

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

# SKILL GAPS

THE ILL-PREPARED WORKFORCE



What are the critical skills?

Where are the skill gaps?

How do we close the gaps?

How are we doing today compared to two years ago?

SKILL GAPS | A CONTINUED CRITICAL PROBLEM



Surveys of critical skills that were completed years ago showed significant gaps between the skills that were required to perform jobs well and skills of those present or entering the workforce. Despite these studies raising awareness, the gaps persist today and continue to widen. In the fall of 2006 the U.S. Conference Board reported that most young people entering the U.S. work force “lack critical skills essential for success.”According to a 2010 American Management Association (AMA) survey, executives say that skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation (the four C’s) will become even more important to organizations than the three R’s, reading, writing and arithmetic.

While there has been much concern about remedying skills deficiencies among new entrants to the workforce, continuous learning and skills training are crucial to sustaining workforce readiness among employees of all experience levels. Training and professional development programs can help workers prepare for emerging skills needs in the workplace. They can also provide transition skill sets for workers who are embarking on new career paths or acquiring new responsibilities. [2]

Recent surveys report that 17 percent of four-year college graduates are deficient in their preparation for work. In the 2008 Conference board and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) study, “The Ill - Prepared U.S. Workforce,” found that new hires lack crucial basic and applied skills.

**Business skill gaps continue to grow in the United States. That is, both new hires and current workers frequently lack the necessary skills to meet job requirements and perform at high levels. Workforce readiness remedial training only provides low to moderate success. Many of these programs do not respond adequately to gaps such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity to enable using their employees’ knowledge in the workplace.**

The study asked whether workforce readiness training programs are the best way to use business resources, particularly during these tough economic times. [3]

In **The Global Achievement Gap** Wagner states that 65 percent of college professors report that what is taught in high school does not prepare students for college. There are too many multiple-choice assessments in high school, while the assessments rarely ask students to explain their reasoning or to apply skills that are critical for success in college. Neither teachers nor students receive useful feedback about college readiness. [6]

**Despite these findings raising the awareness of the problem, the skill gaps are not going away.** They continue to widen and also they may be changing due to the changing work environment and new challenges. For example, many employers believe that current employees lack both oral and written communication skills. With more information available through technology, people are not prepared to process it effectively. In addition, employees follow old ways to solve problems and creativity becomes another urgent issue for effective work. Most importantly, these skill gaps are a significant business issue that has widespread impact on companies’ success or failure in the global marketplace.

Purpose

Concern about this important problem led the University of Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL) to develop a new comprehensive survey to investigate critical skills and skill gaps in the St. Louis region and to develop solutions. In particular, UMSL wanted to investigate changes since similar 2008 and 2010 studies. The purposes of this survey are:

- (1) to determine the critical business skills and their skill gaps;
- (2) to examine potential solutions to this problem; and
- (3) to learn how the UMSL College of Business Administration can help solve the skill gaps problem, both through its own efforts and by partnering with the St. Louis business community.

Although the survey focuses on the St. Louis business community, we believe results and insights apply to other cities and universities.

Development

The survey was developed and administered by the UMSL Survey Team, which is made up of business professionals, faculty and students. A Web-based survey was created to determine the nature and extent of the skill gaps in the St. Louis region, to identify the negative impacts and potential solutions.

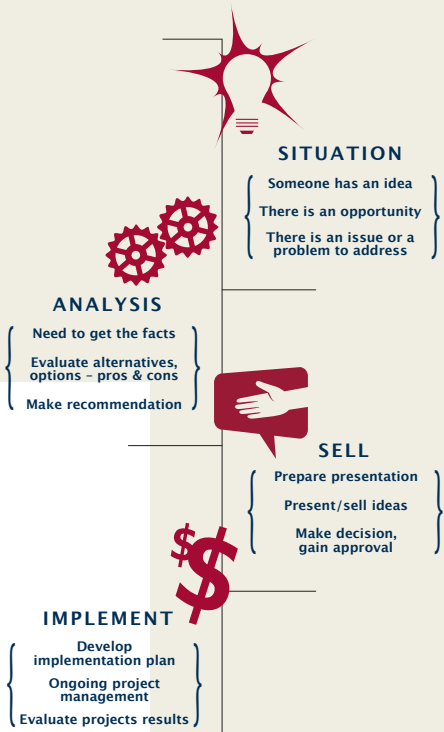
A few key definitions are below:

**Critical skills** are defined as those required to perform one’s job at a high level of performance. The list of critical skills was developed from prior surveys, input from human resource executives and input from the UMSL Survey Team. A complete list of the 35 skills and definitions is in Appendix B.

A **skill gap** is defined as a critical skill that is not meeting the job requirements now or in the future. The survey targeted professionals who have at least a four-year degree. The survey contained a list of 35 skills (and definitions), such as critical thinking, change management, applying information technology, execution and oral communication.

Knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient, for success today. Students need skills to be able to apply their knowledge and continue learning.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



The critical skills needed in business can be depicted in the diagram on page two. These are the applied skills needed in a typical business environment: 1) There is an issue, situation or objective that needs to be addressed. 2) The situation needs to be analyzed with alternative solutions developed, 3) The recommendation needs to be compelling and presented well to gain approval and 4) There must be an execution plan to implement the idea to achieve the business objectives and benefits.

Survey Overview

Survey respondents were selected from three different sources. One source was human resource advisors who were identified by the UMSL Survey Team. A second, and the largest, source was alumni of UMSL primarily from the College of Business Administration plus other colleges who were identified by internal UMSL sources. Personal contacts, identified by the UMSL Business Leadership Council and the UMSL Survey Team, served as the third source of respondents.

Overview of Respondent

A total of 727 individuals responded to the 2012 survey as compared to 317 in 2010 and 320 in 2008. There was a good distribution of respondents across industry, age, company size and type of employer (i.e., public and private). Ninety-eight percent of the respondents had at least a four-year college degree and 43 percent were women. Please see the demographics figures in Appendix A for more details.

Survey Findings

Before reading the survey findings below, the reader may want to take a few minutes and list the critical skills that are necessary for your business and the gaps in those critical skills in your workforce.

Table 1 shows the top 10 critical skills from the 2012 UMSL survey to be oral communication, active listening, written communication, teamwork/collaboration, prioritization and focus, time management, critical/analytical thinking, external customer service, decision making, and internal customer service. Six of these critical skills are seen as skill gaps. (denoted with •) How close were you to the survey’s top 10?

Table 1

TOP 10 CRITICAL SKILLS AND SKILL GAPS 2012			
2012 Top 10 Critical Skills	2012 Top 10 Skill Gaps		
Oral Communication	•	Written Communication	•
Active Listening	•	Leadership	
Written Communication	•	Critical/Analytical Thinking	•
Teamwork/Collaboration		People Management/Supervisory	
Prioritization and Focus	•	Strategic Planning/Strategic thinking	
Time Management	•	Oral Communication	•
Critical/Analytical Thinking	•	Active Listening	•
External Customer Service		Prioritization and Focus	•
Decision Making		Time Management	•
Internal Customer Service		Change Management	



Seven of the top ten critical skills in the 2008 survey reappeared in the 2010 survey. The remaining three new skills were time management, prioritization and focus, and active listening. Between the 2008 and 2012 surveys, 60 percent of the top critical skills remained the same.

Table 2

TOP 10 CRITICAL SKILLS 2008-2012		
2008	2010	2012
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Active Listening	Oral Communication
Decision Making	Customer Orientation	Active Listening
Execution	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Written Communication
Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Teamwork/Collaboration
Teamwork/Collaboration	Time Management	Prioritization and Focus
Leadership	Teamwork/Collaboration	Time Management
Customer Orientation	Written Communication	Critical/Analytical Thinking
Written Communication	Prioritization and Focus	External Customer Service*
Data Analysis	Decision Making	Decision Making
Change Management	Leadership	Internal Customer Service*

\*New categories in 2012

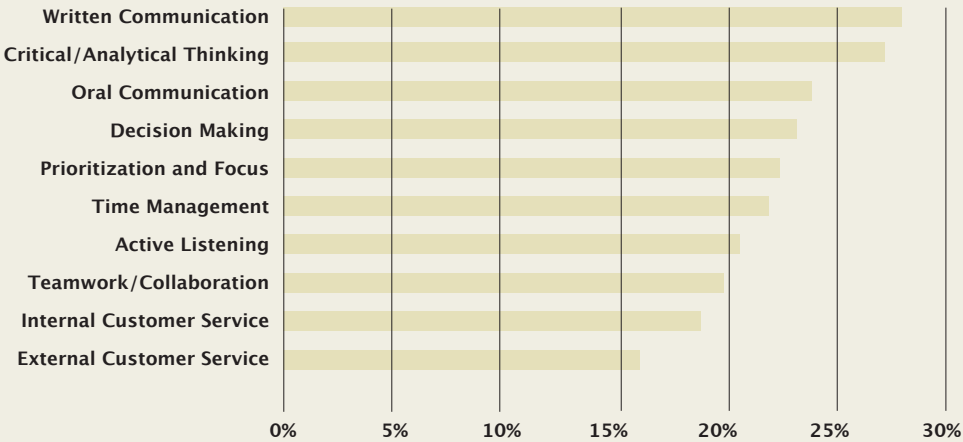
While the top critical skills were similar between 2008 and 2010, the top skill gaps showed more difference between those two surveys. Only five skill gaps from the 2008 survey again made the top 10 in 2010. But from 2010 to 2012 the survey results had 90 percent in common, with the only difference in the top 10 being the substitution of oral communication for lean thinking/process improvement.

Table 3

TOP 10 SKILL GAPS FROM 2008 TO 2012		
2008	2010	2012
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Leadership	Written Communication
Leadership	People Management/Supervisory	Leadership
Oral Communication	Change Management	Critical/Analytical Thinking
Execution	Strategic Planning	People Management/Supervisory
Written Communication	Written Communication	Strategic Planning/Strategic thinking
Change Management	Prioritization and Focus	Oral Communication
People Management/Supervisory	Active Listening	Active Listening
Decision Making	Time Management	Prioritization and Focus
Data Analysis	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Time Management
Project Management	Lean Thinking/Process Improvement	Change Management

One consistency among the three surveys is that the top critical skills exhibit significant gaps. Figure 1 shows that over 25 percent of the respondents see critical or large gaps for two of the critical skills.

Figure 1 - Percentage of Large or Critical Gaps for the Critical Skills



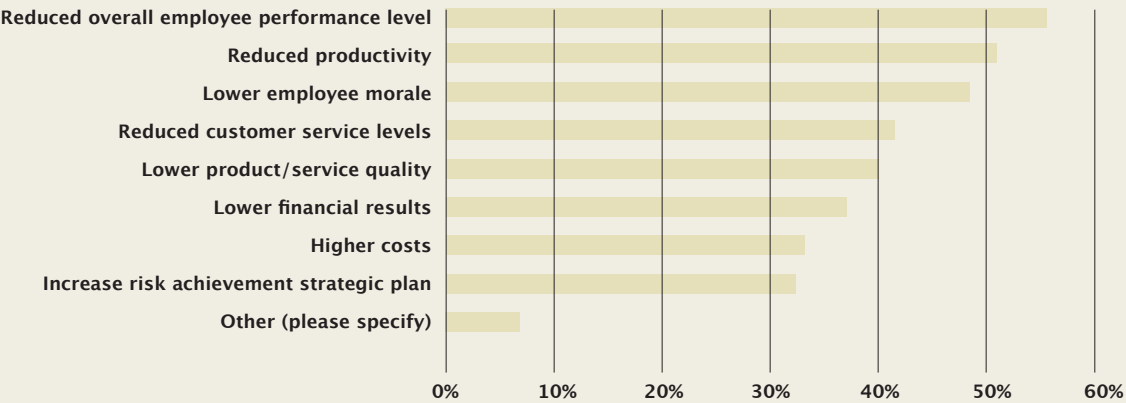
In 2010 the survey team investigated the impact of the recession on skills that were deemed to be critical. Both relationship building and applying technology to business were in the top 10 skills of those finding a new job in 2010. Likewise in 2012, computer skills were in the top 10 for those who reported that they were impacted by the economy. Both skills may have been crucial to and been affected by the economy.

Respondents who were impacted by the economy also differed on the importance of skill gaps. For 2012 those who were impacted by the economy had creativity, leadership, lean production and conflict management as top 10 skill gaps.

Impact of Skill Gaps

The negative impact of skill gaps is shown in Figure 2. Respondents were asked, “What are the consequences of skill gaps for organizations?” More than half of respondents answered that the skill gaps reduced productivity and diminished employee performance. More than 40 percent answered that lower employee morale, higher costs, reduced customer service levels, lower financial results and lower product/service quality would result. Approximately 38 percent said skill gaps increased the risk of not achieving the strategic plan. Other potential consequences included lack of leadership vision, loss of market share, reduced positive employee working relationships, and increased turnover. Thus, respondents recognized numerous dangers to a company by not closing skill gaps.

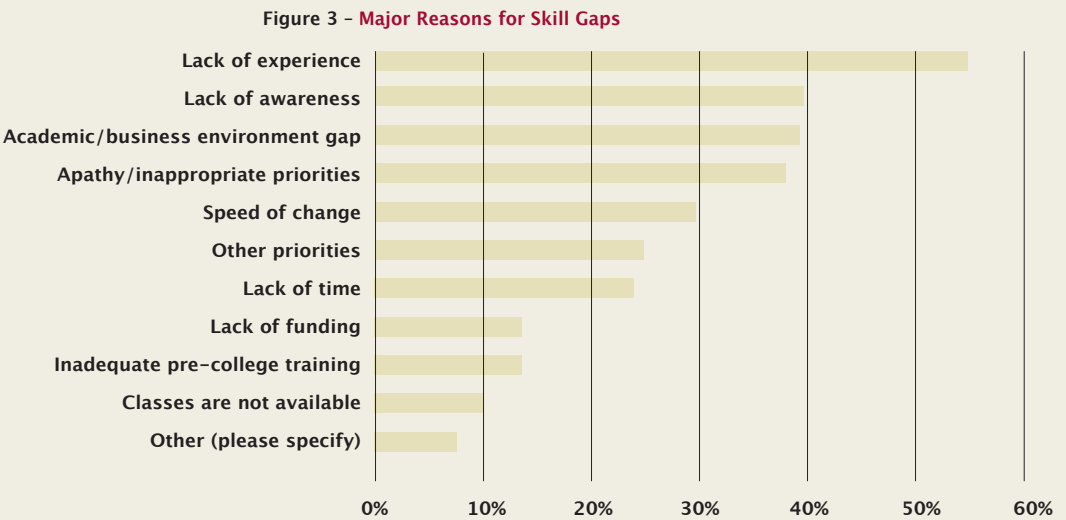
Figure 2 - Impact of Skill Gaps





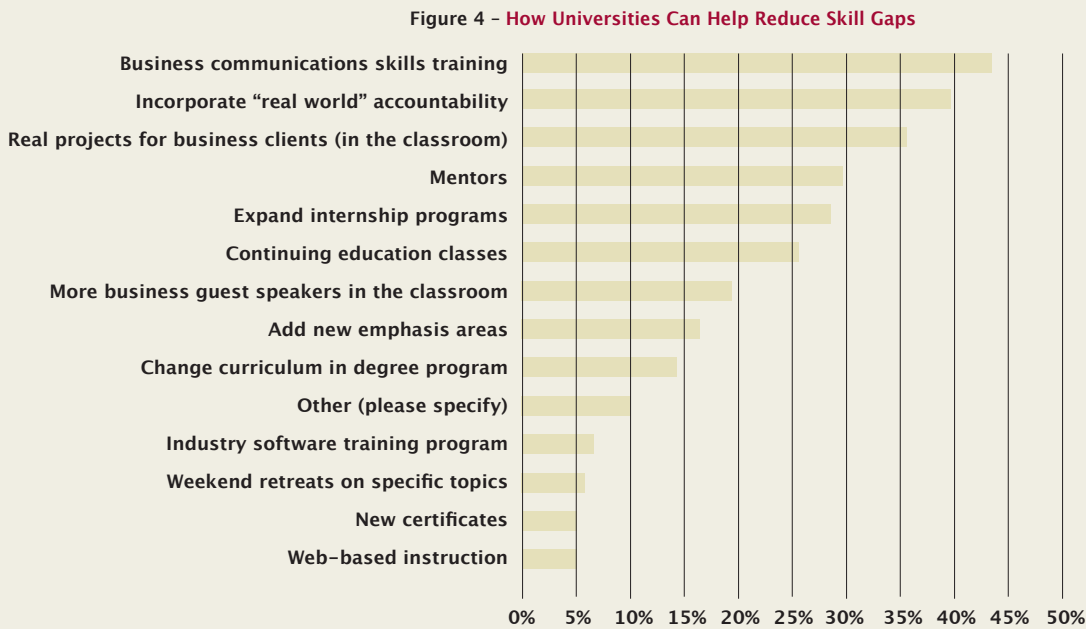
Reasons for Skill Gaps

The four most common explanations for the persistence of skill gaps were lack of experience, lack of awareness, the academic/business environment gap, and apathy/inappropriate priorities. Lack of time and speed of change were also frequently mentioned. Figure 3 shows the relative frequency of the reasons.

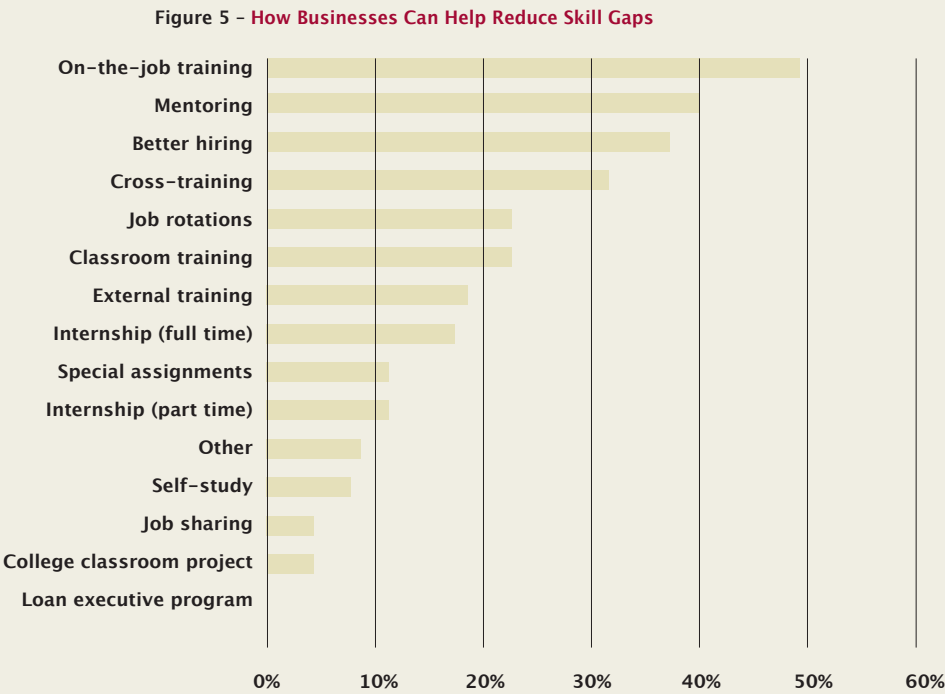


Closing Skill Gaps: University Programs

Survey respondents were provided a list of potential ways that universities can help close skill gaps and were asked to select those considered most important. As shown in Figure 4, the three most frequently chosen ways that universities can help included business communication skills training, incorporate “real world” accountability and real projects for business clients. Nearly a third of the respondents marked business mentor and expanded internship programs as ways in which the skill gaps can be narrowed.



The three most frequently chosen ways in which businesses could help reduce skill gaps are mentoring, on-the-job training, and better hiring (Figure 5). At least 20 percent of respondents said that job rotations, cross training and classroom training were useful company programs for narrowing the skill gaps.



University and Business Partnering

Examining the two lists of ways to help reveals many opportunities for universities and businesses to partner. The university can identify matches between students’ interests and skills with special assignments that might be performed in local companies.

Such programs often can be developed in the context of a class project, with a useful outcome for the company, as well as providing practical, real-world experiences for students. The university can partner with business to provide internship opportunities, offering course credit to students and academic supervisors. In return, businesses have the opportunity to place students with the latest knowledge and information and complete specific tasks they may not have an employee to perform.

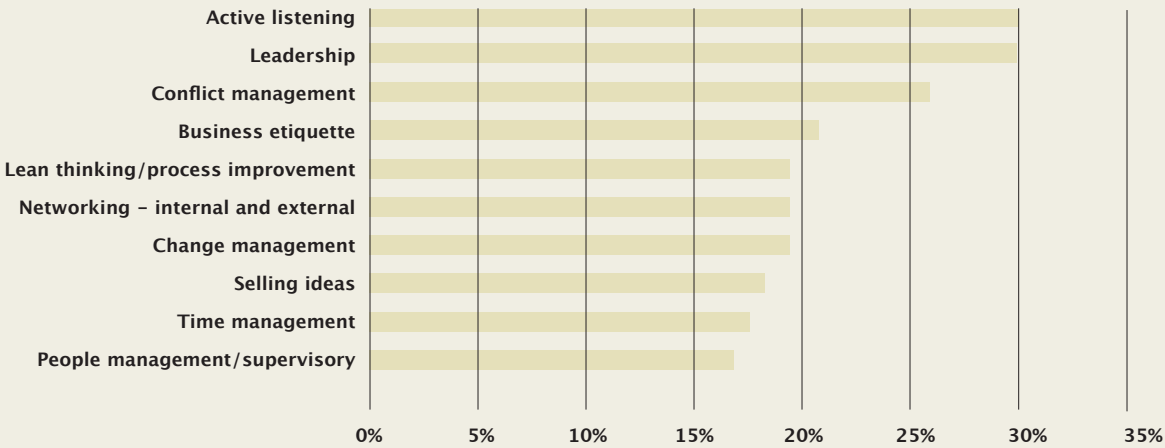
University of Missouri–St. Louis offers a project execution class to both undergraduates and MBA students. The class has teams of students work on projects that are needed by companies and not-for-profits. In the process of completing the projects, the students practice many of the critical skills that are needed by the business community. The university is exploring ways to expand these activities so that most business students will have an opportunity to work on relevant real-time projects.



Personal Skill Gaps and Solutions

Respondents were asked to list one or two skills that they were not taught in their degree programs that they developed after graduation and were critical to success. Although answers varied widely, most soft skills were similar or identical to the critical skills in Table 1 - active listening, time management, leadership, critical/analytical thinking, lean thinking/ process improvement and so forth. Respondents were asked how they'd close the skill gaps. The two most common answers were learning from others (74 percent) and trial and error (64 percent).

Figure 6 – Skills Not Taught in Degree Programs but Critical to Success After Graduation



Conclusions Based on this 2012 research and consistent with the prior 2008 and 2010 surveys, we conclude:

- Skill gaps are real and they continue to grow.
- Critical skill gaps have significant negative impacts.
- Opportunities exist for universities and businesses to work more closely together.
- Universities need to change to include more real-world business experience and continuing education.
- Businesses need to continue to provide internal development programs.
- Individuals must share the responsibility for their own development.
- At a time when eight percent of the workforce remains unemployed, these gaps in critical skills cannot continue to be ignored.
- We need to develop a sense of urgency, the time to address the problem is now.

**Some closing thoughts:** Imagine if your workforce had a 10, 20 or 30 percent improvement in these applied skills. What would your business results look like? Would this give you a competitive advantage? What would be your choice of the top three skill gaps to address? What actions are you going to take to address them?

SKILL GAPS: A CRITICAL PROBLEM

It is our belief that skill gaps are too great and important to be left to a process of just picking up things by observing others or by trial and error. The business environment is changing too rapidly, customer demands are increasing and competition is rapidly intensifying. We cannot afford to make the same mistakes. We must take a proactive approach to meet the future demands of business. We believe that a transformation in business education involving both the university and business will quickly close these gaps. The UMSL College of Business Administration's strategic plan will have the college partner with business to close these gaps. We welcome further input on this important problem.

We would like to thank our survey participants and survey team for bringing these skill gaps to light and offering recommendations on how to close the gaps.

SURVEY TEAM

Keith Womer, (right) Former Dean, UMSL College of Business Administration

Steve Finkelstein, (middle right) Senior Partner, Experience on Demand

Shuang Han, (far right) MBA Student, UMSL

To download a complete survey presentation, go to [www.umsl.edu/business/skills-set.pdf](http://www.umsl.edu/business/skills-set.pdf)

Please send comments or questions to Dr. Womer at [WomerK@umsl.edu](mailto:WomerK@umsl.edu)



Reference Material

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Figure A.1 – Number of Employees in the Organization

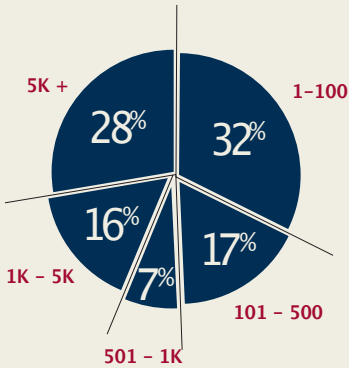
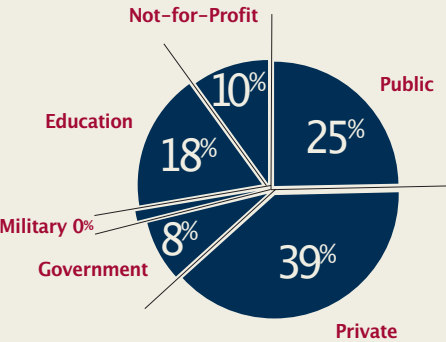


Figure A.2 – Most Recent Employer



2012 Top 10 Critical Skills GENDER\*

Total	Male	Female
Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Active Listening
Active Listening	Written Communication	Application of Legal Skills
Written Communication	Active Listening	Business Case Development
Teamwork/Collaboration	Time Management	Business Etiquette
Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/Collaboration	Change Management
Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Oral Communication
Critical Analysis/Thinking	Computer Skills	Written Communication
External Customer Service	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Computer Skills
Decision Making	External Customer Service	Conflict Management
External Customer Service	Internal Customer Service	Creativity/Innovation

\* Sixty percent of the critical skills differ by gender

2012 Top 10 Critical Skills

SUPERVISOR & EMPLOYEE\*

Top 10 Critical Skills	Supervisor/HR/Manager	Employee
Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Active Listening	Active Listening	Written Communication
Written Communication	Written Communication	Active Listening
Teamwork/Collaboration	Teamwork/Collaboration	Time Management
Prioritization and Focus	External Customer Service	Prioritization and Focus
Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Critical/Analytical Thinking
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Teamwork/Collaboration
External Customer Service	Decision Making	Computer Skills
Decision Making	Time Management	Internal Customer Service
Internal Customer Service	Internal Customer Service	External Customer Service

\*Ninety percent are the same

2012 Top 10 Critical Skills

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES\*

Top 10 Critical Skills	1-100	101-500	501-1000	1001-5000	More Than 5000
Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Active Listening	Active Listening	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Active Listening	Active Listening	Oral Communication	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Active Listening	Written Communication
Written Communication	External Customer Service	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Oral Communication	Written Communication	Active Listening
Teamwork/ Collaboration	Written Communication	External Customer Service	External Customer Service	Leadership	Critical/ Analytical Thinking
Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Written Communication	Written Communication	Decision Making	Teamwork/ Collaboration
Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Time Management	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Prioritization and Focus
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Decision Making	Internal Customer Service	Strategic Planning/ Strategic Thinking	Time Management	External Customer Service
External Customer Service	Time Management	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Time Management
Decision Making	Internal Customer Service	Prioritization and Focus	Internal Customer Service	External Customer Service	Leadership
Internal Customer Service	Computer Skills	Decision Making	Decision Making	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Strategic Planning/ Strategic Thinking

\* Virtually all are the same by company size

2012 Top 10 Critical Skills

TOP 5 MAJOR INDUSTRIES\*

Top 10 Critical Skills	Education	Financial Service	Government	Healthcare	Manufacturing
Oral Communication	Written Communication	Oral Communication	Written Communication	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Active Listening	Oral Communication	Active Listening	Oral Communication	Active Listening	Written Communication
Written Communication	Active Listening	Written Communication	Active Listening	Written Communication	Teamwork/ Collaboration
Teamwork/ Collaboration	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Prioritization and Focus	Time Management	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Active Listening
Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Teamwork/ Collaboration	External Customer Service	Critical/Analytical Thinking
Time Management	Time Management	External Customer Service	External Customer Service	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Prioritization and Focus
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Computer Skills	Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Internal Customer Service	Decision Making
External Customer Service	Prioritization and Focus	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Working Within a System/Industry Tools	Time Management	Time Management
Decision Making	Decision Making	Business Etiquette	Decision Making	Decision Making	Leadership
Internal Customer Service	External Customer Service	Internal Customer Service	Computer Skills	Computer Skills	Internal Customer Service

\* Virtually all are the same across industries

2012 Top 10 Critical Skills

POSITION\*

Top 10 Critical Skills	CEO	Vice President	Manager	Entry-Level Professional	Staff
Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Written Communication	Written Communication	Written Communication
Active Listening	External Customer Service	Active Listening	Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Written Communication	Active Listening	Written Communication	Active Listening	Active Listening	Prioritization and Focus
Teamwork/ Collaboration	Written Communication	External Customer Service	Time Management	Time Management	Time Management
Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/ Collaboration
Time Management	Prioritization and Focus	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Prioritization and Focus	External Customer Service	Active Listening
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Decision Making	Prioritization and Focus	External Customer Service	Computer Skills	Critical/Analytical Thinking
External Customer Service	Internal Customer Service	Decision Making	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Decision Making	Decision Making
Decision Making	Time Management	Internal Customer Service	Computer Skills	Critical/Analytical Thinking	External Customer Service
Internal Customer Service	Critical/Analytical Thinking	Leadership	Internal Customer Service	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Internal Customer Service

\* Virtually all are the same across position



Top 10 Skill Gaps

SUPERVISOR & EMPLOYEE\*

Supervisor/HR/Manager	Employee
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Written Communication
Leadership	People Management/Supervisory
Written Communication	Time Management
Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking	Leadership
Change Management	Performance Management & Measures
Prioritization and Focus	Oral Communication
Decision Making	Active Listening
People Management/Supervisory	Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking
Selling Ideas	Lean Thinking/Process Improvement
Oral Communication	Critical/Analytical Thinking

*\* Forty percent differ by position*

Top 20 Skill Gaps

SKILLS & SKILL GAPS\*

2012 Top Critical Skills	2012 Top 20 Skill Gaps
Oral Communication	Written Communication
Active Listening	Leadership
Written Communication	Critical/Analytical Thinking
Teamwork/Collaboration	People Management/Supervisory
Prioritization and Focus	Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking
Time Management	Oral Communication
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Active Listening
External Customer Service	Prioritization and Focus
Decision Making	Time Management
Internal Customer Service	Change Management
Computer Skills	Performance Management & Measures
Leadership	Decision Making
Business Etiquette	Lean Thinking/Process Improvement
Presentation Skills	Creativity/Innovation
Project Management and Execution	Mentoring
Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking	Selling Ideas
Working Within a System/Industry Tools	Conflict Management
Creativity/Innovation	Presentation Skills
Data Analysis	Teamwork/Collaboration
People Management/Supervisory	Project Management and Execution

*\* Seventy percent overlap*

Top 10 Skill Gaps

GENDER\*

Male	Female
Written Communication	People Management/Supervisory
Leadership	Written Communication
Critical/Analytical Thinking	Lean Thinking/Process Improvement
Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking	Leadership
Oral Communication	Time Management
Active Listening	Conflict Management
Decision Making	Change Management
Prioritization and Focus	Mentoring
People Management/Supervisory	Performance Management & Measures
Time Management	Prioritization and Focus

*\* Seventy percent overlap by gender*

SKILL GAPS

Appendix B

LIST OF 35 CRITICAL SKILLS WITH DEFINITIONS

**Active Listening:** A person's willing-ness and ability to hear and understand, focusing entirely on what is being said and confirming accurate comprehension of the message

**Application of Legal Skills:** Basic understanding of legal processes and constraints as they pertain to a position or responsibility

**Business Case Development:** Develop a compelling and credible business case for all types of projects, including identification of alternative solutions and a financial cost benefit analysis

**Business Etiquette:** Professionalism in both communications and actions

**Change Management:** Assess readiness for change and develop a change management process to include communication strategy, accountability and measures

**Oral Communication:** Verbally articulate ideas clearly and effectively through both formal and informal communication

**Written Communication:** Ability to write clearly and effectively in a standard, professional business language using appropriate methods

**Computer Skills:** Proficiency with common computer applications such as Microsoft Office suites

**Conflict Management:** Ability to give and receive feedback or objections (internally and externally) in a professional and appropriate manner, so as not to incite conflict among parties

**Creativity/Innovation:** Developing new ideas that impact the organization's results and make the ideas a reality

**Critical/Analytical Thinking:** Explore alternatives and review impacts of pros and cons to solve a problem, utilizing tools like the 80/20 Pareto Principle

**External Customer Service:** Listen to and understand customer needs, establish and exceed expectations, and provide for ongoing feedback

**Internal Customer Service:** Listen to and understand the needs of your colleagues and partners in other internal organizations, establish and exceed expectations, and provide for ongoing feedback

**Data Analysis:** Understand how to transform data into information that leads to decisions and actions

**Decision Making:** Develop and evaluate alternatives, make informed decision utilizing fact-based manage-ment, and being decisive

**Driving Stakeholder Value:** Identifying the key stakeholders and their needs

**Global Business Perspective:** Understand how to do business abroad, how to manage the complexities of international commerce, and be aware of international cultures

**Global and Cultural Diversity Management:** Understand and have the ability to bridge the gap between global, cultural and personal differences in the workforce, respect the differences of your coworkers, understand that concessions will need to be made to work in global teams, and be willing to explore new ideas regardless of where they come from

**Leadership:** Set direction, lead by example, develop a strong culture, execute strategy and plan – garnering employees' involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work and the company

**Lean Thinking/Process Improvement:** Identify, analyze and improve existing processes within an organization to meet new goals and objectives, reduce waste, shorten cycle times, automate manual effort, build in prevention and reduce the number of steps

**Meeting Management and Facilitation:** Help others to maximize their contribution in groups and teams by creating a supportive and outcome-focused environment, effectively run group meetings to reach a decision, conclusion or solve a problem

**Mentoring:** Ability to guide and educate others to elevate performance and encourage personal improvement, professional improvement or both

**Networking/Relationship Building – Internal and External:** Establishing rapport with internal and external parties in an effort to achieve congruent goals and develop long-term partnerships and trusted advisor relationships

**People Management/Supervisory:** Motivate, develop and reward individuals and teams, while providing constructive and candid feedback

**Performance Management Measures:** Establish key performance drivers, balance of measures to drive the right behavior and results – including both lead and lag indicators – and provide for ongoing monitoring

**Presentation Skills:** Ability to develop and deliver presentations for both internal and external audiences that are confident, engaging, clear, concise, visually appealing and encourage participation

**Prioritization and Focus:** Ability to identify and focus on high-impact projects and maintain focus on the vital things that must exceed expectations versus simply being met

**Project Management and Execution:** Planning, organizing and managing resources to bring about the successful execution of specific project goals and objectives on time and on budget

**Risk Management:** Analyzing exposure to risk and determining how to best handle such exposure and mitigate damages

**Selling Ideas:** Ability to present alternatives and recommendations and achieve approval to implement an idea

**Strategic Planning/Strategic Thinking:** Ability to ask effective questions to stimulate thought and creative insights in order to determine long-term goals and then identify the best approach for achieving those goals

**Teamwork/Collaboration:** Ability to work with teammates or colleagues through differences in opinion, personality and culture to achieve common goals

**Time Management:** Effectively manage time, set priorities and follow-up

**Versatilist/Multifunctionalist:** Having a wide range of skills, competencies and experiences to assist in fueling business value

**Working Within a System/Process/Industry Tools:** Knowledge of industry specific tools, processes, policies and regulations, allowing one to work inside set standards with detail and consistency



**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**  
**SKILL GAPS: A CRITICAL PROBLEM**



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