



Enthusiasm & Attitude

Activities

Having a positive attitude in the workplace can help with potential promotions. Employers promote employees who not only produce, but also motivate others in the workplace.

Enthusiasm and Attitude

What is the difference between “You’re hired!” and “Thank you for your interest, but...”? In a word: enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm can mean the difference in not just getting a job, but also succeeding in a job and even advancing in your career. A positive and enthusiastic attitude is a critical component of workplace success. When employers look at prospective candidates, beyond skills, experience and training, they look for those who demonstrate enthusiasm—those they believe will complete assigned tasks in an upbeat and cooperative manner. All other things being equal, a candidate who can demonstrate a positive attitude and eagerness to tackle the job will have an advantage over one who displays an attitude viewed by the employer as negative or disinterested. In fact, many employers would rather provide job skills training to an enthusiastic but inexperienced worker than hire someone with perfect qualifications but a less-than-positive attitude. Managers sometimes worry that this type of person will not get along with supervisors and co-workers, treat customers disrespectfully or fail to put much effort into his or her work. On the other hand, employees who are viewed as enthusiastic are known to provide good customer service, resolve interpersonal conflict effectively and work productively with others.

There are many ways in which an individual might demonstrate enthusiasm in the workplace. For example, in a job interview, he or she might smile, sit up straight, make eye contact and discuss training and work experiences in an upbeat manner. Once hired into a position, an enthusiastic employee will typically show up on time, show interest in his or her job and demonstrate a willingness to listen, learn and try new things. In customer service settings, an enthusiastic employee will approach customers proactively and offer assistance or seek out tasks and projects when there is down time. This positive attitude helps employees go above and beyond to get along with coworkers and managers—even difficult ones—and respond to constructive criticism with maturity and a willingness to improve. Overall, an employee with enthusiasm comes across as someone who wants to be at work and who is willing to do what it takes to get the job done.

The activities in this section seek to teach participants about the importance of enthusiasm and a positive attitude in the workplace. Participants will hear strategies for turning negative thinking into positive thinking and displaying and discussing enthusiasm during an interview and on the job.

Note to facilitators: *A positive attitude is an “I can” attitude. Young people with real or perceived barriers to employment (such as those who struggle academically possibly due to a learning or other disability, are in the foster system, have dropped out of school or are raising a family) may not always have ready access to feelings of “I can.” The activities in this section offer an opportunity for you to help all youth learn how to develop a positive attitude and, almost as important, how to showcase it to others, including employers. Regardless of the challenges young people have faced, developing and displaying a positive attitude will often help propel them toward success.*

6. Never Underestimate the Power of PMA

JUST THE FACTS: PMA, or positive mental attitude, is a person’s ability to maintain the belief that they can transform or change a tough situation into something better. This activity will help participants find ways to empower themselves in difficult situations and turn negative thinking into positive thinking.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- One six-sided die for each small group. Alternatively, you can use a “cutout” cube and create it to look like a die, drawing pips on the sides or labeling them 1–6. Download and print a cube shape here: [Cut-and-fold cube cutout](#).
- Chart paper, markers (optional)



Directions

Pose the following questions to participants. (This can be accomplished by full-group discussion or by having smaller groups discussing together and then presenting to the larger group.)

- What is a positive attitude? If I have a positive attitude, what actions might I display?
- What does a positive attitude “look” like to others?
- What is a negative attitude? If I have a negative attitude, what actions might I display?
- What does a negative attitude “look” like to others?

Then say: A positive attitude starts with learning to believe in oneself. In order to believe in ourselves, we must first understand our personal strengths. In this activity, you will be considering and sharing your personal strengths.

Divide participants into groups of four. Write the below statements on a piece of chart paper for all to see, or give a “cheat sheet” to each small group for reference. For visual learners, you might choose to draw a chart with a picture of each side of the die in one column and the corresponding statement in the other.

Each participant will take turns rolling their die two or three times and complete the following statement upon each roll:

Roll a 1: I am thankful for...

Roll a 2: Other people compliment me on my ability to...

Roll a 3: Something I would like other people to know about me is...

Roll a 4: I feel really good about myself when...

Roll a 5: I am proud of my ability to...

Roll a 6: Something nice I recently did for someone else was...

Note to facilitators: *If the group knows each other well, feel free to substitute questions that ask about the positive qualities of their peers.*



Conclusion

Ask participants why they think the statement for “Roll a 6” was included in this activity. Answers should be directed toward the fact that helping or “doing” for others often helps people feel good about themselves. And when we feel good about ourselves, we often demonstrate a positive attitude that can be seen by others.

Discuss with participants how our internal feelings can impact those around us. How might a positive attitude help us on a job?



Journaling Activity

Do you think our attitude (whether positive or negative) is something we are born with or that we have power to control within ourselves? Think about a time when your attitude positively or negatively impacted you and those around you. When is it most challenging for you to keep a positive mental attitude? What do you do to help keep yourself positive during difficult times?



Extension Activity

Have participants keep a daily log for one week. Ask them to write down 50 (or 40 or 30) great things that happen throughout the week. Encourage them to include even the small things like: someone held the door open for me; I found a quarter on the sidewalk; when I went shopping, the clerk at the store was really friendly and helpful. The goal of this activity is to have participants focus on the positive and then discuss whether they felt any different during the week as a result—either in their interactions with others or in their own feelings about themselves.

7. Life Is Full of Hard Knocks

JUST THE FACTS: Failing is a part of life. In fact, failure accounts for many, many successes—without failure, success is almost impossible. Learning how to bounce back from failure is not always easy, but it is necessary. Enthusiasm for goal attainment is a necessary characteristic for success. This activity helps participants understand that failure is not something to fear and is, in fact, often a necessary step on the path to success.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- Activity 7a or 7b
- Whiteboard or flip chart with markers or blackboard
- Paper and colored pencils for drawing (optional)
- Envelopes (optional)



Directions

Write the following statement large enough so all can see (and read aloud): THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IS PAVED WITH FAILURE.

Divide the larger group into smaller groups. Ask each group to discuss the statement and what they think it means. Alternatively, ask individual participants to draw a picture of what this statement means to them. Ask each group to share their feedback and encourage other participants to comment or expand on the responses.

Decide whether you will use Activity 7a or 7b, based on the makeup of your group:

- **Activity 7a:** This version of the activity was developed for discussion, though it could certainly be adapted to include a word bank or list of words from which participants can choose.
- **Activity 7b:** This version provides materials that can be copied, cut out, and placed in separate envelopes to be used as an independent or small-group matching exercise.
- **Alternative activity:** You may choose to have 10 large pieces of paper placed around the room, each with one of the 10 descriptions written on it. Then provide sentence strips or note cards with each of the 10 famous people written on them. Participants can take turns matching the famous person with their famous failure—and eventual success.

Note to facilitators: Participants may benefit from having a picture of each of the famous people on the individual cards, along with the names. You can search online for photos.



Conclusion

Discuss with participants different ways people deal with failure. Pinpoint how people may deal with failure differently in different environments, such as at home, at school or at work. Be certain to wrap up the activity in a positive way, focusing on the fact that without making mistakes, we would never succeed. Ask: What do each of the people we discussed today have in common? (Answer: They refused to quit.)

Further discussion questions include: Would you have given up if you had lost eight elections? What if you had written a book and 23 different publishers had rejected it? What if just one publisher had rejected it? What would you have done? What might the world be like today if Thomas Edison had given up?



Journaling Activity

Think of a time when you experienced a personal failure. What was the failure? How did this failure help you to become a better person, make better decisions or succeed in a way you hadn't imagined? Do you believe that failure is important? Why or why not?



Extension Activity

Show students some of the “Famous Failures” videos on YouTube. Simply type “famous failures” into the search bar to find results.

Have students research additional famous failures and work in teams to create a YouTube video showcasing one of their own failures that ultimately had a positive effect.

Another suggestion would be to use the information provided in this activity (i.e., famous people's successes and failures) and have small groups work together to create a similar game or activity appropriate for younger children. This could then be shared with a local elementary school.

Activity 7a.

Life Is Full of Hard Knocks

CAN YOU NAME...

1. ...a famous person who was defeated eight times while running for political office?
2. ...a cartoonist who was told by the editor of the Kansas City newspaper, "It's easy to see from these sketches that you have no talent."
3. ...an author whose first children's book was rejected by 23 different publishers?
4. ...a famous singer who was fired after his first performance at the Grand Ole Opry?
5. ...a famous actress who dropped out of high school and held a variety of odd jobs, including doing the hair and makeup for corpses, before finally succeeding in show business?
6. ...a famous author who lived on welfare for years in an apartment infested with mice?
7. ...a famous athlete who was cut from the varsity basketball team his sophomore year in high school?
8. ...an inventor who was thrown out of school in the early grades because his teachers thought he couldn't learn?
9. ...a famous Harvard University dropout?
10. ...an inventor of a fried chicken recipe that was rejected by more than 1,000 restaurant owners?

ANSWERS:

- 1. Abraham Lincoln** was defeated in eight different elections. Yet he persisted and succeeded in becoming the 16th, and one of the most admired, presidents of the United States.
- 2. Walt Disney** was told he had no talent and was fired from a newspaper job. He wound up doing volunteer work for a church in an old run-down garage. One day he decided to sketch one of the many mice running through the garage. This mouse became the famous Mickey Mouse.
- 3. Dr. Seuss's** first book was rejected by 23 different publishers. The 24th accepted it and sold six million copies.
- 4. Elvis Presley** was fired after his first performance at the Grand Ole Opry. The manager told him, "You ain't going nowhere, son. You ought to go back to driving a truck." Elvis went on to become a cultural legend and the King of Rock and Roll.
- 5. Whoopi Goldberg** dropped out of high school, relied on welfare and worked as a bricklayer, bank teller and licensed cosmetician. After graduating from beauty college, she took a job at a mortuary doing corpses' hair and makeup. She later went on to win an Emmy Award, Grammy Award, Academy Award and Tony Award—making her one of the select few American artists ever to win the "EGOT."
- 6. J.K. Rowling**, author of the *Harry Potter* series, lived on welfare for years, in an apartment infested with mice. Her manuscript *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which she completed in 1995, was initially rejected by 12 publishers. Bloomsbury Children's Books finally published it two years later, and the rest is history.
- 7. Michael Jordan** was the athlete who was cut from the varsity basketball team in his sophomore year of high school. Angry and embarrassed, he began to get up early each morning to practice with the junior varsity coach. Eventually he not only made the varsity team, but also became a worldwide icon and one of the greatest athletes of all time. Michael Jordan is quoted as saying: "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot, and I missed. I have failed over and over, and over again, in my life. And that is why I succeed."
- 8. Thomas Edison** was the inventor who was kicked out of school. Following this, he was homeschooled by his mother. It took him over 700 tries before he got the filament right for the light bulb. Edison is quoted as saying: "I have not failed 700 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 700 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work."
- 9. Mark Zuckerberg**, co-creator of Facebook, dropped out of Harvard University. He went on to become the youngest self-made billionaire (at the time) at age 23 and is now the CEO of Meta Platforms and a bona fide titan of the tech world. (He received an honorary degree from Harvard in 2017.)
- 10. Harland David Sanders**, better known as Colonel Sanders, had his fried chicken recipe rejected by more than 1,000 restaurant owners before it was accepted by one. Today, people still enjoy his creation at KFCs across the world.

Activity 7b.

Life Is Full of Hard Knocks

<p>ABRAHAM LINCOLN (16th President of the United States)</p>	<p>WALT DISNEY (The Creator of Mickey Mouse)</p>
<p>DR. SEUSS (Children's Author and Illustrator)</p>	<p>ELVIS PRESLEY (Famous Singer)</p>
<p>WHOOPI GOLDBERG (Famous Actress)</p>	<p>J.K. ROWLING (Wrote The <i>Harry Potter</i> Series)</p>
<p>MICHAEL JORDAN (Famous Athlete)</p>	<p>THOMAS EDISON (Inventor of the Light Bulb)</p>
<p>MARK ZUCKERBERG (CEO of Facebook)</p>	<p>COLONEL SANDERS (Founder of KFC)</p>

Lost eight elections, had a nervous breakdown	Was told he had no talent for drawing
First book was rejected by more than 20 different publishers	Was told to go back to driving a truck and quit singing
Dropped out of high school and performed odd jobs, such as fixing the hair and makeup of corpses	Lived on welfare and in a house infested with mice, rejected by 12 different publishers
Kicked off his varsity basketball team	Thrown out of school because his teachers said he couldn't learn
Dropped out of harvard university	Had a recipe that was rejected by more than 1,000 restaurants

8. A Super Ball and a Raw Egg

JUST THE FACTS: One difference between people with a positive and enthusiastic attitude and people with a negative attitude is that the former look at failure as an opportunity to try again. This activity offers an opportunity to use everyday objects to demonstrate this valuable outlook.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- One super ball (i.e., a hard rubbery ball that bounces high)
- Three raw eggs, or one for each participant (if you would rather not use raw eggs, small, thin water balloons are just as effective)
- Large sheet, drop cloth or newspaper
- Masking tape

Note to facilitators: *It is suggested that facilitators complete Activity 7 (Life Is Full of Hard Knocks) prior to completing this activity.*



Directions

Tape a large sheet, drop cloth or piece of newspaper to the wall; put another on the floor directly underneath to catch the broken egg or water balloon. Draw a set of concentric circles on the sheet, drop cloth or newspaper on the wall, making a target. (Another option is to simply put the target on the floor and have participants drop each object from above.)

Without explaining the point of the illustration, ask for six volunteers. The first three take the super ball and throw it at the target, trying to get the closest to the center. The second three throw the raw eggs.

Say something to the effect of: When the super ball was thrown against the wall, what happened? [It bounced back.] What happens the harder it is thrown? [The faster it bounces back.]

What happened to the raw egg when it was thrown against the wall? [It splattered.] What happens the harder it is thrown? [The worse it splatters, or the bigger the mess.]

These objects define two very different types of people: raw egg people and super ball people. When raw egg people hit a “bump in the road,” they splatter. The harder they hit, the harder they splatter, usually giving up on their goal. When super ball people hit an obstacle, they bounce back. The more difficult the obstacle, the harder they bounce back.

If Activity 7 was used previously: The people we just talked about when we talked about successes and failures were all super ball people. With every failure they experienced, they kept bouncing back.

If Activity 7 was not used, simply ask: Why do you think people bounce back after failing at something? What are some of the things you learn when you fail? Who do you know (either a famous person or someone you know personally) who has bounced back from failure to become really successful?



Conclusion

In a small group, discuss what makes people bounce back from defeat. Allow a few minutes for thought, reflection and discussion.



Journaling Activity

Think about a time when you wanted to give up on something but didn't. What was the situation? Why did you want to give up? Why didn't you? How did you deal with it?



Extension Activity

Have participants describe what success means to them. Methods of expression might include writing a poem, doing a dance, drawing a picture, creating a song or a rap, creating a collage from magazine pictures, configuring a word cloud, etc. Allow participants to express themselves in a way they feel most comfortable.

9. Believe It or Not: Your Attitude and Enthusiasm Just Might Get You the Job

JUST THE FACTS: The enthusiasm you display during a job interview can be the difference between getting hired or not. Some sources say that attitude can account for more than 40% of your rating! This activity will focus on the different attitudes that can be (and have been) displayed during a job interview. In a job interview, enthusiasm comes across as showing a genuine interest in the job.



Time

30–40 minutes



Materials

- A few copies of Activity 9 (at least one copy of each script per volunteer actor)

Note to facilitators: You may choose to forgo the role-play scripts and instead have participants answer the questions in their own way, understanding that one person should interview very well, while the other should not (to the extreme). This is a good strategy for nonreaders or those with limited reading proficiency.



Directions

Ask participants: Did you know that an employer will often decide within the first 30 seconds if an applicant is right for the job?

What do you think can come across in 30 seconds? Why are the first 30 seconds so important? [Elicit responses.] Obviously, this means you need to be on top of your game going into the interview.

Ask for three volunteers to act out a role-play of a job interview. One volunteer will play the interviewer, one will play the “good” job applicant and one will play the “bad” job applicant. Allow the volunteers a few minutes to review the scripts. Explain to each “interviewee” that they should be over the top; the “good” interviewee should be really, really good and the “bad” interviewer should be really, really bad. (If possible, the “bad” job applicant should display behaviors such as handling their cell phone, chewing gum and having disheveled clothing, or anything else that could be perceived as unprofessional.)



Conclusion

Discuss with participants the fact that these examples represent extreme scenarios. What are some of their takeaways from observing/participating in the role-play?

Depending on how the interviewees “acted,” there is a good chance that both of them demonstrated enthusiasm—even if it was about body art and rocky road ice cream in one case. Talk about the difference between each type of enthusiasm.

Participants may wish to act out another interview scenario (with or without the script), if time allows.



Journaling Activity

You have a friend who is getting ready for a job interview. This friend has not been feeling very positive lately, and you want to help her get ready for her interview. What are some things you might do to help your friend prepare?



Extension Activity

Divide the larger group into smaller groups of three or four. Instruct each group to write another role-play demonstrating positive attitude and “focused” enthusiasm. This role-play can depict another interview, or it can demonstrate a situation that might happen on the job. Each group should have the opportunity to act out their role-play.

Activity 9.

Believe It or Not: Your Attitude and Enthusiasm Just Might Get You the Job

INTERVIEWER'S SCRIPT

Good morning, my name is _____ and I will be conducting your interview this morning. *[Extend your hand to shake hands with the applicant.]*

Please, have a seat. We are interviewing for the position of a restaurant host/hostess. We are looking for someone with good customer service and communication skills, someone who is dependable and who gets along with others. This person will be the first one to greet guests when they come into our restaurant, so it is very important to us that the host displays a positive and welcoming attitude.

Now, I have some questions to ask you. *[Allow the interviewee to answer before asking each subsequent question.]*

Did you bring a copy of your resume? Tell me a little bit about yourself.

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

Why do you want to work here?

Tell me about a recent job or volunteer position you had.

Why did you leave that position?

Do you have any questions for me?

INTERVIEWEE #1 SCRIPT

This version of the interview should be over-the-top “good.” The candidate should look neat and polished, arrive on time and be attentive, enthusiastic and cheerful. The interviewee should speak politely and respectfully to the interviewer. The interviewee should also shake hands warmly with the interviewer and greet them using their name.

Q: Did you bring a copy of your resume?

Yes, I did. *[Open the folder you brought with you to the interview, pull out a copy of your resume, and hand it to the interviewer.]*

Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I have lived in [city or state] all my life, I love being around people and I love learning new things. Right now, I’m learning a new language because I think it is important to be able to communicate with a variety of people. I also like doing physical work and enjoy gardening and landscaping. I’m quite proud of my yard!

Q: What are your strengths?

I’m a really good listener. Don’t get me wrong, I’m a good talker, too, but I think listening skills are even more important. I’m also a good organizer. Whether it’s organizing my closet or a trip with my family, I love all the planning and organizing that goes into it.

Q: What are your weaknesses?

I like things to go according to plan, so when something derails my plans or schedule, it sometimes stresses me out. But what I have learned about myself is that coming up with a plan B helps a lot! So, if I plan ahead for potential problems, then I don’t stress out at all because I have a good idea of what to do next.

Q: Why do you want to work here?

As I said earlier, I love being around people and in this job I’d get to meet every person that walks through the door. Your restaurant has a good reputation for quality food and service and that’s the type of restaurant I’d be proud to work in. I think my qualities will fit nicely here.

Q: Tell me about a recent job or volunteer position you had.

I worked in a cafeteria serving food. Sometimes I worked in the kitchen but I really loved working as a server. I got to meet a lot of people. Some days were easier than others. I set a goal for myself to smile at everyone I served, especially those people who seemed upset or depressed. It may seem like a boring job to some people, but not to me.

Q: Why did you leave that position?

I left because I had started school and couldn’t do both school and work at the same time.

Q: Do you have any questions for me?

Your staff has a great reputation for customer service, so I thought perhaps I’d ask if you have a training program you put your staff through to achieve that?

Before the end of the meeting, the interviewee should say:

I also have a list of references for you. *[Hand the interviewer a sheet of paper.]* Thank you for the interview. It was a pleasure to meet you. *[Offer a professional, firm handshake—and a smile.]*

INTERVIEWEE #2 SCRIPT

This version of the interview should be over-the-top “bad.” The candidate should be dressed sloppily, wear sunglasses, chew gum, slouch, seem disorganized, arrive late, etc. In fact, the interviewee should be distracted by their phone when the interview begins—and doesn’t realize that the interviewer offered to shake hands.

Q: Did you bring a copy of your resume?

A resume? Oh, yeah...it’s in here somewhere. [Dig around in your pocket or bag until you find a crumpled resume. Smooth out the paper and hand it to the interviewer.]

Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself.

Well, I’ve been taking a little time off lately—traveling around the country. I’m trying to get one tattoo from every state. I’ve already got a pretty good start, see? [Show the interviewer your bare arm.]

Q: What are your strengths?

I can talk to anybody about any subject. There’s never a dull moment when I’m in a room!

Q: What are your weaknesses?

Hmmm, I can’t think of anything... Oh, yeah, I have a weakness for rocky road ice cream. I bet I could eat an entire gallon in one sitting. I also like to sleep late. Really, I’m much more of a night owl than an early bird. Sure, the early bird gets the worm—but who wants worms anyway?

Q: Why do you want to work here?

I figure I’d be able to get free meals if I worked for a restaurant. Plus, I’m living at home with my mom, and she wants me to pay rent—why, I don’t know.

Q: Tell me about a recent job or volunteer position you had.

Uh, the last job I had was at a sporting goods store. That was a while ago, though, and it didn’t last too long.

Q: Why did you leave that position?

Well, me and the manager didn’t always see eye to eye. Sometimes customers were pretty rude when we didn’t have the sports equipment they wanted, and my manager expected me to be nice to these people when they clearly didn’t deserve it. Let’s just say I left by mutual agreement.

Q: Do you have any questions for me?

Do your employees get free meals?

10. Translating Features to Benefits

JUST THE FACTS: Marketing executives translate features to benefits when they are preparing to sell products and services. For example, your cell phone plan offers call forwarding (a feature). This means you will never miss another important call (a benefit). Another example: The new car you want has a built-in GPS system (feature). The salesperson probably tells you that with built-in GPS you will never get lost again (benefit). The purpose of this activity is to help participants list and explain the positive personality traits (or personal features) they possess and how to communicate those traits to an employer. Remember: Features tell, benefits sell.



Time

30 minutes



Materials

- Chart paper, whiteboard (or anything on which you can write large enough for the group to see), markers
- Three to five notecards per participant



Directions

Write the following statistics on a flip chart or whiteboard:

40% — Attitude

25% — Image and appearance

25% — Communication skills (verbal and nonverbal)

10% — Job skills

Tell participants that according to a variety of sources, a person's attitude is the #1 factor in whether they win or lose a job. Show them the chart or whiteboard with the statistics. *[Take a few minutes to discuss what each of these "looks" like.]* For example:

- Attitude: Do you demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm? Are you on time or early?
- Image and appearance: Do you wear too much perfume or cologne? Are your clothes wrinkled or inappropriate for the work environment?
- Communication skills: Do you look the interviewer in the eye? Is your handshake firm?
- Do you speak clearly?

Ask participants (and discuss) why they think attitude is rated highest? How does an employer get a sense of your "attitude" during an interview?

Explain that a job interview is partially a sales pitch. You are "selling" yourself and your skills to an employer. This is not an easy task for many of us because we may not be sure about our skills, lack a bit of self-confidence or are just plain nervous. This is one skill that will definitely get better the more it is practiced.

In order to begin thinking about how we might "sell" ourselves in a job interview, participants will learn how to turn their personal features into benefits for the employer. This is where they

will be able to tell an employer what they have to offer while also giving the employer a reason this feature is good for business.

Take a few minutes to brainstorm some positive personality traits. Ask participants to “yell” them out while you write them where all can see. Examples of positive personality traits include, but are certainly not limited to: friendly, creative, honest, dependable, trustworthy, enthusiastic, upbeat, patient, polite, helpful, etc.

Now, ask participants to think about what these features might mean to an employer. For example:

- Honesty (feature) means you can be counted on to do the right thing (benefit).
- Friendliness (feature) means you will help customers feel welcome (benefit). Review a few of these examples until participants feel comfortable with the activity.

Give each participant a set of notecards. On one side of the card participants should illustrate or write a feature they possess. On the other side of the card, they should illustrate or write the benefit (i.e., why this feature would be valuable) to the employer. Depending on the group, this activity can be done individually or in groups of two or more.

Once complete, ask for volunteers to read their personal traits and how they might benefit a future employer. Alternatively, you can ask participants to act out their features and see if the group can guess both the feature and the benefit to an employer.



Conclusion

Discuss with participants the ease or difficulty they experienced with this activity. In addition, discuss some examples of different features that may be perceived as “challenging” and how they may be described positively as benefits. For example:

- Someone with ADHD: “Over the years, I’ve learned what it means to multitask.”
- Someone who uses a wheelchair: “I am a great problem-solver. You should see some of the places I’ve needed to get into!”



Journaling Activity

Describe how it makes you feel to talk about yourself in a positive way. Is it easy, difficult, awkward? Since this skill is important when it comes time getting a job, what might you do to improve your ability to talk yourself up? If it is already easy for you, how can you be sure you don’t come across as “full of yourself” or conceited?



Extension Activity

Have participants use their individual “features to benefits” cards to create a 30-second “commercial” selling themselves. Explain that their goal is to hook an employer, just as a TV ad might hook viewers on buying a product. A few suggestions for this activity: Record participants, allow for multiple takes and retakes, encourage feedback and suggestions from peers, etc. Encourage participants to view each of their successive videotapes to gauge improvement.

Enthusiasm & Attitude Activities

You may also wish to invite one or more employers in to critique each commercial and provide feedback and suggestions. Only bring employers into the mix once participants have had the opportunity to practice and feel a bit more confident “selling” themselves.