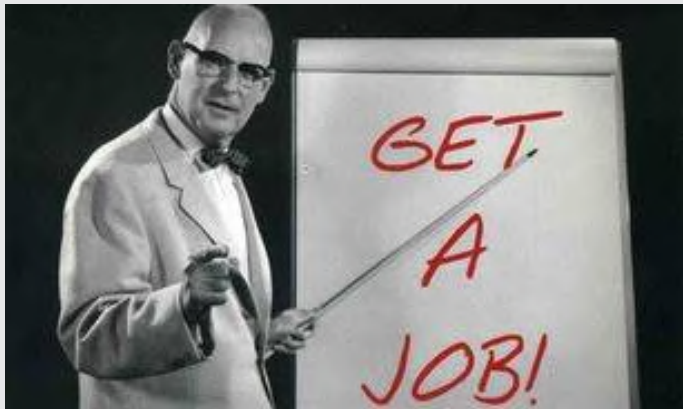


## Know how skill-based training will help you secure a job



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You might have been a brilliant student, with stupendous knowledge of the subjects you studied, but will that be sufficient to land you your dream job? It might not be, in the dynamically changing times of today.

What do employers look for while recruiting fresh graduates in their ranks? They do not just look for IQ and qualification, but they also look for the skill set you bring to the table. Even if you are a graduate in a professional course such as engineering, architecture, or law, what would make a drastic difference to your employability is your added capabilities in the skills that are being practiced in the industry. For example,

a software engineering with sound knowledge of a programming language that was used 10 years back will not cut the ice in the recruitment market; an architect who is not equipped to work on the latest CAD software might find it difficult to cope with the demands of the employers. Today, employers do not have the patience to recruit and provide costly skill-training to employees. This is why good students find themselves at sea when they step out into the job market. They may eventually land up with jobs, but not necessarily their dream job. They might be paid abysmally low as recruiters then upskill them.

A National Employability Report by Aspiring Minds in 2013 concluded that a whopping 47 percent of graduates in India were unemployable in any sector of the knowledge economy. This clearly indicates that colleges and educational institutions in India which provide degrees are perhaps lacking in their approach to make their students employment-ready. So, what can students do to make sure they do not land in the 'dubious 47 percent bracket'?

The key is to keep a track on market trends and equip yourself with skills that will make a difference. Not to be underestimated are soft skills such as communication, persuasiveness, and congeniality. These come especially handy when you are looking for a job in consumer facing industries such as hospitality, PR or marketing.

A wide range of organisations today look for bright graduates to man entry-level positions. Be it sales departments, business process outsourcing units, event management agencies, research analysts, finance sector companies, hospitality sector or back office departments- a large field is open for fresher's seeking an entry into work life.

However, recruiters often turn up disappointed by the quality of applicants and interviewees. While some lack communication skills, others are not computer savvy in this age of technology. Yet others are not capable of analyzing basic facts and figures; and most incapable of putting their theoretical rote learning into application. Even writing emails appears to be a challenging task for some graduates.

Let's take a look at the skills that add to your employability:

**IT Training:** Not just for students of software programming, IT training can make a huge difference to students of multiple fields. Latest IT technology and software are today being used to bring revolutionary changes to different fields. Architectural firms, for example, are rapidly junking the pen and paper design method, and turning to latest Computer Aided Design (CAD) software for design.

Similarly, if you are working in the field of advertising or film making, it may help if you know one bit or two of animation, even if you are in the creative and conceptualization domain. A large number of engineering colleges teach outdated languages to students. One reason for this is the fact that better programming languages and software very rapidly update the market, leaving little time to academics to cope. For programmers therefore, it is very essential to keep a tab on the latest developments in the market and learn the skills from external sources if needed.

Basic computer literacy is also must today. Being computer literate means that you are able to work effectively on basic MS Office operations; update Excel Sheets, and prepare Power Point Presentations. An added skill set in graphics and video editing can make you more useful in some fields. In an increasingly social media centric world, the more you will be able to prove yourself beneficial to your employer.

**Communication skills:** Imagine a good communicator against a person who struggles to put thoughts into words. The latter would certainly find it difficult to land a good job. A confident demeanor, an ability to put thoughts into words, good verbal and written communication, and ability to convincingly deliver presentations can make much difference to your employability. However, not all people are born with the gift of the gab, as they say. For those who are introverts, it helps if they open up on multiple platforms in early life. Being part of extra-curricular activities, on stage appearances as well as joining literary and creative writing groups during college can help you improve on your communication skills. At the same time if you find yourself lacking in this area, it may help to join a brief professional crash course on improving communication skills.

**General Awareness:** No matter how much you know your subject, not being aware of what is happening around in the world can put a major dent on your employability. Recruiters today want candidates who have good IQ levels, and effective general awareness, no matter which sector. As simple a habit as reading a newspaper daily can make a huge difference to your skills and employability.

Inputs by Mr Rohit Aggarwal, CEO Koenig Solutions