

## Survey Finds That Employers, Employees Disagree On The Importance Of Professional Soft Skills

(NAPSA)—With the unemployment rate dropping below 4 percent for the first time since 2000<sup>1</sup>, higher education could help those looking to take advantage of record employment.<sup>2</sup>

According to a national survey by University of Phoenix, only 38 percent of U.S. working adults felt very satisfied with their current professional position and 45 percent said that they need a college degree in order to excel.<sup>3</sup> While IT and health care are two of the fastest-growing occupations, creating a demand for those competencies,<sup>4</sup> the survey found that professional soft skills were cited as some of the most necessary skills for employees to possess.

“The survey found that employers emphasized the need for professional soft skills,” said Kevin Wilhelmsen, program dean, University of Phoenix School of Business. “Employers are looking for employees who are competent in people management (56 percent), critical thinking (52 percent) and communication (50 percent).”<sup>5</sup>

Despite employers valuing professional soft skills, the survey found that most employees felt that those skills had the least impact on their ability to enhance their career. When asked what skills they found most important, only 31 percent said people management, 29 percent said strategic thinking and 22 percent said communication.<sup>6</sup>

“People looking to enhance their career through education must determine which program could help them develop or improve professional soft skills while remaining relevant to their career path,” Wilhelmsen said. “Many of these skills can be found in the MBA, which often focuses more



**Employers are looking for workers with skills in management, critical thinking and communication.**

on practical knowledge rather than research.”<sup>7</sup>

Wilhelmsen said that the MBA could help create well-rounded professionals with the skills for multiple industries. To further this point, Monster.com published a series of articles explaining how the MBA has transformed the job market. Monster suggests that there is an increased demand for MBA candidates because of the critical thinking skills they possess that bring an analytical approach to improve business processes.<sup>8</sup>

“To help provide the necessary soft skills, the MBA program must focus on the competencies that provide a well-rounded, critical thinking professional, in addition to discipline-specific content such as marketing, economics or finance,” he said. “If designed to hit these marks, the MBA can help students build these skills as they progress through rigorous discipline-specific content and integrative experiences.”

University of Phoenix offers a standard MBA that can be earned in as little as 18 months. The university also provides options that add certificates in accounting, marketing, finance and more. Explore options at [www.phoenix.edu](http://www.phoenix.edu).

<sup>1</sup><https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS1400000>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

<sup>3</sup>This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of University of Phoenix between November 6 and November 27, 2017 among 2,011 U.S. adults aged 18 and older, who are full-time employed in a company of 10 employees or more. Figures for number of employees were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup><https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/mba-for-career-advancement>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/why-companies-prefer-mbas>