

## Module 3: Understanding the Workplace

### AT-A-GLANCE

Exercise	My Online Portfolio	Overview
<b>Introduction:</b> Discussion of the Workplace		<b>10 minutes:</b> You will be exploring the workplace and what employers expect from employees, including workplace etiquette and culture, workplace laws and regulations and an understanding of employment forms.
<b>Exercise 1:</b> What Do Employers Want?		<b>20 minutes:</b> This exercise will help participants identify skills and characteristics desired by employers and demonstrate how they can gain those skills.  <b>Student manual:</b> 1) What Employers Want List; 2) My Plan to Become a Stronger Candidate
<b>Exercise 2:</b> Workplace Etiquette - Attendance		<b>20 minutes:</b> This exercise covers the critical soft skill of being on time and showing up for work everyday and when it is appropriate to call in late or take time off.  <b>Student manual:</b> Attendance Excuses
<b>Exercise 3:</b> Workplace Etiquette - Behavior	Videos online: Workplace Etiquette & Challenges in the Workplace	<b>10 minutes:</b> This exercise covers appropriate behavior on the job, like use of cell phones, social media and electronics as well as other workplace behaviors.  <b>Student manual:</b> It's About Respect
<b>Exercise 4:</b> Teamwork		<b>20 minutes:</b> Participants have fun exploring diversity in the workplace and the importance of working as a team.  <b>Student manual:</b> 1) Top Five Movies; 2) Essential Skills for Teamwork;
<b>Exercise 5:</b> Understanding Diversity in the Workplace		<b>20 minutes:</b> Participants learn about the importance of diversity in the workplace and get a peek inside a multi-national corporation to see diversity in action.
<b>Exercise 6:</b> Essential Qualities of Leadership		<b>20 minutes:</b> Participants learn about the role of leadership and essential qualities and values.
<b>Exercise 7:</b> Creative Exploration of Leadership		<b>40 minutes:</b> Participants explore the role of leadership through hands-on creative projects and then present back their project to the group with and insights gained.
<b>Exercise 8:</b> Workplace Safety, Laws and Regulations		<b>15 minutes:</b> This exercise introduces basic workplace laws, regulations and safety tips to protect participants from workplace abuses and unlawful activities.  <b>Student manual:</b> 1) Rules for Youth Workers; 2) Hazardous Workplaces; 3) Workplace Safety; 4) Work Permits & Background Checks; 4) Laws on Workplace Discrimination
<b>Exercise 9:</b> Employment Forms		<b>15 minutes:</b> This exercise introduces the wide range of employment forms participants may encounter and explains their purpose and intent.  <b>Student manual:</b> I-9 & W4 forms

## MODULE 3. Preparing to Work

### Introduction

(10 minutes)

Here's a brief introduction you can make to your participants to help prepare them to work:

*Welcome to the world of work. It's much different than school and hanging out with friends. Expectations, rewards and repercussions are all at a much higher level. We'll be exploring the workplace and what employers expect from employees, including workplace etiquette and culture, workplace laws and regulations and understanding employment forms.*

## A. What Employers Want

### Exercise 1: Skills and Characteristics Employers Value

(20 minutes)

**Goal:** To provide participants an understanding of the skills and characteristics valued by employers, help them assess their own skills/characteristics and help them prepare for an interview and be comfortable talking about themselves as it relates to these skills.

**Objective(s):** By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- Identify skills and characteristics desired by employers
- Provide examples of how they've demonstrated these skills and characteristics.
- Identify those areas where participants

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Flip chart
- Markers
- Pens or pencils
- Student manual worksheets:
  - Want Employers Want list
  - My Plan to Become a Stronger Candidate

#### **Activities:**

##### **1. What characteristics do employers value?**

- Engage participants in a discussion regarding their perceptions of what employers want. Chart responses on a flipchart. Encourage participants that all of their responses are good, but focus on responses that match What Employers Want located in the student manual.

##### **2. What characteristics do you have?**

- Ask participants to turn to What Employers Want in their student manuals.
- Review each characteristic to ensure that participants understand meanings.
- Ask them to assess themselves by writing one example of how they've demonstrated each skill/characteristic.
- **By having them brainstorm this now, they will be better able to talk about such skills in an interview.**

**3. What characteristics would you like to gain?**

- Ask participants to turn to My Plan to Become a Stronger Candidate in their student manuals.
- Have participants complete the worksheet to help them develop an action plan for areas they need to develop, specifying what they can do to gain these skills.
- Ask for volunteers to share skills they identified as lacking and help them come up with ideas for developing those skills.

**4. If you were the employer?**

- Divide the group into smaller teams.
- Ask them to imagine they are owners of a start-up business that will sell office supplies to other businesses and they need to hire an employee who will help get them organized.
- They are putting together an ad to find one strong candidate for the job. What qualities do they want to list in the ad? They can use What Employers Want worksheet and/or they can come up with their own list.
- Ask the groups to report in on what they come up with and be prepared to explain why candidates for the job should have these qualities.

## **B. Workplace Etiquette**

**Exercise 2: Attendance**

(20 minutes)

**Goal:** To help participants learn about basic workplace etiquette and cultural norms so that they can be more successful during employment and retain their jobs.

**Objective(s):** By the end of this exercise, participants will understand:

- Acceptable reasons for calling off of work
- Appropriate protocol for calling off of work
- The impact on the workplace when employees call off of work

**Materials Needed:** Student manual – Attendance Excuses List

**Activity:**

1. Identify half of the group as “Employees” and the other half as “Employers.”
2. Have the Employee group role play calling in with an excuse.
3. Ask the Employer group to determine if it is: 1) a good reason; 2) OK, if not used too often; or 3) a poor reason. Be prepared to provide an explanation.
4. Groups switch roles halfway through.
5. Assist in finding consensus before affirming whether the answer is correct or incorrect. The following are some discussion points:
  - How often is it reasonable to miss work?
  - How much notice should you give your employer when you’re going to be absent?
  - How could you overcome some of the excuses in order to get to work?
  - What is the impact on the workplace when someone calls off of work?

## What Employers Want

Consistently, employers from all industries have identified specific skills and characteristics they look for in job candidates. The following is a top 10 list of the most desired employee characteristics. Think about how you have demonstrated each skill.

Top 10 Most Desired Traits	Write an Example of How You've Demonstrated Each Trait
<p><b>1. Communication Skills</b></p> <p>The activity of conveying information through speech, visual signals, writing or behavior.</p>	
<p><b>2. Teamwork</b></p> <p>The combined action of a group of people and, when effective and efficient, achieving a positive solution.</p>	
<p><b>3. Initiative</b></p> <p>The ability to take action on your own without being told.</p>	
<p><b>4. Interpersonal Skills</b></p> <p>The skills someone uses to get along with others while getting the job done, including everything from communication, listening skills, attitude and manners.</p>	
<p><b>5. Leadership</b></p> <p>The ability to lead a group of people and enlist their aid and support in the accomplishment of a task or project.</p>	
<p><b>6. Analytical Skills</b></p> <p>The ability to visualize, articulate and solve both problems and concepts and make decisions that are sensible and based on available information.</p>	
<p><b>7. Problem Solving</b></p> <p>A mental process that involves discovering, analyzing and solving problems with the goal to overcome obstacles and find a solution that best resolves an issue.</p>	
<p><b>8. Work Experience</b></p> <p>Either paid or unpaid experience (internship; volunteer) working under the direction of someone else.</p>	
<p><b>9. Academic Credentials/GPA</b></p> <p>Ability to study, learn and acquire knowledge and have it validated by grade points.</p>	
<p><b>10. Computer Skills</b></p> <p>Familiarity with basic computer operation and standard business software such as Microsoft Office Suite: Word, Excel, PowerPoint and/or Access; ability to navigate the Internet.</p>	

## My Plan to Become a Stronger Candidate

Now that you know traits that employers look for, in what areas would you like to become stronger? Just like going to the gym to build muscles, you can practice and improve various traits to become a stronger candidate for the job you want.

It's easy:

1. Identify the traits you want to work on and write them in the first column.
2. Talk to your trainer, teacher or guardian to identify activities you can do right now to begin improving those traits.
3. Identify when you will re-evaluate your traits to see the progress you've made.
4. Check off all of the people you will reach out to for guidance.

Traits I Need to Improve	Activities to Help Me Improve	Timeline to Accomplish (by what date?)

Check off all of the people you will reach out to for help to become a stronger candidate:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> JumpStart Success trainer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or guardian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher or counselor at school | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbor or family friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious community            | <input type="checkbox"/> Who else? _____           |

## ATTENDANCE EXCUSES LIST

Excuse	Good Reason	Acceptable Reason <i>IF NOT</i> Used Often	Poor Reason
I am sick in bed with the flu.			
My dad wants me to help him today.			
My parents said I can stay home.			
I have a cold.			
I missed my bus.			
My mom wants me to babysit.			
I have a lot of homework. I can't come in today.			
I stayed over at my friend's house last night.			
There was a death in my family. I have to go to the funeral.			
I just don't feel good.			
My brother came home last night. I haven't seen him in a year. He's leaving tomorrow.			
I have no way to get to work.			
A guy I really like asked me out tonight.			
I have a big game on Friday. The coach said I have to practice.			
My parents decided to go out of town today.			
I have to visit the doctor today.			
I was up late last night. I'm too tired to go to work.			
The bus passed me by at the bus stop.			
My friend and I had a fight last night.			
I didn't call in because we don't have a phone.			