

Component 2 - Sadikur Rahman

Employability skills are highly important criteria managers pay special attention to when shortlisting or hiring employees. While many are not specifically listed in job descriptions, managers who assess candidates during the interview process are surely looking for specific skills that increase an individual's potential to effectively deliver against the responsibilities of a vacancy. Managers tend to have high levels of respect for employability skills as they are often much more challenging to teach or train than job-specific skills knowing that some aspects of employable skills are inherent whilst others are acquired through experience and/or education. Certain highlighted skills can highlight a candidates' likelihood to excel on their own accord or highlight training needs required to develop that candidate over the course of time. Some managers prefer candidates with latent potential who can be trained to become fluid in the specifications of that particular organisation, while others may be seeking an employee who has already demonstrated their capabilities against particular employability skills sets that will be useful for the role.

Employability skills vary greatly across industry; customer services require effective communication skills, IT departments require technical competence; usually within a specific software category. If a manager is seeking someone who is capable of manual handling, they may not be looking for someone who is IT proficient, but someone who can demonstrate hands on skills such as experience bricklaying or who have a background in a similar trade.

The key employability skills in business today are resilience, time management, emotional intelligence and digital competency. I will look to explore the reasons these four skills sets are on the top of the list of desirable qualities managers are seeking to fill roles within their businesses and organisations world-wide.

Resilience:

Resilience is the ability of an individual to handle and competently manage varying ranges of stress factors. Managers seek employees who can see and deal with adversity and who have “the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change, and keep going in the face of adversity.” (R1: Andrea Ovens - HBR 2015).

We live in a fast-paced, modern society where the ability to adapt is highly sought after. A specific skill set may need to grow, or change over short periods of time, so hiring employees who are not only proficient in a particular skill, but who are able to draw upon that proficiency as changes take place over a course of time has become far more essential. Only several years ago a potential employee's application could have shown IT proficiency simply by stating competent in the use of Microsoft Products such as Word, PowerPoint or Excel, however as times changed the capability of individuals to show IT proficiency today would be structured to highlight more than being able to write a document, create a presentation or work on a spreadsheet, now would be creating relevant content, fluidity in the use of social media and

analytics, or the ability to utilise form data in creating dashboard reporting. Managers seek candidates who show this level of potential and can evidence this within an application form.

Things don't always go to plan and sometimes well intentioned projects fail; oftentimes due to a lack of funding, a change in business direction, resourcing complications or limitations, or any of many other valid reasons. A new business term has entered the field over the last year as businesses worldwide have had to cope with and survive the global Covid-19 pandemic; Bouncebackability. "It's now time to build a competitive moat around your business to ensure that it is a sustainable bounce back." (R2: Sean Hoban 2021).



This form of resilience is highly important in employees where managers want to know they have a solid team under them who can not only adapt, but who can adjust and come back stronger as a result. Complications come and go, but an employee's ability to bounce back from obstacles; especially those capable of doing so on their own accord will prove to be valued assets in all fields. If the pandemic has taught businesses anything, it is the need to pick up the pieces and be able to work towards a forward-looking tomorrow instead of being stuck in previous ways of working.

Time Management:

"The difference between successful and unsuccessful people is how much value they attach to time" (R3: Sunday Adelaja 2017).



The ability of an employee to efficiently manage their time is a highly sought after skill which managers seek when assessing potential candidates suitable for any role, but especially now in the post-covid 19 global pandemic. Businesses are reeling from the negative world-wide economic impact the pandemic caused. Many businesses have fallen, whilst others have managed to survive by adapting to the needs of humanity before the needs of the bottom-line.

Remote working, home-working, online-working and teleconferences are just some of the vessels for which modern business have weathered the storm to

persevere through the many real obstacles posed as countries around the world went into lockdown. Time management has always been an important and admirable employability skill but never so much as today have the skill been so linked with trust. 'Not only is it harder to build

strong connections through video and audio calls, email and instant messages, but misunderstandings are likelier to arise from these mediums due to their limitations.' (R4: Hannah Hickcock 2021).

Now, time management has had to adapt to take in the fact that managers and their employees rely solely on newly adopted methods to communicate, manage and now trust each other. Have you ever been in a work team meeting at noon and you've been working since 9am, but when that noon meeting begins you can tell the one person in your team who only just got out of bed and was pretending to work since 9am as well? How are managers able to manage their employees to somehow still progress their own business goals? Trust was and continues to be needed, but a mutual trust between managers and their staff. Many employers now understanding the many stresses caused by lockdown and the imminent impact on health and well-being worked closely with their employees allowing time to be managed in many ways by the employees themselves, obligated to manage their own time agreeing on what will be delivered and by when.

This overall change had a major impact on the new ways of working where employees working from home were allowed to juggle their work and personal lives. Often employees had to deal with important personal issues during this time such as sickness, family deaths due to the virus, mental health problems, child-care and home schooling. This posed a very real and very credible shift in the manager/employee model where employers had to trust work was still being carried out while employees had to deliver in a different capacity both working in remote capacities to communicate and maintain business as well as possible through trust. Now managers will be seeking any candidates who have experience and/or the capabilities to demonstrate they can work and manage their time and who are trustworthy of that new way of working and all of its associated tasks and duties.



Emotional Intelligence:

The employability skill of emotional intelligence is quintessential qualities demonstrated by strong leaders. Managers seek candidates capable of demonstrating emotional intelligences' main characteristics of self awareness, empathy, motivation, self regulation and social skills. An individual's capacity to be aware of, control and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically



(**R5**: Dictionary) is a key component leading to both personal and professional success.

'The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence. Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't make a great leader.' (**R6**:Daniel Goleman - 2004)

Employers want strong leaders who can help shape the future direction of their organisation. An employee with a high level of demonstrable emotional intelligence is more capable of using, perceiving, understanding, managing and handling their emotions which is an employability skill proven to be a quality leading to promote team effort and to problem solve while it has also been shown to foster positive customer relationships. Emotionally intelligent employees increase team productivity and improve staff retention with good composure, making good decisions and communicating effectively. All of these qualities being well-known to produce leaders, means that managers seeking candidates to fill roles within their organisations are more likely to select candidates who are able to demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence in written form within job applications as well as verbally if offered a face to face or telephone interview.

Digital Competency:

'Digital competence is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems in an increasingly digital world.' (**R7**: Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government - Addysg Cymru Education Wales).

This is the year 2021 and more than ever, employers are actively seeking candidates with digital skills with a high level of digital competence. Many roles require staff who are technically proficient or are capable of quickly learning technical systems and processes.



According to Digital Skills Global (**R8**:a digital skills group), The top ten digital skills tech companies are looking for today are '1. Programming, Web and App Development, 2. Digital Business Analysis, 3. Digital Design and Visualisation, 4. Digital Project Management, 5. Digital Product Management, 6. Digital Marketing, 7. Social Media, 8. Data Science and Data Analytics, 9. Decision Making for Leaders and 10. Something they haven't seen before.

As we are still living with the new ways of working, digital competency in the knowledgeable and creative use of technology is worth its' weight in gold as businesses continue to rely on innovation and adaptability when utilising new technologies to allow their organisations to run effectively. High levels of technical competencies also help to future proof organisations business plans, actions and how they harness and utilise their resources. Working from home in front of a computer swishing in and out of teleconferences, presentations, while writing and responding to emails and managing customers and products

remotely is now hardline built into most job specifications so the skills to deliver in this modern technical environment is an employability skill sure to lure employers the towards the resumes of digitally competent candidates.



What makes a good employee? That is a manager's biggest question they ask themselves when seeking to employ a new staff member. The decision is sometimes an easy one based on the amount and quality of those who apply from the role externally, or also based on who within their preexisting team expresses interest in the new role or who has been head-hunted for an internal promotion. I hope to have been able to

demonstrate the importance of managers assessing candidates' core employability skills of resilience, time management, emotional intelligence and digital competency to secure the presumed most productive and efficient employee to fill the vacancies within their organisation.

References:

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R6: What makes a leader? (Daniel Goleman - Harvard Business Review 2004) [Ref Link](#)

R7: Digital Competence Framework - Your questions answered June 2018 - Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government - Addysg Cymru Education Wales) [Ref Link](#)

R8: Top 10 Digital Skills Tech Companies are Looking For Today' Digital Skills Global) [Ref Link](#)