



Presented by DeVry University



Research Report – Career Advisory Board Job Preparedness Indicator

October 16, 2012

Created by: The Career Advisory Board, presented by DeVry University, and Harris Interactive

Interviewing: July 10 - 24, 2012

Respondents: 541 U.S. adults aged 18+ and 516 Hiring Managers

Methodology

The Career Advisory Board Job Preparedness Indicator survey was conducted online within the United States between July 10 - 24, 2012 among 541 US adults aged 18 and up who are looking for work (“job seekers”) and 516 employed US adults, with titles of Director and above or HR manager, with responsibility for hiring decisions within a company with Fortune 1000-equivalent annual revenue (“hiring managers”). Results from the study were weighted as needed for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and household income to align them with their actual proportions in the population among job seekers and by company size among hiring managers to align them with their actual proportions among US businesses and international corporations with US operations.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Please note that due to rounding, calculated scores may appear to be a point off and that not all percentages will necessarily add up to 100%.

Overview

In the current job market, the number of applicants outnumbers the available positions. Hiring managers believe they face a dearth of appropriately qualified applicants, while applicants may be struggling to catch the eye of hiring managers. Such disparity leads to inefficiencies in the job market, leaving qualified job seekers and companies alike to fall short of their full potential. It is vitally important that job seekers meet the demands of hiring managers, since the hiring managers can afford to be very selective. Thus our goal for this research is to understand the causes and consequences of the gap in the job market in order to better align job seekers and hiring managers.

Hiring managers tend to rely on experience and instinct to evaluate candidates and the skills needed to be successful in a given position. They expect entry candidates to demonstrate basic skills that will provide a foundation. As job seekers aim to grow into higher levels of their organization they begin to require credentials—experience, references and appropriate education. They also require high-level skills—strategic thinking and global outlook – that underlie leadership. Hiring managers need cross functional and flexible employees, especially given the drive to increase worker productivity to keep costs low. In the coming years, hiring managers believe workers need to be technologically savvy and global-minded to perform in the workplace. Ultimately, few hiring managers say job seekers have the skills and experience their company is looking for, nor do hiring managers believe that our education system prepares individuals well for today's workforce.

Job seekers often spend considerable time reading job descriptions to make sure they are a good fit, keep a resume that they tailor to each job opportunity for which they apply, and prepare for interviews by practicing answers to likely interview questions. Yet, half are reluctant to apply for a job if they fully lack experience and often leave information off their resume or application. Although job seekers are confident they know what hiring managers are looking for and where to get help for developing professional skills, they would rather rely on their own experience to determine what to put on an application or resume rather than seeking advice. Job seekers tend to look for stability in employment, especially if they lack confidence in the future of the US job market. Yet stable employment may elude job seekers if they do not align themselves with the expectations of hiring managers.

Lastly, this study looked at looked both the importance of job skills/traits to hiring managers and how common hiring managers feel these skills and traits are among job seekers¹. These two metrics, importance and commonality, were then combined to create an Indicator Score for each skill and trait which indicates the *value* of each skill/trait, determined by the skill/trait's level of importance and how rare hiring managers say it is among job seekers.

Overall, it is clear there are tremendous hurdles due to the misalignment of job seekers and hiring managers. Helping job seekers find a way to get their skills more in line with what hiring managers are looking for is a key step in this process. Job seekers can take advantage of the Indicator Score better position themselves to successfully find sought-after employment.

¹ * Throughout this report, "importance" and "commonality" of job skills and traits refer to question directly asked of hiring managers. Similarly, job seekers were asked to describe themselves on the job skills and traits. The "value" refers to the Indicator Score which was created in analysis by combining hiring managers' responses to both the job skills/traits' importance and commonality. See Appendix B for a full description of how the Indicator Score was constructed.

Job Preparedness Indicator

Skill Importance

The following tables show the 15 job skills/traits tested in terms of importance to hiring managers and how well job seekers feel the job skill/trait describes themselves. Both questions employ max-diff exercises.* Answers are scaled from 0 to 100 points (0 being the lowest possible score; 100 being the highest score) describing level of importance to hiring managers or quality of job seeker self-description. Negative gaps have been noted in red in the tables throughout.

[*See Appendix A for full questionnaire; Appendix B for description of max-diff exercises.]

Job Skills/Traits for Entry Level, Ranked on Importance to Hiring Managers

	Importance to Hiring Managers (n=516)	Entry Level Job Seekers Self-Description (n=188)	2012 GAP**	2011 GAP**
Strong base work ethic/dependable	74	80	6	3
Ability to work well with others	61	58	-4	-5
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	56	60	4	-11
Flexibility	43	37	-6	5
High integrity	43	67	24	27
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	41	55	13	4
Accountability	37	52	15	13
A good understanding of technology	32	27	-5	0
Problem solving	32	52	20	15
Interpersonal skills	31	26	-5	-5
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	30	40	10	11
Ability to network effectively	9	10	1	3
Business acumen	8	5	-3	-3
Strategic perspective	6	17	11	7
Global outlook	4	7	3	4

** "GAP" is the difference between the self-description among job seekers and importance to hiring managers

As the table shows, when looking to fill entry level positions, hiring managers place primary importance on rudimentary skills and traits that clearly relate to a person's ability to integrate successfully into the position. Obviously, someone who is willing to work hard, works well with others and displays a high level of self-initiative is likely to succeed in new position.

Job seekers at this level largely describe themselves with skills and traits hiring managers feel are important. Notably, the largest negative gap is on "flexibility," indicating that job seekers at this level could benefit from recognizing how vital this is to potential employers and seeking ways to highlight this during the job search process.

There are a few shifts relative to 2011 when it comes to the gap between entry-level job seekers and hiring managers. The positive gap in strong base work ethic grew due to a decrease in the importance

placed on this skill by hiring managers relative to the number of job seekers who described themselves with this skill. However the increase in gaps for good time management and self-motivation were driven by an increase in job seekers who described themselves with this skill.

The gap in flexibility moved from a small positive gap to a small negative gap in 2012. This reflects a decrease in the number of entry level job seekers describing themselves as flexible while the importance given to this trait by hiring managers grew slightly. Job seekers should capitalize on this as a way to differentiate themselves from their peers in this high-value trait.

Job Skills/Traits for Mid-Level, Ranked on Importance to Hiring Managers

	Importance to Hiring Managers (n=516)	Mid-Level Job Seekers Self-Description (n=243)	2012 GAP	2011 GAP
Problem solving	51	53	2	1
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	44	49	5	10
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	43	51	9	4
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	42	54	12	15
Accountability	41	49	8	8
High integrity	41	66	25	30
Interpersonal skills	35	34	-1	-8
Ability to work well with others	32	56	24	19
Strong base work ethic/dependable	31	76	45	49
Business acumen	27	7	-20	-19
Flexibility	20	35	14	19
Ability to network effectively	17	10	-7	-6
Strategic perspective	17	15	-2	-6
A good understanding of technology	15	30	14	15
Global outlook	7	4	-3	-4

For mid-level candidates, hiring managers show an interest in finding candidates who can navigate the tricky position of being between top management and ground-level employees. It is likely felt that people who are good problem-solvers and strong communicators help maintain an efficient organization and may be able to grow into future leadership positions. However, it should be noted that more complicated, higher level traits such as strategic perspective, global outlook and business acumen still fall to the bottom of the list when compared to other job skills/traits, possibly showing that hiring managers feel these qualities are acquired over time.

Encouragingly, job seekers searching for mid-level positions see themselves in terms that accord well with what hiring managers view as important. No negative gaps are seen until the 7th ranked job skill/trait, and the negative gaps cluster toward the bottom of the rankings. However, it is interesting to note here a large *positive* gap for strong base work ethic/dependable; indeed, this is the trait ranked highest among self-descriptions for mid-level job seekers. In this case, mid-level job seekers may do well

to concentrate more on ensuring their well-established problem-solving and time management skills come across during the interview process, rather than their drive.

Again there are a few notable changes relative to 2011. The positive gaps in the highly valued skills of good time management and strong communication shrank in 2012, driven by a decrease in the number of job seekers describing themselves with these traits. Although job seekers are bringing themselves more in line with hiring managers' expectations, there is certainly room for improvement.

Job Skills/Traits for Managerial/Executive Level, Ranked on Importance to Hiring Managers

	Importance to Hiring Managers (n=516)	Managerial/Exec Job Seekers Self-Description (n=110)	2012 GAP	2011 GAP
Strategic perspective	77	23	-54	-57
High integrity	65	66	1	5
Global outlook	53	4	-49	-47
Business acumen	53	15	-38	-45
Accountability	40	43	3	2
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	37	52	16	19
Problem solving	26	57	31	40
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	24	61	37	32
Ability to network effectively	22	10	-12	-15
Interpersonal skills	21	28	7	7
Strong base work ethic/dependable	20	75	56	58
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	18	49	31	24
Ability to work well with others	13	42	29	33
Flexibility	9	26	17	17
A good understanding of technology	6	29	23	21

At the managerial/executive level, the most obvious breakdown emerges between what hiring managers consider important and how job seekers see themselves. Hiring managers place the highest importance on big-picture skills/traits such as strategic perspective, global outlook and business acumen, yet job seekers do not view themselves strongly in these terms. Instead, managerial/executive job seekers are most apt to describe themselves with job skills or traits that are more sought after by hiring managers for lower level positions, such as strong base work ethic/dependable and self-motivated. Luckily the two groups do coalesce for the trait high integrity, with job seekers often attributing this trait to themselves and hiring managers finding it to be very important.

Worse, the negative gap here is enormous: of the four most important job skills/traits, three have gaps of -38 or worse, far larger than any of the negative gaps seen for entry and mid-level job seekers. This shows that job seekers pursuing managerial/executive positions are by their own admission unqualified.

However it is notable that the gaps several of the most important skills/traits have diminished somewhat since 2011. The importance of business acumen has devalued slightly by hiring managers,

while fewer executive-level job seekers chose to define themselves as problem solving, one of the key mid-level skills. On the other hand, executive level job seekers were more apt to describe themselves as having good time management skills—another mid-level skill—than they were in 2011 causing the gap to increase.

The question then becomes: are job seekers at this level truly ill-suited to the jobs they are after, or are they ignorant of what hiring managers for these positions are looking for?

An answer emerges in the following table:

Job Skills/Traits for All Levels, Ranked on Self-Description for Managerial/Executive Job Seekers - 2012

	Managerial/Exec Job Seekers Self-Description (n=110)	Mid-Level Job Seekers Self- Description (n=243)	Entry Level Job Seekers Self- Description (n=188)
Strong base work ethic/dependable	75	76	80
High integrity	66	66	67
Self-motivated/High degree of initiative	61	54	60
Problem solving	57	53	52
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	52	51	40
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	49	49	55
Accountability	43	49	52
Ability to work well with others	42	56	58
A good understanding of technology	29	30	27
Interpersonal skills	28	34	26
Flexibility	26	35	37
Strategic perspective	23	15	17
Business acumen	15	7	5
Ability to network effectively	10	10	10
Global outlook	4	4	7

As the table shows, there is little difference in how job seekers describe themselves across the three separate levels. It may be that higher-level job seekers are stuck on the job skills and traits that first won them entry into the professional world, when they were most likely interviewing and job searching the hardest. Since that point, they have not considered what new job skills/traits they have gained. Lastly, this could mean that upper-level job seekers are falling too much into the rut of looking at how the positions can fit them, rather than how they can fit the positions.

Clearly, it would be invaluable to encourage job seekers to consider what new skills and traits they have gained throughout their professional life, and what skills/traits would be most important as they move up (or even laterally) in the professional world.

Job Preparedness Indicator: Hiring Managers and Job Seekers

The following tables show the same 15 job skills/traits tested in terms of their value. Value here is determined by a combination of how important hiring managers view these skills/traits in relation to each and how common the hiring managers feel these job skills/traits are among job seekers at the entry, mid, and managerial/executive level. Essentially, the more important a skill/trait is and the rarer it is, the higher its overall score*. As in the previous tables, answers were then scaled from 0 to 100 points, with 0 representing the lowest possible value score and 100 representing the highest. Again, the gap is given between the Indicator Score from hiring managers and the job seekers' self-descriptions.

[*See Appendix B for full description of how the Indicator Score was developed.]

Indicator Score for Entry Level and Job Seeker Self-Description, Ranked on Indicator Score

	Indicator Score for Entry Level (n=516)	Entry Level Job Seekers Self-Description (n=188)	2012 GAP	2011 GAP
Strong base work ethic/dependable	59	80	21	20
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	51	60	9	-4
Ability to work well with others	50	58	8	8
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	47	55	8	-2
Accountability	46	52	6	6
Global outlook	45	7	-38	-38
Flexibility	44	37	-7	3
Strategic perspective	44	17	-27	-31
High integrity	43	67	24	25
Problem solving	42	52	10	7
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	42	40	-3	0
Business acumen	40	5	-35	-35
Interpersonal skills	39	26	-13	-10
A good understanding of technology	38	27	-10	-4
Ability to network effectively	37	10	-26	-26

The Indicator Score for entry level job seekers reveals basic skills and traits such as a strong work ethic and good time management can be overall considered of the highest value. Notably, the top two Indicator Score skills/traits, strong base work ethic/dependable and self-motivated/high degree of initiative are two out of just three skills/traits that a majority of hiring managers feel cannot really be learned: 60% of hiring managers say this about a strong work ethic and 69% say the same for self-motivation (68% also say this of high integrity).¹ This makes it crucial that entry level job seekers make sure they exemplify these skills and traits during the hiring process. Further, taking advantage of traits highly valued due to rarity, such as higher level skills/traits of a global outlook and strategic perspective, can differentiate a job seeker at this level from their competitors.

The gap between the indicator score and job seekers' evaluation has grown for several of the key skills/traits. Most notably, self-motivation and good time management shifted to a positive gap, indicating job seekers are overusing this trait to a degree. In conjunction with the other top skills/traits having a positive gap, it indicates job seekers should aim to diversify themselves to make sure they are truly standing out from their peers at the entry level.

Indicator Score for Mid-Level and Job Seeker Self-Description, Ranked on Indicator Score

	Indicator Score for Mid-Level (n=516)	Mid-Level Job Seekers Self-Description (n=243)	2012 GAP	2011 GAP
Problem solving	44	53	9	8
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	42	51	10	7
Accountability	41	49	8	10
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	41	49	8	13
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	39	54	15	20
Interpersonal skills	39	34	-5	-9
Business acumen	38	7	-31	-28
High integrity	38	66	28	30
Global outlook	37	4	-33	-34
Strategic perspective	37	15	-22	-27
Ability to work well with others	34	56	22	18
Strong base work ethic/dependable	33	76	43	48
Ability to network effectively	32	10	-22	-21
Flexibility	32	35	2	4
A good understanding of technology	29	30	0	0

Problem solving and strong communication skills emerge as the top two skills/traits among mid-level job seekers. In addition, accountability and good time management tie for a third place spot in terms of their value. In general, mid-level job seekers see positive gaps between the value given to these skills/traits by hiring managers and their self-description.

Of interest, the top two Indicator Score skills/traits, problem solving and strong communication skills, are skills/traits that hiring managers feel can be learned, equally as well in a professional as in an academic environment. Sixty three percent of hiring managers say this about strong communication skills, and 62% report that problem solving can learned, either on the job or at school.ⁱⁱ This indicates that mid-level job seekers can increase their attractiveness in the eyes of potential employers by making it clear that they possess these traits and are eager to develop them on the job as well.

It should also be noted that, as with entry level job seekers, higher level skills/traits such as having a global outlook and business acumen, can help a mid-level job seeker stand out from the rest of the pack and draw the attention of employers. Given these are key skills/traits in the next level up, this could provide a tremendous benefit to mid-level job seekers.

Comparing the gaps from 2011, very few notable changes exist. Where they do appear, they tend to indicate the gap closing, showing mid-level job seekers and hiring managers are aligning, although there is certainly room for improvement.

Indicator Score for Managerial Level and Job Seeker Self-Description, Ranked on Indicator Score

	Indicator Score for Managerial/ Executive (n=540)	Managerial/Executive Job Seekers Self-Description (n=156)	2012 GAP	2011 GAP
Strategic perspective	52	23	-29	-31
High integrity	48	66	18	19
Global outlook	44	4	-40	-38
Business acumen	40	15	-24	-28
Accountability	35	43	8	5
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	32	52	20	26
A good understanding of technology	29	29	0	-4
Problem solving	29	57	28	37
Interpersonal skills	29	28	-1	-1
Flexibility	27	26	-2	-4
Ability to work well with others	26	42	16	20
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	26	49	23	17
Ability to network effectively	26	10	-15	-18
Strong base work ethic/dependable	25	75	50	51
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	24	61	37	35

For managerial/executive job seekers, hiring managers are hungriest for candidates who demonstrate qualities inherent to leading an organization. Three out of the top four Indicator Scores are given to skills/traits that exemplify high level leadership: strategic perspective, global outlook and business acumen. However, there again is a striking negative gap between these traits and how managerial/executive level job seekers describe themselves. Encouragingly, hiring managers view many of these skills as possible to pick up on the jobⁱⁱⁱ:

- 47% of hiring managers say a strategic perspective can best be learned in a professional environment; however, an additional 39% say it can be learned equally well in an academic or professional setting; only 4% feel it is a skill/trait that cannot really be learned.
- 39% of hiring managers say a global outlook can be learned in a professional environment and 42% say it can be learned equally well in an academic or professional setting; just 5% feel it is a skill/trait that cannot really be learned.
- 53% of hiring managers say business acumen can be mostly learned in a professional environment and 35% say it can be learned equally well in an academic or professional setting; a mere 3% feel it is a skill/trait that cannot really be learned.

These numbers make it clear that managerial/executive job seekers would benefit enormously from discussing their higher level skills that they have developed, in addition to stressing their ability to grow and adapt while on the job itself.

When comparing the gaps to 2011, again we find that there are few notable shifts but where they exist, they tend to indicate that gaps between executive-level job seekers and hiring managers are narrowing.

Overall Importance, Indicator Score and Job Seeker Self-Description, Ranked on Indicator Score

	Overall Importance to Hiring Managers (n=516)	Overall Indicator Score (n=516)	All Job Seekers Self-Description (n=541)	2012 GAP between Indicator Score and JS Self-Descrip.	2011 GAP between Indicator Score and JS Self-Descrip.
Strategic perspective	33	44	18	-26	-30
High integrity	50	43	66	23	25
Global outlook	22	42	5	-37	-37
Accountability	39	41	48	7	7
Business acumen	29	39	9	-30	-30
Strong base work ethic/dependable	42	39	77	38	40
Strong communication (i.e., written and verbal) skills	36	39	48	9	11
Problem solving	36	38	54	16	18
Self motivated/High degree of initiative	41	38	58	21	17
Good time management skills (e.g., multitasking, organizational ability)	34	38	51	13	9
Ability to work well with others	36	37	52	15	15
Interpersonal skills	29	35	29	-6	-7
Flexibility	24	35	33	-2	1
A good understanding of technology	18	32	28	-4	-3
Ability to network effectively	16	32	10	-21	-22

Above is the overall importance, Indicator Score and job seeker self-description for the job skills/traits. When comparing to the 2011 data, there are no notable changes in gaps between job seekers and the indicator score. It is revealing to note that high-level skills/traits are highly valued, the top skill/trait on importance is high integrity. Given how closely high integrity can track with both loyalty and dedication this is no surprise.

Top 5 Skills/Traits According to the Job Preparedness Indicator: 2011 and 2012

	2011 Overall Job Preparedness Indicator- Top 5	2011 Overall Job Seeker Self-Description	2012 Overall Job Preparedness Indicator – Top 5	2012 Overall Job Seeker Self-Description
Strategic perspective	44	15	44	18
High integrity	43	68	43	66
Global outlook	42	5	42	5
Accountability	41	47	41	48
Business acumen	40	10	39	9

Despite changes in the gaps between job seekers and hiring managers at various levels, when it comes down to the top 5 skills and traits most important at all levels to hiring managers but believed to be least common, little has changed since 2011.

Detailed Findings

1.) How do hiring managers and job seekers see the future of the job market?

Hiring managers and job seekers alike are reluctant to believe the US job market will improve over the coming year. Many say their confidence, or lack thereof, is tied to the outcome of the 2012 election. This lack of confidence on the part of hiring managers is further evidenced by the need to hire fewer employees while increasing productivity. Meanwhile, job seekers who lack confidence in the job market tend to seek stability in employment.

- Nearly a third (32%) of hiring managers and a similar proportion of job seekers (30%) are not at all confident that the US job market will improve in the next year.^{iv}
- Hiring managers in rural or suburban areas are half as likely as their urban counterparts to be extremely or very confident (12% versus 26%).^v
 - Similarly, 33% of rural or suburban job seekers are not at all confident in the future of the job market compared to 20% of urban job seekers.^{vi}
- Two in five hiring managers (40%) say that their confidence in the job market depends a lot or a tremendous amount on the outcome of the next election. Thirty-six percent of job seekers said the same.^{vii}
- In addition to their pessimistic outlook on the future of the job market, 84% of hiring managers say their company is trying to hire fewer employees while increasing productivity in order to keep costs low.^{viii}
 - Sixty percent of hiring managers believe employees tend to stay with their company for longer now than they did five years ago.
 - Further, nearly all hiring managers (96%) say it is becoming increasingly important to find candidates that can easily take on new responsibilities as needed.
- For job seekers not at all confident about the future of the job market, 31% say they are looking for positions more likely to be stable in their job search.^{ix}

2.) What is the role of education in job preparedness?

In general, job seekers have more confidence than hiring managers that their education has prepared them well for the job market. However, hiring managers responsible for filling managerial-level positions, as well as managerial level job seekers, are more likely to have positive attitudes towards the education system's ability to prepare individuals. Such alignment indicates that the educational system may be failing to provide the skills job seekers need to secure their first jobs, but prepares them for growth once they get a start on their career.

- Over three in five (63%) job seekers believe their education prepared them well for today's job market.^x
 - Job seekers who are looking for employment at the managerial level are more likely than their entry level colleagues to believe their education prepared them well (70% managerial level; 57% entry level).

- Significantly fewer hiring managers (48%) believe the education system prepares individuals well for today's job market.^{xi}
 - Nearly three in five (57%) of hiring managers responsible for managerial level candidates believed the education system prepares individuals well, compared to 43% of those hiring office admin/entry level positions.

3.) What is the role of experience in job preparedness?

Many hiring managers recognize situations where job seekers need experience they can only get on the job in order to be hired in the first place. For their part, job seekers are very eager to develop skills on the job if they did not have the necessary experience to begin with. While that enthusiasm is sufficient for entry level positions, hiring managers expect the job seekers at the mid or managerial levels to come with the appropriate experience. Still, half of job seekers (51%) would not apply to a job if they did not have at least some directly related experience, suggesting that many would hesitate to jump into a position they felt wholly unqualified for.

Both hiring managers and job seekers agree that some skills are best learned in a professional environment, including business acumen, strategic perspective and efficient networking. Further they believe some foundational skills could be learned either in a professional or academic environment, including good time management, communication, problem solving and a good understanding of technology.

- A majority of hiring managers (72%) believe job seekers may find themselves applying for jobs that require skills and experiences that can only be acquired after being hired for the job.^{xii}
- Nearly all job seekers (95%) agree that if they don't have the experience necessary for a position they apply for, they would be eager to develop those skills on-the-job.^{xiii}
 - Over three quarters (77%) of hiring managers would be highly likely to hire someone for an entry level position if they lacked the necessary skills but appeared eager to learn them on the job.^{xiv}
 - However, only 33% of hiring managers say the same of a mid-level candidate, and just 12% say the same about a managerial level candidate.^{xv}
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- Hiring managers in 2012 more often say they are extremely/very likely to hire someone at a mid-level position who lacked the necessary skills but appeared eager to learn those necessary skills on the job. (33% in 2012; 22% in 2011).^{xvi}
 - In 2012, hiring managers less often said they were not at all likely to hire a managerial/executive candidate who fit this description (59% in 2012; 72% in 2011).^{xvii}
- Half of job seekers (51%) say that if they don't have experience that mirrors a job, they won't apply for it.^{xviii}
- Many job seekers and hiring managers believe there are certain skills that can only be learned through experience in a professional environment:^{xix}
 - Business acumen (53% hiring managers; 46% job seekers)
 - Strategic perspective (47% hiring managers; 31% job seekers)
 - Ability to network effectively (46% hiring managers; 32% job seekers)

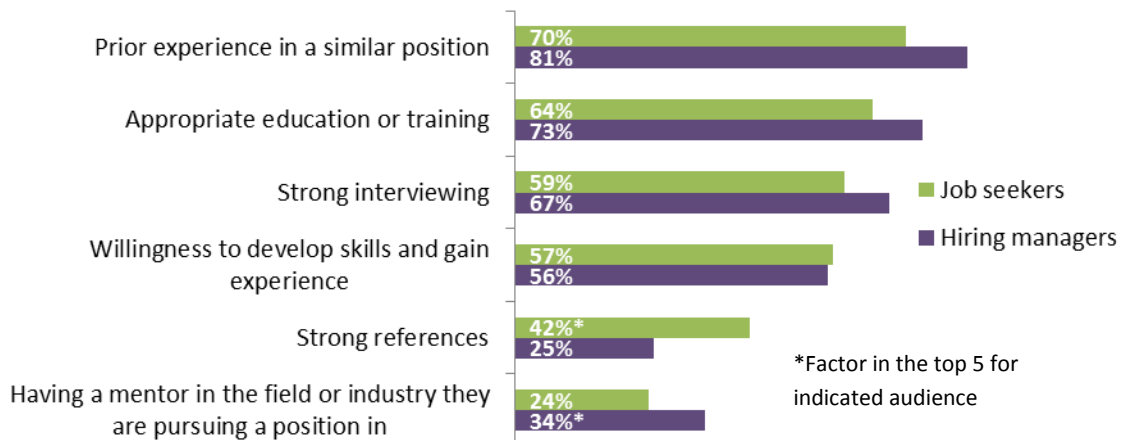
- Hiring managers and job seekers conclude that many skills can be learned equally as well in a professional or academic environment:^{xx}
 - Good time management (54% hiring managers; 58% job seekers)
 - Strong communication (63% hiring managers; 60% job seekers)
 - Problem solving (62% hiring managers; 60% job seekers)
 - A good understanding of technology (68% hiring managers; 65% job seekers)

4.) What makes for an ideal candidate?

Hiring managers express difficulty in finding candidates with the right skills and traits for their company. This scarcity of qualified candidates is especially evident at the managerial level. Although hiring managers place substantial importance on the use of references as a means for evaluating managerial candidates, they indicate references are only a piece of the puzzle for job seekers looking to land a desirable job. Both hiring managers and job seekers agree on four critical skills/traits that are most likely to help a job seeker land a desirable job, although job seekers were less focused on such skills.

- Just 17% of hiring managers say nearly all or most job seekers have the skills and traits their company is looking for in a candidate.^{xxi}
- For those hiring managers with responsibility for managerial level candidates, one in five (20%) say very few job seekers have the necessary skills and traits, compared to 13% of hiring managers who are responsible for entry or mid-level candidates^{xxii}
- Job seekers and hiring managers agree on the top factors leading a job seeker to obtain a desirable job:^{xxiii}
 - Prior experience (70% and 81%, respectively),
 - Appropriate education (64% and 73%),
 - Strong interviewing (59% and 67%), and
 - Willingness to develop skills and gain experience (57% and 56%)
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- Hiring managers say that references are only part of the story. Just 25% cite references among the five factors most likely to help a job seeker find a desirable job. Significantly more job seekers, 42%, also chose references.^{xxiv}
- Job seekers tend to believe more strongly in some factors, compared to hiring managers:^{xxv}
 - Strong references (42% job seekers; 25% hiring managers)
 - Willingness to pursue additional education (37% job seekers; 23% hiring managers)
 - Strong resume writing skills (32% job seekers; 19% hiring managers)
- Nearly all hiring managers agreed (90%) that online social networks like LinkedIn can only get you so far; you need to establish personal relationships with others in the field to be successful.^{xxvi}

Top 5 Factors Leading a Job Seeker to Find a Desirable Job ^{xxvii}

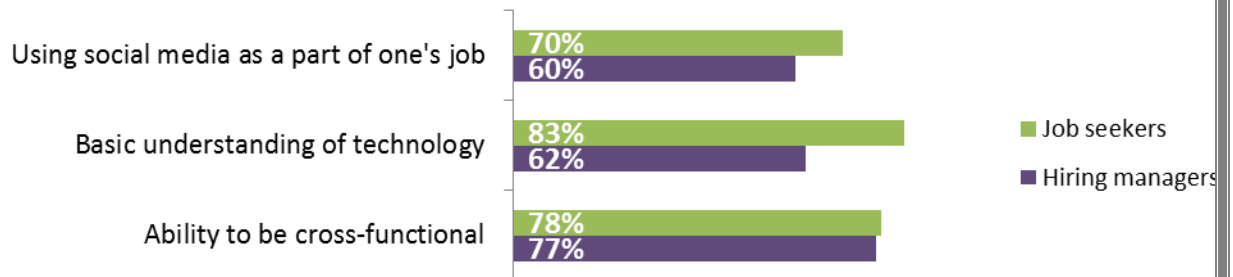


5.) Do job seekers and hiring managers agree on emerging skills? ^{xxviii}

Both job seekers and hiring managers agree that cross-functionality, a basic understanding of technology and ability to use social media as a part of one's job are skills that will become more important over the next five years. However, job seekers tend to under-recognize the growing importance of traits including global perspective and analytical skills. It is also important for job seekers to recognize the growing importance of global perspective at larger companies which may be more likely to provide the kind of stable employment that job seekers lacking confidence in the market are seeking.

- Both hiring managers and job seekers identify skills that are becoming more important in the coming 5 years:
 - Ability to be cross-functional (78% job seekers; 77% hiring managers)
 - Basic understanding of technology (83% job seekers; 62% hiring managers)
 - Global perspective (54% job seekers; 62% hiring managers)
 - Using social media as a part of one's job (70% job seekers; 60% hiring managers)
- Job seekers more often expect that some skills are becoming more important, compared to the proportion of hiring managers who feel the same way:
 - Basic understanding of technology (83% versus 62% of hiring managers)
 - Ability to speak more than one language (68% versus 57%)
- Hiring managers tend to believe some skills are becoming more important in the next 5 years than job seekers:
 - Having a global perspective (62% versus 54%)
 - Analytical skills (55% versus 48%)
- Global perspective is becoming more important according to 66% of hiring managers at larger companies (\$6B or more in annual gross revenue). Among their colleagues at smaller companies (\$1.5-less than \$6B) about half (54%) believe global perspective is becoming more important.

Skills Becoming More Important in the Coming Five Years^{xxix}



6.) Job seeker confidence

Despite some misalignments in expectations of job seekers and hiring managers, job seekers tend to believe they are confident enough to walk into an interview and know how to present their skills and experience, to know what hiring managers are looking for in candidates today, to know where to find help in developing their professional skills. Yet despite this confidence, only a small majority of job seekers prepare for interviews by practicing responses to questions that interviewers are likely to ask. Additionally, job seekers lack confidence in their ability to get a job in an industry where they had little experience.

- Three quarters (75%) of job seekers are confident that when they walk into a job interview, they know how to present their skills and experience to the interviewer.^{xxx}
 - However only 63% of job seekers agree they prepare for interviews by practicing responses to questions the interviewer is likely to ask.^{xxxi}
- Just over half (59%) are confident they know what employers are looking for in job candidates today.^{xxxii}
- About 5 in 7 job seekers (70%) are confident they know where to go to find help with developing their professional skills.^{xxxiii}
- Only about one third (36%) are confident they could get a job in an industry where they had little experience.^{xxxiv}

7.) How do job seekers decide what to emphasize on their application/resume?

Nearly all job seekers spend a lot of time reading a job description to make sure they would be a good fit prior to applying. Although most job seekers keep a resume, those who are currently employed or at the mid/managerial level are more likely to do so. To determine the content of their resume, job seekers say they are more likely to rely on their own experience rather than seek advice from others and tailor their resume to suit the job description rather than keeping a broad list of skills and experiences. Many job seekers would leave off experience they believed was irrelevant to the job they are applying for.

- Although nearly all job seekers (91%) spend a lot of time reading the job description to make sure they would be a good fit, only 63% prepare for interviews by practicing responses to questions the interviewer is likely to ask.^{xxxv}

- Nearly three quarters (72%) of job seekers have a resume they keep up to date and use when applying to jobs.^{xxxvi}
 - Job seekers who are currently employed are significantly more likely than their unemployed counterparts to keep a resume (77% versus 66%).
 - Job seekers at the managerial or mid-level are significantly more likely than their entry-level counterparts to keep a resume 82% managerial, 75% mid-level, 64% entry level).
- In order to determine what to put on applications or resume/cover letters, more job seekers would rely on their own experience to decide what to include (58%) rather than seek advice from other people including career counselors or instructors (42%).^{xxxvii}
- When applying for jobs, more job seekers tailor their application or resume/cover letter to include skills or experience specifically mentioned in the job description (66%) rather than use descriptions of skills or experiences that can be broadly applied to many types of jobs (34%).^{xxxviii}
- About half (51%) of job seekers leave jobs or other types of work experience off their resume or application that they feel would be irrelevant to the jobs they are applying for.^{xxxix}
- In fact, job seekers commonly said they would include directly related experience that mirrors the position for which they are applying (78%) in order to demonstrate they are right for the job.^{xl}

8.) How do hiring managers evaluate skills and job seekers?

Hiring managers rely heavily on instinct and experience (either their own or others within the organization) to determine what skills are critical for a position and to evaluate candidates. Hiring managers with responsibility for managerial level candidates are more likely to say the candidate's references are among the most critical pieces of information for vetting candidates. Ultimately it can come down to a simple assessment of whether or not a candidate is currently employed.

- Over three in four (77%) hiring managers talk to those who directly supervise employees in a given position in order to determine what skills are critical for that position.^{xli}
 - A similar proportion (74%) relies on their own instincts and experiences to decide what skills would be most important.
- Those with responsibility for skilled and unskilled labor are more likely to rely on candidates to have a fundamental skill set than those responsible for higher hiring levels (74% compared to 68% for those hiring entry level/office admin or higher).^{xlii}
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of hiring managers report that establishing a set of criteria and looking for candidates with the best fit is their go-to method for evaluating candidates.^{xliii}
 - More than half (54%) rely on their instincts and experience to determine whether a candidate is the right fit.
 - About half (51%) develop a set of standard questions to ask all candidates of a given position, and a similar proportion (51%) use behavioral interviewing.

- Obtaining references from current employees was more commonly used by hiring managers at the managerial level (35% versus 24% for mid-level hiring managers and 25% for entry/office admin level).
- Just 17% of hiring managers at Fortune 1000-equivalent companies use benchmarking or applicant tracking to help sort through the applicant pool.
- Hiring managers were more likely to agree in 2012 that companies oftentimes refuse to consider a candidate for a job if he or she is not currently employed. (56% in 2012 compared to 47% in 2011)^{xliiv}

9.) The application & resume: What do job seekers list and what do hiring managers look for?

The application or resume is a job seeker’s chance to catch the attention of hiring managers who may be looking through dozens or hundreds of candidates. Thus it is critical that job seekers are listing the same skills and traits hiring managers look for. Those key pieces of information vary by level, as expected. In general, job seekers tend to list the same kinds of information that hiring managers are looking for, but there is still plenty of room for improvement. Job seekers at the entry level may be too concerned with identifying directly related experience; hiring managers say that is only vital for mid-level and above. For entry level candidates, hiring managers are simply looking for some basic skills that will give the candidates a solid foundation. It is vital for managerial candidates to ensure they are listing information that demonstrates continuity and length of work history.

- When evaluating candidates, hiring managers indicate differences in things they want to see in a resume for each level of employment, and job seekers likewise tend to have differences in what they include in their resume at various levels:^{xlv}

Hiring managers are looking for...	Job seekers are listing...
<u>Entry Level:</u> Evidence of basic skills (81%) Appropriate educational background (50%) References (43%)	<u>Entry Level:</u> Directly related experience (74%) Appropriate educational background (74%) References (60%)
<u>Mid-Level:</u> Directly related experience (73%) Appropriate educational background (71%) Continuity of work history (69%) Length of work history (67%)	<u>Mid-Level:</u> Directly related experience (82%) Appropriate educational background (77%) Key words from the job description (64%) Continuity of work history (61%)
<u>Managerial Level:</u> Length of work history (76%) Appropriate educational background (71%) References (70%) Continuity of work history (68%)	<u>Managerial Level:</u> Directly related experience (81%) Key words from the job description (75%) Appropriate educational background (72%) Continuity of work history (64%)

10.) Who is responsible for training?

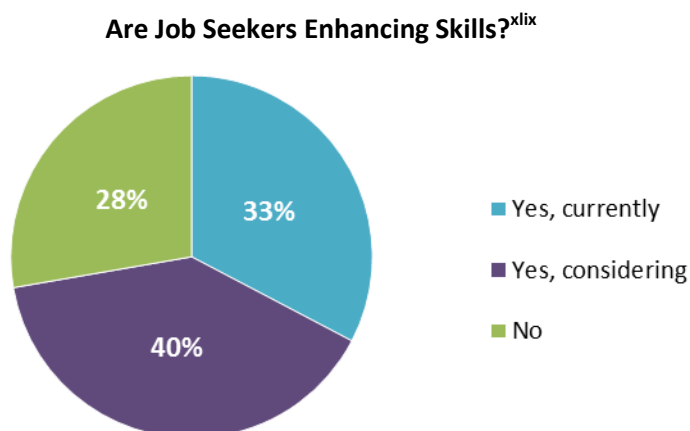
There are disagreements between hiring managers and job seekers as to who should be primarily responsible for training. Hiring managers tend to believe that employees should bear more of the responsibility, while job seekers believe that employers should be responsible for most. Specifically, hiring managers believe the employer holds responsibility for working one-on-one with employees to identify tasks or projects that would help the employee enhance their skill set and to encourage mentor-

mentee relationships. Both hiring managers and job seekers agree that employers should provide training opportunities for developing professional skills and providing ongoing specific job training to ensure that employees are successful in their jobs.

- About two thirds (65%) of hiring managers believe employees should be mostly responsible for finding ways to develop skills and traits needed to be successful in their job, with some support from employers.^{xlvi}
 - While most job seekers agree with this statement, they are still more likely than hiring managers to believe that employers should be mostly responsible, with employees being somewhat responsible for themselves (36% job seekers; 29% hiring managers).
- Both job seekers and hiring managers agree that employers should do the following in order to help workers be more successful in their jobs:^{xlvii}
 - Provide employees with training opportunities for developing professional skills (78% hiring managers; 81% job seekers)
 - Provide ongoing specific job training (76% hiring managers; 74% job seekers)
- However there are some disagreements about other ways employers should help workers:^{xlviii}
 - Hiring managers are significantly more likely to say employers should work one-on-one to identify projects or tasks that would help employees enhance their skills (69% hiring managers; 50% job seekers).
 - In addition, hiring managers are more likely to believe employers should encourage mentor-mentee relationships among employees (61% hiring managers; 47% job seekers).

11.) What are job seekers doing to enhance their skills?

Ultimately job seekers are responsible for their own development. Nearly three-quarters of job seekers are either currently or considering doing something to enhance their skill set. They are most commonly building their network, getting their undergraduate degree, a professional certification or volunteering. Their primary motivation is to have better job opportunities available and to be able to compete in the job market.



- Seventy two percent of job seekers are either currently engaged in or considering enhancing their skill set in some way.ⁱ
 - Among them, they are most often developing their network of individuals working in their field of interest (24%), getting an undergraduate degree (23%), earning a professional certification (23%) or volunteering (22%).ⁱⁱ
- Nearly two thirds (64%) say they are enhancing their skill set to have better job opportunities available to them. Over two in five (43%) are doing so to be able to compete in the job market.ⁱⁱⁱ

12.) What makes a company decide that the skills gap is severe enough to warrant outsourcing?ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

Many hiring managers see outsourcing as an option but usually only when it becomes the most cost effective way to fill open positions, or to fill temporary and seasonal positions. A substantial minority of hiring managers would never consider outsourcing.

- Hiring managers most often said that they would consider outsourcing to fill open positions at their company if it was more cost effective than hiring their own staff (39%) or to hire temporary/seasonal workers (39%).
 - Being cost effective was more commonly cited by hiring managers at companies with 30,000 or fewer employees compared to hiring managers at companies with larger workforces (46% and 33%, respectively).
- About one in five hiring managers (21%) would not consider outsourcing at all.

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- ⁱ Hiring Managers, Q900 Table 76
 - ⁱⁱ Hiring Managers, Q900 Table 76
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Hiring Managers, Q900 Table 76
 - ^{iv} Hiring Managers, Q600 Table 7 and Job Seekers, Q600, Table 9
 - ^v Hiring Managers, Q600 Table 7
 - ^{vi} Job Seekers, Q600 Table 9
 - ^{vii} Hiring Managers and Job seekers Q1600 Table 10
 - ^{viii} Hiring Managers, Q1602 Table 11
 - ^{ix} Job Seekers, Q1605 Table 17
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 - ^{xi} Hiring Managers, Q1005 Table 148
 - ^{xii} Hiring Managers, Q1016 Table 149
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 - ^{xiv} Hiring Managers, Q1011 Table 127
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