

# College grads lack soft skills to get, keep a job

By Martha C. White, Time

It's because college kids today can't do math, one line of reasoning goes. Or they don't know science. Or they're clueless about technology, aside from their myriad social-media profiles.

These are all good theories, but the problem with the unemployability of these young adults goes way beyond a lack of STEM skills. As it turns out, they can't even show up on time in a button-down shirt and organize a team project.

The technical term for navigating a workplace effectively might be soft skills, but employers are facing some hard facts: the entry-level candidates who are on tap to join the ranks of full-time work are clueless about the fundamentals of office life.

A survey by the Workforce Solutions Group at St. Louis Community College finds that more than 60 percent of employers say applicants lack "communication and interpersonal skills" – a jump of about 10 percentage points in just two years. A wide margin of managers also say today's applicants can't think critically and creatively, solve problems or write well.

Another employer survey, this one by staffing company Adecco, turns up similar results. The company says in a statement, "44 percent of respondents cited soft skills, such as communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration, as the area with the biggest gap." Only half as many say a lack of technical skills is the pain point.

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