

## Want a Better Job? Refine These Skills



[Image via Pixabay](#)

Having a degree is one thing, but being [ready](#) to participate in your chosen career is something different altogether. No matter how much knowledge you have knocking around your gray matter, if your communication, problem solving, and leadership abilities are lacking, you're in for a lifetime of lateral career moves. If you want to move up the ladder, you have to focus on the things you didn't learn in the classroom. Consider supplemental training opportunities to help get ahead such as curriculum found at [ReadyJob.org](#).

Work ethic, flexibility, and creativity are just three of the skills that employers say many of today's brightest workers simply don't possess. If you want to stand out professionally, you'll have to work hard on your soft skills, including:

- **Leadership.** From the time you begin your first job, your employers are looking to see if you have what it takes to be the next generation of company leader. Even if you have no plans to manage today, tomorrow may be a different story. Refine your leadership skills by taking the reigns on projects, mentoring new employees, and learning to stay focused in all situations. Peter Economy says there are [nine traits](#) that define a leader. Improve these and you'll increase your employability.
- **Communication.** With most interactions today being relegated to a few texts or Facebook messages, verbal and written communication has become a widely sought-after skill as opposed to something employers assume their employees will have. Your body language, grammar, and willingness to look someone in the eyes when you're speaking say a lot about you as a person and your value as an employee. Kent University researchers further suggest tailoring your [communication style](#) to your audience – in other words, your coworkers and superiors.

- **Initiative.** Taking initiative means standing up when others sit down. Show that you are willing to take on tasks above and beyond your written job description and you will already be one step ahead of your coworkers.
- **Flexibility.** In a professional environment, things don't always go according to plan. Work on your ability to change pace when needed and don't complain about having to make modifications to your goals and strategies. Employers large and small need workers who can handle responsibilities and get things done regardless of kinks along the way.
- **Attention to detail.** Sometimes, it's the things just below the surface that have the biggest impact on a business's productivity. Learn to pay attention to those things just out of sight. You never know when a seemingly insignificant detail may be relevant. Even something as simple as noticing that your boss likes a certain baseball team may lead to conversations that catapult your career.
- **Personal presentation.** Believe it or not, the way you [dress](#), walk, and comb your hair are things that your manager takes note of. Even in a relaxed environment, you should ensure that your personal hygiene has been taken care of. Never show up to work looking disheveled with wrinkled clothes, chipped nail polish, or a perpetual downward gaze. Take pride in how you look, speak, and act and you will earn the respect of those around you.
- **Tact.** If you want to succeed, you have to learn to speak to people even when things aren't exactly right. Learn to approach negative situations with [tact and diplomacy](#). Be thoughtful in your replies and reasonably sensitive to the wants and needs of others.

These and other soft skills are transferable across all industries and are often given more weight than education and experience. As employee roles continue to change as technology evolves, it is not enough to simply know how to do your job. You must be approachable, competent, and observant in order to avoid getting lost in the hustle and bustle of the workplace. Employers are constantly looking for [qualified applicants](#) who display these valuable work readiness skills.