

Everything You Need to know about the Skills for the Future

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As we cope with the first decade of the 21st century, competitive management is facing with many new challenges, not the least of which is a significant shift in the types of working skills that are essential for organizations, businesses and career success. The old skill set, emphasizing hard work and task success remains important, but it is already being overshadowed by new competencies. Professionals who want to succeed in the new working environment will need to shift their emphasis towards the new critical skills, developing these new abilities quickly, or be left behind.

In Puerto Rico, we have shared with all the productive sectors that the internal dynamics of all kinds of organizations are driven by external demands from the marketplace, the customers and the stakeholders. Thus, to really understand why new abilities are becoming of paramount importance, it is necessary to share with our readers the major trends that organizations are facing as we have heavily researched them. The logic is that market trends lead to the renewal of business, organizational and managerial strategies, which in turn require of developing new working skills.

Forecasting these trends, we can point to the following: 1) The level of complexity is making human and institutional endeavors more complicated, confused and convoluted; this phenomenon has an impact on finances, markets, products, services, organizations, vendors, laws, regulatory agencies, technology, competitive relationships and business solutions. 2) The rate of change is steadily accelerating and speeding up even more affecting life cycles of markets, products, technologies, organizations, alliances, consortiums, joint ventures, real co-opetition, industries and consumer tastes.

3) The population is aging rapidly, producing a major increase in the retire population (particularly those over 70), as well as a shorter-term increase in the 45 to 65 age group. This is impacting political and governmental policies, economic growth patterns and the human resource characteristics of both, the workforce and consumers. 4) Knowledge and information are the “products and services” that customers, businesses, organizations and individuals are increasingly seeking the most. 5) Execution and accountability are the new rules of the productive game. 6) The real

challenge is to create real and sustained economic growth when the labor force is declining rather than growing.

7) The internationalization of the economy is creating short-term problems caused by regional trade-blocks of a sporadically rising nationalism. Providers of goods, services and knowledge are increasingly competing in international market places, for customers, technologies, operations and resources. 8) All countries (including PR) are paying attention to the ways of creating competitive advantages.

The above trends are forcing businesses and organizations that want to be successful to do the following: 1) Focus on delivering REAL value to the customer

2) Anticipate and take advantage of rapid-turn around change 3) Cope with an increasingly complex technically and socially active environment.

The major, specific long-term business strategies that are essential for the future are: 1) Adjusting the scope of operations to REAL core competencies (subcontracting, functional outsourcing, alliances, networks and a variety of partnering arrangements.

2) Responding with flexibility and agility to rapid changes that are making dominant loosely coupled organizations. 3) Contracted goods and services are being monitored tightly in order to assure a high level of value to the acquiring organization.

4) Organizations are becoming more interdependent, and joint ventures are increasingly dramatically. 5) Compliance and social responsibility are potent factors.

6) Small and family businesses continue to grow and to have a high impact in the economy. 7) Organizations are forcing turnover (among other things) to acquire new skills and knowledge set, either for the long-term or on a project basis. The average tenure at a given organization and within a given job is declining. 8) Consultants are providing dedicated, specific technical, market, management skills and knowledge, and are either total solutions providers or highly competent experts in narrow areas.

9) External connections, formally and informally are more than necessary as organizational boundaries become more open. 10) The internationalization of business is already a reality. 11) Organizations are flatter in the structures.

12) Competition is accomplished through the power of information systems.

13) Communication effectiveness is everything when it comes to assuring core stability of the operations.

Therefore, in synthesis, what are the main working skills for the future?

- 1) Increase PERFORMANCE to demonstrate contribution to organizational goals.
- 2) INCORPORATE WORLD CLASS STANDARDS, benchmarks and metrics to validate the efficiency and effectiveness of a job.
- 3) Work with ROBUST ETHICAL VALUES and intelligence culture standards.
- 4) Show the capacity to engage in JOB MOBILITY inside and outside the organization.
- 5) ADAPT TO NEW KNOWLEDGE, new organizations, new people, new culture, new products, new customers, new viewpoints and new realities.
- 6) UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE TURNAROUND and radical change.
- 7) READ NEW CONTEXT to execute in an adequate manner.
- 8) Show FLEXIBILITY and AGILITY at all times.
- 9) Cope with SHORTER WORK RELATIONSHIPS
- 10) LEARN TO MANAGE others with emotional intelligence.
- 11) Face the difficulty of managing FACE TO FACE RELATIONSHIPS, and use more electronic devices.
- 12) Develop SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE and share faith for whatever has to be done.

The professionals who can adapt to the new working skills and capabilities requirements are being rewarded with interesting and challenging careers in the new labor world.

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