DO YOU HAVE SKILLS?

Dennis E. Coates, Ph.D. is a Duke University doctoral graduate, and CEO of Performance Support Systems, Inc. based in Virginia. Dr. Coates explains the difference between “hard skills” and “soft skills”, and their bottom line on the job.

HARD SKILLS vs. SOFT SKILLS

In the world of work, “hard skills” are technical or administrative procedures related to an organization’s core business (ex: operating a machine). These skills are easy to measure, observe, and train for. By contrast, “soft skills” (also called “people skills”) are typically hard to observe, quantify and measure. Soft skills include listening, solving problems, working collectively on teams, etc.

BOTTOM LINE

Introducing a new soft skill is extremely difficult, because it means replacing the old skill. The brain may be an information processor, but it doesn’t work like a digital computer. There is no “delete” key for unwanted programs. Any new pattern, even one that makes sense, will seem extremely awkward. If it has better results, you will naturally embrace the new skill. Introducing and practicing new soft skills is vital to success in business!

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Business as usual during govt. shutdown

Midstate College students were relatively unaffected by the shutdown; however, concerns were running high...

Nick Fowler
Academic Advisor & Instructor

At least on our campus, Midstate College students can rest easily knowing they have remained relatively unaffected by the recent federal government shutdown.

Many feared that the federal financial aid, in terms of loans and grants for college students, would not be accessible. However, such funding never stopped and financial aid operations for the new winter term ran as smoothly as ever. The U.S. Department of Education released a statement directly before the shutdown. "As a result of the permanent and multi-year appropriations, Pell Grants and [federal] student loans could continue as normal. Staff and contractors associated with these areas will continue to work."

Seemingly, the only students who were affected at all by the shutdown were military. Government benefits for military families were temporarily suspended.

Midstate senior, Jillian Hansen, is a Business Administration major and military veteran. In a recent conversation, Hansen said: "During the shutdown, to say my family was nervous of what was to come would be an understatement. I was terrified of not being able to pay my bills as I understood that I may not receive over half of my monthly income."

Fortunately, on October 17th President Obama signed a bill which would end the government shutdown.

James Miner
Business Administration

I am married and have four children. My wife and I have been together for seventeen years. I have been a roofer since I started in the apprenticeship program in 2003. After I became a journeyman, my wife entered into nursing school and graduated in 2012. She now works in the Neurology Department at Saint Francis Hospital. After my wife graduated, she told me it is my turn to get a degree in a field that I would enjoy. After much thought, I decided I wanted to go to school for business, with the intentions of being an entrepreneur. I was hesitant at first, and not sure if I could actually succeed. I did some research and spoke with the people I already knew in the business field. After hearing great things, I chose to meet with an admissions counselor at Midstate. From the moment I walked through the door, I realized I could be successful and had made the right choice. Admissions and Financial Aid were wonderful. Never did I doubt the decision I made to get a degree in Business Administration. The Business Department was extremely knowledgeable and offered not only an education from materials, but also education from experience in the business field. The faculty and staff have helped me at every turn, and I have never felt as if I were just a number or a paycheck. At first, I was intimidated by the knowledge and experience of the instructors and staff. I soon realized that they were some of the most personable and approachable business professionals I had ever seen. After meeting them just a few times, they all know your name and communicate with you as if they were your peers. They have always extended anything they can do to help. After my first term I now have the confidence to say that I can succeed, and Midstate is the best choice for Business education.
Debra Bush has been the Human Resources Coordinator for the City of Peoria, Illinois for over 16 years. Her responsibilities include the development of departmental policies and procedures, administering the operations of human resources in the specialized areas of employment, classification and compensation, and benefits administration. Debra is also involved in the hiring of all city positions. She coordinates and organizes all entry-level and promotional examinations for the Police and Fire Departments, while serving as the liaison for the Police and Fire Commission.

Debra has received her IPMA-CP (International Public Management Association for Human Resources certification as a Certified Professional in Human Resources.) She is currently a member of the Midstate College Business Advisory Board, IPMA-HR, E.L.I.T.E. Youth Outreach Program and the Public Employees for Community Concerns.

Debra explains below how the government shutdown affected the City of Peoria:

"Previously, the City of Peoria was given a grant through the Department of Justice to hire seven additional Police Officers. It did affect the city’s ability to accept the grant, as access to all governmental agencies was impossible. It did not allow for access to previously awarded funding. All of our grants through the Department of Justice were financially frozen. While it did not cause any direct hardship for the city, other social service agencies were greatly impacted."

"Likewise, it did not allow the city to complete its federal quarterly reports. The shutdown occurred during a time when all grantees are required by law to complete their reports for the previous quarter. One hundred per cent of our reporting is done via internet access to federal web sites. These websites were closed during the shutdown.

It did not allow for the release of grants, and with grants becoming more and more competitive, it placed a hardship on grantees; including education, science, transportation, and justice. They couldn’t find, or apply for new funding. Many agencies rely on the timely release of grants to assure funding for the next fiscal year. Again, this was not a hardship for the city, but impacted schools, social service and small businesses.

In general, the shutdown had a small effect on how we did business. Had it continued, the shutdown would have had a much greater impact."

Meet Peoria’s Human Resource Expert

Debra Bush
City of Peoria Human Resources Coordinator

Phi Beta Lambda
Speaker Presentations are a Hit!

By: Morgan Barden
Midstate Student & Phi Beta Lambda member

Each term, all business students on campus, and anyone else who would like to attend, convene in Room 303 of the Arline H. Bunch Business Center for the PBL sponsored Speaker Presentations. Starting at 5:30 PM refreshments are served. Different guest speakers, with diverse experiences in all facets of business, present from 6:00-7:00 PM.

“This is a time of networking and learning current issues in the real world of businesses. It’s an opportunity for students to enrich their traditional business education”, said Nick Fowler, Academic Advisor of Business Administration.

If you missed the Speaker Presentation for the fall quarter, here is a recap of the great information that was presented by Sherry Meyer from Edward Jones. The key points made in her presentation involved loans, investments, bonds, stocks, and mutual funds.

- Always diversify your investments
- Mutual funds are a great option for most of us who don’t want large risks, but want good returns!
- Do your homework – make sure to research before you invest
- Consult a professional financial investor
- Anyone can begin investing today for only 25$ per month!
Upcoming Events

• Phi Beta Lambda Speaker Presentation – Bob Woolsey December 3rd
  Refreshments served 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM. All students, staff and faculty welcome.

• Breakfast with Santa December 7th
  All Midstate students, staff, faculty, and family members welcome. 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

• *** Spring Quarter Registration Begins Dec. 9th ***
  Students are urged to register for spring classes before Christmas break!

• Christmas break begins December 22nd
  HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

• Classes resume January 6th
  HAPPY NEW YEAR!

• Phi Beta Lambda meeting January 7th
  Anyone can join us in Room 303 from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM or contact Nick Fowler at njfowler@midstate.edu

• Phi Beta Lambda meeting February 4th
  PBL meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month in room 303 from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM.