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## Soft Skill Is The Key To Success

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### **Abstract:**

*Success is our goal. It is the noble goals in life that propel us to work, motivate us to go the extra mile. Our needs and motives constantly prod on to achieve success in our undertakings. In the process we become agents of change. We search the means that are fit enough to be used as instruments for success. What we need is the requisite skill to utilize our knowledge and the means to obtain the goals. A skill is ability, usually learned and acquired through training, which helps achieve the goal.*

### **1.Introduction**

Success is our goal. It is the noble goals in life that propel us to work, motivate us to go the extra mile. Our needs and motives constantly prod on to achieve success in our undertakings. In the process we become agents of change. We search the means that are fit enough to be used as instruments for success. What we need is the requisite skill to utilize our knowledge and the means to obtain the goals. A skill is an ability, usually learned and acquired through training, which helps achieve the goal.

It is interesting to note that most dictionaries do not even have any entry for the term soft skills. It is a term of recent origin. However, there have been attempts to define it in the following terms: 'soft skills is a sociological term, which refers to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a Job.' Or a soft skill is 'a personal skill that is usually interpersonal, non-specialized, and difficult to quantify, such as leadership or responsibility.' Elsewhere it has been defined as skills as varied as 'communicating, conflict management, human relations, making presentations, negotiating, team – building, and other such abilities, defined in terms of expected outcomes and not as a specific method or technique such as statistical analysis.'

Some other sources that define the term are the glossaries. According to them 'soft skills' are: 'Skills needed to perform jobs where job requirements are defined in terms of expected outcomes, but the process to achieve the outcomes may vary widely. Usually, an area of performance that does not have a definite beginning and end. You may note here that these skills lay emphasis on the personal management skills. We are required to develop such attitudes and behaviours that enhance our personal growth, and make us an adapt team player. Further, we find a definition like this: Soft skills are about projecting oneself and one's professional skills in the best possible way, and taking a holistic view of things. They are about how you interact with and react to others when you come in contact with them; they enable you to zero in on the most important point you want to make, but in an attractive and charming manner.

This definition is true but just the tip of the iceberg. It can be strongly argued that soft skills are not only 'projecting oneself and one's professional skills in the best possible way' but also strengthening oneself from within so that one's acceptance in a socio –cultural framework – both in the personal as well as in the professional arena – is optimum.

Skills are of two types; hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills, as a panel of experts comment, are those skills which are required to perform the functions of a specific job, work or a specialized task. These skills are the technical abilities gained through education and practical hands-on application. For example, a civil engineer is supposed to be thorough regarding the plan, design, estimate and guide the construction of a bridge or dam or a doctor diagnosing, operating and treating a patient or a carpenter making and repairing wooden objects and structures. These are called hard skills. Hard skills are quantitative in nature; they can be tested, measured and certified. Technical skills are the basis on which one can expect an employment.

Soft skills, on the other hand, are the skills which complement and supplement hard skills. Soft skills are the managerial skills, the 'people skills.' They have become an essential employability skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century environment; so much so that any job advertisement seeks a candidate possess soft skills or communication skills. Soft skills relate to being able to work in teams, listen effectively, take and give direction, communicate in writing and speech; being able to analyse, prioritize, evaluate; being able to solve problems, negotiate and manage conflict. Students of technical subjects like Management, Engineering and Medical find the soft skills a hard subject if they do not possess them. Remember that "Technical Skills will get you the interview, but it's the soft skills that get you the job." Communication skills are soft skills at work. You can assess your communication (skills) competence by moving forward.

Soft skills refer to the cluster or personality traits, social graces, personal habits, cheerful nature, empathetic attitude, sensibility and careful use of language. It also means the absence of arrogance, cheating on others, manipulating to gain one's favour, self-glorification, and deriding others. Persons who rank highest in the cluster of positive skills are generally the people who are endowed with soft skills and whom most employers prefer to hire. Soft skills complement the hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job. People need to be made aware of these skills, some of which may be latent in them, while others need to be aroused. Very often, the absence of simple courtesy – expressions like “please,” “thank you,” “excuse me” or “may I help you” or “I am sorry I have hurt you” in daily interactions at the workplace can sour relationships. People without such manners may get branded as lacking in the finer qualities.

George Gazda highlighting the need to enhance soft skills says; “As a result of a person's socialization, he has already acquired some interpersonal skills. However, one's level of functioning in terms of these skills can be raised. Everyone has a vast capacity for being more understanding, respectful, warm, genuine, open, direct, and concrete in his human relationships. With a sound body of theoretical knowledge, appropriate models, and numerous opportunities for personal experiencing, the process of becoming more fully human can be greatly accelerated.”

Let's not get carried away by these lofty connotations. On the basis of all that we have discussed let us try to define ‘soft skills’ for ourselves for a better understanding: Soft skills are people skills backed by our emotional intelligence that help us behave in a socially acceptable manner and adapt ourselves to a social environment so that others are comfortable in our company and vice versa. Here we see that soft skills involve:

- Our ability to function harmoniously with others
- Our openness to learning new ideas
- Our tolerance to not – so-pleasant situations and differences in opinions
- Our readiness to accept people from different cultures
- Our willingness to make things work in our personal and professional life
- Our ability to manage our own emotions
- Our ability to manage others by mapping their mood
- Our ability to manage a situation by weighing its sensitivity and attuning our actions accordingly.

John Hancock, an American statesman, rightly puts it, “The greatest ability in business is to get along with others and influence their actions.” Everyone now realizes that soft skills are an important element for the success of an organization. Organizations – particularly those frequently dealing with customers from different cultures, languages and locations – are generally more prosperous if they train their manpower to use these skills. For this reason, soft skills are increasingly sought by all organizations, in general, and the BPO sector, in particular, in addition to standard qualifications.

Nowadays, companies use all types of assessment tests like Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) in order to get an idea of what kind of personality the prospective recruit has and what the degree of his/her soft skills is. Employing soft skills effectively in the highly competitive corporate world would help you stand out in a crowd of average employees who have mediocre skills and talent.

Soft skills play a vital role in professional success. They help one excel in the workplace. Their importance cannot be denied in this age of culturally diverse workplaces and information – based economy, especially in countries like India, China, the Philippines, Ireland, Australia and Canada that have an ever – increasing job market.

Communicative English plays a vital role in equipping learners with effective communication skills and imparting the broader social and ethical values of liberal humanism. In the new millennium of a post-globalized world, their demand and scope have increased much more than what it was in any other age. The proficient use of good language competence is a sine none of a technology – driven world where human interaction has been liberated from the temporal barriers of time and space. As users of English as an international language, it has become even more imperative to constantly upgrade and improve our skills, for all knowledge acquisition and dissemination depends on this vital human facility. English is not only the most visible language of the arts and culture but also of science and technology, of business and commerce and of the web and internet. Therefore, its future is a future of limitless opportunities.

Soft skills determine a person's attitudes. They are the skills which emanate from the very being of an individual. Again, communication is the life blood of any organization, social or business. A combination of soft skills and communication skills, or rather their integration, will entail success in interpersonal communication. This is the key to success in corporate communication, too.

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