

Soft skills: A certain path to success

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Today we have demands everywhere for a successful professional. Companies are looking forward to professionals having all kinds of skills to succeed. While hard skills and technical skills form a major core, soft skills are essentially needed to make effective contribution. Now keeping this in mind teaching schemes at Boards, Universities, Colleges, and Schools have started giving importance to group presentations, projects, group discussions, public speaking and mock interviews which involve a lot of opportunities to acquire soft skills. To improve one's personal as well as professional effectiveness one has to master soft skills. These soft skills are vital for our professional progress. Employees at all levels work in an environment in which technical knowledge alone may not be sufficient to create value for the customers. Companies in India are rising faster and faster to meet their expansion needs. At the same time, they are not getting the candidates possessing the necessary managerial skills to lead teams and handle projects efficiently. Companies in the sections like BPO, IPO, Pharmaceuticals and management have found that their employees need soft skills to work effectively.

Few years back technical knowledge was supposed to be the major factor contributing to the success of an individual but currently soft skills are turning the tables. Soft skills are a set of skills necessary for a person to succeed in one's work area. Proficiency in technical and hard skills is a basic prerequisite to succeed in one's chosen professional area but at the same time to improve ones' career prospects and to enhance one's personality as a whole one needs soft skills. The umbrella term "Soft Skills" cover abilities such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, team skills, negotiation skills, team management, business etiquettes etc. Soft skills play a significant role in one's success in life particularly in one's profession. They help one to excel in the work place and their importance can not be denied in this age of information and knowledge, soft skills in the highly competitive corporate world will help one to achieve success. Organizers, particularly those who frequently come in contact with customers face to face, are generally

more prosperous if they train their staff to use these soft skills effectively. Soft skills have become absolutely essential for the success of the organizations and the individuals. It is essential to be technically sound but one should have the personality traits, social graces, understanding optimism and impeccable english for effective communication.

What are soft skills?

Soft skills by nature involve working with others. In the initial years of one's career, one's technical abilities are important to get good assignments. It is the soft skills that matter when it comes to growing in an organization. Soft skills are also known by varied names such as Generic skills, Life skills, People skills, and Survival skills. These skills can be acquired by constant practice. Corporate houses have started to take up the task of grooming employees in soft skills. We work through our marketable skills, teamwork and self-motivation to get the things done. Healthy lifestyle choices, stress management, disease prevention and personal safety are our prime concerns for better living. Self-esteem, self-responsibility, character, managing feelings and self-discipline must be practiced without fail for our well-being. In a nutshell, the essence of life skills is to share well, care well and fare well. There was a time, not long ago, when soft skills including communication were thought of as poor cousins of the hard skills. While investing considerable time and resources to acquire the hard skills, bright students ignored the soft skills. It was thought that once you mastered the hard skills, slowly soft skills would follow without any special effort. Teachers and parents often endorsed this lop-sided view of social and technical skills. In the globalized world, 'techies' are discovering the harsh reality that technical skills without soft ones would make them knowledge workers, not managers or leaders. Hard skills may be perishable and machine-replaceable. Those who cannot communicate will lose out; they get much less credit for their achievements than they deserve.

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