

Calcasieu Workforce Gazette

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Soft skills factor into a job search

Have you ever gone to a job interview and felt like you were the perfect fit for the job, only to find out the company hired someone else? While you may have possessed the right technical skills for the role, there's a chance another set of skills determined the employer's hiring decision: soft skills.

The attributes that make up your personality and "emotional intelligence quotient" are often characterized as soft skills, or the traits that you excel at and naturally enjoy.

Identifying your own soft skills, as well as understanding the ones employers often look for, can strengthen your job search and allow you to present yourself as the total package.

SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

Some soft skills are better suited to a job than others, but there are a number of common traits that most employers are seeking. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' "Job Outlook 2013," employers have common preferences in the soft skills they're looking for in an employee.

When asked what skills and qualities employers want to see, employers' top five picks were leadership, problem-solving skills, written and verbal communication skills, the ability to work in a team and analytical/quantitative skills.

IDENTIFYING THOSE SKILLS

In order to know which soft skills you possess, it's easiest to start by asking others. "Often, those around us have a clearer picture of our strengths, including our soft skills, than we have of our own," says Lindsay Witcher, practice development manager at Rise Smart, an outplacement and career wellness company in San Jose, Calif. "Ask a couple of people with whom you have worked in the past, a couple friends or anyone else who knows you well. Ask not only what they think your soft skills are, but for examples of where they have seen you successfully use those skills. Concrete examples are key. Anyone can say they have a skill; only those who truly have them can discuss ways in which they have successfully demonstrated those skills."

Next, look inward at what you know you're good at. Take a look at your accomplishments. "A necessary exercise in accomplishments, particularly solving problems or overcoming challenges. Once you have identified yours, break them down into the skills you used, specifically honing in on the soft skills you leveraged to help you achieve these accomplishments.

PUT YOUR SKILLS TO WORK

After identifying your soft skills, it's time to put them to work for you. The trick in communication soft skills can be summed up as 'show, not tell'.

In other words, you need to demonstrate something highly specific. Anyone can list a skill like communication, teamwork, or learns new skills quickly, so merely listing things this general is meaningless. More explanation is necessary.

"For example, I once had a summer job in college, when I had no prior experience in databases," John continues. "By the end of the summer, I had designed a database that ran part of the fiscal office." This demonstrated creativity, ability to learn new skills quickly, (and ability to) design a product for use by others.

Demonstrating both your technical and soft skills can show employers that you are well-rounded and have what it takes to get the job done.

By: Susan Ricker



Upcoming Community Events:

Leadership Seminar

12/13/2013 Friday
Guest Speaker
4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
2424 3rd Street, Lake Charles

Light Up The Lake Christmas Celebration

12/7/2013
Noon-7:15 p.m.
Lake Charles Civic Center,
900 Lakeshore Drive,
Lake Charles
FREE

WIA Spring Orientation

12/16/13 Monday
8:30 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.
Business & Career Solutions
Center 2424 3rd Street,
Lake Charles, LA

Free Holiday Yoga Class

12/16/2013
5:30 p.m.
Yoga Center of Lake Charles
321 Broad Street, Lake
Charles,

2014 Leadership Seminars

As we all know a new year brings new changes. Following are the new changes that will be implemented in the youth program.

This year the Youth Department hosted monthly seminars for our youth participants and public to attend. Due to sched-

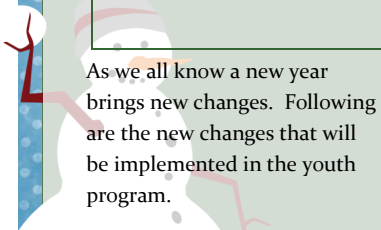
uling conflict, the Leadership Seminars will now take place quarterly.

Participants will now receive timesheets on a quarterly basis at the seminars.

The 2014 seminars will be held the last Friday of Jan., April,

July, and Nov., unless otherwise noted.

In the event that you have any questions please, contact Ms. Jonnika Boutte or Ms. Venus DeJean. You may contact them by phone 337-721-4010 or email jboutte@lwia51.com or vdejean@lwia51.com.



Participant of the Month!

Marquetta Declouette enrolled into the Calcasieu Workforce Center, Youth Program February 2013. Upon enrollment she was a single parent, that faced many barriers, such as Basic Skills Deficient, not health care, economically disadvantaged, and no parental guidance.

Despite her obstacles, Marquetta wanted the best for her son and herself and enrolled into Sowela Technical Community College, Pharmacy Tech. program. Throughout training Marquetta faced additional obstacles such as, not being able to obtain her certificate due to no clinical site and lack of communication from the school.

However, Marquetta was able to overcome obstacles and sees light at the end of the tunnel. She found her own clinical site at CVS Pharmacy, working full-time, eligible to receive health benefits, unemployment compensation, while earning \$10.00 an hour. She and her son are living with her son's grandmother who is encouraging and supporting her.



Marquetta has proven to be strong willed and determined.



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We're on Facebook!

Calcasieu Workforce Center Youth Department

Youth Giving Back



The Calcasieu Workforce Center would like to give their thanks to Ms. Kay Vacherie from Volunteers of America and all the youth that participated and donated items for the homeless at the "Volunteering" The Power of Giving Back, Leadership seminar.

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth"

-Muhammad Ali