

# WINNING WITH SKILLS

## Marketable Skills Will Make You Employable

**W**hat would you do if you could not find a job no matter how hard you tried? Or, if you lost your job right now?

Do you believe that you would have the required skills and qualifications in order to be marketable in any situation, or better yet to be self-employed in some way?

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) the three most important pillars on which to build in order to ensure that you can remain employable and marketable in any situation are education, vocational training and life-long learning.

With the emphasis in today's world being on skills development, the questions oft asked are what are skills and why are they so important?

The term technical and vocational skills development refers to the acquisition of knowledge, practical competencies, know-how and attitudes necessary to perform a certain trade or occupation in the labour market.

Education in skills is essential to making people employable, to gaining decent work and to staying out of poverty. Employers more than ever are demanding that workers in this 21st century must possess not only the soft skills but also the requisite technical and vocational skills which are suited to their business in order to function effectively and be competitive in the workplace. Even though you may report for an interview with great confidence and an impressive resume reflecting academic achievements, the question will still be asked "What can you do?" Therefore skills development is necessary for survival in today's workplace.

According to the ILO in the year 2008 there were 113.4 unemployed adults in the world and 75.2 million unemployed youth. Unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean was at a high of 7.2%. Unemployment rates in Latin America and the Caribbean rose to 8.4% in 2009. In this year, 2010, those figures are not likely to decrease. Who would resist the need to develop themselves in as many and in as wide a range of skill areas as possible? Or is this concept just another of the buzz words of the 21st century? Far from it.

Below are examples of skills that can be developed as vocational skills.

Do you:

- Sew
- Crochet
- Fix your own car
- Repair furniture
- Plant and tend a garden
- Do hairdressing or barbering?
- Raise animals
- Paint
- Coach sports teams
- Work as a hospital volunteer?

Do you like:

- Fishing
- Photography
- Diving
- Carpentry
- Have you ever participated in fund-raising for a group, or in church-related activities?
- Have you ever led a social group or sold things as part of an activity?
- Hairdressers, Colourists
- Health/Home care assistants
- Chefs, Restaurant/Hotel managers
- Groundsmen, Farmers
- Road maintenance operators
- Primary or secondary school
- Tour guides, Holiday reps
- Creche workers, Special needs assistants
- Car/Motorbike/Truck mechanics
- Beauty/Spa/Holistic therapists
- Masons, Scaffolders, Tilers, painters, woodworkers
- Fashion, Textile designers
- Plays a part in all jobs
- Photographers, Retouchers
- Plumbers
- Fashion / Music Retail assistants
- Security guards, Bodyguards
- Fitness instructors, Personal trainers
- Domestic and industrial electricians

### THE FOUNDATION SKILLS

When companies interview prospective employees they are looking for the candidate with the most compatible skills and competencies which match the needs of their company and the specific position to be filled. The person with the right match of skills and personal qualities will stand out from the rest based on expertise, experience and the possibility that their personality will fit in with the company.

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All workers in today's world must develop what are known as marketable, transferable and motivated skills if they are to be successful on their chosen career path. Such skills will drive success as they are the skills which will ensure that employers are interested in hiring you.

As you no doubt can deduce from the above, skills are the common denominator amongst THE most successful workers anywhere in the world and in all sectors across the entire spectrum. According to well-known career development expert, Dr. Lawrence Jones, in his book, Job Skills For

The 21st Century, it's as simple as this: "Skills, you win; no skills, you lose.....Your hope is that you have the skills an employer wants and that the employer will buy your skills, that is hire you..... Your skills are marketable when employers will pay you to perform them." The 21st century workplace is increasingly a modern environment requiring a different approach to work and mind-set from workers and a clear recognition of the Foundation Skills.

The Foundation Skills are the 17 essential

areas in which all workers must reach a certain standard if they are to be successful in such an environment. These areas are reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, visualisation, social, negotiation, leadership, teamwork, cultural diversity, self-esteem, self-management and responsibility.

These 17 skill areas are broken down into four groups.

1. The Basic Skills are reading, writing, mathematics, speaking and listening. These relate to the fundamental necessity of a worker to show literacy and numeracy and to be able to locate, distil and understand information from a variety of sources including modern means such as the computer/internet and communicate such information accurately. Speaking, listening and mathematical skills must also be up to scratch.

2. Creative thinking, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills and visualisation are classed as The Thinking Skills. Will a worker be of value in a company's employ due to their ability to think clearly, solve problems, make sound decisions based on the pros and cons presented and also through the ability to visualise outcomes from different situations?