

## Career Advice

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### Keeping up with your career qualifications



According to a recent survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management, more than 40 percent of employers cite hiring difficulties — the highest level seen since 2007. Employers claim that they can't find qualified applicants and that candidates often lack necessary skills.

In relation to those findings, for employees who already have a job, it is important to realize that skills required to succeed today may not be the same as the skills required to succeed

tomorrow. To enhance your opportunities for career advancement, you need to be open to change, harbor a continuous-improvement mindset and have the ability to improve or develop needed skills.

#### Q. What skills are most needed in the workplace?

A. Different jobs require different knowledge, skills and abilities. Generally, some of the hard-to-find skills include technical skills, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and math); soft skills such as effective communication, creative thinking, problem solving and teamwork; and leadership skills. Demonstrating to your employer that you can apply knowledge to real-world problems is essential for individual advancement.

#### Q. How do I show that I've acquired new skills?

A. Competency-based certifications, proof of hands-on training and successful application of new skills in the workplace can help demonstrate to employers that you have acquired key skills. Participating in mentorship, internship and apprenticeship programs also can provide evidence of skills acquisition.

#### Q. Where can I get training?

A. Community colleges, universities and private-education institutions offer training programs in a variety of settings. The state Department of Labor administers education and training fund grants for approved training programs. For high school students, participating in public school "pathways" or engaging in programs such as Junior Achievement can be instrumental in skills development. In the workplace, have a conversation with your manager to determine what skills you need to improve on or develop to advance in your career. Depending on your organization, they may be able to send you to some of the trainings listed above, or provide opportunities within the workplace through work projects, job-rotation assignments and other hands-on training activities.