

Critical skills needed in this sector

The previous chapters aimed at giving you a good understanding of each of the scarce skills, the roles each involve, the work environment, and the knowledge and technical skills you will require to perform them. However, if you want to be successful, knowledge and technical skills alone are not enough.

There are skills that we all need to cultivate to enhance our ability to do our job, no matter what our job is. These skills are called 'critical skills'.

With the right knowledge, experience and skills you will fly!

Read now about the critical skills this sector is looking for.

What are critical skills and why are they so important?

The food and beverage manufacturing sector has identified generic skills that are essential to success in the sector. These are the critical skills that some companies call competencies. Employees need to have both the necessary technical skills and these critical skills to do their jobs well.

Many learners entering the world of work are not successful because they have not developed critical skills. This is because people learn these skills by working with others. Schools, colleges and universities with jam-packed curricula cannot concentrate on developing them, although they are encouraged.

The table on the next page shows the kinds of behaviour associated with scarce skills.

Look at each skill and its associated actions. Normally, you have the skill only if you demonstrate these key actions.



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Do you have the critical skills needed?

CRITICAL SKILL	KEY ACTIONS
Problem solving	<p>A person with this skill is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather the information needed to better understand an issue interpret the information and generate options for addressing the issue choose the appropriate action
Problem identification	<p>A person with this skill can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. determine whether further action is needed
Mathematics and numeracy	<p>A person with this skill is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> add, subtract, multiply and divide quickly and correctly use mathematics to solve problems
Language and literacy	<p>A person with this skill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has knowledge of the structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar is able to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing
People handling skill	<p>A person with this skill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives full attention to what other people are saying takes time to understand the points being made asks questions as appropriate, and doesn't interrupt at inappropriate times
Conflict handling	<p>A person with this skill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarifies situations effectively by asking questions remains open to the points of view of all parties involved in conflict contributes ideas and develops the ideas of others takes positive action to resolve conflict in a way that addresses the issue and maintains the relationship
Teamwork	<p>A person with this skill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes appropriate suggestions and helps remove obstacles to assist teams to achieve their goals listens to and involves others in team decisions values and make use of individual differences and talents communicates and shares relevant information with the team
Process monitoring	<p>A person with this skill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> constantly monitors the machine and product process identifies process deviations takes the corrective action to correct process problems



NB: Learning to learn

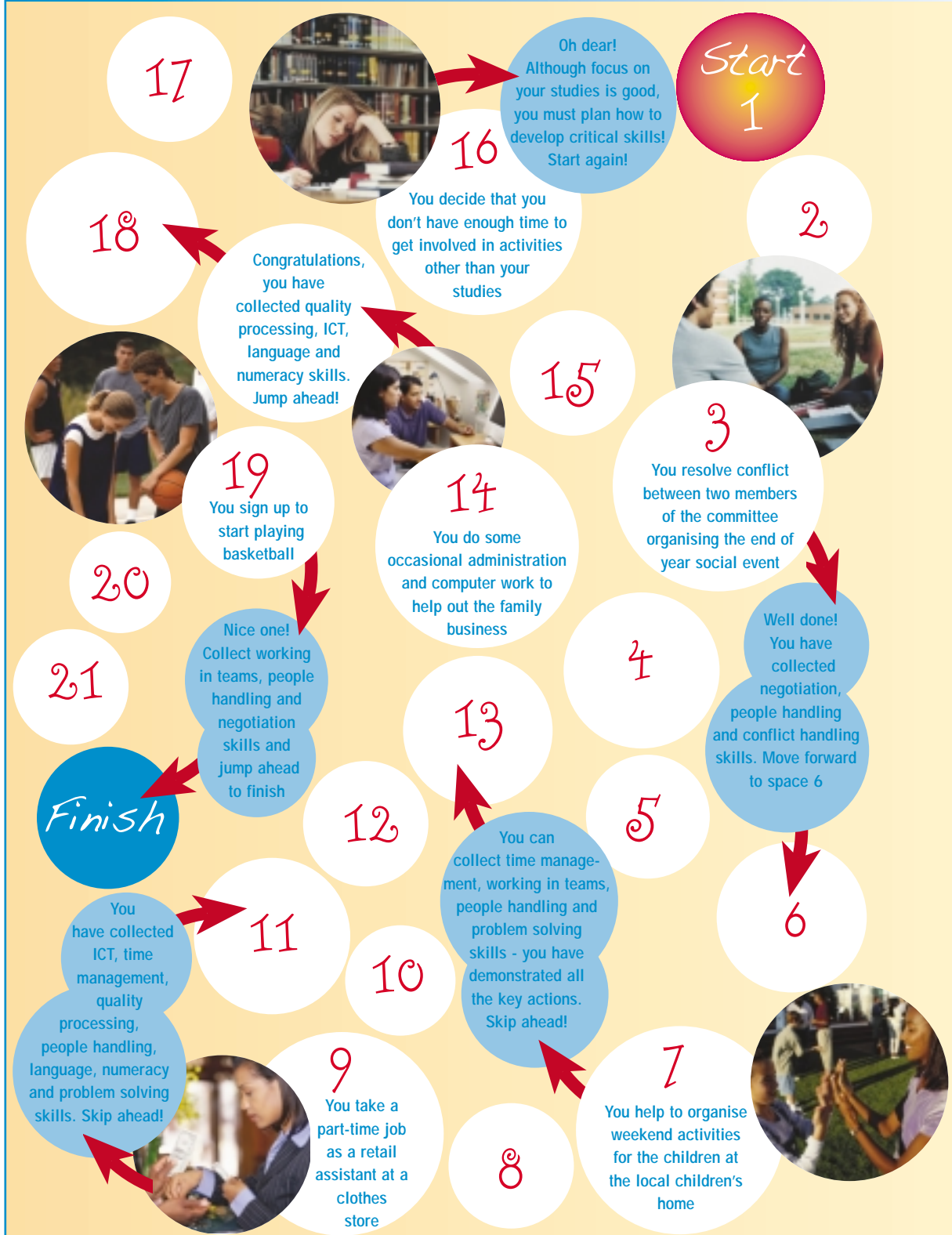
The core skill that is needed to develop all the others is 'learning to learn'.

Make sure you understand where your strengths are and which areas you need to develop. If you are not sure, ask people who know you well to point them out. Put a plan together to address areas where you have less experience. For example, if you prefer more individual activities like running or reading, you may not have had a chance to develop your team skills.

Once you have decided on a plan to fill the gaps in your experience, assess how things are going so that you can learn not only from your mistakes but from what you do well!

Developing critical skills is not as daunting as it may seem – they can be developed through some very ordinary activities and jobs. Check out the critical skills game on the next page.

THE CRITICAL SKILLS GAME



Career planning

Now you know what the sector is about and have a feel of whether it is for you, it is time to start planning your career goals. Chapter 7 contains important information to consider when making your decisions.