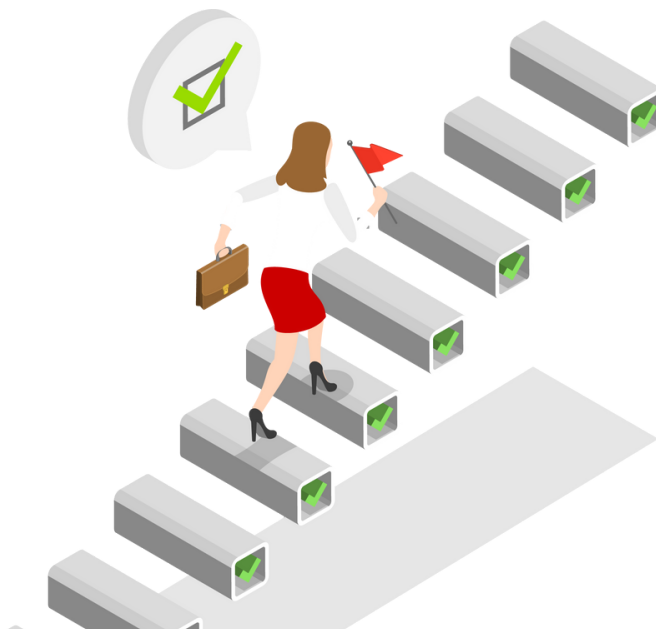


# BUILDING YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE

## How will using critical thinking and inquiry help me in the workplace?

- **Employees**
  - Identify and solve problems, analyze data, make informed decisions, evaluate options, and contribute to the overall success of their organization.
- **Managers**
  - Often face complex situations where there are multiple factors and different options that require balancing financial success with guiding their teams effectively.
  - Need to think critically and ask the right questions when assessing performance, resolving conflicts, and quickly adapting to changing circumstances.
- **Executives**
  - Perform long-term, strategic decisions that have a significant impact on the business.
  - Analyze complex and ambiguous information, evaluate risks and opportunities, and justify legal, financial, ethical, environmental, and potentially global decisions.



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## Will these skills help me outside of work?

Yes! Enhancing these skills lets you perform at a higher level when:

- Evaluating information from various sources, making informed decisions about personal matters, and assessing the credibility and validity of given information.
- Navigating through complex issues, having meaningful discussions, and actively participating in personal, business, financial, civic, or social situations.

# THE VALUE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT

A successful business requires individuals working together to create a sum greater than its parts. It demands intelligent individuals who ask the right questions and make well-informed decisions. It involves creative thinking, innovation, analysis, evaluation, and integration of information. In a competitive job market, these are **essential workplace skills** highly valued by employers and are often grouped with problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and teamwork as the **core skills** sought after in candidates' resumes.



Employers recognize the value of candidates who can analyze problems, evaluate information objectively, and propose creative solutions. **Critical thinkers** can identify underlying issues, question assumptions, and consider alternative perspectives. Such skills **empower** employees and job applicants to position themselves as adaptable problem solvers who can contribute to a company's success in an ever-changing environment.

By encouraging a culture of inquiry and providing fair compensation, businesses can create an active learning environment where employees are motivated to seek *knowledge, explore new ideas, and collaborate effectively.*



# THE VALUE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT (CONTINUED)

## Don't I already have these skills?

Educational environments are considered valuable opportunities for educators to establish the learning frameworks vital for forming a student's foundation. However, the traditional educational system may not always provide sufficient emphasis on critical thinking and inquiry skills.

This workbook serves as a valuable resource to help you **reinforce** these skills. The information can be learned at your convenience, within a flexible environment. Learners can explore their interests and participate in open-ended discussions, which will encourage them to question assumptions, think independently, and develop unique perspectives.

## Marketing example:

In an era of information overload and fierce competition, marketing professionals must critically evaluate *data, consumer behavior, and market trends* to develop effective campaigns. By **employing critical thinking skills**, marketers can identify target audiences, assess consumer needs, and design persuasive messaging.

Additionally, inquiry skills enable marketers to conduct thorough research, gather valuable customer feedback, and adapt their strategies accordingly. This iterative process of questioning, testing, and refining (also known as lateral thinking, see page 31) ensures that marketing efforts are driven by data, focused on the customer, and yield real results.



The development of thinking and questioning skills is invaluable, regardless of whether you are a job applicant, a creative professional, or an employee within a business. Candidates who demonstrate such skills are more likely to **stand out** in a competitive job market, while businesses benefit from employees who can navigate complexity, propose creative solutions, and drive productivity. As our world continues to evolve, the significance of critical thinking and inquiry in industries will continue to grow, making them essential skills for achieving success.