Green Jobs in the Puget Sound Region

"And How to Get There"

Basic Employability Skills

Adapted and expanded from [Youth Central](#).

There are two types of skills that should be included on a resume, hard skills and soft skills:

Hard skills are skills unique to a job that are previously learned. A person applying to work as a rain garden installer must have hard skills like using a shovel and plant knowledge. Other examples of hard skills are computer programming or an earned degree.

Soft skills are not quantifiable and more ambiguous than hard skills. Sometimes called "people skills," soft skills are the way that a person reacts to and interacts with other people ([Balance](#)). A person applying to work as a rain garden installer must have soft skills like flexibility and leadership. Other examples of soft skills are work ethic and time management.

Certain soft skills are universal. These top 8 are important skills to master, no matter what industry you're working in.

1. Communication

Effective communication involves being confident about speaking to people (also don't forget about phone calls!), including strategies to communicate your ideas clearly. It also involves writing well enough to be understood in emails and reports. Being bilingual can be a benefit in seeking some jobs so be sure to call attention to it.

Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your communication skills include:
- treat school presentations as professional practice
- make oral presentations in school or extracurriculars
- blog or use social media
- work in customer service (face-to-face or on the phone)
- volunteer to host a community radio program

2. Teamwork

Teamwork means being good at working with people - both the people you work with and other people that you come into contact with.

Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your teamwork skills include:
- volunteer for a community organization
- volunteer at a restoration site
- participate in an extracurricular
- participate in a sport
- learn conflict management techniques

3. Problem solving

Problem solving is about being able to find solutions when faced with difficulties or setbacks. Even if you can't think of a solution straight away, have a logical process for figuring things out.

Examples of ways you can develop or improve your problem solving skills include:
- study the ideas behind systems thinking skills
- develop the habits of a systems thinker
- design a project that solves a community problem
- design a project that solves a technical problem
- design a project that solves an environmental problem
- mentor a young person to help them think through steps in problem-solving
- dealing with complaints or conflicts at your workplace
- doing a study skills course with a focus on problem solving

4. Initiative and enterprise

Initiative and enterprise are about being able to think creatively and to make improvements to procedures or processes. Another aspect looking at the bigger picture and how your skills and habits fit into in.

Examples of ways you can develop or improve your initiative and enterprise skills include:
- develop a passion and deep curiosity for learning and how things work
- seek out informational interviews
- seek out job shadow opportunities
- apply for internships and meaningful work
- set up a fundraiser or community function
- proposing changes to a group you belong to
- get involved in local politics

5. Planning and organizing

Planning and organising are about working out what is required to get a job done, and then working out when and how you'll do it. In a job you must often develop project timelines and meet deadlines.

Examples of ways you can develop or improve your planning and organising skills include:
- use a planner
- organize independent travel
- create and stick to a study schedule
- develop and stick to a household chores schedule
- develop and stick to an exercise and nutrition schedule
- organize a community event
- organize a school event

6. Self-management

Self-management is about being responsible for your own work as well as keeping track of deadlines. Another aspect is the ability to delegate tasks to others in the process of getting tasks or projects done.

Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your self-management skills include:
- do a work experience placement or internship
- ask for new responsibilities at work
- join a volunteer organization

7. Learning

Learning is about wanting to understand new things and actively trying to improve. It's also about being able to take on new tasks and to adapt when things change.

Examples of ways to develop or improve your learning skills include:
- do a short course or online course
- do some research into learning skills and learner types
- start a new hobby
- join a sporting or volunteer group
- pick up a new hobby

8. Technology

General technology skills that employers want include things like being able to use a computer for word processing and sending email, or knowing how to use a photocopier.
Some more specific technology skills relate to software, like using social media, working with design or video editing software or knowing programming languages. Other technology skills relate to hardware, a cash register, a photocopier or scanner, a camera or a recording studio.

Examples of ways to develop or improve your technology skills include:
● doing a short course or online course
● asking for extra training at work
● finding out what technology is used in the job you want and researching its use
● identifying the technology you're already using in your day-to-day life.

Using your employability skills:

Youth Central's Applying for Jobs
Find out more about applying for jobs, including how to write a resume or cover letter.

Youth Central's How to Find a Job

Youth Central's Job Interview

Department of Education and Training - Employability Skills (.pdf, 99KB)
Teaching resource with some good information about employability skills.

Monash University Careers -Developing Your Skills
Advice on employability skills, including video interview with Monash graduates about how they got their skills.