

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ADD VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS

## What are they?

Employability skills, such as communication or teamwork, are sometimes referred to as 'soft skills' compared with 'technical skills', such as reconciling a bank statement or tiling a floor.

Both employability and technical skills are important.

Often staff need to use employability skills and technical skills simultaneously, for example when working with other people on a technical problem.

## Why are they important for your business?

Employability skills, like initiative and self-management, are essential in every job. They can contribute to:

- > improvements in business processes and increased productivity
- > greater efficiencies and more innovation
- > creation of a positive culture in the workplace
- > achievement of strategic objectives
- > development of a competitive advantage by your business.

## Why is it helpful for you to know about them?

By knowing more about employability skills, you can:

- > include employability skills in job descriptions
- > put a focus on these skills during the job interview process
- > emphasise these skills during induction programs
- > refer to them when conducting formal reviews of an individual's performance
- > refer to them when interacting informally with your staff
- > make decisions about retention of staff based, in part, on their employability skills
- > incorporate them in internal staff development programs
- > base some of your strategic planning on the existing employability skills in the company.

## What are the eight skills?

The eight employability skills are:

- > initiative and enterprise
- > learning
- > self-management
- > communication
- > teamwork
- > problem solving
- > planning and organising
- > technology.

## What are they in detail?

The table on the reverse of this pamphlet lists aspects of each of the eight employability skills that employers identify as important. Many employees, including new staff, will have some of these skills already.



## How are they included in training?

Employability skills are now embedded in all vocational education and training (VET) programs that use Training Packages.

For example, for an employee to demonstrate competency in 'handling customer queries, complaints and disputes', he or she would need to use a combination of technical and employability skills. In this retail scenario, the employability skills might include planning and organising, self management and communication.

## What can you expect of employees?

You can expect that employees, even in their first full time jobs, will already have some employability skills. Additionally:

- > If the employee has a VET qualification, you will be able to check on the public record what employability skills are associated with that qualification at <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>
- > Employees should become increasingly aware of which employability skills they have gained and which ones they could aim to develop in the future.

## How can you encourage staff?

There is much to be gained by encouraging all employees to continue to develop their employability skills. You could:

- > encourage new staff to observe how existing staff demonstrate employability skills
- > arrange for more experienced staff to assist or mentor less experienced staff concerning employability skills
- > give staff tasks which will assist them to develop more aspects of employability skills
- > provide constructive feedback to employees about their employability skills.

## Where can you get more information?

1. examine training organisations' websites that are dedicated to employability skills, for example, Department of Education and Training NSW, [www.skillsonline.net.au](http://www.skillsonline.net.au)
2. consult with your employer representative group for advice about professional development opportunities or resources on employability skills for you or your workplace supervisors
3. consult with your Industry Skills Councils [www.isc.org.au/](http://www.isc.org.au/) about whether they have produced guidelines regarding employability skills for use by workplace supervisors.



Skill	Facets
<b>Communication</b> that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; listening and understanding</li> <li>&gt; speaking clearly and directly</li> <li>&gt; writing to the needs of the audience</li> <li>&gt; negotiating responsively</li> <li>&gt; reading independently</li> <li>&gt; empathising</li> <li>&gt; using numeracy effectively</li> <li>&gt; understanding the needs of internal and external customers</li> <li>&gt; persuading effectively</li> <li>&gt; establishing and using networks</li> <li>&gt; being assertive</li> <li>&gt; sharing information</li> <li>&gt; speaking and writing in languages other than English</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b> that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; working across different ages irrespective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion</li> <li>&gt; working as an individual and as a member of a team</li> <li>&gt; knowing how to define a role as part of the team</li> <li>&gt; applying teamwork to a range of situations e.g. futures planning and crisis problem solving</li> <li>&gt; identifying the strengths of team members</li> <li>&gt; coaching and mentoring skills, including giving feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Problem solving</b> that contributes to productive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; developing creative, innovative and practical solutions</li> <li>&gt; showing independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems</li> <li>&gt; solving problems in teams</li> <li>&gt; applying a range of strategies to problem solving</li> <li>&gt; using mathematics, including budgeting and financial management to solve problems</li> <li>&gt; applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas</li> <li>&gt; testing assumptions, taking into account the context of data and circumstances</li> <li>&gt; resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues</li> </ul>
<b>Initiative and enterprise</b> that contribute to innovative outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; adapting to new situations</li> <li>&gt; developing a strategic, creative and long-term vision</li> <li>&gt; being creative</li> <li>&gt; identifying opportunities not obvious to others</li> <li>&gt; translating ideas into action</li> <li>&gt; generating a range of options</li> <li>&gt; initiating innovative solutions</li> </ul>

Skill	Facets
<b>Planning and organising</b> that contribute to long and short-term strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; managing time and priorities – setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others</li> <li>&gt; being resourceful</li> <li>&gt; taking initiative and making decisions</li> <li>&gt; adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies</li> <li>&gt; establishing clear project goals and deliverables</li> <li>&gt; allocating people and other resources to tasks</li> <li>&gt; planning the use of resources, including time management</li> <li>&gt; participating in continuous improvement and planning processes</li> <li>&gt; developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it</li> <li>&gt; predicting – weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria</li> <li>&gt; collecting, analysing and organising information</li> <li>&gt; understanding basic business systems and their relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Self-management</b> that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; having a personal vision and goals</li> <li>&gt; evaluating and monitoring own performance</li> <li>&gt; having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions</li> <li>&gt; articulating own ideas and visions</li> <li>&gt; taking responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b> that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; managing own learning</li> <li>&gt; contributing to the learning community at the workplace</li> <li>&gt; using a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support and networking, IT and courses</li> <li>&gt; applying learning to technical issues (e.g. learning about products) and people issues (e.g. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)</li> <li>&gt; having enthusiasm for ongoing learning</li> <li>&gt; being willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job</li> <li>&gt; being open to new ideas and techniques</li> <li>&gt; being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills</li> <li>&gt; acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b> that contributes to the effective carrying out of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; having a range of basic IT skills</li> <li>&gt; applying IT as a management tool</li> <li>&gt; using IT to organise data</li> <li>&gt; being willing to learn new IT skills</li> <li>&gt; having the OHS knowledge to apply technology</li> <li>&gt; having the appropriate physical capacity</li> </ul>

The list of facets set out above is not an exhaustive list and the facets will vary from one qualification to another.

