

## Qualifications - what do employers look for?

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When applying for jobs, it is important that you read through the job description thoroughly before submitting your application. A lot of what employers are actually looking for in their potential associate is written right in the job description and requirements. In fact, you should review your resume against the requirements listed in order to make sure you have covered everything the employer is looking for. If you can address all the requirements by the information in your resume or in your cover letter, you will be on the right track for getting the job.

However, there is a whole list of skills employers look for that are never spelled out in the job description. These skills are typically referred to as employability skills, which are skills beyond your technical knowledge and qualifications that make you a great professional in your field. Don't panic, you already have employability skills, you just may not think of them as critical for getting a job.

The employability skills have been grouped in eight categories:

- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Initiative and enterprise skills
- Planning and organizing skills
- Self-management
- Learning skills
- Technology skills

Now that you have read the categories, you are thinking to yourself, yes, I have those skills. But did you ever think to list them on the resume? Most people focus on their professional achievements and responsibilities, and they often skip these skills in favor of those that are job specific. However, more and more employers look for these skills in resumes. Your potential employer wants to know that you are a team player, that you communicate well, and will show initiative when needed. While you may think this is implied by your interest in the available position, employers like to see these skills called out on your resume or cover letter.

The best way to demonstrate these skills is through your experience and under your qualifications. Point out the initiatives you have participated in that required you to work in a team, under a deadline, or as a self-starter. Demonstrate your loyalty through pointing out your accomplishments at an organization and how they benefited your team as a whole (not just you). You can showcase the employability skills in your cover letter by openly showing your enthusiasm for the available position, stating your commitment to your career objective, indicating your motivation and your integrity, and showing that you are above all un-selfish and

credible. These skills are just as critical to your ability to do a great job as your professional experience and education – employers are looking for someone who will be a great fit on their team and in their organization, someone who works well under pressure but also has a sense of humor and has a balance between their personal and professional life.

Review your existing resume. Does it contain any employability skills? If not, make revisions to incorporate those employability skills you feel you excel in. If you are unsure, ask your friends or family for an objective opinion, so that you can get a better idea of how people around you see you as a person as well as a professional. Keep these attributes in mind as you compose your resume and your cover letter, and especially as you are taking part in interviews. These skills can make a difference between knowing how to do a job and being qualified to exceed goals and grow in your career.