

# Five qualities employers look for in job candidates

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A good degree or professional certification can help secure an interview for your dream job, but once you're sitting in front of the recruiter or potential employer, you'll need to show what you can offer in addition to your qualifications. Today's top employers are looking for more than the right training and education.



They are seeking employees who are well-rounded, adaptable, committed and a good fit for their organisational culture.

Here are a few attributes that recruiters and potential employers look for:

**1. Mind-set:** Employers are looking for attitude as much as they're looking for aptitude when they hire. They'd rather develop someone with the right outlook who needs some training than hire someone with great skills and low motivation.

Honesty, accountability, flexibility, curiosity and commitment are all as important to employers as your qualifications. If you can show that you're motivated, upbeat, and eager to learn, that will give you an edge in the job market.

**2. Interpersonal skills:** Today's workplace is diverse and collaborative, which means that most organisations are looking for people with high levels of emotional intelligence. Someone with good interpersonal skills is more likely to thrive than a superstar who lacks the tact and professionalism needed to play well with others. As good as your degree and experience might be, a recruiter or potential employer will also want to know that you can collaborate and lead.

**3. Life experience:** Employers often like to see that their employees have interests outside work and that they can bring diverse life experiences to their job. A modern office is a multi-disciplinary environment. The leadership skills you learnt as a school rugby captain, the strategic thinking you developed playing competitive chess, the ability you developed to write clearly from your love of reading, your exposure to different cultures during a gap year of travelling – these can all be as

valuable to an employer as your formal qualifications.

**4. Work experience:** Young jobseekers often feel caught in a catch-22 situation – they can't get experience because no one will give them a job and they can't get a job because they have no experience. Against this backdrop, it's important to seek out experience to add to your CV. You can volunteer at a charity (many non-profit organisations need help in disciplines like IT, finance or marketing), take vacation jobs, or start up a small business to sharpen your skills and get practical experience.

**5. Cultural fit:** The question of how you'll fit in will generally be top-of-mind for someone interviewing you for a job. Cultural fit is about how likely you will be able to adapt to the core values and collective behaviours that make up an organisation. Having the right fit with a company means you'll be happier at work and that you'll be more likely to perform to the organisation's expectations.

There are many factors that shape a corporate culture – corporate policies, geographic location, industry, size, the personalities of the founders and managers, values, and more – and the trick is to find a place to work that suits your personality and working style.

Sage's SkillsMap tool helps track job opportunities and evaluates the values, interests and strengths that makes job seekers unique in the market. Remember that how you position yourself is as important as your degree – show employers what you've got beyond the piece of paper.

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