

Getting Hired Isn't Hard –
**When You Have the
Right Soft Skills**

They may be called “soft,” but make no mistake: Regardless of your industry or job function, soft skills are critical to getting hired – and succeeding on the job. Which do you need for your career, and how can you develop them?

In this eBook, you will learn:

- What soft skills actually are.
- Why soft skills are important for success.
- Ways to enhance your soft skills.
- Strategies for demonstrating soft skills in an interview.

Ready to get started?

What Are Soft Skills, Anyway?

Every job requires certain “technical” skills. Engineers must be good with math. Developers must have a firm grasp of coding skills. Machine operators must be mechanically inclined.

However, success on the job requires more than task-specific skill sets. Soft skills are equally important to “hard” skills in today’s job market. Soft skills are traits that allow you to work well as a functioning member of a team. They include things like:

- **Communication.** Most jobs require you to communicate effectively with others on a regular basis, whether that communication is verbal, written or both.
- **Listening skills.** Being able to receive communication is just as important as the way you communicate with others. Listening allows you to follow directions, address concerns and needs, and do your job effectively.
- **Accountability.** Successful people do what they say they will do and take responsibility when a task doesn’t go as planned.
- **Problem-solving abilities.** When challenges arise, it is important to assess the situation and develop a plan to move forward, without getting paralyzed or overwhelmed.
- **Empathy.** Empathy allows you to understand someone’s feelings without letting them impact your own. It’s being able to say, “I know how you feel,” and demonstrating you really do.
- **Emotional Intelligence.** This is the ability to read other people’s emotions and adjust your approach accordingly. Emotionally intelligent people don’t rely on knee-jerk reactions. They measure their approach and act rationally, rather than reactively.

Why Are Soft Skills Important to Success?

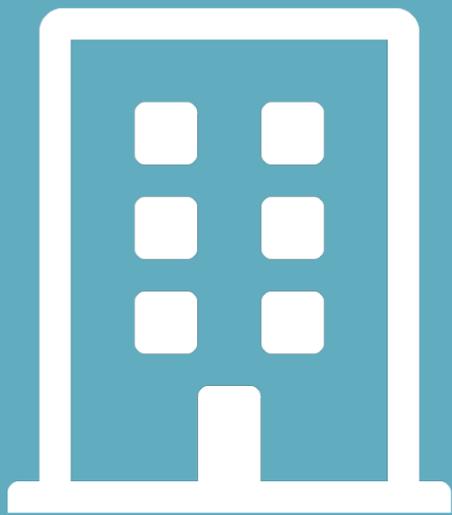
It's easy to understand why technical skills are important for success, but many people wonder why soft skills are so important.

In today's environment, soft skills are critical because:

- **Hard skills are useless without soft skills.** Technical skills can help you complete tasks, but soft skills are what make you successful. For example, a salesperson with exceptional knowledge about their products won't be successful if they don't have the interpersonal skills to relate to clients.
- **Soft skills are difficult to learn.** Employers know that technical skills can be taught, but soft skills are linked to a person's character. Learning soft skills takes discipline, effort and commitment to self-improvement. That's why hiring managers look for people who already have the necessary soft skills to succeed.
- **Most jobs are interpersonal.** It is very rare to find a job where you do not have to interact and communicate with others. Strong soft skills make for more productive and effective teams.
- **Soft skills create a competitive advantage.** Customers rely on technology to interact with businesses, but when they want to speak to a human, they demand empathy, knowledge, effective problem-solving and swift resolutions. Companies that focus on building teams with soft skills will build stronger relationships with their customers.

Top Soft Skills for Popular Jobs

Most soft skills can be applied to any job, but these are the most important soft skills for popular jobs.



Administrative

- Listening skills
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Attention to detail
- Accountability
- Empathy
- Patience
- Flexibility



Light Industrial

- Listening skills
- Dependability
- Problem-solving skills
- Safety consciousness
- Teamwork
- Accountability

Top Soft Skills for Popular Jobs



Accounting and Finance

- Multitasking
- Leadership
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Empathy
- Emotional intelligence
- Problem-solving skills



Information Technology

- Verbal and written communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Curiosity
- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Flexibility



Management

- Verbal and written communication skills
- Listening skills
- Empathy
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership
- Coaching abilities
- Adaptability

Tips for Developing Soft Skills

Soft skills aren't always easy to learn, but you can work on them with a bit of focus and determination. Here are some practical ways to start enhancing your soft skills.



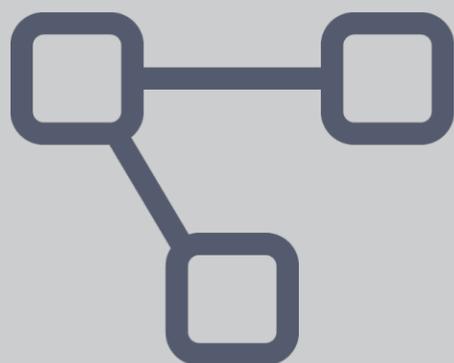
Communication

- Focus on making eye contact when speaking to other people.
- Become more aware of your body language.
- Practice speaking clearly and making your point concisely.
- Always proofread anything you write before turning it in or clicking “send.”



Listening

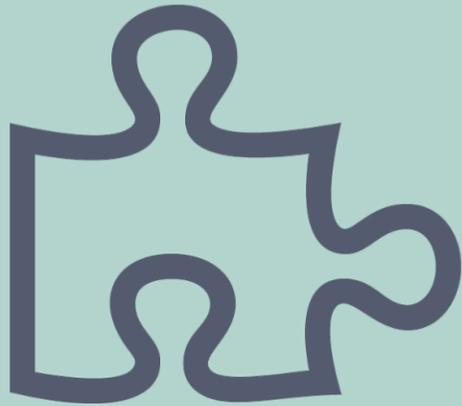
- Let other people finish their statements before speaking.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Repeat back what you think you heard the other person say.



Teamwork

- Divide work evenly.
- Eliminate, “that’s not my job” from your vocabulary.
- Thank others and praise others for a job well done.
- Volunteer to help someone who is struggling.

Tips for Developing Soft Skills



Problem Solving

- Ask others for input when solving a problem.
- Brainstorm new approaches to old problems.
- Surround yourself with creative thinkers.
- Get plenty of rest.



Accountability

- Practice underpromising and overdelivering.
- Speak up if you know a project is falling behind.
- Resist the urge to blame others when things go wrong.
- Treat mistakes as learning experiences.



Emotional Intelligence

- When someone is having an emotional reaction to a problem, don't get “sucked in.”
- Practice assessing situations and measuring your response before reacting.
- Demonstrate empathy when someone is emotional.
- Focus on the task, rather than the feelings of the people involved.

How to Sell Soft Skills in an Interview

It's easy to "prove" your hard skills in an interview, as your work experience and credentials speak for themselves. Demonstrating soft skills isn't quite as easy, but it is extremely important if you want to land the job.

Study the company's mission, vision, values and corporate culture, and go back over the job description for the role you're interviewing for. Identify a few soft skills that are required for success in the position and in the company. From there, you can develop anecdotes from your work history that demonstrate those skills.

Tips for Demonstrating Your Soft Skills

1. Concisely describe a situation in which you exhibited a specific soft skill.
2. Talk about the specific actions you took.
3. Explain the outcome.

Identifying Opportunities to Discuss Soft Skills

Hiring managers will rarely ask you directly about your soft skills. Instead, they will ask behavioral questions that require you to describe previous actions, or they will ask questions that speak to your unique personality and character.

These are some common interview questions that open the door to showcasing your soft skills:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Tell me about a time when you did more than was required of you on the job.
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Do you consider yourself successful?
- Tell me about a recent conflict with a co-worker.
- When is it ok to ignore workplace procedures to get a job done?
- Describe a challenge you had to overcome in the last two years, and what was the outcome?
- How do you plan your workweek?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?

The most important thing to remember is to be yourself. Exaggerating skills or making up stories could cost you the job.

Finding a Job That Suits You

Jobs require specific soft skills, but the culture of the organization also impacts the skills you'll need to do your job effectively. That's why it is so important to find the right match.

Many times, a job doesn't feel right because it's just not the right fit. If you are looking for a job that truly suits you, work with a staffing service to find new opportunities.

The right recruiter can help you:

- Find jobs that complement your existing soft skills.
- Identify opportunities to develop your soft skills on assignment.
- Match you to employers where you will be naturally poised to succeed.