

The Workplace

Volume 2, 16

August 30, 2001

A Fact Sheet

Highlights

Capabilities needed for reliable job performance include:

1. *Five workplace competencies*
 - *Utilizing Resources*
 - *Working with Others*
 - *Using Information*
 - *Understanding Systems*
 - *Working with Technology*
2. *Three-part foundation of skills*
 - *Basic Skills*
 - *Thinking Skills*
 - *Personal Qualities*

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Workplace Skills Needed by Today's Workers

The fundamental capabilities needed by a modern workforce for reliable job performance include five workplace competencies and a three-part foundation of skills

<i>WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES</i>	
Utilizing Resources	Having the ability to allocate time, money, materials, space and staff
Working with Others	Possessing the skills and desire to participate in teams; teach others; serve customers; lead; negotiate; and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds
Using Information	Knowing how to acquire and evaluate data; organize and maintain files; interpret and communicate; and use computers to process information
Understanding Systems	Comprehending social, organizational, and technical systems; monitor and correct performance; design or improve systems
Working with Technology	Knowing the equipment and tools to select; applying technology to specific tasks; maintain and troubleshoot equipment
<i>FOUNDATIONS SKILLS</i>	
Basic Skills	Having the ability to communicate, i.e., read, write, speak and listen; arithmetic and math; and science
Thinking Skills	Being able to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and solve problems
Personal Qualities	Having self-esteem and integrity; being responsible and sociable; and the ability to take responsibility for and manage self

Alabama, along with rest of the nation, is becoming more and more global. Globalization brings change—the type of work performed in the modern workplace requires high-skilled jobs, thereby lessening the need for low-skilled workers. The workforce of today and the coming decades needs skills to cope with increasingly complex technology.

Communities all across the country, including Alabama, worry about their economic future. The two greatest concerns of employers today are finding good workers and training them. High schools, post-secondary institutions, and colleges should prepare young people to exceed and compete in a demanding economy.

In most communities the jobs of the future will likely require these competencies and skills. But, sadly many complete their education—high school, post-secondary or technical school, or college—lacking fundamental competencies sought by employers. It is not uncommon that a high school diploma is regarded as a certificate of attendance because of the many students who did not work hard in high school.

To succeed in a high-performance workplace, workers must have a solid foundation. Workers must have the basic literacy and computational skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job.

Simply having the knowledge of and the ability to perform these skills, however, are often not enough. Workers need the thinking skills vital to putting the basic skills to work. The ability to think, reason, and make sound decisions is crucial for employees desiring to do well and advance. A person who can think critically, act logically, and evaluate situations to make decisions and solve problems, is a valuable asset. Application of higher order thinking skills in the use of technology, instruments, tools and information systems takes these higher order skills to a new level making the employee even more valuable. Employers will usually try to help valued employees seek and get more advanced training, thus widening the gap between

those with higher order skills and those possessing basic academic skills alone.

Having desirable personal qualities is equally, if not more, important than having a good basic foundation and critical thinking skills. Regardless of ability, it is difficult in most jobs to utilize workers effectively who lack personal skills. Entry-level employees with good personal skills have

“Having desirable personal qualities is . . . more important than having a good basic foundation and critical thinking skills.”

confidence in themselves and deal with others honestly and openly, displaying respect for themselves, their co-workers, and their supervisors regardless of other people’s diversity and individual differences. They view themselves as a part of a team and are willing to work within the culture of the group. They have a positive attitude and take the initiative to learn new things to get the job done. Rather than blaming others when things go wrong, they are accountable for their actions. They also have the ability to set goals and priorities in their work and personal lives so that resources of time, money and other resources may be conserved and managed. These individuals practice good personal habits, come to work as scheduled, on time and dressed appropriately, and are agreeable to change when necessary.

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