



Campus Life Building • Room 220 • DeKalb, Illinois 60115
Website: www.niu.edu/CareerServices
Phone: (815)753-1641
E-Mail: CareerServices@niu.edu

Characteristics Employers Seek in Candidates

What do employers want to see when they begin evaluating college candidates for employment? The entire package! The **Total Package** that a candidate should possess includes being academically prepared in their discipline as it pertains to their employment, plus:

THE TOTAL PACKAGE

Communication skills that demonstrate solid verbal, written, and listening abilities. The capstone is presentation skills that include the ability to respond to questions and seriously critique presentation materials.

Computer/Technical Aptitude based on the level required for the position being filled. Computer ability is now perceived as a core skill; right up there with reading, writing and mathematics. Basic skills expected include Word/WordPerfect, a spreadsheet application (Access or Excel) and PowerPoint.

Leadership involves the ability to take charge or relinquish control according to the needs of the organization. This is closely aligned with possessing management abilities.

Teamwork involves working cooperatively and collaboratively with different people while maintaining autonomous control over some projects.

Interpersonal abilities that allow a person to relate to others, inspire others to participate, or mitigate conflict between co-workers.

Personal traits. The shape of the above competencies are molded by a combination of personal traits. Specifically, candidates need to demonstrate initiative and motivation; the ability to be flexible and adaptable in order to handle change and ambiguity; hard-working (strong work ethic) and reliable; demonstrate honesty and integrity; and the ability to plan and organize multiple tasks.

THE WRAPPING

Several skills or experiences bind the package and are essential to holding it together. Without these skills, a candidate may not be able to deliver the package.

Critical thinking and problem solving involves the ability to identify problems and their solutions by integrating information from a variety of sources and effectively weigh alternatives.

Intelligence and common sense

Willingness to learn quickly and continuously.

Work related experiences that provided an understanding of the workplace and served to apply classroom learning.

From: Recruiting Trends, Michigan State University, Career Services & Placement, Collegiate Employment Research Institute