Skills Paper

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When a person is looking for a job, they often look for a job that fits their generic skill set. This can range from accounting type jobs (Cashier, accountant, etc..), to more labor-intensive jobs (theater usher, freight loader/unloader, etc.). While these are the skills that the employer is looking for, they often tend to look for other skills that some applicants may have more than others. This can range from how well a given person works as part of a team, to how well that person can manage multi-tasking under pressure, to how well the person can plan ahead and plan for multiple outcomes. In this paper, I have decided to go over a few skills that I see as the most important. These skills will be beneficial in probably 90% of jobs, with the only exceptions being self-employed or lone-wolf style jobs.

What I believe to be one of the most important set of skills to have regardless of if you work solo or as part of a group is the skill set of Project Scheduling and general time management. These skills are important because most any job will have deadline for certain projects. In order to meet those deadlines, a person must be able to reasonably schedule out the steps of the given project, as well as hold themselves to that schedule. Of course, a schedule is hard to come up with if you are poor at managing your time to begin with. For instance, let's say a person sets on a schedule that they need to write up a few functions before a meeting where they need to present a review for a project that requires those functions. If the person is bad at managing their time and ends up wasting it on other things, they may start on the coding only to find that they don't have enough time to code the functions. Alternatively, a person could be working on two sperate projects with different due dates, but both equally as important. In the time that the two projects are both active, these skills are important in making sure that the person does work in both projects without sacrificing one over the other.

Next on the list of skills that will often be useful whether self-employed or not is the ability to think creatively. Creative thinking is one of those skills that will often define how well received your given project is. Afterall, people are more likely to give a given product a chance if they see a well-designed logo than if they were to see a standard, block text font on the front of a white box. This also goes for getting people into a store, as your exterior is one of the first things that will potentially draw in newer customers. Take a look at the images below:

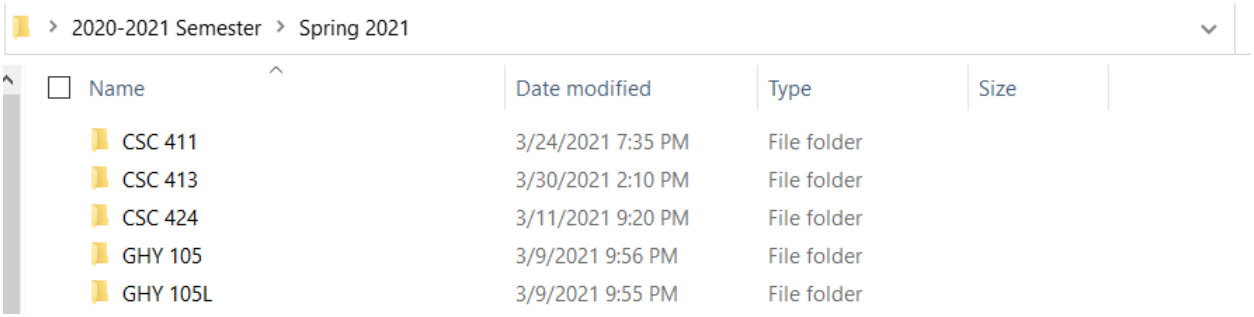
If a person were looking for a fast food restaurant to bring their kids in order to have a meal and possibly play around, which one of these two images would you think is more appealing? Without even going inside, the first one is more colorful, you can see the playground

area, and has an overall more appealing look to it in that regard. As for the second image, that looks like the kind of place you would possibly find men in business suits having a discussion over coffee and a quick bite. In this respect, the first picture would seem to show more creativity on the part of the designer of the building.

More than just having a given project look good, creative thinking can also help you simply get a project done to begin with. Among programmers, one of the most annoying things to have happen, aside from simple syntax mistakes, is running a program only to find that, for some unexplainable reason, the program isn't performing the way you thought it would. If you aren't able to think creatively, you may not be able to even see what is causing the issue, let alone find a way to work around it.

Just recently, I was talking with a friend who was having some difficulty on a project. For some odd reason, if an invalid input was inputted into their program, their sentinel loop, which ran the program, would just run infinitely, ignoring an input statement and just constantly outputting. Both he and I looked it over and couldn't figure out why it was doing what it was. I had the exact same structure of code in a previous program I had made and that program didn't have an issue. In the end, he decided to look out into other ways to read the input and eventually found a way to deal with those "illegal" inputs.

Third on the list of good skills to have would be organizational skills. When trying to schedule projects and trying to creatively work on them, it is important to organize the various fragments of the project. Odds are that, on a large project, you may not be the only one working on a particular portion. By keeping things organized, you make it easier for yourself and others to understand the direction of the project. Not only that, but keeping organized can allow you to more easily transition from project to project, as you won't have to search for where you stored that item you last worked on. For a programmer, or someone who uses computer documents for most of their project, a simply way to organize would be to create a folder that you then divide into sub-folders. Each sub-folder can house an individual project, and could contain even more divisions as so desired. Shown below is an example of how I keep my class work organized over the semester.



As can be seen, the folder shown is, itself, a sub-folder of "2020-2021 semester", which is a folder that resides on my desktop currently. Each of the folders in the image represents a different class that I am taking during this Spring semester. Some of those folder, such as GHY 105 and GHY 105L are subdivided into individual test brackets or individual labs, respectively. This helps me keep track of what I need to study for each test or where to look for a particular

lab, as all of the labs contain multiple documents. By keeping organized like this in all of my classes, I can make sure that I can get to a given document within only a few clicks, as long as I know which class that given document is from. While a small thing on a desktop, this helps tremendously when you factor in that I back this folder up to an external hard drive, which contains various folders of varying items.

Finally, we come to the last skill that I will touch on in this paper, Risk Analysis. Whenever you look into taking on a project, whether as a solo individual or as part of a group, you should always weigh the risks of taking on that project. If you are currently already working on a few other projects, taking on a new one may cause scheduling issues with finishing one of your current projects, or even cause work overload for yourself for the group. Along with that, you must also look at the risks of what taking this job may do for your reputation, or what kind of impact this project may have on the appropriate area. There are many different risks associated with any given project, and you must be able to analyze all of them and see if it's worth taking a given risk.

All in all, there are many different skills that can be beneficial to a certain profession, but I believe the ones I listed will be useful no matter what line of work you get into. From managing your time and scheduling your projects, to making sure you don't take too big of a risk on a project, each skill listed should help you perform better at any given job.

APPENDIX

N/A