



# Piedmont Triad Regional Council

Northwest Piedmont Workforce Development Board

Taking Workforce Development Programs to  
the Next Level

***Head Start to Employment Initiative***

# 2012 Skills Gap Survey



## Closing the Gap

2012 Skills Survey of North Carolina Employers

Summary and Findings

## Key Findings.

- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills** represent a **primary gap** in workplace soft skills.
- **Critical, Analytical Thinking and Problem Solving** were also frequently indicated.
- **Businesses** indicated that **improved Soft Skills/Personal Effectiveness training** would be of most value in the future followed closely by **Occupational Skills training.**

**Note:** The survey was conducted throughout North Carolina during a seven week period. Data from 1,152 valid respondent surveys was collected and analyzed.

# Survey Summary

## Survey Summary

The responses from manufacturing, health and community services, professional services, retail sales, construction, education, and other business categories identified the following ten soft skill areas that were deemed deficient in the current pool of job applicants:

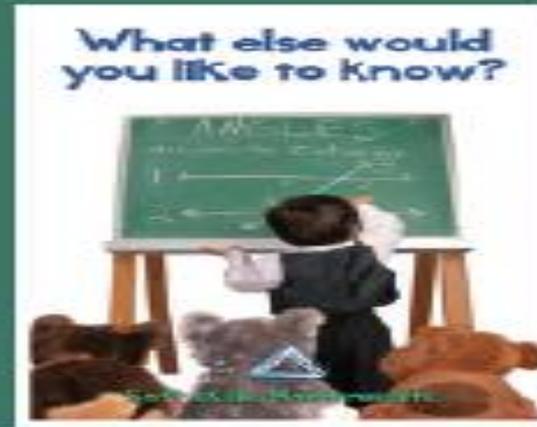
- **Attendance**
- **Communications**
- **Leadership**
- **Customer Service**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Writing**
- **Critical & Analytical Thinking**
- **Following Directions**
- **Using Information**
- **Teamwork**

# Where to begin?

## Head Start!

Soft Skill  
**Critical and  
Analytical Thinking**

© Excellence Skills - Waterloo, Ontario, N.C.



Soft Skill:  
**Leadership**

© TreeHouse Studio · Winston-Salem, N.C.

**Unlock the future.**

Strong learners  
become strong leaders.



Soft skills. Hard results.



Soft Skill:  
**Teamwork**

© Treehouse Studio - Winston-Salem, N.C.



Everyone wins when  
we all work together.



Soft skills. Hard results.

# Project Phase I

## Head Start to Employment

- In July of 2012, The Northwest Piedmont Workforce Development Board initiated a soft skills pilot program in a six county area. The intent of this pilot is to take a developmental approach to building soft skills proficiency in the student population starting at the pre-K level.
- The staff interacts with Pre-K providers to stress the importance of skills learned in early childhood to future success in school and the workplace.
- Workforce Development Staff has developed relationships with Head Start Family Advocates to educate and empower parents on the significance of Soft Skills as they relate to career success and the importance of reinforcing these skills in their children.

# We can help you open the door...



## Your future is only a few steps away!

**Northwest Piedmont Workforce Development:  
Helping you remake and remarket yourself for today's working world.**

### Workforce Investment Act

WIA services are available to unemployed or underemployed adults whose objectives fit WIA's mission. These services may include career planning, job search coaching, on-the-job training, and possible financial assistance for retraining in order to obtain employment.

**CONSULTATION** – Orientation to information and services, interview, evaluation, and referrals to support needs

**ASSESSMENT** – Initial assessment of skill levels, interest, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs

**RESOURCE** – Job search assistance, labor market information, resumé assistance, practice interviews, internet, fax machine, copier, phone, referrals to community resources

**EXPLORATION** – Training and education information, salary information, local in-demand occupations, career ladders

**EDUCATION** – Guidance, encouragement, coaching, possible financial assistance

**RE-EMPLOYMENT** – Plan effective job search strategy, update resumé, cover letters, interviewing and networking. Appropriate job referrals and placement. Follow-up services can include; counseling regarding the workplace, reinforcing and stabilizing job placement, measure success of the program and referrals to other agencies if services are needed.

Visit our Facebook pages for events, job postings and tips.

**Davie WIA      Rockingham WIA**  
**Surry WIA      Yadkin WIA**

*"The Northwest Piedmont Workforce Development Program is an equal opportunity employer/program with auxiliary aids/services available upon request to individuals with disabilities."*

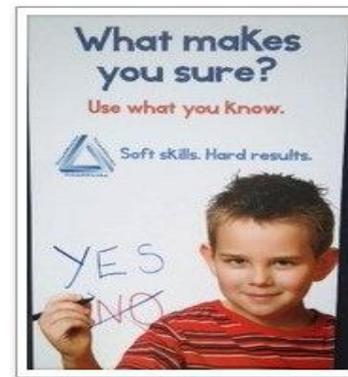
# Phase II

## K - 12

- **Transitioned project into the Public School System in all six counties. Have met with School Superintendents to explore ways in which the ten soft skills can continue to be developed.**
- **The ultimate goal of this initiative is to graduate students who have soft skill proficiencies that meet the needs of a growing North Carolina economy.**
- **Newsletter- a monthly news article is released through e-mail and on the Workforce Board website that focuses on one of the Soft Skills and explains the importance of the skill and its practical application.**
- **Market and Outreach Materials- Posters have been created to display in the Public School that provide visual support for learning each of the Soft Skills identified by the Skills Gap Survey.**

## Using Information: The Soft Skill Focus for April

In the workplace **the ability to effectively use information**, as differentiated from finding information, **is viewed as a soft skill**. In many respects, how an individual uses information is an interpersonal skill. One's ability to use information is interrelated to the development of other soft skills such as customer service, problem solving, critical & analytical thinking, teamwork, leadership, communications, attendance, and following directions. It is also a skill that is closely tied to the occupational requirements of employment.



Employers typically provide employees with initial as well as ongoing training that is relevant to occupational requirements of a given job. However, this degree of training does not cover all aspects of job expectations. In today's economy, employees need to know how to use and apply information that is relevant to their job. Employers also expect their employees to know how to filter and process a wide range of variables so that the day-to-day job expectations can be productively handled.

Early in 1970 the National Commission on Libraries labeled the use of information as **information literacy**. This gave rise to colleges and universities defining and adopting information literacy as a component of their curriculum. Some of this filtered down to secondary public schools with the introduction of instructional technology. However, this was focused more on using technology to find information instead of teaching students how to use information.

In the classroom the challenge is to incorporate information literacy into the established curriculum. Using information to accomplish a specific purpose is a multi-step process. The Big6 Model of the components of information literacy developed by Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz outlines the learning sequence.

1. Understand or clarify the problem.
2. Identify and find sources of information.
3. Analyze and select relevant information.
4. Synthesize and organize the information.
5. Communicate the information to others.
6. Evaluate to determine if the new information clarified or solved the problem.

**If you are looking for ideas to teach information literacy, click on the button below and create an account.**

# Outreach Materials for Middle and High Schools

**SOFT SKILL:**  
**CRITICAL AND  
ANALYTICAL THINKING**



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SOFT SKILL:  
PROBLEM SOLVING



THE BEST WAY TO  
ESCAPE A PROBLEM IS  
TO SOLVE IT.

Thinkstock  
by Getty Images

SOFT SKILLS.  HARD RESULTS.

**SOFT SKILL:**  
**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

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# Phase III - Business Endorsement

- Lunch and Learn Forums for Business and Industry that focus on Soft Skills
- Expose Teachers to a 1 day Manufacturing Simulated Work Experience
- Summer Internships in Manufacturing for Teachers
- Engage business and industry and create a soft skill certification
- Offer Soft Skills Certification to Youth Participants
- Before and after evaluation of students based on the Soft Skills Indicators
- Involve Chamber of Commerce and SHRM to support teachers
  - Identify a lead business in each county to support initiative.
  - Use Smore [www.smores.com](http://www.smores.com) program to track readership and disseminate information about initiatives.
  - Continue to use the newsletter
  - Use matching funds or scholarships to support teachers in training