THE AGILE STUDENT

FAST-TRACK CAREER PROGRESSION

CHANGE YOUR MINDSET BY LEARNING INDUSTRY TECHNIQUES & DEVELOPING THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLSET

Asif Akbar

Agile Student Ltd
Copyright © 2018 Asif Akbar

THE AGILE STUDENT

All rights reserved.

The right of Asif Akbar to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Declaration:
I hereby declare that this is my own work and effort. Where other sources of information have been used, to the best of my interpretation or by use of direct quotations, they have been acknowledged and referenced. The web addresses of websites, articles and reports accessed online may have been removed or deleted following the publication of this book.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, nor translated into a machine language.

No part of this publication may be referenced by any means, electronic, online or in any paper format, by any company, institution or individual without prior written permission from the publisher.

Conditions of sale:
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, sold or hired out or otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

ISBN: 978-0-9956063-1-9

About this book

The Agile Student is intended to create a new generation of professionals in industry to fulfil not only today's employers' needs, but those of the future. Those students and apprentices interested in gaining an advantage in today's competitive job market can do so through acquiring the most sought-after employability skills.

The word 'apprentice' means a young person on a company training scheme; in this book I use the word in a more general sense to cover such students, as well as university students on internships or one-year placements, and new graduates in industry.

What does 'agile' mean?

The term 'agile' can be applied to the physical aspects of a person moving rapidly and easily. In this book, it refers to the internal mindset of a person to understand, think and act quickly in academia and the workplace.

What are the benefits for the reader?

Having an agile mindset develops the following:

- Commercial awareness of an organisation, its corporate objectives and association with the wider world;
- An alignment with the culture and structure of existing and future companies;
- Industry techniques and technological awareness for process improvement and product/service development;
- A high level of emotional intelligence, core to intrapersonal skills and the development of interpersonal skills;
- A multimodal learning style to process information faster;
- An entrepreneurial spirit to take risks in seeking innovation and embracing change for continuous improvement;
- Mental resilience and perseverance to overcome challenges and execute both long-term company objectives and your own career plan.

Such an extensive skillset is desirable for any company operating in a volatile industry. These exist in many sectors including consumer goods, healthcare, transportation, energy, banking, and entertainment and media. High profile multinational companies in these sectors will be analysed to strengthen students' (and apprentices') understanding of 'agile' practices in the workplace.

What are the broader benefits?

Tackling the skills deficit is fundamental for any government, industry or educational strategy to be viable. *The Agile Student* is the missing link between academia and industry, and offers a new way of thinking and behaving, to build a strong pipeline of talented students and apprentices, who match company needs for future growth: to raise productivity, spread prosperity and open up new paths to economic growth.

Who is this book for?

This book is for all students, regardless of their field of study, to recognise the significance of having a definitive skillset and its practical application to their career plan, in academic life and the professional world. There are many academic courses suitable for careers in a variety of industries, and others that are more specific. A majority of students will work in industries that can be categorised into the following six sectors:

Consumer Goods includes industries such as fashion for those studying textiles or graphic design, and consumer electronics for those studying electronic engineering or computer science.

Healthcare includes pharmaceuticals for those studying sciences, and the medical field for those studying medicine, or nursing.

Transportation includes the automotive industry for those studying engineering disciplines (electrical, electronic, or mechanical), and aerospace for those studying aeronautical engineering and electronics/ software engineering.

Energy includes oil and gas for those studying engineering disciplines (chemical, civil, electrical, mechanical), and agriculture for students studying environmental sciences (biology, chemistry, geography, botany or ecology).

Finance includes investment banking for those studying finance, accounting, management, or any engineering or science discipline.

Entertainment and Media includes film, radio, television and theatre for those studying subjects such as media studies, performing arts, journalism, cinematography or special effects/film editing.

Readers hoping to work in other sectors should still find the employability skillset of great use, as it is designed to be transferable to any industry.

1

Introduction

TOPICS TO COVER

- Voice of the employers
- Skills gap survey
- The hard–soft approach
- Commercial awareness
- Industry techniques
- Agile working environments
- Work experience
- Recruitment process

Employability is on the mind of every student at some stage, whether you are a university student with the financial burden of higher education, or a college/school leaver deciding to enter industry early as an apprentice.

Hands up if you think achieving a high grade or in-depth academic course knowledge will land you a job offer and a successful career.

For those of you with your hands up, this book will come at a perfect time in developing traits increasingly sought by employers now, and in the future to give you the extra skills you need. Those with your hands down are presumably already aware that academic knowledge alone is never enough. You too will benefit from commercial awareness, industry techniques and practical study guides to be industry-ready when entering the world of work.

Success is dependent on three variables that form a definitive skillset that requires learning and continuous development of industry ‘knowledge’ (in addition to academic knowledge) and key ‘skills’ to obtain and/or make the most of a variety of relevant work ‘experience’.

The knowledge, skills and experiences taught herein will support students during academia, after graduation as valued apprentices, and beyond as experienced professionals.

1.1 Voice of the employers

Industry skills can only be identified by employers themselves. Fortunately there are dedicated associations and government departments across the world that engage with businesses worldwide, such as:

- Institute of Student Employers
- Institute for Apprenticeships
- European Association of International Education
- Association for Talent Development (USA)
- Asia Pacific Career Development Association
- International Education Association of Australia
- Confederation of British Industry
- The Manufacturers' Organisation
- Institution of Engineering and Technology

There is a global talent crisis where students and future apprentices lack a comprehensive skillset that is truly valuable in today's challenging economic landscape, from the Americas and Europe to the African continent and Asia Pacific. Information from the sources above acts as the foundation of this book and are cemented with an agile mindset to deliver the definitive employability skillset.