I am a retired businessman, and FPS GRANDFATHER. I was employed for 28 years in a national corporation whose culture at the time was developing, training and promoting 100% from within. When I started with the company, we hired only male college graduates. As society changed, we hired male and female college graduates. As society continued to change, we hired qualified candidates who had the potential to positively impact our organization. As a result, I have interviewed many young men and women who were entering the job market for the first time.

FPSPI (Future Problem Solving Program International) was not available to our children while they were students. Our grandchildren, however, have participated in the Program. The more I listened, the more I realized that this Program provided a personal asset that employers strongly needed and considered when interviewing an applicant, as I did, when I was interviewing in the corporate world.

To be successful in Problem Solving, RESEARCH is a key element. Research before analyzing and solving problems is critical, essential and paramount. So I did some quick online research by GOOGLING “What skills do corporations look for when hiring.”

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Not surprisingly – this is what I found:

1. Problem solving is considered a “soft skill” as defined by Heather R. Huhman, Career and Workplace expert who is founder and president of COME RECOMMENDED. “Soft skills” relate to the way employers relate and interact with people. “Hard skills” are skills easy to quantify like language proficiency or programming ability.

Of the top 10 skills 77% of employers look for - “solving problems” is #3. This includes “critically and effectively solving problems.” To research the top 10 unique soft skills employers desire, read this article available under the GOOGLE search referred to above: www.entrepreneur.com/article/234864.

2. Here is another link: www.forbes/.../the-10-skills-employers-most-want-in-2015-graduates/ The two skills tied for #1 are: “Ability to work in a team structure” and “Ability to make decisions and solve problems.” SOUND FAMILIAR? THESE ARE TWO OF THE GOALS OF THE FPSPI PROGRAM!

3. Another link is: www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-job-skills-report/ The most wanted and hardest-to-find skills in applicants are “strategic thinking, creative problem solving, analytic thinking, ability to work collaboratively and communication skills.” HERE AGAIN, THESE ARE THE VERY SPECIFIC ELEMENTS THAT FPSPI INCORPORATES INTO ITS PROGRAM!

These skills are in extremely short supply among young MBA applicants. According to Bloomberg's research, Harvard is recognized as the only school that develops all three of the top three skills employers are looking for.

Because we recognize that FPSPI is such a critical opportunity for students the world over, my wife and I volunteered to mentor the UK and Portugal into the Program. We are currently working with Turkey toward becoming accredited as an Affiliate of FPSPI. I have been an FPS volunteer for about 13 years – my wife has been associated with the Program for over 25 years.

Allow me to expound a bit… Consider this: there are very few companies in America that do not compete internationally. Business, finance, food distribution, agriculture, sports, manufacturing, law, technology, and many other fields are all competing on an international level. My grandkids, most of whom are not yet out of college, will have to function in an environment very different from mine at their age. The problems they will be challenged with will be much more complex than this 80 year old had to deal with. I don’t envy them.

Those students who seriously participate in FPSPI (although most students find it not only rigorous but FUN and rewarding!) and who implement and apply the skills learned through their participation will have a distinct advantage and maybe, just maybe, will be as effective as the Harvard MBA!

Thanks for reading!

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Please send your questions or comments to the FPSPI Parent Committee via Chair, Deb Woythal at dwoythal@gmail.com