



Building Competitive Companies Since 1946

The 21st Century Workforce Arrived with Unanticipated Consequences



Jobs in the 21st Century demand learning, problem solving and the softer competencies such as initiative, drive, communication skills, and teamwork. Workers are required to take on broader responsibilities and adapt to workplace changes. While these have always been attributes of better workers, in today's workforce these qualities are required of all workers.

The challenge today is finding, screening, and selecting workers who can learn and adapt for future changes. Companies are struggling to find enough employees with acceptable capabilities in these areas. The future will bring additional change in technology, in employee diversity, and in customer expectations. While technology offers some relief, you still need the right people in the workplace or you will face a reduced capacity to compete.

Among companies now facing a skills shortage or anticipating one, 66 percent expect to lose business to competitors, 64 percent face a loss of revenue, 59 percent face eroding customer satisfaction and 53 percent say there will be delays in developing new products or services.

<http://www.apollo.edu/content/dam/apolloedu/microsite/workforce/pdf/Creating-the-Future-American-Workforce.pdf>

Companies need to align their cultures with a continuous change and learning model. Otherwise, they will not be able to achieve the results expected and they will not survive. In today's business climate we need to manage change and continuous learning as we maintain daily production and meet current business needs. We will need to make time for continuous learning and training efforts as we would with any important and necessary project.

So what can be done? If we cannot find enough workers with the right skills, managers must become teachers for the workers onboard so they can learn to handle increased responsibility. Sometimes this involves reorganizing the workflow, using outside expertise, and taking a team approach where employees learn smaller parts of a job and together have the necessary expertise. In any case, it is important to create and promote a culture of continuous learning as part of all employees' performance expectations. If workers have been selected for good problem solving skills, they will learn more quickly and will be more adaptable when dealing with change.



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While it is possible to identify employees' abilities, problems solving skills, and learning capacity, some workers who may have the ability don't always have the interest in learning. Fortunately, an interest in learning can be measured through psychometric testing and a review of the individual's work/educational history. With the continuous change occurring in today's work world, employee training is no longer a luxury. It has become a necessary core strategy to remain competitive and achieve business goals.

The Wall Street Journal reports that, for companies across the U.S., it is increasingly difficult to find job applicants who can communicate clearly, take initiative, problem-solve, and get along with co-workers. As these attributes are necessary for employee success in today's business world, securing the best workers available is paramount. When employee selection and replacement options are not available, improved training, equipment and work flow are the only other pathways to success. Of these choices, improved employee selection is the fastest and least expensive approach to becoming and remaining competitive in the 21st century.

PSP Metrics has psychometric tests available to evaluate outside and internal candidates for their ability to meet necessary expectations in problem solving and learning capacity as well as in drive, communications, teamwork, and interest in learning. www.PSPMetrics.com