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Annual Survey Reveals Importance of Applied Technology Skills to Employers
Hiring Managers Receptive to Non-Traditional Students

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill. – Mar. 14, 2018 – The Career Advisory Board, established by DeVry University, today announced the results of its seventh annual Job Preparedness Indicator (JPI). This year's study explored how nearly 500 U.S.-based hiring managers view two emerging topics: managing the technology skills gap and evaluating non-traditional students as job candidates. The findings:

- Employers identify the need for applied technology skills – the competency to leverage the right technology for employees to successfully perform their jobs.
- When hiring, employers prefer candidates with applied technology skills.
- Employers are becoming receptive to non-traditional students--those who may have attended college later in life, part-time or while raising a family.

The applied technology skills that are among the most relevant in the workforce today include the ability to use data to make appropriate decisions and draw logical conclusions, the ability to employ data analytics to improve margins, profitability and processes, and how to utilize available IT resources.

According to the JPI, 76 percent of respondents cited the desire for organizational leaders to have a demonstrated applied technology skillset and experience, and more than half stated those skills are needed in the operations and administrative functions. From a talent acquisition perspective, 69 percent of the hiring managers agreed that having an applied technology skillset and experience were competitive differentiators amongst job candidates.

Yet, despite a demonstrated need among employers, applied technology skills are still relatively uncommon in today's overall candidate pool. Knowledge of data analytics, for instance, was among the least common skillsets at the entry, middle and senior levels.

Organizations recognize it's their responsibility to continuously train and retrain employees on applied technology skills. According to the survey, 75 percent are taking action from offering internal courses to tuition reimbursement for outside training.

Other Key Findings in the 2017 Job Preparedness Indicator

Non-Traditional Students
The Career Advisory Board speculated that employer attitudes towards non-traditional students were changing, and the JPI findings revealed this to be the case.

- Half of those surveyed reported their organizations have increased hiring of non-traditional students and graduates. Of that group, 32 percent of the hiring managers perceive these graduates to have a stronger work ethic, and 43 percent said skills gaps in the traditional talent pool have prevented them from filling positions.

- More than 60 percent of hiring managers said non-traditional candidates are common in their talent pools; 72 percent of those hiring for senior-level positions said the same.

- Although, nearly 70 percent of hiring managers agreed if a candidate has the right skills, it doesn't matter what type or format of education was used to gain them.

Advice for Job Seekers

- **Know the target position inside and out**: To help stand out from other job candidates, be sure to showcase your experience that directly relates to the job description. Be prepared to tell your interviewers exactly how you have solved similar challenges – with excellent results. Practice your narrative until you can articulate it concisely.

- **Build your data sense:** The research illustrated that data analytics skills are needed, yet are uncommon in candidates at every level. With applied technology skills as an identified competitive differentiator, job candidates should learn to collect and manipulate data from disparate sources and derive key strategic insights.

- **Be confident about your differences:** Hiring managers want to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to their workforces. Be sure to explain how the organization will benefit from having an employee with your special combination of grit, determination, resilience, and resourcefulness.

"Since our first JPI study in 2011, we've seen a trend with employers desiring candidates in all industries and roles who come with a solid understanding of how to integrate people, process, data, and devices to effectively make business decisions," said Alexandra Levit, chair of DeVry University's Career Advisory Board. "With employers needing to close the skills gap and their desire for a more diverse workplace, we believe non-traditional students who can demonstrate their applied tech skillset will be at a competitive advantage in today's job market."

To read the research report and expert commentary, visit www.careeradvisoryboard.org

About the Career Advisory Board
Established in 2010 by DeVry University, the Career Advisory Board is comprised of leading representatives from business and academia who deliver valuable insights on today's most important career trends and provide actionable advice for job seekers. The Career Advisory Board generates original research and commentary, and creates tools, insights and resources to prepare job seekers for success. Its members include executives from DeVry University, Google, Apple, GE, US Cellular, and LinkedIn, as well as nationally recognized career experts. For more information, visit CareerAdvisoryBoard.org.

Survey Methodology

The 2017 Job Preparedness Indicator research was conducted online within the United States by DeVry University on behalf of the Career Advisory Board in November 2017. Survey respondents included 491 US-based individuals (55 percent male, 44 percent female) with full-time positions at the director level or above, in companies with more than 10 employees (mean company size was moderately large at 7,000). Most frequently in the education, financial services, and healthcare industries, our respondents' primary job responsibilities include management of staff, hiring employees, and human resources management. Sixty-four percent of respondents hire entry-level professionals, 78 percent hire mid-level professionals, and 46 percent hire senior-level professionals/executives.

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