

COMMON SKILLS IN HIGH DEMAND



COMPETENCIES THAT ARE PREPARING THE CHARLESTON
REGION'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BE CAREER READY





THE NEED:

The Charleston Metro Chamber released a Talent Gap Analysis in June 2014 that showed a rapidly expanding employment base in the Charleston region and projected employment growing seven times faster than the previous five years. The study demonstrated two of the biggest challenges facing the region:

- Our economy transformed from a service-based economy to a STEM-based economy (*Science, Technology, Engineering and Math*)
- The region's students and workforce lack the needed skills to be employed in the new high demand jobs

One of the study's most startling statistics showed that a majority of the new high demand, high-skilled jobs were being filled with new population moving into the region that has the needed skills and credentials being demanded by employers.

To meet the projected future demand for jobs in the region, the community cannot solely rely on filling jobs with new population. It must also work to ensure local students have every opportunity to be hired into these new high demand jobs. The region's public schools need to focus on increasing high school graduation rates and ensuring every child graduating is prepared for the next step – whether career or college.

TALENT DEMAND STUDY

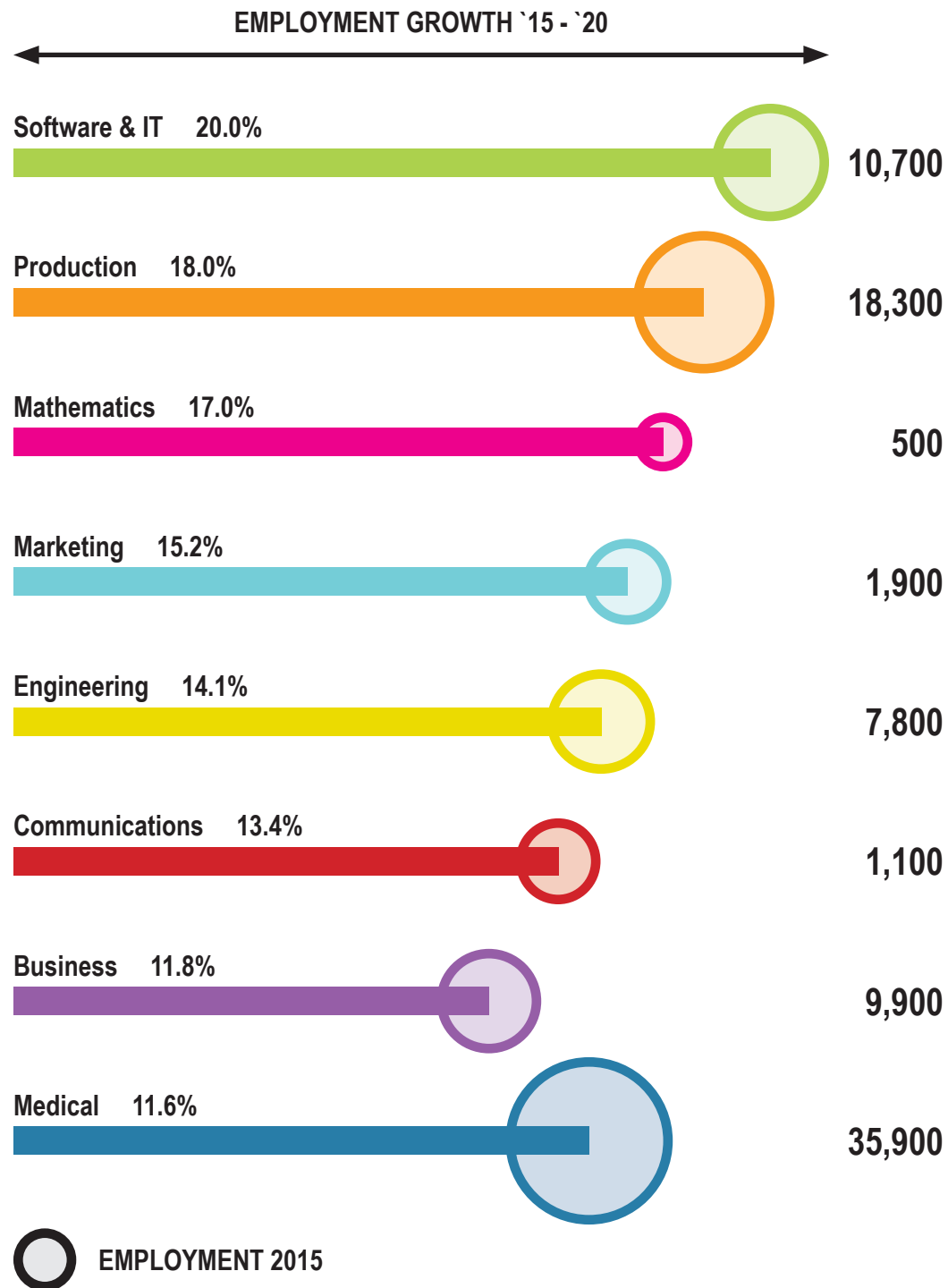
MEETING THE DEMAND:

In December 2016, the four public school superintendents asked the Chamber to identify a set of career readiness standards/competencies related to the fastest growing sectors and high demand jobs in the region. The goal of the study is to identify a common set of minimum skill standards for every high school student and then to build curriculum throughout the K-12 system to support the development of the standards.

Nationally, the dialogue around "career" and "college readiness" has been limited to traditional academic skills. This report instead outlines the core expectation for an entry level position within a particular career cluster (construction, healthcare, hospitality/culinary, information technology, advanced manufacturing and transportation and logistics) and determines both the specific academic skills and the performance level of those skills requested for "readiness" in those jobs.

JOB CREATION FORECAST

3-County Charleston Metro



Source: Avalanche Consulting, May 2016, adjusted data from EMSI

HOW COMMON COMPETENCY SKILLS WERE IDENTIFIED

THE CHALLENGE:

Request that the business community help to define the skills required of “a successful high school graduate” along with detailed information from the region’s business community in order to successfully implement the needed curriculum to produce graduates with the required skills.

The Chamber, along with District leadership, held a half-day workshop facilitated by Kathy Zandona, a nationally recognized education consultant working for the Lumina Foundation and the Association of Chamber Executives, to identify two goals.

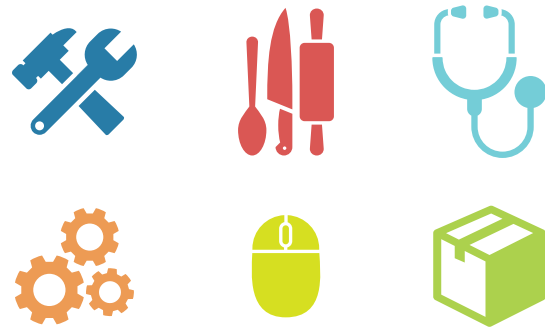
THE GOALS:

1. To define the entry level job skills and competencies required by the region’s high demand industry sectors
 2. To incorporate techniques for students to learn these skills while in school and develop “the ideal high school student” - ready and eager to work, willing to learn and with a positive attitude.
-

THE PROCESS:

Representatives from a series of industry sectors were convened for professionally facilitated sessions in each of the following sectors:

- BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION
- CULINARY AND HOSPITALITY
- HEALTHCARE
- ADVANCED MANUFACTURING
- IT, COMPUTER SCIENCE AND CYBER
- TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS



The discussions focused on actual definitions of what a particular skill looks like in an entry level position in the related sector.

As a result, specific skills were identified as top priorities and common skill competencies became apparent. The soft skills brainstorm component of each session is extremely valuable—hearing directly from the industries in their own words about workplace culture and behavior expectations.

THE RESULTS:

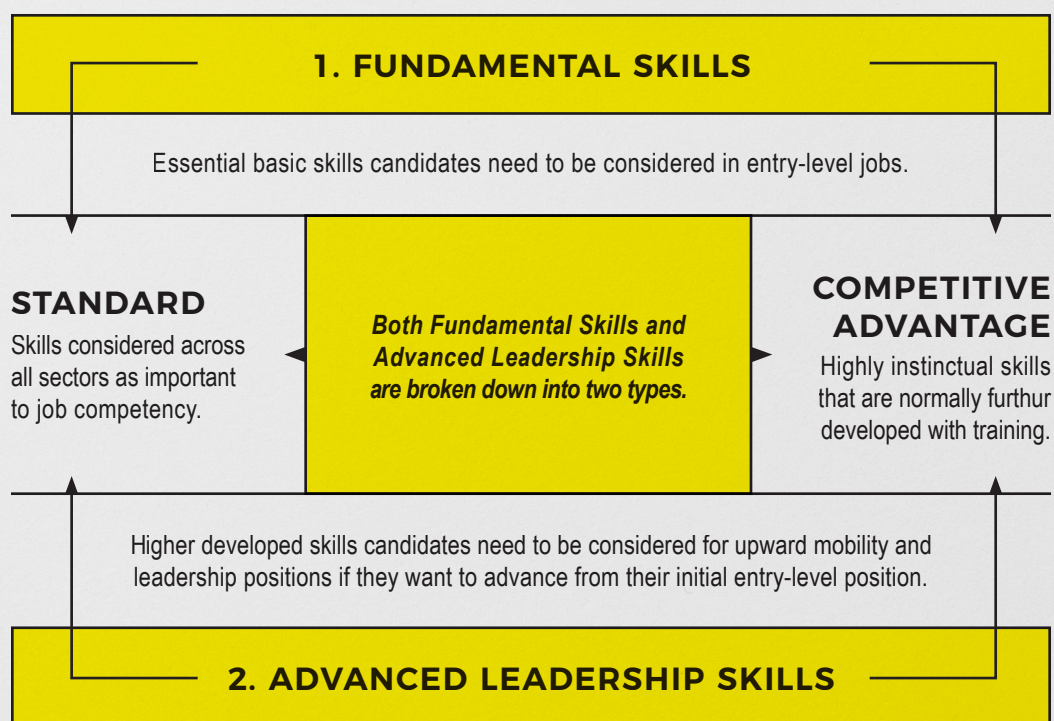
The Chamber will work alongside each District to identify where curriculum is matching the development of needed skills, where gaps exist and how to bridge the existing gaps in order to ensure all high school graduates are prepared for career and college upon high school completion.

Additionally, the Chamber will work to help educate area businesses on how our public schools are already addressing needed skills. If the barrier for the districts is regulations or lack of resources, the Chamber will engage with state agencies and legislators to try to address the gaps.

WITHIN:

SECTION ONE

Focuses on the competency skills needed for entry-level jobs in the Charleston region as defined by industry leaders. This section is divided into two areas:



SECTION TWO

INDUSTRY SECTOR BREAKDOWN

As a result of the industry focus groups, representatives defined additional skills needed to be considered for entry-level positions within their specific sector.

For example, an employee in the hospitality sector must exhibit excellent customer service skills while a worker in the construction sector should be able to use a tape measure and make simple calculations.

SECTION THREE

SOFT SKILLS

Each focus group spent time brainstorming what are defined as “soft skills” – a set of expectations that industry finds lacking among candidates today. These include skills such as showing up for work on time having a basic use of professional language to work in the business world.



STANDARD

LEARNING AGILITY

LOOKS LIKE...

- Willing and able to learn new skills and information related to the job
- Self-learner, pursues opportunities to further develop skills and knowledge
- Participative in implementing new knowledge and skills/training into the workplace
- Follows instructions

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...



SECTION ONE

WORK ETHIC

LOOKS LIKE...

- Arrives on time every day
- Observes company policies
- Follows safety regulations
- Acknowledges privacy and confidentiality
- Represents the company respectfully while off-duty
- Disciplined in maintaining clean personnel records
- Positive attitude

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

MATH SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...

- Can use algebra to solve for "x"
- Add and subtract
- Geometry
- Can do conversions and work with decimals and fractions
- Ability to use and read a measuring tape
- Ability to use a calculator

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...

- Eye contact
- Use open-ended questions
- Use active listening skills
- Follow instructions
- Written communication skills
- Basic grammar and spelling

READING FOR INFORMATION

LOOKS LIKE...

- Follows instructions, training details and procedures
- Looks for details
- Technical manual understanding

TEAM PLAYER

LOOKS LIKE...

- Dependable and follows through with assigned jobs
- Meets deadlines
- Respects skills and ideas that each individual possesses
- Cooperative and collaborative

PROBLEM SOLVING

LOOKS LIKE...

- Problem and resource identification
- Detail oriented
- Ability to trouble shoot
- Adheres to pre-check equipment maintenance as an everyday routine
- Interface with users to determine issues that need to be solved
- Fully utilizes resources
- Knows when to request assistance

MANAGEMENT OF SELF

LOOKS LIKE...

- Accepts responsibility for self
- Aware of work environment, space and mobility
- Disciplined
- Demonstrates appropriate use of technology
- Practices time management
- Skilled in conflict resolution

TECHNICALLY INCLINED

LOOKS LIKE...

- Appropriate use of technology
 - Tablets
 - Cell phones
 - Computers
 - Equipment
 - Tools
 - Programs

CONVEYING INFORMATION

LOOKS LIKE...

- Ability to convey thoughts through verbal and written communication
- Use active listening skills
- Use communication to assure accuracy
- Good eye contact
- Adjusts communication style appropriately
- Know your audience
- Skilled in writing reports and presentations

COMPANY UNDERSTANDING

LOOKS LIKE...

- Knowledgeable about the company's code of conduct
- Awareness of the company's mission and vision
- Understands company culture and cues
- Researches the company prior to the interview
- Adaptable to different cultures and people

INTEREST IN ADVANCEMENT

LOOKS LIKE...

- Ability to see the light at the end of the tunnel
- Demonstrates initiative
- Showcases skills
- Resiliency
- Proactive and positive
- Leadership skills
- Flexible to new ways of doing things / change
- Focused on career path and areas for improvement



STANDARD

CRITICAL THINKING

LOOKS LIKE...

- Research the issue and take the initiative to solve the problem
- Know at what point to pull the trigger
- “Triage” the problem (*timing and decision making can make or break the situation*)
- Detail oriented

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...



SECTION ONE

MATH SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...

- Uses algebra to solve for “x”
- Can add and subtract
- Knows geometry
- Can do conversions and works well with decimals and fractions
- Ability to use and read a measuring tape
- Ability to use a calculator

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

READING FOR INFORMATION

LOOKS LIKE...

- Reading plans and blueprints
- Follows instructions, training details and procedures
- Detail oriented
- Technical manual understanding

MOTIVATED

LOOKS LIKE...

- Self-learner
- Embraces challenges
- Demonstrates initiative
- High self-esteem
- Accepts and embraces responsibility

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LOOKS LIKE...

- Uses eye contact
- Uses open-ended questions
- Engages in active listening
- Follows instructions
- Strong written communication skills
- Basic grammar and spelling knowledge

BUSINESS ACUMEN

LOOKS LIKE...

- Aware of tone and manner
- Uses basic professional business language in the workplace
- Ability to resolve conflict
- Observes privacy and confidentiality on the job
- Cognizant of surroundings

LEADERSHIP

LOOKS LIKE...

- Positive and motivated
- Adaptable to different cultures and people
- Possesses interpersonal skills
- Management and team building abilities
- Eye contact, social skills, tone and empathy

THINKING OF END USER

LOOKS LIKE...

- Meets deadlines
- Details, processes and strategy driven
- Uses correct terminology
- Ability to “talk them off the edge”
- Draws out information and repeats it back to the user through listening checks

ACTION ORIENTED

LOOKS LIKE...

- Showcases skills
- Determines needs and innovative ways to fill those needs
- Goes over and above
- Ability to see the light at the end of the tunnel
- Shows up on time every day, prepared and ready for work



BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

INDUSTRY SECTOR

SECTION TWO

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Sonya Addison-Stewart
Career Academy Coordinator
Berkeley County School District

Doug Carlson
Council Member
ABC Carolinas

Paul Connerty
Consultant
K.C. Associates Consulting

Chris Cullum
President and CEO
Cullum Mechanical Construction

Richard Gordon
Executive Director Career
and Technology Education
Charleston County School District

Tim Heichelbeck
Director of Operations
Choate Construction

B.D. LaPrad
Training
Banks Construction

Janice Poplin
Vice President,
Human Resources
and Risk Management
Thompson Turner Construction

Pamela Richards
Director of Membership
ABC Carolinas

Melissa Stowasser
Dean, Division of School
and Community Initiatives
Trident Technical College

14,400 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$39,460

Sector occupation examples:

Building Inspectors	\$54,460
First Line Supervisors	\$64,240
Helpers / Carpenters	\$30,770
Laborers	\$28,490

New construction jobs created 2016 - 2021

+3%

377

*New Construction Trade Workers
and Supervisors needed

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled
and do not include replacement demand such as workers who
retire, change careers or leave the market.*

SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Good eye contact conveys confidence to the "customer"
- Listening skills are required to follow instructions
- Verbal skills and written skills require correct grammar in order to write reports, convey information and identify safety hazards
Example: Safety reports may be written and verbal
- Teamwork and tolerance for various cultures
- Awareness of the ramifications of each job every day

MATH SKILLS:

- Knowledge of geometry concepts, working to scale, relating point A to point B, angles and ability to use a tape measure, determine the square distance across a surface, Pythagorean theory
- Knowledge of conversions and working with fractions gives a competitive edge
- Ability to use a calculator

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Attention to safety guidelines, training details and procedures for equipment operation
- Awareness and focus
- Ability to read and understand plans, blueprints and instructional manuals

MECHANICAL SKILLS:

- Ability to operate power equipment, electrical systems, change batteries and blades
- Conduct pre-check maintenance as an everyday routine



CULINARY AND HOSPITALITY

INDUSTRY SECTOR

SECTION TWO

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Mickey Bakst

Manager
Charleston Grill by Belmond

Dan Blumenstock

Director of Hotel Operations
*DoubleTree by Hilton,
North Charleston Convention Center*

Mike Carmel

Culinary Department Head
*Culinary Institute of Charleston
at Trident Technical College*

Paul Connerty

Consultant
K.C. Associates Consulting

Frank Fredericks

Managing Director
Wild Dunes Resort

Randall Goldman

Managing Partner
Patrick Properties Hospitality Group

Chris Kendig

Business Services Coordinator
Palmetto Goodwill

Chuck Lauer

Food and Beverage Director
*Embassy Suites Hotel Charleston
Area Convention Center*

Nathan Rex

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*Culinary Institute of Charleston
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Wild Dunes Resort

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Human Resources Assistant
*Embassy Suites Hotel Charleston
Area Convention Center*

Bob Tremayne

Training and Development Chef
Kiawah Island Club

Jenn West

Area Director
Wild Dunes Resort

Melissa Zimmerman

General Manager
*SpringHill Suites by Marriott
and TownPlace Suites*

Food Prep and Serving Related Occupations

35,410 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$22,360

Entertainment and Lodging Occupations

16,411 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$23,446

Sector occupation examples:

Lodging Managers	\$54,150
Food Service Workers	\$18,260
Food prep workers	\$23,440

New hospitality jobs created 2016 - 2021

+8% **3,768**
*New Hospitality Workers needed

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled and do not include replacement demand such as workers who retire, change careers or leave the market.*



SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Active listening is required in order to respond appropriately
- Body language and eye contact should relay confidence and positive attitude
- Verbal skills require proper grammar and speaking professionally to customers, co-workers and supervisors
- Written skills include proper online correspondence and email etiquette

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

- Exude hospitality and confidence with a smile
- Know how to engage, ask questions, be inquisitive, acknowledge and converse with people
- Ability to read a person's body language and genuinely care about anticipating needs

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Attention to detail and organizational skills begin with the resumé (*include phone number, appropriate email address and explain what you are looking for*)
- Be one step ahead (*Plan for transportation, childcare, traffic and parking*)
- Prepare and have everything ready for your shift following procedures and checklists
- Prepare uniform properly (*ironed, tucked in, clean, etc.*)

CULINARY / HOSPITALITY SKILLS:

- Perform basic math operations including addition, subtraction, percentages and making change
- Ability to understand and manage personal finances is a sign of competency
- Talent and capability to increase sales

PROBLEM SOLVING / ANALYTICAL SKILLS:

- Be solution oriented and take ownership of the issue
- Be accountable, know your resources and the right person to go to resolve the issue
- Ability to resolve conflict without defensiveness (*a customer issue is not always your fault-just try to resolve it*)

HEALTHCARE

INDUSTRY SECTOR

SECTION TWO

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Catherine Bailey

Senior Human Resources
Business Partner
Trident Health Systems

Tyler Bartlett

Administrator
NHC Health & Rehabilitation

Butch Clift

Consultant
BC Training and Safety

Paul Connerty

Consultant
K.C. Associates Consulting

Linzy Greene

Pharmacy Relations Supervisor
Equiscript

Mary Hodgson

Tricounty Cradle to Career

Tracy Hunter

Chief Human Resources Officer
East Cooper Medical Center

Adell Hutto

Recruiting and Training
Roper St. Francis Healthcare

31,680 JOBS

Healthcare Practitioners

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$75,290

Healthcare Support

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$29,720

Sector occupation examples:

Home Health Aides	\$21,830
Nursing Assistant	\$27,750
Occupational Therapy Assistant	\$53,240
Pharmacy Tech	\$31,730

New Healthcare jobs created 2016 - 2021

+11% 4,080
*New Healthcare Workers needed

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled and do not include replacement demand such as workers who retire, change careers or leave the market.*



SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Active listening includes body language, eye contact, listening for understanding and listening checks to confirm information and show you care
- Verbal skills require proper grammar, the ability to carry on a conversation, speak clearly and concisely, and awareness of the professional office atmosphere
- Written skills require proper grammar, punctuation, compose emails correctly versus text-ease and use correct medical terminology and respond respectfully
- Ability to determine the appropriate mode of communication

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

- Acknowledge others with a greeting and a smile and provide directions or guidance upon request
- The customer comes first! Practice internal (co-workers) and external customer service
- Be aware of your tone of voice and how you approach different people
- The care giving profession requires the practice of empathy and compassion (*pharmacy technicians act as customer care advocates and communicate with patients by phone to check on their medications and health*)

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- The perfect resumé is more likely to result in an interview
- Ability to use systems, processes, research and resources to determine next steps in resolving issues and completing tasks
- Communication should be well thought out and proofed thoroughly (*one error on medications can mean life or death*)
- Knowledge of spreadsheets, computer programs, multi-tasking, prioritizing and time management
- Stick to deadlines (*in healthcare everything is "stat" or "critical"*)
- Be neat, tidy, orderly and safety conscious

MATH SKILLS:

- Perform basic math operations, percentages, conversions, use of a calculator and common sense

CYBER, COMPUTER SCIENCE AND IT

INDUSTRY SECTOR

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Paul Connerty

Consultant
K.C. Associates Consulting

Kevin Danko

Senior Human Resources Generalist
The Boeing Company

Richard Gordon

Executive Director Career
and Technology Education
Charleston County School District

Tana Lee

Director Career and
Technology Education
Berkeley County School District

Mark Lester

Cyber Security
South Carolina State Ports Authority

Dom Maddalone

Senior Vice President,
Information Systems,
Chief Information Officer
Santee Cooper

Keith Neuman

Chief Information Officer
Roper St. Francis Healthcare

Kelly Thompson

STEM Outreach Program Management
Space and Naval Warfare Atlantic Division

Willie Timmons

Computer Science Supervisor
Space and Naval Warfare Atlantic Division

Ivan Torres

Network Infrastructure Manager
City of Charleston

Computer and Mathematical Occupations

9,990 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$75,920

Sector occupation examples:

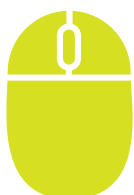
Computer User Support Specialists	\$51,960
Computer Network Support Specialists	\$59,050
Data Entry Keyers	\$31,750

New Computer / IT jobs created 2016 - 2021

+15% **1,647**
*New Computer Hardware,
Software and Support
Workers needed

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled and do not include replacement demand such as workers who retire, change careers or leave the market.*

The majority of the focus group indicated a minimum requirement is an Associate or Bachelors degree.



SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Active listening means thinking of the end-user and the ability to “talk them off the ledge” by drawing out information with listening checks, eye contact, social skills and empathy
- Verbal skills for customer service and support positions require an awareness of tone and manner, proper grammar, use of “business language” in a professional office atmosphere and use of terminology that is appropriate and does not intimidate the customer
- Written skills for web developers require proper grammar, use of basic professional language, correct terminology and attention to detail in order to assure the technicalities of the websites work properly

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

- Practice patience when discussing technical issues with users who may not be technically inclined (*Help Desk and Desktop Computer Installers must be able to interface with users to solve issues and troubleshoot problems*)
- Ability to explain the issue or the solution in a way a non-technical person can understand without being intimidating

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Resumé must be perfect
- Proof your work (*web developers must make sure all “links” work*)
- Use of basic professional language and correct grammar
- Awareness of culture accommodations

PROBLEM SOLVING / ANALYTICAL SKILLS:

- Must be able to draw on all you know, resources available and then add to that
- Use critical thinking skills and probing questions to make sense of the problem
- Must be able to identify the problem in order to find the resources to fix it

MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION

INDUSTRY SECTOR

SECTION TWO

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Sonya Addison-Stewart
Career Academy Coordinator
Berkeley County School District

Paul Connerty
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K.C. Associates

Richard Gordon
Executive Director Career
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Charleston County School District

Mimi Hamilton
Human Resources Manager
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Suzanne Purdum
Vice President, Human Resources
TRU Simulation and Training

Terrance Rivers
Area Director
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Melissa Stowasser
Dean, Division of School
and Community Initiatives
Trident Technical College

19,440 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$41,340

Sector occupation examples:

Assemblers / Fabricators	\$54,460
Machine Tool Operators / Tool and Die Makers	\$64,240
Welders	\$30,770

New Advanced Manufacturing jobs created 2016 - 2021

+15% **3,000**
*New Advanced Manufacturing
Workers needed (at a minimum)

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled and do not include replacement demand such as workers who retire, change careers or leave the market.*



SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Communication skills are a given, including the appropriate way to communicate
- Written skills require the use of basic English grammar

MATH SKILLS:

- Ability to use algebraic equations to solve for "x", addition, subtraction, geometry, conversions, decimals and fractions

PROBLEM SOLVING / ANALYTICAL SKILLS:

- Trouble shooting ability and problem solving

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Assemblers look for details, inspect parts for defects
- Timing is vital

MECHANICAL SKILLS:

- Ability to use hand tools, work an assembly line and do repetitive work (*assemblers are stationed on an assembly line with a technician who can automatically operate equipment and fix equipment if it breaks down*)
- Attention to details is required to inspect products for defects

TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION AND LOGISTICS

INDUSTRY SECTOR

SECTION TWO

*Focus Group participants
facilitated by Laura Varn.*

Woody Arsenault
Business Development
Ability Tri-Modal

Paul Connerty
Consultant
K.C. Associates Consultants

Beverly Cowart
Human Resources
South Carolina State Ports Authority

Taylor Floss
Supervisor
C.H. Robinson

Julie Free
Human Resources Manager
Charleston County Aviation Authority

Lynn Hedinger
Human Resources
Southern Eagle Distributing

Candice Kurant
Business Development
Bollore' Logistics

Tyler Smith
Branch Manager
Bollore' Logistics

20,240 JOBS

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

\$35,910

Sector occupation examples:

Delivery Truck Drivers	\$31,280
Material Movers	\$29,080
Hand Packers	\$22,530

New Logistics / Transportation jobs created 2016 - 2021

+ 6%

1,078

**New Logistics / Transportation
Workers needed*

**These figures demonstrate net new jobs that need to be filled and do not include replacement demand such as workers who retire, change careers or leave the market.*



SKILLS NEEDED

COMMUNICATION / LISTENING SKILLS:

- Active listening requires setting your work aside to listen and focus
- Written skills begin with the resumé and job application, be concise and get to the point
- Verbal skills require conciseness and are used for verbal confirmations
- Use of body language to give physical confirmations

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS:

- Ability to communicate with professional etiquette by phone, in-person and by email
- Use of proper body language and eye contact to relay confidence
- Perform basic computer skills including keyboarding, creating Excel pivot tables, database searches and product knowledge
- Respond in a timely manner when resolving an issue or answering a question and know which person or department to defer to

DETAIL ORIENTED / ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Aware of movements and cognizant of surroundings
- Focus on the details of the transaction process (*shipping and receiving requires attention to specific identification numbers and codes*)
- Attention to "red flags" and ability to recognize bad data "on the fly" to avoid issues, use checklists and constantly scan for errors

MATH SKILLS:

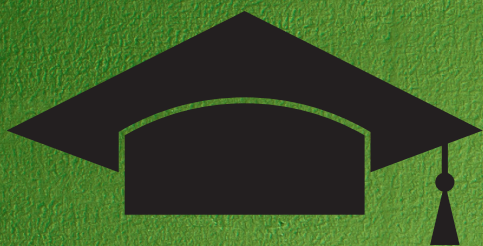
- Proper management of personal finances is evidence of the ability to manage money on the job
- Perform basic math operations including addition, subtraction, percentages, conversions, the metric system and awareness of foreign currencies
- Aware of the cost of mistakes

PROBLEM SOLVING / ANALYTICAL SKILLS:

- Ability to analyze and identify problems using your resources
- Be accountable, own the mistake and correct it
- Use coping skills and mediation skills (*don't "Bug Out!"*)
- Determine the impact of the problem-gather details (*don't jump to conclusions*)

MECHANICAL SKILLS:

- Ability to use basic hand tools and conduct pre-check maintenance as an everyday routine (*truck drivers need to perform pre-checks*)



SOFT SKILLS BRAINSTORMS

RESULTS FROM SECTOR BRAINSTORM SESSIONS

Each of the six focus groups spent time discussing the need for “soft skills” development among candidates and a concern over the lack of these skills among candidates applying for entry-level jobs in their particular sectors.

This section captures the many “soft skills” identified that were common among all industry groups and are not specific to a particular industry.

Soft skills are often described as twenty-first century skills and are incorporated into high school curriculum standards, where applicable. Students in today’s classrooms work in teams and collaborate on projects that require teamwork to problem solve an issue. Other soft skills, such as showing up to work every day on time, are more difficult to teach and are instead work ethic skills that students must understand and develop individually. For example, they must realize the ramifications of arriving late to class in the school setting as compared to being fired for not arriving on the job.

The Chamber, in partnership with the area’s public school districts, have implemented Career Academies within area high schools. Career Academies are designed to expose students to the high demand occupations available locally and to incorporate the development of soft skills into the curriculum development. Academy business partners and community engagement in the classroom is vital to the process by providing opportunities for students and teachers to learn about how their work in class is relevant to the expectations of the workplace.

SECTION THREE

BASIC SKILLS:

- Focuses on ability to learn and develop skills in school that will result in job readiness
- Basic knowledge of interview skills
- Practices time management and develops multi-tasking skills
- Uses appropriate communication skills in the workplace
- Exhibits the ability to read for information, follow written instructions and decipher correspondence
- Operates mathematical skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, percentages, measurement and can use a calculator
- Demonstrates writing skills using basic English grammar, correct spelling and terminology
- Shows basic respect for authority

PROPER ATTIRE AND PERSONAL CARE:

- Dress “up” for the interview then find out about the appropriate attire for the job
- Cognizant of first impressions
- Maintains personal hygiene and cleanliness
- Considers professional grooming
- Adheres to professional dress code
- Ensures clothes are clean, wrinkle-free and tucked-in (*as appropriate*)
- Follows requirements for use of safety clothing, shoes, gear, etc.

POLICIES:

- Observes company policies regarding privacy and confidentiality
- Maintains safety consciousness
- Remains cognizant of surroundings
- Understands the company code of conduct
- Observes the cultural cues of the company
- Follows “Break” policy
- Complies with scheduled check-ins, performance appraisals and feedback from supervisors
- Aware that you are always representing the company

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Adheres to company policies about appropriate use of tablets and cell phones
- Demonstrates knowledge of technology and the appropriate technology and/or program to use to complete the task
- Demonstrates knowledge of office automation and equipment such as the copier, telephone system, coffee maker, etc.
- Uses common sense (*think before you act or post!*)
- Manages your social media (*employers are looking at Facebook and other personal media to screen applicants*)
- Personal email addresses should be appropriate (*create a business-related gmail account*)
- Social media awareness in the workplace (*your employer is looking*)
- Practice caution with workplace Facebook friends

WORK ETHIC:

- Arrives on time every day, prepared and ready to work the required hours
- Is a team player
- Completes tasks and projects by adhering to schedules and deadlines
- Aware that you still represent the organization when you are off the clock
- Drug-free with no criminal record and possess a valid Drivers' license
- Plans ahead for family responsibilities and traffic
- Is considerate of your supervisor by communicating if you are going to be late for work
- Practices conflict resolution skills

UPWARD MOBILITY:

- Goes over and above, and proves reliability
- Possesses the ability to see the light at the end of the tunnel
- Demonstrates initiative, dedication and leadership skills
- Communicates interest in advancement and long-term employment
- Puts forth workplace energy and drive to gain the skills to advance
- Practices self-management and independence
- Evokes a positive outlook and passion for work
- Observes best practices and is collaborative and participative (*listen, watch, ask, take notes*)
- Proactive about problem solving

WORKPLACE:

- Let it go (*move on*)
- Leaves work at work and personal issues at home
- Be punctual, reliable and ready to work
- Knows the work environment (*don't always expect inside with air conditioning*)
- Respects generational differences (*have a basic understanding about how to communicate with each other*)
- Uses appropriate workplace etiquette
- Is considerate of customer perception
- Does not engage in office gossip

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS:

- Practices empathy coupled with knowing how to resolve the issue
- Knows resources and uses them
- Researches all of the details before jumping to conclusions
- Knows when to defer to a supervisor
- Knows who should handle the issue
- Communicates your timeline for following up with a resolution or recommendation and follows up in a timely manner
- Demonstrates the ability to resolve conflict
- Practices listening skills and asks questions

PERSONAL AWARENESS:

- Possess high self-esteem and leadership qualities
- Projects optimism and resiliency
- Accepts responsibility for self-management
- Is mindful of personal reputation (*practice integrity and discipline*)
- Embraces challenges with a sense of urgency
- Energetic and participative
- Demonstrates gratitude
- Practices good work ethic and reliability

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