INFORMATION STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATORS



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Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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1: Professional Skills of Successful Communicators

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1.1: EQ vs IQ

It is not just intelligence, as measured by IQ tests, that predicts a student's or professional's success. Emotional intelligence and personal resilience are becoming as important a measure as test scores. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) developed a "character growth chart" to help measure students' personal characteristics that auger well for success in higher education.

Among the attributes it lists and the indicators that a student has those attributes are:

- **GRIT:** Sticks with a project for more than a few weeks, tries hard even after experiencing failure, keeps working even when s/he felt like quitting
- **ZEST:** Actively participates, shows enthusiasm, approaches new situations with excitement and energy
- **SELF CONTROL** (school work): Comes to class prepared, remembers and follows directions, pays attention and is able to resist distractions
- **SELF CONTROL** (interpersonal): Remains calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked, allows others to speak without interrupting, is polite
- **OPTIMISM:** Believes that effort would improve his/her future, stays motivated even when things don't go well
- **GRATITUDE:** Recognizes what other people do for them, shows appreciation by saying thank you or doing something nice for someone else
- **SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE:** Finds solutions during conflicts with others, shows they care about the feelings of others
- **CURIOSITY:** Eager to explore new things, asks questions, takes an active interest in learning

You can see why this list of attributes would be attractive to employers as well.

These are not "skills" per se, but personality traits that will help you succeed in both your academic and professional work environments. We encourage you to develop these approaches and attitudes.

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1.2: Attributes Employers Desire

The Wisconsin Job Center surveyed employers in their state to get a sense of what they are looking for when hiring or promoting employees. Take a look at the list below and see how much the personality traits and behaviors identified by KIPP are mirrored in employers' wish list.

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Enthusiasm
- Cooperation
- Maturity
- Accuracy
- Problem-solving Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Openness — Shares Experience and Ideas
- Discretion and Loyalty to Employer — Doesn't Criticize Past or Present Employers
- Versatility — Skilled in More Than One Area
- Conscientious — Committed to Doing the Best Job Possible

Identify those skills or personality traits on this list that you currently possess, and those that you might want to develop. As emotional intelligence becomes more widely appreciated, it is your ability to demonstrate these skills that will be the strongest predictor of your success.

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1.3: Team Membership Skills

Mass communication professionals almost always work in teams. Different members of the group bring their particular skill sets and competencies to the overall task. Employers expect that each individual understands the role s/he plays and understands how to work collaboratively to accomplish the goals set by supervisors and clients.

You will almost certainly begin your career as one member of a larger team and as someone who is responsible for working with a variety of colleagues who have different expertise and different responsibilities. You will be successful if you understand how your contributions to the overall effort fits with others contributions. Your ability to both "manage laterally" and "manage up" will help your colleagues and superiors understand and acknowledge the role you are playing in the team effort.

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Author Dan Collins has outlined characteristics of a good team member:

- Works for consensus on decisions
- Shares openly and authentically with others regarding personal feelings, opinions, thoughts, and perceptions about problems and conditions
- Involves others in the decision-making process
- Trusts, supports, and has genuine concern for other team members
- "Owns" problems rather than blaming them on others
- When listening, attempts to hear and interpret communication from other's points of view
- Influences others by involving them in the issue(s)
- Encourages the development of other team members
- Respects and is tolerant of individual differences
- Acknowledges and works through conflict openly
- Considers and uses new ideas and suggestions from others
- Encourages feedback on own behavior
- Understands and is committed to team objectives
- Does not engage in win/lose activities with other team members
- Has skills in understanding what's going on in the group

Again, you can see how this list overlaps with the KIPP traits and the employers' wish list. These are some of the key skills and characteristics that successful students, professionals and team members share.

A short video from Study.com on being a good team member

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1.4: Values for Success

Another list of what employers look for comes from About.com's article on internships. This is oriented a bit differently from the previous lists in that it identifies "values" that employees possess that are of importance to employers. It includes:

- Strong work ethic
- Dependability and responsibility
- Possessing a positive attitude
- Adaptability
- Self motivation
- Self confidence

Two other personal attributes are vital to maintaining the ethical and legal standards in your communications work. They are:

- Honesty and integrity
- Professionalism

In Lesson 7 we will be discussing how to evaluate the ethical and legal considerations you must keep in mind as you begin your information strategy work.

As for the personality traits and attitudes discussed in this lesson, it is important for you to do an honest self-assessment of where your own strengths lie, and where there might be the need for an attitude adjustment. Learning now which personality skills you have and which you need to work on will help ensure your success both in the classroom and on the job.

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1.5: Resources

Links to Resources in the Lesson

- Characteristics of a Good Team and Team Member: www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/pages/articles/characteristics.htm
- [1]Top 10 Work Values Employers Look For: internships.about.com/od/internshipsuccess/a/workvalues.htm

Additional Resources about Work Values

- 7 Traits of a Solid PR Professional: www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/7_traits_of_a_solid_PR_professional_14347.aspx
- 9 Traits of Uber-Effective PR Pro in 2015: www.cision.com/us/2014/10/9-traits-of-an-uber-effective-pr-pro-in-2015/
- Advertising Manager Careers: www.mymajors.com/career/advertising-manager/skills/
- Top 10 Qualities of a Great Advertising Team: advertisingschools.com/resources/top-10-qualities-of-a-great-advertising-team
- What are the Qualities to Become a Good Journalist?: www.buzzle.com/articles/what-are-the-qualities-required-to-become-a-good-journalist.html
- Trust Me, I'm a Journalist: how-to-become-a-journalist.blogspot.com/2013/05/personal-skills-needed-to-be-journalist.html

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