



# Pirate MAP

*Maintaining Partnerships and Alliances*  
An Employer Career Newsletter from ECU  
Volume IV, Number 3

## Employers Seek Soft Skills

By James E. Challenger, *JobJournal.com*

For the 1.3 million college seniors who courted campus recruiters this spring, their soft skills – ability to communicate ideas, think critically and respond positively to feedback – were much more critical than the technical skills most commonly regarded as the keys to employment.

Reflecting the shift toward a more global and diverse business environment, soft skills are becoming even more critical for succeeding in complex environments where managers must evaluate and organize information, identify risks and gaps, and effectively direct their diverse staffs.

Campus recruiters and the hiring managers that entry-level jobseekers encounter after graduation look for how well candidates can communicate, build relationships, and solve complex problems.

Despite increased demand for college graduates, a recent study from the Association of Graduate Recruiters found that more than four out of ten employers are struggling to fill graduate vacancies this year because many university graduates lack the right ‘soft skills’ for the job.

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## Recruiting Early

by Jean Thilmany, *HR Magazine*

Employers with successful student internship programs emphasize training both during orientation and throughout the internship and tailor the training to the program's goals. Companies regard interns as employees rather than "summer-term gofers," and some companies view the internship as a prolonged training initiative that may culminate into a job offer. In fact, at Hallmark where interns "shadow" managers to meetings, three-quarters of the firm's interns accept full-time job offers from the firm. At the Peabody Essex Museum, interns get a "crash course in business conduct" during their first few days, and then receive specialized training based on the tasks they will perform.

Managers also mentor interns during two-hour conferences each week. At IBM's Extreme Blue internship program, interns are placed into project teams with software engineering and MBA students, and regularly sit down with senior staffers to learn about their career paths. Communications training is a major focus at IBM, with weekly training on subjects like how to talk to boss; interns give a final presentation to executives at the internship's end.



### The Career Center

#### Location

701 E. Fifth Street  
328-6050  
800-391-0506

[www.ecu.edu/e3careers/](http://www.ecu.edu/e3careers/)

#### Hours

M-F, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

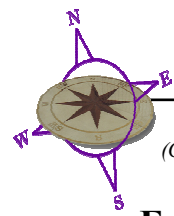
Appointments may be made for Career Advising, Resume Critiques, Mock Interviews, and various other services offered by the Career Center

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#### Upcoming Events

For a list of upcoming events sponsored by the Career Center, please click [here](#).



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## Emotional Intelligence

A recent study of *Fortune* 500 oil companies and retail associations found that the ‘must haves’ for recruiters are such softer skills as enthusiasm, drive, creativity, critical thinking, initiative, and oral communication. To prove themselves as sustainable producers, candidates must show both business and emotional intelligence.

Recruiters look for how well you are able to establish a rapport with potential co-workers, and they are looking for confident, assertive, and concise speakers. Demonstrating leadership skills and the ability to construct dynamic teams is more important than ever to proving your long-term value.

In response to pleas from alumni and recruiting employers, top-flight MBA programs around the country are now revamping their curriculums to focus on soft-skills training, adapting corporate methods like executive coaching, behavioral assessments, and peer feedback to prepare students for the marketplace. Students must learn that it is not only their technical assets that will get them a job, but how well they can operate in a team environment where they must constantly negotiate solutions to broker profitable compromises.

Mark Thompson, dean of Quinnipiac Business School, told *Business Week* that college recruiters are looking for people with strong written and verbal skills over a quantitative finance background. "When you are talking to employers, they never say that business candidates lack finance skills, they say that they lack communication skills."

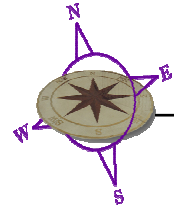
In response to this recent recruiting trend, first-year students at the Tuck School of Business of Dartmouth College are now assigned to teams where they focus on how well they solicit and act on feedback while managing larger conflicts. The students then rate themselves and each other on how well they operated within those teams, judging whether each person provided effective leadership to the project.

## Non-Technically Speaking

Even in more technical fields, such as information technology, recruiters look for candidates who balance their technical knowledge with effective communication and leadership skills. Technical employees must be able to explain complex concepts in simple, persuasive statements.

Since opportunities for graduates often lie in disparate fields, job candidate must demonstrate the transferability of their experience and skills. Because hard skills are often industry specific, jobseekers must highlight softer skills to ensure recruiters that they can produce results in a broad variety of working environments.

As we move toward an increasingly global community, it will become essential for future leaders to demonstrate these softer skills that will enable them to negotiate cultural differences and generational gaps. Rapid change is becoming a constant in nearly every field. As distances are collapsed between companies and clients, it is these softer skills that will help incoming employees guide complex worldwide projects and succeed at industry-leading organizations.



## Hire A Pirate!

The Career Center @ East Carolina University is excited to announce our **"Hire a Pirate"** program. The focus of this program is to help connect ECU students with local businesses who are hiring part-time and/or seasonal employees. The best part ... it's FREE! That's right; businesses may advertise their job vacancies at no cost! To participate, businesses can submit job announcements to The Career Center in several ways:

Online (preferred method)

Email: [donley1@ecu.edu](mailto:donley1@ecu.edu)

Fax: 252.328.6425, Attn: Student Employment Administrator

Once received, job announcements are entered into our online jobs database for students to access. Students searching the online database will see the job postings, business contact information, and application procedures. As students apply, businesses may contact the students directly to schedule interviews. It is a very simple and efficient process.

A representative from The Career Center will follow-up with businesses periodically to obtain program feedback and to collect placement data on the students hired. If you have ECU students working for you on a part-time basis we want to hear about it. Please have the student complete our "Took A Job" form online at:

<http://www.ecu.edu/e3careers/forstudents.tookajob.asp>

We hope this FREE service will assist your business in finding well qualified employees. In addition, your support of this program will allow ECU students to gain valuable work experience and earn some extra money. Thank you for your support!

If you have a question or comment about the "Hire a Pirate" program, please contact:

Larry Donley, Student Employment Administrator

252.328.1870

ECU

## Hire a Pirate



### Career Quote to Live By:

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.

- George Bernard Shaw