

# TALENT AT ANY LEVEL: BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY

## 35 Skills Which Differentiate Rising Stars at Lower Levels of the Organization

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It's hard to define exactly what makes superstars stand out at work.

Our **BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY** is our best attempt to do just that. In nearly three decades helping organizations identify and develop top talent, we have identified 35 skills in 3 categories:

1. Learning skills
2. Relationship skills
3. Value adding orientation

These categories represent the broad transferable skills which differentiate rising stars in any skill specialization or industry. It is important to remember that **no one person will embody all 35 skills!** Rather, this tool should be used to help quantify the soft skills which differentiate employees with similar technical skillsets and at the same organizational level.

# BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY: LEARNING SKILLS

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- 1. Voracious learning:** The desire and ability to devour and process information rapidly, get up to speed on new skills and knowledge, and stay ahead of the rapidly accelerating obsolescence curve.
- 2. Strategic learning:** The ability to sort through the vast tidal wave of information in today's world, make acute decisions about what one is going to throw out and what one is going to learn.
- 3. Information management:** The ability to frame research inquiries, effectively access information resources, gather worthwhile data, store data in an organized manner for easy recall, and utilize data effectively.
- 4. Critical thinking:** The ability to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information, carefully weigh the strengths of conflicting views, and make reasoned judgements. The habit of taking the time to consider various possibilities and not become too attached to one point of view. Balancing an openness to the views of others with independent judgement.
- 5. Foreign language mastery.**
- 6. Technoliteracy:** The desire and ability to learn and operate new technologies.
- 7. Protégé behavior:** Being the diligent protege of a worthy mentor. Studying the example of an accomplished, experienced, and wise person whom one admires.

# BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY: RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

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**8. Supply focus in relationships:** Approaching relationships in terms of what one has to offer others, instead of what one needs or wants from others.

**9. Seeking out decision makers:** The ability to clarify the decisions which must be made to reach particular goals and then identify the individuals who have the authority to make those decisions (or the influence to affect those decisions).

**10. Total customer service mindset:** Treating everyone as a customer—coworkers, employees, managers, suppliers, service people, and actual customers. Identifying the needs of others and seeking to address them with cheerful promptness.

**11. Trustworthiness:** Spelling out clear expectations and assuming an absolute duty to fulfill those expectations. Being honest, realistic, responsible, on-time, and accountable.

**12. Empathy:** The ability to imagine oneself in another person's position and tune in to the thoughts and feelings that person might have.

**13. Motivating others:** The ability to visualize positive results and enthusiastically share that positive vision in a way that inspires others.

**14. Facilitating the effectiveness of others:** The ability to train and coach others, set goals and deadlines, provide effective feedback, and reward good performance.

# BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY: RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

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- 15. Celebrating the success of others:** Giving people credit for their achievements, no matter how small, and trying to catch people doing things right.
- 16. Being a mentor:** Helping another person learn and grow and, in the process, practicing leadership skills--priority setting, communication, and motivation.
- 17. Communication:** Most important, the ability to listen carefully (or read) and understand what others are thinking and feeling and expressing. Also the ability to speak clearly (or write) and make oneself understood.
- 18. Being a great team player:** The practice of sacrificing one's own autonomy and contributing one's best ideas and hardest work to pursue a shared purpose along with others; giving up some individual recognition to win recognition for the group and its shared purpose.
- 19. Negotiation and conflict resolution:** The ability to clarify one's own bottom line, identify the true bottom line of another, expose the common ground, and move oneself and another to that common ground.

# **BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY: VALUE ADDING ORIENTATION**

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**20. Results-focus in their work:** The ability and inclination to organize one's work around clear tangible goals and concrete deadlines.

**21. Identifying problems that have not yet been identified.**

**22. Solving problems that have not been solved.**

**23. Improving existing services and products** by making them faster, more effective, more efficient, higher quality, or less expensive.

**24. Inventing new services and products.**

**25. Being a workhorse:** Putting in lots of time and energy to steadily accomplish a lot of tasks that may be routine, menial, or even tedious.

**26. Seizing opportunities to add value:** The ability to identify needs, match one's skills to those needs, define the value one can add, and then create an effective sales message to persuade decision makers to authorize and/or pay for the project.

**27. Deal closing:** The ability to clarify the parameters of a proposed transaction, identify the desired result of each party, move both parties to the common ground, eliminate mutually exclusive elements, and secure a binding agreement of both parties to execute the transaction.

**28. Strategic planning:** The ability to identify many possible contingencies and create, for each one, a plan to achieve clear goals by concrete deadlines; utilize resources; overcome obstacles; map out intermediate goals and deadlines and all the necessary actions.

# BROAD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS INVENTORY: VALUE ADDING ORIENTATION

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**29. Going the extra mile:** The practice of achieving more than one promises to achieve.

**30. Quality:** Holding oneself to a high standard. Thinking before speaking; outlining before writing (and always doing second drafts); planning before acting; double- and triple-checking before finalizing anything.

**31. Integrity:** A commitment to act on one's best knowledge and intentions, to be honest with oneself and with others, and remain faithful to basic ethical principles.

**32. Speed:** The ability to beat established deadlines without compromising quality.

**33. Gauging change:** The practicing of monitoring feedback from every source to keep track of what is changing and what is staying the same, what is still working and what is no longer working.

**34. Flexibility:** The willingness and ability to continually adjust one's goals, plans, and practices every step of the way as indicated by changing circumstances.

**35. Adaptability:** The ability and willingness to learn new skills, perform new tasks, do old tasks in new ways, work with new machines, new managers, new co-workers, new customers, new rules, no rules; to do whatever is needed, whenever it's needed; to go, on any given day, from one boss to another, from one team to another, from one organization to another, from one set of tasks to another.