

Curriculum Resource

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail & Food Services – Adaptability

OALCF Alignment

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A -Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	1
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	1
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School Credit | <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary
<input type="checkbox"/> Independence |
|---|---|

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptability
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity and innovation
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital | <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
|---|--|

Notes: Part 3 of Series

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail

NOTE FOR PRACTITIONERS:

This series of **Skills for Success Curriculum Resources** can be used as a supplement to the [“Retail Curriculum package”](#) developed by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and produced by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) in 2019. It is not an adaptation of that material but an addendum focusing on five newly identified Skills for Success competencies—**Problem Solving, Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration, and Communication**—as well as updates to the retail sector itself.

These resources are learner-based and activity-focused, moving the learner through on-the-job “scenarios” which they will have to respond to. In participating in the activities, the learner will gain an understanding of the workplace challenges that might require them to use a given competency and its associated strategies.

The series is divided into six sections that can be used separately or in tandem:

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Finding a Job**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Problem Solving**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Adaptability**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Creativity & Innovation**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Collaboration**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Communication**

*This is section three, Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Adaptability***

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE: RETAIL ADAPTABILITY

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1. What is a “Retail” Job?

A job in retail means:

- Selling products to customers, or
- Doing **other jobs** at a place that sells products to customers—a retail store.

This work is best for:

- People with good customer service skills.
- People who like to interact with others.
- People who like to try do different tasks.

2. What Sorts of Jobs are in Retail?

There are retail jobs at many types of stores and businesses. You could work at:

- A convenience store as a cashier
- A grocery store stocking shelves
- A Walmart as a greeter
- A hair salon scheduling appointments
- A car dealership selling cars
- A Tim Hortons' drive-thru
- A restaurant as a dishwasher or server

3. What Skills and Habits Do You Need to Work in Retail?

To succeed in a retail job you need some key **skills**:

- Basic math skills.
- Basic digital skills
- Good customer service skills.
- Problem-solving skills.
- **Adaptability.**
- Time-management skills.
- Multitasking.
- Collaboration skills like teamwork.
- Creativity and innovation skills like trying tasks in new ways.
- Strong communication skills.

To succeed in a retail job you need also some key **habits**:

- Tidy appearance.
- Politeness.
- Being on time for work.



4. What is “Adaptability”?

Adaptability means learning how to **change the way** you work and **accepting those changes**.

Adaptability allows you to succeed, even when faced with the unexpected!

Why is Adaptability Important at Work?

Change can be hard, especially if it happens quickly. But if you are open to change, you can **improve your work on the job**.

Will you rise up to meet a new challenge?

Employees who learn to be **adaptable**:

- Succeed even as the work changes.
- Learn to work with anyone.
- Embrace new tasks.
- Take on new roles.
- Are always learning!



Managers rely on adaptable and flexible staff.

5. Adaptability at Your Retail Job

There are many ways you might need to adapt at a retail job:

a. New Roles

When you are hired for a job, you are often given a **role**. At a restaurant, you might be:

- A dishwasher.
- A waiter.
- A busser
- A host.
- A cook.



But sometimes your boss asks you to try a **new role**. This may be a reward for good work or a “promotion.” It may help the boss fill a role when someone else is sick.

b. New Ways of Doing Things

Even if you keep the same role, the way you do things might **change**. A dishwasher at a restaurant might be asked to:



- Use a new dishwashing machine.
- Stack dishes in a different place.
- Take on new tasks like mopping or garbage removal.

c. New Shifts

Sometimes you become used to working on certain days or at certain times. But your boss could **change your schedule**. You might have to work:

- Early mornings.
- Evenings.
- Late at night.
- Weekends.
- Holidays.

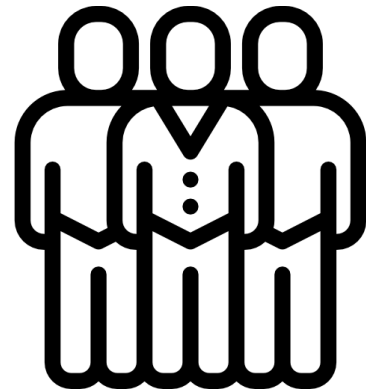


Your boss might also ask you to **“cover”** someone’s shift. Cover means to work the shift of someone else.

d. New Co-Workers or Boss

When you start a new job, it takes a while to get to know your boss and co-workers. But your co-workers will change often. Some people will quit. Some new people will be hired.

Your **boss** or your **managers** may even change.



Start Developing Your Adaptability Skills for the Workplace

To embrace these changes, you will need to learn to improve your **adaptability** skills.

Here are some steps you can take to do so:

- ✓ Be **flexible** or open to change.
- ✓ Be **open-minded** or open to new ideas.
- ✓ Be willing to try new things.

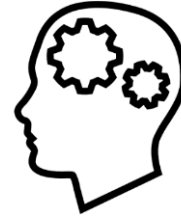
- ✓ Be willing to learn.
- ✓ Be **generous** by helping your co-workers.
- ✓ Be patient.



Activities

We will now do some activities that will give you a good sense of how to use **adaptability skills** at work. These activities will provide examples of:

- ✓ The types of jobs you might have in retail.
- ✓ The daily tasks you might do.
- ✓ On-the-job challenges.
- ✓ Other key skills for success in retail.
- ✓ Dos and don'ts.



In each case you will **read a scenario**, **think** about it, and **respond** to some questions. Then we will review.

Activity #1

Hassan has been working at a Harvey's for four months.

He was trained to do many **different roles** at work, but from the beginning **he has always worked the cash register**.

One day his boss tells him that a co-worker has quit.

They need Hassan to do the cooking. He has to:

- Flip burgers.
- Make fries.
- Make onion rings.

Activity #1 (Continued)

Hassan doesn't enjoy the work at all because of the heat.

He doesn't want his boss to make him do the cooking again, so he decides that he will do a bad job.

He makes mistakes on purpose.



Questions:

1. Do you think Hassan handled the situation well? Check one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**

2. If you think he could have handled the situation better, what did he do wrong?

Discuss with your teacher or partner.

3. What should he have done differently? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.



Answers #1

- Hassan should have tried to be more **flexible**.
- If he was **open-minded** about his new role, he might have **learned** something.
- If he was **patient**, he might have found that he could **adapt** to his new role.
- His boss won't be happy because Hassan did not adapt.



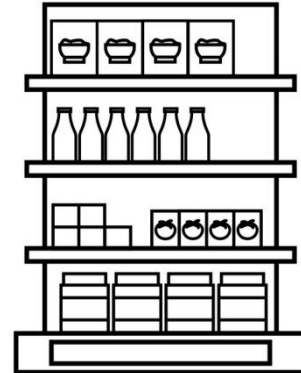
Activity #2

Gwen has been working for two months stocking shelves at a big grocery store.

Now she knows where everything goes. This helps her stock the shelves quickly. It also helps her tell customers where to find things.

One day, Gwen's boss tells her he wants her to make a **change**.

He wants her to **walk customers to the item** they are looking for, not just tell them where to find it.



She doesn't want to do this.

It will take her much longer to stock the shelves if she is always walking customers to different aisles.

But she remembers that **helping customers** is the most important thing.

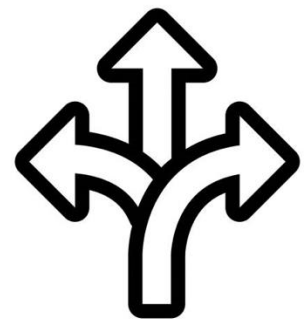
She **does as her boss asked** and walks customers to their product.

Questions:

1. List one way Gwen used her adaptability skills.
2. What are the benefits of Gwen adapting? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

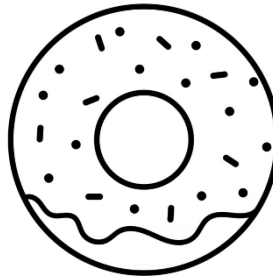
Answers #2

- Gwen used her adaptability skills by doing as her boss said.
- She was **open-minded** and remembered that the customer is important.
- She was **flexible** and was able to embrace her new role.
- Her boss will be very pleased with her choices at work.



Activity #3

Lulu has been working at a Tim Horton's for one year. She has been there long enough that her boss only schedules her from Monday to Friday.



One day her boss tells her that another staff member can't work on Saturday and **asks if she will cover the shift.**

"Cover the shift" means working for someone else.

Lulu feels that she has earned the right to weekends off.

She says no.

Questions:

1. Did Lulu use her adaptability skills? Check one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**
2. How could she have used her adaptability skills? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

Answers #3

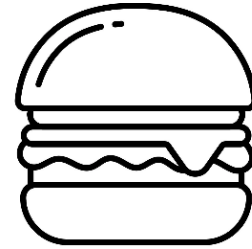
- Lulu should have been more **flexible** about changing her shift.
- She should have been more **generous** in helping a co-worker.
- She should have been more **open-minded**.
- Her boss will be disappointed that she was unable to adapt.



Activity #4

Saleem has been working at a MacDonald's for several months. His boss always schedules him on afternoon shifts rather than morning shifts.

This is perfect because he doesn't like to wake up early.



One day Saleem learns that his boss has scheduled him for all **morning shifts** for the following two weeks.

Saleem likes to stay up late. But now that Saleem is scheduled for the morning shift, he decides to **go to bed early**.

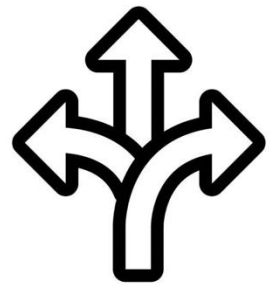
He is not too tired and finds that he likes morning shifts! He likes having the evenings to himself.

Questions:

1. Do you think Saleem handled the situation well? Check one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**
2. How did he adapt to the situation? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.
3. What are the benefits of him adapting? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

Answers #4

- Saleem did the **right thing** by doing as his boss asked.
- He adapted by being **open-minded** to working a new shift.
- He had to make a change in his life and go to bed earlier.
- He was **willing to learn new things**, and he found that he liked morning shifts.
- His boss will be very pleased that Saleem was able to adapt.



Activity #5

Carla works as a **dishwasher at a buffet restaurant**. It is her job to:

- Get the dishes washed quickly.
- Get them ready to be used again.
- Stack them on the shelves.

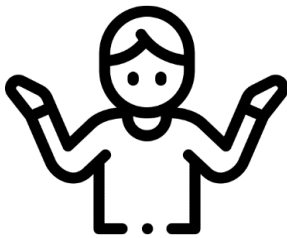
She has been at her job for **several months**, and she is **good at it**.

Then a new dishwasher, Andrei, is hired.

Andrei sees the waiters need help, so he decides to do **extra** work. He carries the clean dishes to the buffet when he has time. The waiters like the extra help.

Carla doesn't want to do the extra work. She **does not** bring the dishes out to the buffet.

When the waiters ask Carla to carry dishes to the buffet, **she says**:



It's not my job!

Questions:

1. Who showed good adaptability skills? Check one: **Carla** **Andrei**
2. What should Carla have done differently? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

Answers #5

- Carla should have been more **flexible** in changing how she does her role.
- She should have been more **generous** in helping the waiters.
- She should have done a better job working together with others.
- She said it wasn't her job, but tasks are always **changing**.
- Bosses never like to hear a worker say, "It's not my job."
- Her boss will be disappointed that she was unable to adapt.



Review

- ✓ Now you have learned some **strategies** to use adaptability on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **flexible** on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **generous** with co-workers.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **open-minded**
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **willing to learn new things**.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **patient** when things change.
- ✓ You can go back to this guide to review the strategies for problem solving at your job.

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