What Employers Look For In Recent College Graduates

Every year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys employers nationwide and compiles a list of top skills and qualities employers look for when hiring recent college graduates. The Top 20 Abilities, Skills and Qualities Recruiters Most Want in Candidates* are:

1. Teamwork skills
2. Problem-solving skills
3. Organizational skills
4. Communication skills
5. Processing skills
6. Analytical skills
7. Technical skills
8. Computer skills
9. Creative skills
10. Persuasive skills
11. Leadership skills
12. Strong work ethic
13. Initiative
14. Detail-oriented
15. Adaptability
16. Interpersonal skills
17. Self-confidence
18. Strategic planning skills
19. Entrepreneurial spirit
20. Friendly/sense of humor

Employers also look for important attributes (both academic-based and experience-based) when evaluating graduates for hire. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, employers look for the following attributes in recent college graduates**:

Relative Importance of Attributes in Evaluating Graduates for Hire

Evaluate your top qualities, skills and attributes from the information above. Identify your areas of weakness and develop a plan to improve and gain experience in these areas. Strengthen, improve, and develop your skills, qualities and attributes through:

- Internships
- Employment
- Classes
- Clubs and Organizations
- Volunteering
- Athletics/Club Sports
- Service Learning
- Class Projects
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You can also list some of your top skills and attributes from the information above and cite specific examples of how you have utilized each skill. This will help prepare you in effectively communicating your strengths to potential employers.