

# 21st Century Must Have Skills

The logo for Bridgeprep features the word "bridgeprep" in a lowercase serif font. The word "bridge" is colored orange, and "prep" is colored grey. A thin orange arc is positioned above the "bridge" portion of the text.

bridgeprep

***“Excel and PowerPoint is just as important as speaking English in business.”***



This is a direct quote from a hiring manager at a global company. Microsoft Office is critical for success. Excel and PowerPoint are not just a tool for business professional. It is also used by non-profits, education, and many other non-business organizations. Most people think that these tools are just for business, but they are an important part of work for all organizations. Moving forward these tools we be used more intensely in non-profit and education because of the power these tools provide decision makers.

Excel is not going anywhere, and businesses will continue to use Excel as a primary tool for diverse functions and applications ranging from IT projects to company picnics.





A working knowledge of Excel is vital for most office-based professionals today, and stronger Excel skills can open the door to promotion and leadership opportunities. Excel is a powerful tool but cannot function alone. It takes a savvy computer user to take advantage of everything Excel has to offer to provide the best results for their company.

When surveyed hiring managers believe that 87% of students are not prepared for the workforce and that being proficient with Excel and PowerPoint is a must. In other words, these skills set are of the utmost importance and essential to success. Also, when surveyed Microsoft Office skills were ranked 3rd out of all the skills by hiring managers in terms of importance.

Excel know-how can instantly increase your job prospects as well as your starting salary? Excel is a transferrable skill that any hiring manager understands is critical. That's the beauty of knowing such a universal computer program: It gives you options.



Research shows<sup>1</sup> that middle-skill job applicants who know Microsoft Excel make \$22.66 per hour on average compared to the \$20.14 per hour their peers make who don't know the program. That's roughly an extra \$20 per eight-hour workday and \$100 per workweek, simply for knowing how to use a single computer program. Moreover, full-time employees in certain industries can see a starting salary bump<sup>2</sup> of anywhere from \$1,000 to \$7,000 per year based on their Excel skills. That's not chump change you can ignore.

The students that have not mastered these skills by graduation are at a huge disadvantage. This is like math, you cannot fake this, either you know it or you don't. Mastering these skills take time and practice. This form of practice needs to happen prior to graduation, this way you can get all of the mistakes out of the way.

I know Excel and PowerPoint isn't exciting or glamour. The reality is these tools are a must and the skill set is in high demand in the job market. By simply understanding these two tools, students are more competitive with their peers and in a better position to compete in the global marketplace.

Scientists, teachers, business owners, graphic designers, and so many other people turn to the program for help. Regardless of what you do in the office, chances are there's some way for Excel to be helping you do your job better; it's just a matter of figuring out what that is.

For instance, is there a better way you could be organizing your data? Could graphics allow you to better communicate your ideas? Do you just need a place to dump all of your brainstorm ideas? Turn to Excel next time instead of those random pieces of paper filled with your chicken scratch.

Excel may seem intimidating at first, but by just starting to use the program for basic tasks in your life, you'll get a better feel for how it works and also how it can make everything you do so much easier. A concentrated plan to improve this skill can make a significant impact and expand future opportunities.



# References

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1. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/you-cant-escape-the-hegemony-of-the-spreadsheet\\_n\\_6816570](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/you-cant-escape-the-hegemony-of-the-spreadsheet_n_6816570)
2. <https://visual.ly/community/Infographics/business/career-value-microsoft-excel>