



College to Work Transition

The Paradox of Preparation

“College and work are fundamentally different. The *knowledge* you acquired in college will be critical to your success, but the *process* of succeeding in school is very different from the process of succeeding at work. Certain aspects of your education may have prepared you to be a professional, but evidence from the workplace indicates that this is not enough for professional success.”

From *How to succeed in your first job: Tips for new college graduates*, by E. F. Holton, II and Sharon S. Naquin, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

College Graduates' Perceptions of Differences between College and Work

<u>College</u>	<u>Workplace</u>
Frequent, quick, and concrete feedback (grades and so on)	Infrequent and less precise feedback
Highly structured curriculum and programs with lots of direction	Highly unstructured environment and tasks with few directions
Personally supportive environment	Less personal support
Few significant changes	Frequent and unexpected changes
Flexible schedule	Structured schedule
Frequent breaks and time off	Limited time off
Personal control over time, classes, and interests	Responding to others' directions and interests
Intellectual challenge	Organizational and people challenges
Choose your performance level (A, B, and so on)	A-level work required all the time
Focus on your development and growth	Focus on getting results for the organization
Create and explore knowledge	Get results with your knowledge
Individual effort	Team effort
“Right” answers	Few “right” answers
Independence of ideas and thinking	Do it the organization's way
Professors	Supervisors
Less initiative required	Lots of initiative required

Reprinted with permission from *The Senior Year Experience: Facilitating integration, reflection, closure, and transition* by J. N. Gardner, G. Van der Veer and Associates by Sheik Safdar, San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc

Characteristics that bring value to companies (and percentage cited):

Enthusiasm/Excitement/Drive (17%)
Communication skills - oral and written (13%)
Technological aptitude (11%)
Fresh perspectives/new ideas (10%)
Teamwork (5-7%)
Willingness to Learn (5-7%)
Work ethic (5-7%)
Analytical thinking (5-7%)
Adaptability/ability to embrace change (5-7%)

Challenges employers face from new hires (and percentages cited):

Entitlement attitude/unrealistic expectations (23%)
Lack of work ethic/laziness (17%)
Loyalty/commitment issues (12%)
Appropriate work-life balance (5-8%)
Immaturity (5-8%)
Lack of confidence (5-8%)
Inability to understand work required (5-8%)
Communication skills (5-8%)
Need for instant gratification (5-8%)

Source: Recruiting Trends 2007-08, Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI), Michigan State University

What Employers Look for in New Hires:

Skills:

*Rated:

Communication skills (verbal and written)	4.7
Honesty	4.7
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	4.5
Motivation/initiative	4.5
Strong work ethic	4.5
Teamwork skills (works well with others)	4.5

- 3/4 prefer to hire new college graduates who have gained relevant work experience
- 2/3 screen job candidates on their grade point average (gpa); 58% use a 3.0 gpa as a cutoff

*5 point scale, where 1= Not important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; 5=Extremely important
Source: Job Outlook 2007, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

Dealing with Digital Dirt

- 83.2% recruiters used a search engine in 2007 to uncover information about candidates
- 43% said they eliminated candidates based on this information

Suggestions for online reputation management:

1. What is out there? Do an internet search of your name
2. Create a positive online presence. Use web sites, professional blogs, or published articles
3. Continually monitor your name. Create a self search with internet engines to run periodically

Source: Citing Execunet in Herman Trend Alert: Digital Dirt Hurts Candidates, February 20, 2008