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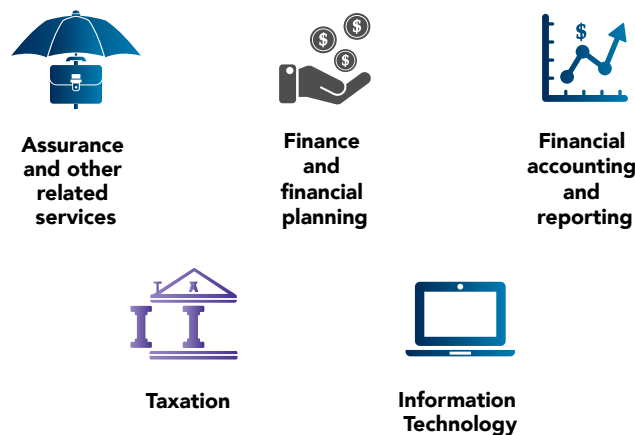


A survey questionnaire was developed to facilitate this study. The survey questionnaire, based on Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) requirements, Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA) Learning Standards, and the AIF's Talent Gaps and Skills Gaps report findings, assessed nine soft-skills (Figure 2) and five technical areas of knowledge and skills (Figure 3) that were categorised as important for entry-level hires to possess prior to joining the industry.

Figure 2: Soft-skills needed from entry-level hires



Figure 3: Technical knowledge and skills needed from entry-level hires



“We don’t really expect them to handle clients immediately. We don’t want clients to complain. We don’t usually let them handle this on their own at first” - Employer, Capital Market

and problem-solving skills they need to be effective in their teams – because nobody is there telling them exactly what to do⁴.

Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

Employers observed that entry-level hires who have had some experience in business and/or entrepreneurial skills have a competitive edge over entry-level hires who have basic or no experience at all in business. Entry-level hires who are skilful in this competency are able to:

- understand the interrelationships of an issue on different functions of an organisation and react to circumstances in a timely manner;
- aggregate information from a variety of sources and perspectives to assess the impact of issues on an organisation;
- participate in professional networks to enhance service to stakeholders; and
- apply marketing/sales skills and understand customer segmentation.

As with problem-solving, employers believed that this skill would require time for entry-level hires to be experts in, and therefore, they acknowledged that it was acceptable for entry-level hires to only have basic business and entrepreneurial skills at the start of their career in the FSI.

Lifelong Learning

One of the concerns that employers had regarding entry-level hires was the lack of desire to develop and improve themselves further beyond what they had achieved from their tertiary education. For most of the FSI employers, they expected their entry-level hires to be able to:

- engage in continuing professional development to enhance professional knowledge and skills;
- apply new learning for the benefit of the stakeholders;
- assess professional priorities and manage their own time and resources to achieve them; and
- demonstrate dressing and grooming skills by wearing appropriate attire, taking care of personal hygiene, and so forth.

An outcome of rapid digitalisation and automation is a shorter shelf life for skills. If employees want to ensure that their skills remain relevant to the industry, they must continually acquire and enhance skill sets throughout the employee lifecycle. It is with this concern that employers expect their entry-level hires to be more inquisitive and proactive in their self-development. Most employers indicated that entry-level hires do not fully adopt the concept of lifelong

⁴ Tony, Wagner, Rigor (2008), Available at https://www.sisd.net/cms/lib/tx01001452/centricity/domain/22/rigor_redefined.pdf