



ATTRIBUTES – SOFT SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Technical and job-related skills are mandatory, but they are not sufficient when it comes to finding a job or progressing up the ladder. With the traditional style of leadership has become out of fashion, Managers in all sectors expect their employees to have some extra skills which we call today soft skills. Soft skills is a term which refers to personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills are as important as traditional hard skills to an employer regardless of industry or job type. It is to be understood clearly that soft skills complement hard skills. Soft skills are very important in business and corporate culture. It is essential to be technically sound, but one should also have the ability to convey the idea to the masses in the simplest possible manner. Planning is necessary but execution is also equally important. And it takes soft skills to execute any idea because it involves dealing with people directly. For this reason, soft skills are increasingly sought out by employers in addition to standard qualification. Soft skills cannot be taught. However they can be developed through proper training. Majority of the managers observe that they could find workers who have “hard skills” but many potential job seekers lack “soft skills” that a company needs. This paper offers opportunities for the job seekers to understand the importance of soft skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOFT SKILLS:

Soft skills play a significant role in one's success in life particularly in one's profession. They help one to excel in the workplace and their importance cannot be denied in this age of information and knowledge. Soft skills, in the highly competitive world will help them stand

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out in a crowd of regular job seekers with ordinary skills and talent. In a survey conducted by an agency, the findings indicate that socially acceptable profile and skills are needed to make a good employee. The jobseekers are expected to have what employers call soft skills.

The ever – changing impact of technology and the style of management pay so much attention to soft skills. This plays an important part for the success of an organization. Organizations, particularly those dealing with customers face -to-face, are generally more prosperous if they train their employees to use these skills. With the boom in outsourcing taking root across industries, many professionals and subject matter experts directly dealing with their clients on a regular basis, soft skills have become essential for the success of the organizations and their individuals.

Employers are now looking for people who can do more than just perform a set of tasks. Employers are increasingly searching for more than a qualification, and highlighting their soft skills, it can put them at a considerable advantage over similarly qualified candidates. In addition to key competencies like strong analytical skills, reasoning skills and a proven ability to manage complex information that employers are looking for, desirable soft skills which include the following skills also:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Communication is a process of sharing information. Technical communication involves all the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ability to communicate ideas to others effectively in an absolutely essential requirement for technical, engineering, IT professionals and teaching as the nature of the industries make them dependent upon shared knowledge. In fact, communication skills could be the deciding factor in determining whether or not they are selected, promoted. So without communication skills the employer's career could be severely impaired. The fast growth of technical knowledge coupled with the development of sophisticated information technology, it has changed the way they communicate in professional situations. They prefer fast, interactive, and result oriented forms of communication such as voice-mail, email, video transmission, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, internet transmission, and so on to the traditional and slow forms of communication such as letters, memos, newsletters, and so forth. Today, one may find a range of interactive technologies for communication. However, technical communication still depends on the two basic forms of communication that is oral and written.

Each form of communication has its merits and demerits. While oral communication provides immediate feedback and promotes better understanding. Written communication provides a

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permanent record and facilitates the creation of organized messages. Oral communication gives a personal touch to the communication process whereas written communication is impersonal as the two communicators cannot see each other. The choice of an appropriate form of communication may depend on the need and purpose of the communicative situation. In addition, there are two widely recognized categories of technical communication that is external communication and internal communication. External communication consists primarily of describing the areas of expertise technical people or professionals provide. This may include any communication that an organization does with people belonging to other organization. Internal communication includes memo describing problems or requesting additional resources, different kinds of reports and proposals, internal presentations, company meetings, policy statements, office instructions, and office descriptions to be used for public releases or company websites.

Technical communication is the essence of organizational life and a prerequisite to effective management. The list of multipurpose function is very long. It makes not only professional interaction possible but also directs the flow of technical information and knowledge for the guidance of technocrats, engineers, trainers and others in their professional activities. It stimulates scientists, researchers and students to act to achieve individual as well as social and organizational objectives and develops information and essential for effective group functioning. Moreover, it leads to unification between the activities of individuals as a work team and helps to foster positive attitudes required for motivation, cooperation, and other important organizational processes. Finally, it ensures free exchange of information and ideas and promotes scientific temper and maintenance of professional relations.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

These include the ability to lead, motivate and delegate. They are important at every level of organizational responsibility and should always be evident. Being the most technical person in their field is not always enough to succeed unless they have the ability to convince others that what they are doing is important. Possessing good knowledge of interpersonal relations and being able to achieve the delicate balance that communication requires goes a long way in fine-tuning our reflexes to achieve effective communication. For instance, it would be extremely inappropriate on our part to complain to a new recruit at our office against the boss or a nagging spouse at home. It is very important to be able to decide who should be told what, when and how. Some confusion can be avoided by using these skills in the professional field. It leads the organization to maintain better working climate.

TEAM WORKING SKILLS:

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Teamwork is the concept of people working together cooperatively as in a sports team. Today's world is driven by innovation leading to constant change and success of an organization depends on its teams. Thus it has become mandatory to train the employees in all spheres of management. Team building is one of the crucial areas in which the employees need to be trained. Effective teams are necessary for the continual growth, development and management of an organization. The success of an organization depends on the kinds of team it has. Projects require people to work together, so teamwork has become an important concept in organization. Effective teams are an intermediary towards getting good, sustainable results. Industry has seen increasing efforts through training and cross-training to help people to work together more effectively and to accomplish common goals. Within each team they can define clear roles. Most of them are of course related to traditional positions. First is the clarity of role, every player knows what to do in every situation. Second is the acceptance of the role. Each player should feel comfortable in the position that is playing. Last is the performance of the player in the role. Make the players understand that they need to adhere to team standards, each individual player shares responsibility for the success of the team. Skills needed for teamwork: Besides technical proficiency they need to have a wide variety of social skills desired for successful teamwork. They are, listening is important to listen to other people's ideas. Where ideas are freely expressed they pave way for the other ideas to emerge. Questioning are important to ask question, interact and discuss the objectives of the team. Persuading is essential to exchange, defend, rethink and if needed change the ideas. Respecting is essential to treat others ideas and views with respect and accept when they prove worth. Helping is the core principle in teamwork. Sharing creates a conducive environment for the teamwork. Participating makes the work easier and simple. Communication is a skill that most human beings acquire in different degrees of effectiveness in the course of life. Although most people are born with the ability to talk, not many people master the art of effective communication. Basic communication skills can be learnt by observing other people and modeling our behavior on what they see. The environment that a person grows up in contributes a lot to developing communication skills in an individual. However, it's not difficult to acquire good communication skills if one focuses attention on imitating the behavior of those who have excellent communication skills.

NEGOTIATION SKILLS:

The dictionary describes negotiation as a formal discussion in which people or groups try to reach an agreement, especially in business or political situations. It is believed that this process may lead to a change. People who can negotiate effectively can be considered as champions of change. Negotiation is an interactive communication process. Negotiating in a way means they are able to achieve desired outcomes and still maintain successful ongoing relationships with others. Influencing positively will help them achieve more of what they

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want and build relationship based on openness, trust, understanding and mutual respect. Attitude is critical to negotiation. They should be prepared to bargain, should have the patience to spent time on the activity, not lose their cool and try to understand if the opponent is playing a game or is serious about the negotiation. If someone is clever with words, observes carefully every move of the person on the other side and enjoys the idea of negotiation, which is ideally suited for it. Someone who has no patience and does not like arguments or lacks quick thinking abilities, is of course not suited for negotiation. Very often, both negotiators are looking for some sort of a compromise benefiting the two in some measures. It may not be a bad idea to settle for some sort of a compromise. Fairness is another critical point. When they come to the negotiating table with fixed ideas on numbers, anything below it may not be acceptable to them. Negotiation process involves personalities. Two interest groups sit together to arrive at an agreement. Their personal characteristics like age, position, status, temperament, communication skill, experience in negotiation etc., influence the whole process of negotiation.

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS:

The busy man only can manage to do many things, which seem to be beyond the reach of ordinary people. The life of great leaders teaches us one lesson. They have to do many things in spite of their busy schedule. The secret therefore lies in scientific management of time. Time management is actually self-management. The skills that they need to manage the others are the same skills that are required to manage ourselves. Namely, the ability to plan, organizes, direct and control. Time is an opportunity. It is a chance given an individual to create, innovate and manufacture something.

Time management is a myth. What a big fantasy. They can't manage time. They can only manage themselves according to the time and not vice versa. Every day they receive 24 hours. They can't add more nor do they get any less time. Erase time management from their brain and start thinking out of the clock. Experts are of the opinion that is not Time management but it is self-management. They have to organize their activities to fit the clock. The word time management, because that's how people use it. They think they have a time management problem. In reality it's an activity problem. One of the first things they have to do is to shift their mindset from Time management to Self-management.

STRESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS:

Stress is the word that many people use when they are describing how the demands of their life seems to be becoming too great for them to cope with. This ability to cope with stress varies from individual to individual. But the fact is that work and stress go hand in hand.

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Every one in every job experiences in pressure, stress. Jobseeker's success in job depends on their ability to handle work pressure. Stress is the wear and tear our body experience as they adjust their changing environment. Stress is the emotional, physiological and psychological effects caused by an internal or external mental pressure. Stress is a scientific concept which has suffered from the mixed blessing of being too well known and too little understood. A stressor is any event or situation that is perceived by an individual as a threat causing one to either adapt or initiate the response. Therefore, a stress is a stimulus and Stress is a response. To think of it another way, the stressor is the cause and Stress is the effect. Stress is a fact of life, but being stressed out is not. We don't always have control over what happens to us, and yet, that doesn't mean us have to react to a difficult, challenging situation by becoming frazzled or feeling overwhelmed or distraught. Being overly anxious is not a mental hazard: it's a physical one too. The more stressed out we are the more vulnerable we are to colds, flu, and a host of chronic or life threatening illness. And the less open we are to the beauty and pleasure of life.

Stress is a part of life and cannot be avoided. Fortunately, there are some control measures developed by experts. Stress isn't only experienced by adults. Teenagers can also experience serious cases of stress that is caused by more than overactive hormones and breakout. Most teenagers do not know what initially causes their stress, and may not be aware that what they are experiencing is stress, or not know how to treat it. Moreover, many teenagers are not aware what can happen to their health and wellbeing if stress isn't treated. Most cases of teenage stress are usually a result of emotions that go unexpressed because teenagers feel as if no one will understand their situation. Moreover, due to the fact that the vast majority teenagers have a hard time discussing personal problems with their parents, or may not have a good friend they can confide in, the emotional stress they feel grows, and they isolate themselves further. One of the best ways teenagers can release stress is to express their emotions.

This can be done through writing, music, talking with friends, or someone they can trust such as a teacher or guidance counselor. Therefore, it is important that they know there are other people they can turn to when feeling down. Furthermore, teens should be encouraged to take break, lower their intake of stimulants, increase their intake of water, eat breakfast and engage in exercise. Just like adults, if teenagers don't take care of chronic stress, it can develop into dangerous health issues. Thus, if regular methods of stress management are not helping a teenager cope, seek the help of a professional for treatment.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS:

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The role of a teacher is not limited to mere teaching or imparting his subject knowledge but extends beyond, as all-time great teacher of our nation, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had said: “The aim of education is not the acquisition of information although important, or acquisition of technical skills, though essential in modern society, but the development of that bent of mind, that attitude of reason, that spirit of democracy, which will make us responsible citizens”. It is time the teachers rise to the occasion and ensure that the nobility associated with the profession stays forever and our education system scales greater heights. One area that can contribute significantly to enhance the teacher’s efficacy could be soft skills. Soft skills can play a pivotal role in making teachers more effective and students more receptive to teachers who are endowed with sound soft skills.

SUMMATION:

Soft skills training can make the difference between clinching or losing the deal, creating an efficient or a malfunctioning work force, getting that promotion or missing out. Acquiring soft skills gives the job seekers a competitive edge, helping them to create positive relationship that mean they can get more from people, both internally and externally. Soft skills training cover a whole range of skills, including understanding self, others, assertiveness, influencing and persuading, negotiating, presenting and public speaking, networking and managing a team. Over all it is about gaining a better understanding of the ways employers think and behave and presenting themselves and their ideas in a way that will have the best impact.

This type of training is useful for all and particularly is relevant for anyone who interacts with other people a part of their job. For all professions, the importance of soft skills is obvious. For many of the more process driven and technical professions like accounting, training or IT, soft skills training can often be forgotten or given less focus. But even in this type of business soft skills have become vital. For some people, these soft skills come naturally, while others need to work harder to acquire them. Soft skills training should be designed to take into account the experience, situation and personality of the job seekers willing to learn. Beyond their qualifications for a job, beyond their technical expertise and quantitative expertise there lies the importance of soft skills. Job seekers who lack soft skills are sure to be left behind. Everyone accepts that they all need to develop their soft skills. Yet, it is so difficult to persuade student of the importance of soft skills may be because they are called “soft skills.”Developing soft skills is a hard work. It requires strength of character, courage, proper training and perseverance. Soft skills require hard work. It takes discipline to learn these skills. Soft skills being internal and innate they can be acquired by constant practice.



Training on soft skills has become all the more important in India and there are lots of professional trainers in every organization. In the initial years of one's career, one's technical, soft skills are important to get good assignments. However, when it comes to growing in an organization, it is the soft skills that matter. Corporate houses have started to take up the task of grooming employees who are the link between the company and the external world, so that they are able to present themselves better. In any case the employees stand to benefit a lot. Communication skills and Soft skills are as important as or even more important than traditional qualifications and technical skills or hard skills for personal, academic and professional success.

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