

# Employability Skills

## Employer Expectations

As an employee, you have many responsibilities to meet. Employers expect the people they hire to help the business operate and make a profit. Employers expect their employees to work to the best of their abilities and follow their rules. Your employer will expect you to follow the workplace dress code for the work environment, have good personal grooming habits, be punctual, and have good time-management and organizational skills.

## *Dress Code and Personal Grooming*

In many jobs, a worker's personal appearance has a great deal to do with his or her success. Your appearance is a reflection of you. Your clothes are also important to your personal appearance. Wearing clean, neat clothes that are appropriate for your job means you take pride in yourself. Some businesses have dress codes that must be followed. A *dress code* is a set of rules or guidelines about the manner of dress acceptable in a certain place. In the workplace, dress codes can be used for safety reasons or to maintain a professional atmosphere.

Even if a dress code is not set in place, it is important to avoid extremes in your appearance at work. Multiple piercings and tattoos, for example, may impress your friends, but might have a negative effect on supervisors, coworkers, or customers. In fact, some employers may not hire people whose appearances might cause a distraction in the workplace.

While on the job, look your best. A professional appearance starts with good personal grooming. Clean, neatly combed hair; clean hands; and trimmed nails are expected. Employees who care about their personal appearance will also care about their jobs and want to do their best.

## *Punctuality*

*Punctuality* means being on time. Being late may make your employer think you are not interested in your job. Frequent lateness indicates a negative attitude about the job. Missing work without an excuse and tardiness are inconsiderate and are not tolerated in the working world. Coworkers will have to take on the work of employees who are late or absent. It is important to show up ready for work every day and on time.

Punctuality is a good sign of dependability. *Dependability* shows a person's ability to be reliable and trustworthy. Being dependable means others can count on you to do what needs to be done. Dependable employees keep their word, are honest, and carry their share of the work load. Dependable employees tend to be given the important jobs in a company.

## *Time Management and Organization*

"Work smarter, not harder" is a phrase frequently quoted in business and industry. Employees who understand how to organize both their time and job responsibilities can meet or beat deadlines. They are able to take on more responsibilities and eventually earn promotions.

*Time management* is the ability to organize time and work assignments to increase personal efficiency. It is another very important skill in the workplace because work assignments may include a variety of tasks. Often, you will need to work on several tasks at the same time. You will be expected to prioritize those tasks by determining which ones should be completed before others. When uncertain as to which tasks are the most important, always ask your direct supervisor. The

difference between average and excellent workers is often not how *hard* they work, but how well they prioritize assignments.

## Interpersonal Skills

*Interpersonal skills* are those skills that help people communicate and work well with each other. Your company or business will expect you to have good interpersonal skills. These skills are necessary to complete the job duties and ensure a positive working environment. The ability to communicate well, show respect for others, and work as part of a team are skills all employers want in their employees.

### Communication

Giving and receiving information efficiently is the key to effective communications. Time is limited in the workplace and all employees have many duties and responsibilities. Others appreciate it when a person gets to the point quickly and in a positive manner. Being able to state your needs or intentions clearly to others can be learned through practice.

Careful listening and responses are also hallmarks of good communication. If you do not understand what someone wants, ask the person to clarify the request. Make sure to follow directions carefully. Always ask questions when you do not understand how to do a certain task. As in every part of life, communicating in a positive manner gets better results than negativity or a bad attitude. Every employer wants positive employees who are happy and enthusiastic about their work.

### Respect

*Respect* is the feeling that someone or something is good, valuable, and important. All people want to be respected, especially in the workplace. Be friendly, respectful, and considerate of the feelings of coworkers. A smile and a few minutes of friendly conversation are good ways to promote good working relationships.

Work environments are usually diverse. There will be people of many different cultures, beliefs, and ages. Regardless of personal differences, show respect to your supervisor, coworkers, or any other person you interact with on the job. Make sure to remember the golden rule: treat others as you would like to be treated.

### Teamwork

Many employers consider teamwork skills to be necessary in the workplace. Employees may be asked to work in different teams as work needs arise. Being a team member of a work group is similar to playing on a sports team. Success is measured in terms of the success of the team, not each player.

Each team member is also expected to contribute to the success of the team. This is true whether the team is the company, a department, or a committee. Every person has certain strengths and weaknesses. In the workplace, be honest about the strengths and weaknesses you bring to a team. Teamwork means putting the team's goals ahead of personal goals.

Part of developing good teamwork skills is getting to know and trust fellow team members. When fellow workers trust each other, they work more effectively. Team members can rely on each other to complete tasks and get the job done. It also helps when you have problems or make a mistake. Team members are there to support one another.

Do not try to do other team members' jobs or refuse to do your own. A team only works as well as its members. When you take a positive approach to your work, you tend to be more productive. Your work performance improves. This makes you a more valuable employee and helps you get along well with other people.