

## The Importance of Soft Skills

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### Abstract

The education as well as the market scenario is changing very fast. A decade ago, those individuals who had a brilliant academic record with added work experience were well sought after by most of the corporate institutions. But today hard skills and experience are not sufficient enough for the ingress and escalation in the corporate world. Employers prefer to hire and promote those persons who are resourceful, ethical, and self directed with good communication/ soft skills. 'Soft Skill' used to indicate personal transversal competencies including communication, decision making, problem solving ability etc. The study upholds ten dimensions of soft skills by applying hermeneutic dialectic methodology including five respondents from different perspectives. The study solicits with major claims, concerns and issues regarding soft skills by applying convenient personal interview methods. The study come up with a declaration that, soft skills are the prerequisite in this global competition and consider as employability skills that stands beside hard skill. To make competent our next generation there is no alternative to initiate the support system of providing soft skills related learning.

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**KEYWORDS:** Soft skills, Soft skills training, Hard Skills, Internship, Industry, Gap Analysis.

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### Introduction:

Soft skills refer to both character traits and interpersonal skills that will influence how well a person can work or interact with others. The term soft skills cover a wide range of skills as diverse as teamwork, time management, empathy and delegation. The importance of soft skills development is increasing with everyday. Soft skills are personal traits, suggesting

how cordially and effectively you interact with others The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs report suggested that by 2020, complex problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and emotional intelligence would be among the most important skills required in the workplace. Soft skills are the more intangible and non-technical abilities that are sought from candidates. For example:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Leadership
- Responsibility

The importance of these soft skills is often undervalued, and there is far less training provided for them than hard skills such as coding. Organizations seem to expect people know how to behave on the job and the importance of skills such as taking initiative, communicating effectively and listening, which often is not the case.

### **What are soft skills?**

Soft skills are personal attributes that influence how well you can work or interact with others. These skills make it easier to form relationships with people, create trust and dependability, and lead teams.

In essence, they are essential for your success in the workplace, your company's success and your personal life. They can include, or relate to, the following:

- Negotiating
- Customer service
- Networking
- Presentation
- Conflict resolution
- Communication effectiveness
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Working under pressure

### **Why are soft skills important?**

Most interactions with other people require some level of soft skills. At a company you might be negotiating to win a new contract, presenting your new idea to colleagues, networking for a new job, and so on. We use soft skills every day at work and developing these soft skills will help you win more business and accelerate your career progression.

On the other hand, a lack of soft skills can limit your potential, or even be the downfall of your business. By developing strong leadership, delegation, teamwork, and communication abilities, you can run projects more smoothly, deliver results that please everyone, and even positively influence your personal life by improving how you interact with others.

Outside of the office, soft skills such as communication are used to build friendship groups and meet potential partners. You might be negotiating the price of your new house renovation, or mentoring your neighbors' children on the weekend. Soft skills are useful both in our professional and personal lives.

Let's have a look at some specific examples supporting the importance of soft skills.

#### 1. Career progression and promotion

ICIMS Hiring Insights (2017) found that "Ninety-four percent of recruiting professionals believe an employee with stronger soft skills has a better chance of being promoted to a leadership position than an employee with more years of experience but weaker soft skills." It's become vital to develop these skills if you want to progress in your career as they will set you apart from others at the interview and on the job.

#### 2. The modern workplace is interpersonal

Skills such as active listening, collaboration, presenting ideas and communicating with colleagues are all highly valued in the modern workplace. Strong soft skills ensure a productive, collaborative and healthy work environment, all crucial attributes for organisations in an increasingly competitive world.

#### 3. Customers and clients demand soft skills

Consumers these days have a huge number of choices of where to buy from, bought about by the internet and smartphones. For these consumers, convenience and low prices are easy to come by, so customer service is often what influences the choice to use a particular business. The ability to communicate at a human level with customers is therefore a vital factor in an organisation's success.

#### 4. The future workplace will rely on soft skills

Automation and artificial intelligence will result in a greater proportion of jobs relying on soft skills. Advances in technology have caused tasks that require hard skills to decline, making soft skills a key differentiator in the workplace. A study by Deloitte Access Economics predicts that "Soft skill-intensive occupations will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030". As the cost of robots decreases and the performance of artificial intelligence improves, jobs such as manufacturing line workers, will become automated. Traditional skills like teamwork, communication and critical thinking will be more important than ever.

#### 5. Soft skills are hard to automate

Following on from the previous point, soft skills such as emotional intelligence are hard to automate and unlikely to become automated anytime soon. This means they're expected to become more desirable in the near future. However soft skills can be difficult to teach and track improvements on. Companies such as Virtual Speech are tackling this by using VR as a way to improve soft skills.

## 6. Soft skills are in high demand by recruiters

Soft skills are in high demand in the workforce. According to the 2017 paper by a Harvard student on the importance of social skills in the labour market, jobs requiring high levels of social interaction grew by nearly 12 percent as a share of the U.S. labour force.

Most in-demand soft skills (from LinkedIn research):

- Communication
- Organisation
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Social skills
- Creativity
- Interpersonal communication
- Adaptability

In the papers conclusion, it reasons that because computers are very poor at simulating human interaction, social skills are still important. Therefore, individuals should still look to improve their social and soft skills through activities such as volunteering, leading a team or even by working on an open source project with other people.

### **Do you need to improve your soft skills?**

Many people are strong in certain soft skills, while weaker in others. For example, someone might be a great public speaker and able to command a room full of people while on stage, but struggle to interact with people at a busy networking event.

It's common to either underestimate the importance of soft skills or overestimate your own abilities. Here are a few scenarios that may be improved with stronger soft skills:

- You have a low client retention rate compared to others in your field
- You are frequently late for meetings or struggle to meet deadlines
- You fail to grow your professional network, or avoid networking opportunities altogether
- You manage to land meetings with prospective clients, but rarely proceed to the next stage or close deals..

**Now that you know the importance of soft skills, which ones do you think you need to develop? Here's a list of the soft skills that today's employers value most:**

- Communication (oral and written)
- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Collaboration
- Adaptability

- Positivity
- Learning from criticism
- Working under pressure

### **Successful Soft Skills Development**

But suppose you don't have these skills? It's never too late to develop them. For example, you can learn a lot just by observing other people within a company who excel in these seven areas. Also, offering to take on more responsibilities at work (serving on committees, planning events, etc.) can help you gain valuable experience. In addition, consider taking online soft-skills courses. Developing emotional intelligence will make you a more valuable employee, and increase your chances of career success.

Employee assessments can also reveal areas where improvements could be made, which makes it easier to put together a development plan to address those needs. People often focus specifically on technical skills or competencies when planning their development, but neglecting soft skills can make it difficult to succeed in future positions that require a high degree of emotional intelligence and social interaction (in other words, just about any leadership position).

### **Conclusion:**

Soft skills are broadly classified as a combination of personality traits, behaviors, and social attitudes that allow people to communicate effectively, collaborate, and successfully manage conflict. People with good soft skills tend to have strong situational awareness and emotional intelligence that allows them to navigate difficult working environments while still producing positive results. This is especially important for leadership positions because good leadership is more about managing people and directing their efforts toward a desired outcome rather than bringing any specific technical skills to bear.

Another benefit of soft skills in the workplace is that they help people to adapt to changing circumstances. Being able to communicate effectively during a time of uncertainty or collaborate with others when solutions aren't immediately obvious is hugely important whether someone is in a leadership position or not.

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