find solutions during conflicts with others. Shows that they care about other people's feelings. Adapts to different social situations

Challenge! Curiosity

Curiosity - Eager to explore new things. Asks questions to help learning. Takes an active interest in learning.

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Interpersonal Relationship

However talented the candidate may be, having interpersonal skills like the following will make him or her far more likely to succeed:

- Listening
- Relationship-building
- Collaboration

Problem Solving & Adaptability

These are essentially problem solving or cognitive abilities, such as:

- Analyzing and summarizing information
- Making decisions
- Adapting to change

Personal Values & Commitment

Your goal is to understand to what degree the applicant possesses:

- Integrity
- Respect for diversity
- Adherence to standards and policies

Engineering-Mind-Set

- Setting direction
- Managing change
- Motivating others

- Selecting and retaining talent
- Leading a team
- Holding others accountable

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
Identify the seven steps to solving a problem effectively
Practice solving work problems as an individual and as a member of a team

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Understand how the same problem-solving process works in many settings

Using Technology
Understand how technology has changed on the job in the past century
Successfully create a PowerPoint presentation, a basic Excel spreadsheet, and a blog using online research
Take a self inventory of technical skills

Time Management
Take a self inventory of time management skills and identify how to improve
Learn to discern urgent tasks from important tasks and plan accordingly
Identify common barriers to time management and how to overcome these barriers
Complete a personal time study in order to meet personal goals

Interviews
Understand the purpose of an interview
Identify different types of interviews
Prepare for and successfully experience a mock interview
Be able to write a thank you letter

Motivation
Define intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation
Complete a self-assessment to identify ways to increase self-motivation
Identify a specific goal and ways to keep motivated to achieve the goal

Work Ethic
Define 'work ethic'
Understand how your work ethic applies in the workplace

Listening
Understand how listening is different than hearing
Practice active listening techniques

Respect
Define 'respect'
Take a personal self-assessment of respect and identify if improvement is needed
Apply tips for increasing respect at work to various scenarios

Responsibility
Understand the concept of responsibility to self and in various groups
Take a personal self-assessment regarding responsibility
Critique workplace case scenarios

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Flexibility
Understand the concepts of flexibility and adaptability
Learn ways to show flexibility on the job
Critique workplace case scenarios

Interpersonal Skills
Understand what interpersonal skills are
Take a personal self-assessment of interpersonal skills
Apply interpersonal skills to work scenarios

Negotiation
Understand the 5 steps to the negotiation process
Learn tips to avoid and processes to try
Apply the 5-step negotiation process to work scenarios

Networking
Understand the process of networking and various channels available
Learn to apply networking to the employment process
Write a networking email seeking employment

Patience
Understand the physical signs of impatience
Learn to identify the root cause of impatience
Identify ways to improve patience at work

Presentation Skills
Learn how to deliver presentations more effectively
Learn ways to enhance PowerPoint presentations
Create and deliver a class presentation using the tips learned in this lesson

Self-Confidence
Take a self-assessment to consider personal levels of self-confidence
Learn ways to build self-confidence, especially at work
Learn to use positive self-talk to build self esteem

Stress Management
Learn to recognize the physical, emotional, and health-related signs of stress
Research and report ways to manage stress successfully
Learn to positively respond to stress

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