

CAREER SKILL

ACCESSING & ANALYZING INFORMATION

Also known as: detail-oriented, analytical, organizational skills

What does it mean?

- You can conduct research from a variety of sources to gather and analyze relevant information
- You can assess a situation and seek multiple perspectives to improve workflow or processes
- You can gather more information and compare and contrast it
- You can analyze a problem and identify key issues to solve it

Why is it important?

- In the "information age," doing research is an everyday requirement. You cannot possibly memorize everything you need to know. Today, it is not what you know that is important, but whether or not you can find the information when you need it.
- With so much information available, decision makers only need what is important to them.
- The best solutions are those that are thoughtful and include data from many sources.
- Planning and organizing skills are expected from workers today, and are critical to successful solutions and improvements.

How do I apply it?

- Become a life-long learner.
- Ask questions.
- Use ideas from one part of your work to solve a problem in another part.
- When gathering information, take extra steps to prove "facts" that are presented in reports, articles, books and especially, the internet.

Example:

Anna is the manager of a retail outlet for locally-crafted food products. The company has always made three samples of their top selling salsas and snack bags available during store hours. When inventory began running low on one of the products, the staff stopped putting out samples in order to save that amount for sales. After two months of this, Anna noticed that the foods not put out for sample had not sold yet. She gathered sales information over the last year to see that the products that were sampled far outsold those that were not sampled by customers.

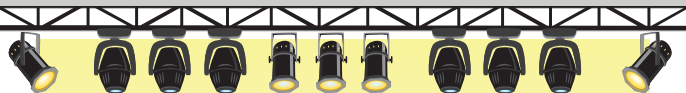
In order to solve the problem of the few bags of products that were still available and to increase sales overall, Anna put out samples of four other products.

After three months, Anna again gathered the sales information, reviewed the numbers and saw there was an overall sales increase of up to 23% for all products available for sampling. Anna, thrilled with her discoveries, did some research online about the connection between more samples creating more sales. She found that her experience was not unique. She then presented this information to the store owner, who made the decision that all products should be sampled during store hours, and increased sales far outweighed the cost of the samples.

Career Skills for the New Economy

- Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving
- Collaboration & Leadership
- Agility and Adaptability
- Initiative & Entrepreneurism
- Effective Oral & Written Communication
- **Accessing & Analyzing Information**
- Curiosity & Imagination
- Personal Accountability

Based on information from *The Global Achievement Gap* by Tony Wagner (2008, Basic Books, New York) and adapted from *The Seven Survival Skills for Careers, College, and Citizenship*, Tony Wagner, Harvard University.



The Career Spotlight is available online, providing more in-depth information & videos:

nwm.org/career-spotlight



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