

The Employer's Expectations for Your Competence

Competence is the ability to do a job properly. It is not the same as intelligence.

When you start a new job, you can expect certain things from your employer, such as a regular paycheck, agreed-upon benefits, and a safe work environment. Your supervisor will expect certain things from you, too. If you become hired, what does your employer expect, beyond basic skills?

- **Work hard, fast and smart.** You owe your employer a full day's work, without taking time to make personal phone calls or look at your personal texts, IMs, and emails. You need to arrive a few minutes early, work efficiently to get the most done, and think about problems carefully before wasting time on ineffective solutions.
- **Show you "get" what professionalism is.** A professional is dependable, honest, flexible, meets deadlines and is loyal to supervisors and the company.
- **Apply your computer skills.** Nearly all jobs require word processing and spreadsheets. Many require basic coding and the ability to create simple websites.
- **Read, write, and understand business documents.** Everyone writes in today's careers, and your writing must represent your company well. Write concisely, use proper grammar, edit, rewrite, and proof, proof, proof.
- **Speak clearly and logically without over-speaking.** Get to the point quickly. Wait for questions, and avoid TMI—too much information. TMI occurs when you add off-the-topic information or offer an unsolicited opinion.
- **Double check your math.** You don't have to be an outstanding mathematician. That's what calculators and computers are for! But inaccurate or sloppy computations in business documents are unforgivable.



Action: Identify the mistakes and bad judgment that make Andy incompetent in some areas.

Andy scoots into the company parking lot three minutes before start time and arrives at his team meeting two minutes after it begins. When a teammate points to the wall clock, Andy says, "I had to stop for gas. I was here early, but the parking lot was full and I had to look for a spot. I can't believe this company doesn't give us more parking spaces!" As team members discuss how to pack for the move, Andy interrupts with a long explanation of his own ideas.

For the meeting, team members were to prepare a written report describing what labor, time, and dollars will be needed to move their equipment. Andy passes out his printed report with handwritten notes here and there. "I didn't have time to make copies, but you'll get the idea. The dollar figures are rough, but I'll tighten them up later."