

# The 8 Cornerstones of High Performance

*The skills that will make you successful in college  
are the same skills that will make you successful in the workplace*

1. ATTITUDE | 2. EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER VISION | 3. FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS | 4. SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS | 5. WORKPLACE SKILLS | 6. CONTACTS | 7. EXPERIENCE | 8. PERSONAL LIFE

## 8 Cornerstones of Success

WTAMU

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West Texas A&M  
UNIVERSITY

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**learn today... lead tomorrow**

Most people change jobs about every three years (U.S. Bureau of Labor). Whether you have a major or you're undeclared, a complete set of employability skills will see you through any number of career changes.

The 8 Cornerstones of High Performance clearly identifies the key skills to ensure success in the workplace. West Texas A&M University will help you develop the best all-around set of career skills. No matter what happens in your life, the 8 Cornerstone skills will take you wherever you want to go.

The 8 Cornerstones include: attitude, career vision, self-management skills, fundamental skills, workplace skills, contacts, experience, and personal life.



## The 8 Cornerstones of High Performance

These Cornerstones will help you become a high performer and get a job with a high-performance salary.

### 1. Attitude

- positive outlook
- motivation
- initiative
- work ethic
- persistence
- discipline
- coping with change and stress
- willingness to learn
- commitment to quality

**Positive outlook, motivation, Initiative:** “Opportunity is nowhere.” Did you read that trait as “opportunity is nowhere” or “opportunity is now here”? It’s the old “is the glass half-empty or half-full” question. Many employers say that the number one trait they look for is a positive attitude.

**Work ethic, persistence, discipline:** These are arguably the most important workplace skills, next to a positive attitude. Having a good work ethic means doing whatever it takes to get a job done regardless of the obstacles.

**Coping with stress and change:** Employers love people who view problems as challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth.

**Willingness to learn:** Look at new situations as learning opportunities, and be willing to learn a new skill if the situation requires it.

**Commitment to quality:** This is caring to do it right, from the smallest details to the largest task. If you set employment standards for your college work, you’ll be developing a habit of producing quality work. Few people would give their boss a proposal that was thrown together at the last minute, so why not work on a paper as if you’re preparing it for an employer?

### 2. Educational and Career Vision

- education plans
- career plans

If you’ve decided upon a career, you’ll be able to:

- a. gather educational and career information that’s relevant to your profession,
- b. get a clear picture of how your education will lead to a concrete job,
- c. discover the skills you’ll need to be successful in college and in the workplace, and
- d. make a clear educational and career plan and follow it.

If you don’t know which career you want to pursue, that’s fine; you can focus on developing the employment skills that apply to all careers. Whenever you are ready to make your decision, you’ll have the other essential employment skills in place.

### 3. Fundamental Skills

- written communication skills
- verbal communication skills
- listening skills
- creativity
- critical thinking skills
- problems solving skills

**Communication skills:** Good written, verbal, listening, and presentation skills are essential to most professions and are highly valued by employers.

**Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills:** It's important to be able to think critically, evaluate situations, collect information, and produce solutions independently.

### 4. Self-Management Skills

- time management
- priority setting
- decision making

**Time management, priority setting, decision making:** Self-management ties in closely with work ethic and discipline and is a distinguishing characteristic of high achievers. Good self-managers know what needs to be done and gets done on time. These kinds of people must be hard to find – Time Management is the most delivered professional development seminar in industry today.

### 5. Workplace Skills

- teamwork skills
- computer skills
- technology skills
- professional skills
- career competencies

**Teamwork skills:** A vital aspect of any job is the ability to work well in a group and deal effectively with all personality types. Leadership skills are also a part of group dynamics.

**Computer Skills, technology skills:** It's a rare job that doesn't involve at least some computer work. You can greatly enhance your skill portfolio by learning as many different software programs and operating systems as possible. Many job candidates are selected because of their computer skills.

**Professional skills, career competencies:** These are the career-specific skills you'll need for your chosen profession. If you haven't decided which career is for you, concentrate on developing the other employment skills universal to all careers.

## 6. Contacts

- networking
- reference
- mentors
- industry contacts

**Networking, references, industry contacts:** It's been said that 85% of all jobs aren't advertised, so it's the people with the right contacts who are often successful in getting these jobs. The old saying, "it's not what you know, it's who you know" has more than a measure of truth to it.

Creating contacts within your industry can start now. Networking could involve your classmates, your faculty and their contacts, your career resource center, professional associations, conferences and events, and informational interviews with professionals within your industry. Another excellent way to meet people in your field is to job shadow.

## 7. Experience

- part-time work
- internship placements
- volunteer work
- projects
- unrelated work experience

**Direct and indirect experience:** Because employers want someone with experience, your work history should contain as much relevant experience as possible. To gain direct work experience, intern in the field through formal experiential education programs offered by the university. Work part time or do volunteer work in your field. Volunteering is an ideal way to gain experience. Find out which events or conference are being held within your chosen field and volunteer your time at as many of them as you can. Approach a company you'd like to work for and offer your services. Part-time and/or volunteer work is often that "foot in the door" that leads to a full-time job.

## 8. Personal Life

- family
- friends
- health
- lifestyle

It's Important to maintain balance in your life and make sure you leave time for family, friends, and a healthy lifestyle.