

Recruiters reveal: Top 5 in demand skills and why

As the workforce continues to evolve, employers are placing a premium on people with skills that will help secure their success in the future. But, what exactly are they looking for?

We spoke to some of New Zealand's leading recruiters to reveal the five skills in high demand and how you can show that you have exactly what employers are looking for.

1. Adaptability

In a fast-changing work environment, no one can afford to stand still. Technology is evolving, industries are shifting, and new market trends require a quick response. Employers value candidates who can demonstrate an ability to adapt to these changes.

“Employers want their people to be able to pivot to a new role or area of responsibility as things change and to upskill to remain on top of new trends relevant to their job function or industry,” says Nick Deligiannis, Managing Director of Hays in Australia & New Zealand.

How to demonstrate adaptability

Deligiannis says the best way to demonstrate your adaptability is by citing examples from previous roles. This may include recent courses you have undertaken to broaden your skill set, or instances when you have adapted to new technology or new client expectations. “Using examples allows you to prove your skills while clearly demonstrating to the interviewer how you could add value to their team or department,” says Deligiannis.

2. Analytical thinking

Data is widely regarded as the ‘new gold’ due to the wealth of insights it can reveal. It is helping to drive business decisions across almost every industry, and while technology

can crunch the numbers, it takes humans to analyse it and extract its value.

“Analytical thinking has become a highly sought-after skill,” says Mike Dickson, Director NSW at Six Degrees Executive. “As every function seeks to operate more efficiently and to drive return on investment, the ability to analyse enables informed decision making.”

How to demonstrate analytical thinking

Dickson says potential employers expect evidence of your analytical skills. “Bring it to life with real examples that show the impact you have made with these skills,” he says.

Dickson suggests structuring your examples by using the ‘STAR’ story framework, which stands for Situation (to set the context for your story), Task (what was required of you), Activity (what you actually did) and Result (what was achieved).

“Too often, candidates want to talk about the result, which is meaningless without the situation or the actions they undertook,” says Dickson.

3. A proactive approach

In an era of automation, inherently ‘human’ skills are in hot demand. While robots need to be programmed, humans can take their own initiative, and proactivity is now a highly sought-after skill.

Qamran Somjee, Practice Leader of Digital, Projects & Technology, Davidson Technology, says a proactive approach is required as more organisations become more ‘agile’- able to move quickly and easily.

“In order to be agile, companies need less leader-led employees and are looking for staff who are proactive enough to contribute ideas and resilient enough to accept the team’s feedback, even when it is negative.,” he explains.

How to demonstrate a proactive approach

To demonstrate this skill, Somjee suggests creating a narrative in your resume that explains how goals have been achieved. “During an interview, I also advise people to answer questions by first describing the environment they have come from, succinctly describing challenges and letting the interviewer understand how they strived to achieve their goals.”

4. Empathy

Thanks to digital technologies, consumers of today are empowered by unprecedented access to information and are seeking swift, seamless, personalised service. As a result, more organisations are adopting a human-centred design methodology to ensure the customer is at the centre of business processes, products and services.

How to demonstrate empathy

Natalie Firth, Co-founder and Co-CEO of Think Talent, says employers are seeking candidates who are empathetic to customer needs. “Empathy is becoming more valued in the workplace. Candidates should stress that they always consider the customer’s perspective. They should also list ‘empathy’ as a skill in their resume and explain how it has helped them in their career.”

5. Resilience

The pace of workplace change can present challenges and employers value candidates who demonstrate resilience.

“The requirements of today’s workplace are more intense than ever before,” says Andrea McDonald, Director of u&u Recruitment Partners. “Due to the rise in technology, employees are rarely ‘off’, so the ability to manage that pressure and work effectively is essential.”

McDonald adds that with rapid change comes the need to experiment with new directions. “In an environment where you’re constantly experimenting, you have to be comfortable with failure and able to get back up again. This is why resilience is so important.”

How to demonstrate resilience

To highlight your resilience, McDonald suggests describing how you have effectively managed significant change in the workplace – what was the outcome and how was it achieved? “If it is suitable, bold key words in your examples so that they really stand out,” she says.

While the workplace of tomorrow will look very different to that of today, if you can demonstrate that you have these five sought-after skills, your future looks bright.

So, if you possess any of these skills, make sure you add them to your [SEEK Profile](#) to help you stand out.