

5 REASONS WHY SOFT SKILLS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

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Studying takes you on a path towards acquiring hard skills - the specific technical skills you need to do your job effectively. While these are the skills you'll list on your CV (also called curriculum vitae or resume), today's employers are looking for more than this. Increasing importance is being placed on soft skills - personal attributes that enable you to interact well with other people. Here are the reasons why soft skills are more important than ever:

1 - HARD SKILLS ARE USELESS WITHOUT SOFT SKILLS

In most jobs, technical skills alone are not enough to be truly effective. A salesperson with an unrivalled knowledge of their product and market will have little success if they don't have the interpersonal skills needed to close deals and retain clients. A business manager needs to be able to listen to employees, have good speaking skills, and be able to think creatively. All careers require at least some soft skills to make the hard skills valuable.

2 - SOFT SKILLS ARE HARDER TO LEARN

Hard skills aren't necessarily hard to acquire. They can be easily taught and can be learned and perfected over time. Soft skills are more challenging to develop, since they have little to do with knowledge or expertise but are closely linked with a person's character. It takes conscious effort, ongoing practice, and a commitment to self-development to improve your soft skills. Hard skills may look impressive on your CV, but the soft skills are what will set you apart from the many candidates who have similar expertise to you.

3 - THE MODERN WORKPLACE IS INTERPERSONAL

Skills such as listening, collaborating with others, presenting ideas and communicating with team members are all highly valued in the modern workplace. Strong soft skills ensure a

productive, collaborative and healthy work environment, all vital attributes for organizations in an increasingly competitive world.

4 - CUSTOMERS DEMAND SOFT SKILLS

The modern market offers consumers an unlimited number of choices through technologies such as 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 efficiently and effectively with customers is therefore a vital factor in an organization's success.

5 - THE FUTURE WORKPLACE WILL RELY ON SOFT SKILLS

Automation and artificial intelligence will result in a greater proportion of jobs relying on soft skills. Thanks to cutting-edge technology, tasks that require hard skills are continuing to decline, making soft skills key differentiators in the workplace. As an example, look at this fascinating study by Deloitte Access Economics, which predicts that two-thirds of all jobs in Australia will rely on soft skills by 2030. This trend will inevitably be mirrored globally.

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

You can improve your soft skills by taking personal development courses or online courses, networking with people both inside and outside your organization and challenging yourself to take on new tasks. With a strong set of soft skills complementing your hard skills, the most important paving stones to success will be in place.