

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 succeeding in a job and even advancing in your career. A positive and enthusiastic attitude is a critical component of workplace success.

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.

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, and not 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 co-workers and managers - even difficult ones - and respond to constructive criticism with maturity and 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, have been in and out of foster homes, have dropped out of school, or are raising a baby) may not have experienced enough success to feel or demonstrate this attitude. 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 learn to showcase that to others, including employers. Regardless of the challenges young people have conquered, developing and displaying a positive attitude will often help them to surpass their peers in many aspects of life.

6. Never Underestimate the Power of PMA

JUST THE FACTS: PMA, or Positive Mental Attitude, is one’s ability to maintain the belief that he or she can transform or change a tough situation into something better. This activity will help participants take difficult situations and find ways to EMPOWER themselves to turn negative thinking into positive thinking.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- One rolling die for each small group. Alternatively, you can use a “cut out” cube and create it to look like a single dice, using either numbers one through six or the typical dots found on rolling dice. An easy cube shaped cut-out can be found at <http://www.leslietryon.com/3dcolorcutout/cube.html>
- Optional: Chart paper/markers



Directions

Pose the following questions to participants. (This can be accomplished by group discussion or by 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: Developing a positive attitude starts from learning to believe in one’s self. 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.

Break participants into groups of four. Write the below statements on a piece of chart paper for all to see, or have a “cheat sheet” at each table for reference. You might choose to create a chart and draw a picture of each roll of the dice (for those who learn best from pictures) on one side and write the corresponding statement on the other.

Each participant will take turns rolling the dice 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: 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 the statement for Roll #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 internal feelings have the ability to 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 (either positive or negative) 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 log for one week. Ask them to write down 50 (or 40 or 30) great things that happen each day. 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 if 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, it accounts for many, many successes - for without failing, 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 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
- Optional: Paper and colored pencils for drawing
- Optional: Envelopes



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 (Success or Failure), based on the make up of your group:

- **Option 1:** Activity 7a was developed for discussion, though it could certainly be adapted to include a word bank or list of words from which to choose.
- **Option 2:** Activity 7b provides materials that can be copied, cut out, and placed in separate envelopes to be used as an independent or small group matching exercise.
- **Option 3:** Alternatively, you might choose to have 10 large pieces of paper placed around the room, each with one of the 10 descriptions written on it. Sentence strips or note cards could then have each of the 10 famous people written. Participants can take turns matching the famous person with their famous failure, and, thus, their eventual success.

NOTE: Participants may benefit from having pictures of each of the famous people on the individual cards (along with the names). You can use an Internet search engine to find pictures of each famous person.



Conclusion

Discuss with participants different ways people might deal with failure. Pinpoint how people might 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 lost 8 elections? What if you wrote a book and 23 different publishers rejected it? What if just one publisher 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

If you have Internet resources, check out some of the YouTube videos on “Famous Failures.” 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 (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. Success or Failure?

CAN YOU NAME....

1. ...a famous person who was defeated seven 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 make-up 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 drop out?
10. ...an inventor of a fried chicken recipe that was rejected by more than 1000 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 respected, presidents of the United States.
2. **Walt Disney** was told he had no talent and 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 that were running through the garage. This mouse became the famous “Mickey Mouse.”
3. Twenty-three different publishers rejected **Dr. Seuss’s** first book, while the 24th accepted and sold 6 million copies of it.
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.” He went on to become one of the most famous American singers of the 20th century.
5. **Whoopi Goldberg** dropped out of high school, was on welfare and worked as a bricklayer, bank teller, and licensed cosmetician. After graduating from Beauty College, she took a job at a mortuary fixing the hair of and applying make-up to the corpses.
6. **J.K. Rowling**, author of the Harry Potter series, lived on welfare for years, in an apartment infested with mice, and was rejected by 12 publishers before going on to fame and fortune.
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 one of the most popular athletes in the world. 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 seven hundred times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those seven hundred 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** dropped out of Harvard University. He went onto become the youngest millionaire (at the age of 26) and is the CEO of Facebook.
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 eat it at KFCs across the world.

Activity 7b. Success or Failure?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (16TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES)	WALT DISNEY (THE CREATOR OF MICKEY MOUSE)
DR. SEUSS (CHILDREN'S AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR)	ELVIS PRESLEY (FAMOUS SINGER)
WHOOPI GOLDBERG (FAMOUS ACTRESS)	J.K. ROWLING (WROTE THE HARRY POTTER SERIES)
MICHAEL JORDAN (FAMOUS ATHLETE)	THOMAS EDISON (INVENTOR OF THE LIGHT BULB)
MARK ZUCKERBERG (CEO OF FACEBOOK)	COLONEL SANDERS (FOUNDER OF KFC)

LOST 8 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 MAKE UP OF CORPSES.	LIVED ON WELFARE AND IN A HOUSE INFESTED WITH MICE REJECTED BY 12 DIFFERENT PUBLISHERS
WAS KICKED OFF OF 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 FROM 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 (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

It is suggested that facilitators complete Activity 7 (Success or Failure) 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. Draw a set of concentric circles on the sheet, drop cloth, or piece of 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 this super ball was thrown against the wall, what happened? [It bounces 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 or 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) that 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, 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: According to many sources, the enthusiasm you display on a job interview can make the difference between getting the job and not getting the job. Some even say that attitude can account for up 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

- Activity 9
- You will need three actors/actresses. One will play the interviewer, one will play the positive job applicant, and one will play the not-so-positive job applicant
- If possible, the not-so-positive job applicant could use props such as a cell phone, chewing gum, boxer shorts showing, and anything else that might be perceived as unprofessional

Note: You may choose not to use the role-play scripts - and instead have participants answer the questions in their own way – understanding that one person interviews very well, while the other doesn't (to the extreme). This is a good strategy for non-readers or those with limited reading proficiency.



Directions

Ask participants: Did you know that often an employer will 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 is 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 volunteers to read a role play script about job interviews. Allow volunteer actors/actresses a few minutes to review the scripts. Explain to each “interviewee” that they should be “over the top” and that the “good” interviewee should be really, really good; and the “bad” interviewer should be really, really bad.



Conclusion

Discuss with participants the fact that these examples are both ends of the extreme. What are some of the takeaways from either observing or participating in this role play?

Depending on how the interviewees “acted,” there is a good chance that both interviewees demonstrated enthusiasm - and even if it wasn’t “spoken,” interviewee #2 certainly was excited about his/her tattoos and ability to eat rocky road ice cream. Talk about the difference between both types 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 is not feeling too positive lately, and you want to help her get ready for this 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 focus, again, on an interview, or can be an example of a situation that might happen on-the-job. Each group should have the opportunity to act out their role play.

Activity 9. Interview Role Play

INTERVIEWER'S SCRIPT

“Good morning, my name is [Mr. or Ms.] _____ 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 gets along with others. This person will be the first person 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.”

“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?”

Activity 9. Interview Role Play

INTERVIEWEE SCRIPT 1

Q: “Did you bring a copy of your resume?”

Yes, sir (or ma’am), I did. *[You open up a folder you brought with you to the interview (where you have copies of your resume). You hand one copy to the interviewer.]*

Q: “Tell me a little bit about yourself.”

I have lived in [your city or state] all of 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. It doesn’t make any difference if it is 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 my plans so when something comes up that may make my plans go off 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 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 you leave:

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.]*

Activity 9. Interview Role Play

INTERVIEWEE SCRIPT 2

This version of the interview should be over-the-top “bad.” The candidate should be dressed inappropriately, wearing sunglasses, chewing gum, displaying poor posture, disorganized, late, etc. In fact, the interviewee doesn’t pay attention when the interviewer begins - and doesn’t realize that the interviewer offered to shake hands because he/she was too busy putting a cell phone in his/her pocket.

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 United States. 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...and 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 figured 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). In another example, the new car you want to buy has a built-in GPS system (feature). The salesperson probably tells you that with built-in GPS you will never get lost or need to print out Internet directions 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, white board (or anything on which to write so a large group can see), and markers
- Three to five notecards per participant



Directions

Write the following statistics on a flip chart or white board:

- 40% - Attitude
- 25% - Image and appearance
- 25% - Communication skills (verbal and non-verbal)
- 10% - Job skills

According to a variety of sources, your attitude is the #1 factor in getting or losing a job. On the chart is how it is often broken down. *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 part of a job interview is actually a sales job. 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 why this feature is good for his or her 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 welcomed (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 draw a picture of or write a FEATURE they possess. On the other side of the card, they should draw a picture of or write the BENEFIT (or why this feature would be important) 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:

- “Over the years, I’ve learned what it means to multi-task.” (someone who has ADD)
- “I am a great problem solver. You should see some of the places I’ve needed to get into!” (someone who uses a wheelchair)



Journaling Activity

Describe how it makes you feel talking about yourself in a positive way. Is it easy, difficult, awkward, etc.? Since this is important when it comes time getting a job, what might you do to improve your ability to do this? If this 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.” Explain that their goal is to hook an employer on hiring them, just as they might get hooked on buying something from TV after seeing a commercial for the product. A few suggestions for this activity include: 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 look for improvement.

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.