

Marketable Skills for the Policies & Procedures Professional

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Changes in the economy and within organizations continue to require that demonstrated value be produced from the labor force. In order for policies and procedures (P&P) professionals to demonstrate how their work adds value to an organization, they need to develop and diversify their skill set to be more accessible and valuable in the services they provide.

FORCES AFFECTING 1990s LABOR MARKET

Restructuring, downsizing, technology, and standards are key forces affecting the labor market in the 1990s. Restructuring has introduced new ways of doing business, which in turn requires documentation of new processes and procedures. Downsizing has frequently eliminated such support functions as procedures groups; and instead, organizations may choose to contract for such services. Technology is allowing people to perform work, including procedures development, that might have been performed by specialists alone. ISO 9000 and government standards are requiring documentation of quality management systems. Although the bulk of documentation will be produced by workers, the P&P professional's expertise will be in demand beyond just writing skills.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS NEEDED

Communication skills must include more than effective writing techniques. The skills must include expertise in information design, development, and visual communication for producing manuals, job aids, videos, and multi-media.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS NEEDED

One purpose of having documented procedures is for learning. The P&P professional will need to incorporate instructional design methods and principles to aid in developing and using reference-based learning manuals, and information for CBT and online help.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS NEEDED

Analytical skills are usually applied before one can communicate procedures. Analytical skills include the methods and techniques to study processes and tasks.

They also include the ability to apply research techniques such as interviewing for information-gathering purposes.

PEOPLE SKILLS NEEDED

As organizations become more process oriented, verses functionally oriented, work will be accomplished through teams. As a result, the P&P professional needs to learn such people skills as team facilitation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and leadership.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS NEEDED

As "value added" becomes a more critical element in judging the worth of policies and procedures to an organization, the astute P&P professional will need to develop management skills to demonstrate value. These management skills should include documentation project management, time management, cost management, and evaluation measures of benefits.

MARKETING SKILLS NEEDED

While the other skills discussed add to one's marketability as a P&P professional, actual marketing techniques must be practiced. The key marketing technique is relationship building. P&P professionals must link with other professionals engaging in projects together as change agents for improvement and solving problems.

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Raymond E. Urgo has conducted three studies on advertising patterns for policies & procedures skills. He has more than 15 years' expertise with processes, procedures, and training. The Los Angeles Business Journal identifies Urgo as one of the leading practitioners for documenting procedures in the Los Angeles region.