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LOGITECH CEO: 'I Love Hiring English Majors'

BUSINESS INSIDER By Vivian Giang June 20, 2013 3:43 PM



[MeetTheBoss via YouTube](#)

Don't fret, English majors: There are employers out there looking for you. One such employer is Bracken Darrell, the CEO of Logitech. He loves hiring English majors.

In fact, he thinks graduates of the liberal arts are so rare that he calls them "endangered species."

"If you find one, you need to run over and catch them in a conversation," he tells Business Insider.

This support for English majors isn't solely because Darrell graduated with an English degree from a small, private liberal arts college in Arkansas. Or that his dad was an English major. Or that his mom was an elementary school English teacher. Or even that his grandmother was an English major.

It's because, contrary to what most [employers think of English majors](#), Darrell believes those "soft skills" are greatly needed in today's technical world.

"The older I get, the more I realize the power of words and the

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power of words in making you think ... the best CEOs and leaders are extremely good writers and have this ability to articulate and verbalize what they're thinking," he says.

In a [survey published Wednesday by Accountemps](#), the top reason CFOs said their workers fail to advance is poor interpersonal skills.

"The most successful guy in Silicon Valley in the last decade was Steve Jobs and he supported the liberal arts..."

"You don't have to be an English major to learn how to do this, but the classes do help you express yourself and build communication skills."

These soft skills come from personal aptitudes and attitudes that are often attained after years of studying the liberal arts. Darrell says there's a thoughtfulness about culture that isn't emphasized in majors outside literature and the arts. This understanding of people will affect how you connect to others, which plays a role in your influence and leadership skills.

That's the secret: connecting and communicating. That's what English majors acquire after years of critiquing and discussing their thoughts in group settings. Eventually, they become comfortable with sharing their ideas.

According to Darrell, right now is when we need English majors the most.

"I'm sitting in Silicon Valley [right now] ... this is the most technical place in the country except for maybe the MIT campus ... I mean, there's more engineers per capita here."

"Yet the most successful guy in Silicon Valley in the last decade was Steve Jobs and he supported the liberal arts," Darrell says, referring to Jobs' [quote in 2010](#) when he said that "it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields the results that make our hearts sing."

As technology continue to dominate our economy for years to come, Darrell believes that companies would benefit from having "great thinkers" who were taught to dissect and critique various scenarios. In a [piece he wrote in The WSJ earlier this month](#), Darrell said design requires "an understanding of art," because "design is certainly more than engineering. It's really the integration of a bunch of things."

Although not many will argue against the value of creative thinking and communicating, today's economy is centered on knowledge, and specific technical skills are needed to obtain jobs that are on the rise.

So how does an English major make it in today's job market?

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They need to supplement their liberal arts education. Between his English classes, Darrell took finance courses to set himself apart from his peers. He then eventually went to Harvard Business School to get his MBA. He advises young people in college today consider a double major if they want to study the arts. Or at least enroll in classes that will teach them technical skills as well.

The central message of Darrell is to not live in a bubble. Yes, he loves hiring English majors, but he understands the *most* successful people are the ones who have learned to broaden their skill set with traits that will give them an edge.

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