

Honing the Soft Skills: A Need of the Hour

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1. Introduction

India is well-known for its skillful and talented youth whose success stories are being recorded in every nook and corner of the world. Have you ever thought what is different in them? They are obviously skillful in their fields means they have command over the subject but it doesn't mean they got their success path clear and only their hard skills were enough to make them successful. They also faced problems, committed mistakes, hesitated in many situations, felt lack of confidence and struggled. But they overcame all these hurdles through their soft skills. I hope you have listened that when knowledge fails, your good behaviour and attitude work. It doesn't mean that behavioural skills can replace the knowledge but it can make your personal and professional journey smoother, smarter and stress-free to give the clear way to achieve your success and goal.

Soft skills are counted as the behavioural and personality skills like communication skills, time management skills, problem solving skills, emotional intelligence, positive attitude, teamwork skills, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, public speaking, being aware of your own strength, & weakness, having confidence and self-esteem etc. These skills are called soft skills as these are related to soft components of human being that is his behaviour.

Soft skills are the bonus points to one's personality. They increase the chances of his success and form positive image among his mates, colleagues and society. Soft skills enable to make the person more acceptable and employable in any organization and society. Through the soft skills, hard skills can be projected effectively, impressively and accurately.

Today, every role requires soft skills, and that's why soft skill training has become a norm in every company and industry. Earlier, the most important skill that was required for a particular role was hard skills. Hard skills are the skills that can be learned and might differ for every role. But experts have realized that one of the major reasons behind success is soft skills.

Soft skills don't remain as they are as one gets by one's birth. These can be learnt and trained. Soft skill is not just about communication, and hence the concept of soft skill training emerges in which the person is trained on the other aspects of soft skills as well. Soft skills training is the training that focuses on developing skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, emotional intelligence, a positive attitude and taking the initiative.

In professional world, a professional with a sound personality must imbibe sets of soft skills, social skills including etiquettes and must have knowledge on emotional intelligence in order to create a strong network of people

with effective interpersonal relationships which enhance their potential and career performance resulting in growth of an organization. Soft skills training can get employees to change the professional development mindset. Even if one isn't a natural at some soft skill, it's possible to train those skills.

Essentially, soft skills are the people skills that your workforce needs for the long-term success of your organization. Now a day every job requires employees to be engaged with others, either inside or outside of your organization, making these skills to be noticed and to be ignored or left over.

LinkedIn carried out a study in early 2018 across 100 metropolitan cities in the United States and discovered a shortage of 1.4 million people with communication skills. There are a number of options for soft skills training.

By investing in soft skills training, one will see many benefits. Some of the most important soft skills are as follow:

Communication Skills

Communication is the most important soft skill. The first impression is always casted by through communication. If it is proper, it casts positive impact. Communication is of two types: verbal and non-verbal. Both have their own importance. Only through communication, one can express one's feeling, emotion and thoughts to others. If this process is executed properly, the communication will be well-understood otherwise it can be misinterpreted or may create communication gap. Communication skills include proper listening with understanding, speaking with correct content, with right tone and body language while conversing. In written, formal rules, structures are to be followed. Skills in communication are required to form an impressive and positive image that helps the person in building good terms, relationship and bond with others. This is one of the steps to make a reach towards the goal.

Think Positive

As human beings we face problems in life. With the fear of failure, we cannot achieve our goal. We should be positive. You must have listened about the achievements of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Sunder Pichai, Steve Jobs, Satya Nadella, Narayana Murthy and many such other great people. They have not become great and got success overnight. They too faced problems in their lives. But they could face all problems courageously and mould their lives in a positive approach only through their attitude.

Positive attitude is the combination of the attributes like encouraging others, being happy through achievements, not worrying constantly about problems, managing stress, not

thinking much about bad times, not losing faith in oneself, aiming for success, showing patience and facing problems confidently.

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	Showing patience
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	Not worrying constantly about problems
	Being happy through achievements
	Encouraging others

Hone Your Strengths Well

People who are smart enough they identify their strengths and build their success on them. By identifying our strengths, we will build our future on them. Strengths are the strong attributes of one’s personality. These attributes make one person different from another one. Due to strength, one can do much better than any other one in particular field. So it is necessary for everyone to realize their strength which can be utilized as a great potent in concerned area.

The strength can be related to one’s talent that is God-gifted by birth; related to one’s knowledge in specific area or subject; related to skills that are acquired and gets mastery in it, and it can be related to personal traits that is behavioral skills i. e. have a managerial skills, communication skills etc. The strengths can be polished and furnished to get optimal utilization.

Self-Esteem:

You respect yourself if you have faith in your abilities. Such kind of self-love and self-respect is called self-esteem. The one of the strongest factors for success is self-esteem; to trust yourself that you can do it, to trust yourself that you deserve it and to trust yourself that you will get it.

Self –Esteem reflects:	
I am STRONG	But I know my weaknesses. I move on with my strengths.
I am WORTHY	But I’ve worked through my “unworthiness” that makes me worthy.
I am BEAUTIFUL	I’ve dropped the illusion of not enough
I am PERFECT:	Instead of having imperfections, I am perfect as I am.

(Source: www.pinterest.com)

Self-esteem can be developed by appreciating and respecting yourself, feeling good factor, seeing yourself as deserving one, respecting of others and having confidence in your own abilities.

High self-esteem gives you the courage to try new things and the power to believe in yourself, making you optimistic and helping to resolve your problems and help others. While Low self-esteem makes you feel excluded and disconnected from society, making you want to surrender your individuality and conform to stereotypes, making you feel that you can’t handle life’s challenges and leading to depression, destructive behavior, eating disorders or alcohol/drug abuse.

Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence gives you inner energy. It is very important and can be acquired through practice. You may be hard worker, intelligent or may be rich but if you don’t have self-confidence you cannot openly face the person, public and situation to deal with them. Famous personalities too developed their self confidence through continuous practice.

“You were born with wings. Don’t crawl; Learn to use them to fly and fly.”-A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

To boost up your self-confidence, you must set challenging and realistic goals, stay positive, believe in yourself, think and act confidently, learn from your mistakes, be competitive, know yourself thoroughly, live with principles and empower yourself with knowledge.

You must avoid being a critic of yourself, not to expect to be successful for the first time not to be afraid to seek help, not to have negative thoughts and not to feel inferior.

Body Language

Kinesics is another name for the study of the body’s physical movements. Nodding or itching your head, blinking your eyes or maintaining eye contact, shrugging shoulders, moving or waving the hands and other such physical activities are also the forms of communication. Such behaviors as you nod your head for acceptance are deliberately done to communicate. Understanding and using these non-verbal cues correctly will develop your ability to use them more effectively during your conversation.

Body Language includes personal appearance in which our dressing sense and styles according to time, place, culture and purpose are observed unknowingly and knowingly. Posture generally refers to the way we stand, sit or walk. It reveals a lot about you. Gesture is the movement through hands, arms, shoulders and head. Adroit gestures can add to an impact of your personality. Sometimes gestures should be quite natural and spontaneous. Facial expressions also play an important role. The face is the most expressive part of our body. Your facial expressions may show anger, sadness, anxiety, recognition, hesitation, and pleasure as a quick response. The eyes are considered to be the windows of the soul. Eye contact is a powerful form of non-verbal communication. Looking directly at listeners builds rapport.

It is said by Socrates “Nobility and dignity; self-abasement and servility, insolence and vulgarity, are reflected in the face and in the attitudes of the body whether still or in motion”. Non verbal communication is instinctive.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are meant to maintain mutual understanding and proper behaviour among peer group, subordinates, authorities, customers, colleagues, relatives etc at professional and personal level. Different-different terms demand and need different types of approaches, attitude and behaviour. The awareness to understand its importance and to do accordingly gives advantages in personal and professional life both.

Teamwork

Together everyone achieves more. Teamwork always generates better outcomes. But it also comprises of many skills. One should not aspire to be the best in the team but should aspire to be the best for the team.

Either you are a leader or follower in a team, you must have some certain qualities to be called a good team member. As a team member, you must be proactive, positive, be respectable and fair, be open to new approaches, communicate freely, share issues with the team, use consensus, encourage discussions and celebrate accomplishments. Effective teamwork counts understanding the team goals, objectives and time frames, knowing your role and responsibilities in relation to the team, respecting others' opinions, perspectives, thoughts, sharing knowledge and expertise, Acknowledging and appreciating others' contribution, empathizing while resolving conflicts managing the conflicts within team effectively and providing mentoring to needy members.

Empathise

Empathy	
E	Everybody needs somebody
M	Model and mirror
P	Put yourself in their shoes
A	Ask if you can help
T	Treat others in the same way you want to be treated
H	Hurtful or helpful
Y	You feel better and let others feel better

Empathy is to step into other's shoes. It is the ability to feel and to understand another person's difficulties and point of view. To care and sympathize someone is always observed and feel good factor fills you and other person on good note. One must share and listen other's thoughts to get expected result.

Time Management

Time management gives you the skill to take responsibility for your own time and enables you to manage time more efficiently, to create effective to-do lists, to sharpen your focus, and more. Everyone has 24 hours but only one's time management system shows how much a person is capable to manage this time with optimal utilization without compromising importance and urgency of any work. Learn to prioritize your work. Prioritize your activities under four heads as given below:



Keep A Smart Goal:

Smart Goal	
S	The goal must specific that must be clear in particular field.
M	The goal should be quantifiable so that it can be measured how much it is achieved and how much it is left to be achieved.
A	The goal must be factual and practical, that can be attained.
R	The goal should be suitable, affordable and matching with your current and expected circumstances
T	The goal must have a deadline to be achieved.

If we have a goal in life, it keeps us focused and helps us to utilize optimal sources and resources during the journey in achieving the goal. A goal must be SMART so that it can be achieved accordingly. The term in goal, S M A R T stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bounded.

A smart goal saves your time and utilizes it in correct direction. It prevents distraction. It directs, motivates and keeps you enthusiastic.

Leadership Skills

Are leaders born or made? If you look at the lives of famous leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, you can understand that leaders are not born. A leader has a clear vision for a change and he does hard work for it and keeps commitment. An effective leader remains honest, confident, creative, able to delegate, able to inspire, has a sense of humor, positive attitude, and commitment and communication skills. An effective leader is whole institution. "The more we give importance to skill development, the more competent will be our youth." – Honb'le Prime minister Shree Narendra Modi

2. Conclusion

Soft skills are an indispensable part of one's ability to work with others and can create a positive influence. Soft skills can't be "all or none" Many people are sufficient or even exemplary with some of the soft skills yet struggle with others. You may be excellent in communication and teamwork but struggle with time management or become irritated under pressure. Soft skills can influence your ability to give a great presentation and communicate your speaking points effectively. Soft skills make it easier to maintain relationships with people, create trust and lead teams. In essence, they are essential for your success in the workplace, your company's success and your personal life. Soft skills are vital skills that every individual must possess. Lack of the soft skills can limit the potential of a person. However, the person with soft skills proves his ability to work with others and positively impacts his career or even positively influences his personal life by improving ways of interacting with others.

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