

Top 10 Qualities Employers Look for in Teen Job Applicants

Job hunting for teens can be a challenging, often overwhelming, task. Most teens seeking that first paid job are completely unprepared and have no idea of where to start in the process. They have no idea of how to create a resume or fill out a job application, how to act or what to say in a job interview, or even how to dress for success. Often this causes them to fail before they even have a chance to get their foot in the door. In fact, many first time job seekers discontinue their job search early on out of frustration. Catapult is here to help!

Employers who hire teens recognize that they lack the experience and skills of more mature applicants. They, therefore, tend to focus on certain qualities that they feel will make a teen a good employee. Before hitting the pavement looking for that first paid job teens would be wise to know what those qualities are.

- 1. Well groomed / professionally dressed:** employers want to hire those who know how to dress appropriately. It is true that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. An employer typically starts forming an opinion on you from the moment you meet, based on what they see. A poor first impression is irreversible! So make sure you project the right impression.
- 2. Reliability:** reliability in teen applicants is important to employers. Employers are paying you to do a specific job and need to know they can count on you to do that job to the best of your ability. You are either an asset or a liability to an employer. Being a dependable employee makes you an asset, being undependable makes you a liability. Employers are not looking for a liability.
- 3. Punctuality:** Since teens do not have the experience of those who have worked before they often don't realize just how important punctuality is. The employer hires you to work specific hours and if you are not there on time then he must find someone else to cover your job duties for you. This puts a strain not only on the employer but co-workers as well.
- 4. Positive, "can-do" attitude:** teens with a positive, "can-do" attitude are the ones employers see as the biggest asset. While you may not have experience or skills your attitude can make all the difference in how you do your job. Employers are happy to train those who are eager to learn and ready to take on any task with a cheerful spirit.
- 5. Courteous and well mannered:** This one is just good common sense. You are representing the employer's business so naturally your manners will be important. If you are working with the public you will most likely be the first person a customer has contact with. How you behave towards them will be the impression they take away about the business. Being courteous and well mannered is also important when dealing with co-workers and makes for a more professional work environment.

6. **Trustworthy:** since first time teen job applicants do not have a work track record the employer is unable to check with previous employers on how trustworthy you are. So being someone the employer can trust is something he will have to take on faith. Knowing that you can be trusted in any situation is a very attractive quality in a first time employee.

7. **Self motivation:** no employer wants an employee who has to constantly be told what to do and when to do it! Being motivated enough to work independently and get things done without any prodding or instruction is a very valuable quality to an employer.

8. **Willing to learn:** Employers are impressed with those who are willing to go the extra mile. Those who are willing to take on extra duties without being asked, learn job duties other than their own, and look for something to do when things are slow, make you a valuable employee. Employees who are willing to go above and beyond are the ones employers look for when considering promotion.

9. **Ambitious:** what teens lack in skills and experience they can often make up for in ambition. So many times teens are seen as lazy or just wanting to do enough to get by. Employers really appreciate those teens who are ambitious and driven to succeed. Success is available to anyone who strives for it.

10. **Good oral and written communication skills:** if you want a paying job you must demonstrate to employers that you have the basic education required to do the job. If you can't write or speak correctly your chances for getting a job are slim to none! Brush up on your speaking and writing skills so you can properly complete a job application and properly respond to questions asked during the interview.

The more of these qualities you possess the better your odds of getting a paid job. Decide which of these qualities you possess and be sure to mention them as selling points during a job interview.