

## Importance of soft skills in career success

Shweta Bajaj<sup>1</sup>, Abhishek Verma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Graphic Era Deemed to be University Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Director, University of Petroleum and Energy studies Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

### Abstract

Soft skills have always been crucial and important in today's byzantine world, where people are apathetic to each other, frustration is all around, insecurities are propelling, here soft skills can emerge as a panacea to combat these problems. Soft skills entails interpersonal skills that propel how well an individual can get along with others. It envelops varied spectrum of skills as different as emotional intelligence, teamwork, communication skills, problem solving skills and empathy.

In the knowledge era, it is quintessential for employees to enhance and upgrade their soft skills to have a right career progression, entangled with opportunities and growth. Soft skills plays a pivotal role in one's life and career as well.

To gain competitive advantage, it is imperative for employees to constantly hone their soft skills which comprises ability to communicate effectively, managing emotions, handling stress, etc. having right set of soft skills among employees not only enhances the chances of individualistic growth but also create symphony and candor among employees at work place which increases performance and productivity at large.

Competition has been inadvertently promulgating across workplaces worldwide. It alarms us to be agile and hone our skills to sustain and succeed in this volatile world.

In order to create a culture of harmony among employees and bringing more productivity to the workplace the significance of soft skills cannot be neglected.

**Keywords:** importance of soft skills, career success, insecurities

### Introduction

What a common man knows about these skills are the intrinsic attributes that are required for behaving in a better way through verbal or nonverbal communication. Soft skills play a pivotal role today in our lives. They are those intangible abilities that are sought from anyone. Soft skills are attracting many people into research and also to professionals working in big corporate houses as it has become an integral part of our day to day life. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines soft skills as "personal qualities that enable you to communicate well with other people" (Hornby, Sydney, & Deuter, 2015)<sup>[9]</sup>

Being human is all about maintaining relationships whether personal or professional, soft skills play a very important role in maintaining these relationships as it completely depend upon the individual that how he or she wants to maintain his or her association. Soft skills mainly are our Emotional quotients with a blend of Intelligent Quotient. It has Elegance, communication skills, our day to day habits, basically life skills and Peoples skills are the major components of it. Being optimistic, sanguine, adaptable, confident determined are also an integral part of soft skills.

Medical Dictionary defines life skills as "Any personal ability that helps an individual to cope with people, situational changes, or stress.

Life makes us face many challenges and many times we have to go through a rough phase of negativity. We have challenges, deadlines and many conflicts too. Here Soft skills plays a predominant role as they boost an individual and motivates them to meet these challenges with strength and confidence and makes life smooth and effective. . According to Monoharan entitles life skills as soft skills. He

writes "life skills, also known as soft skills, are the skills necessary for successful living. These skills can help people in all respects particularly in making right decisions, communicate effectively and develop self- management talents, to lead a healthy and productive life" (Manoharan, 2013)<sup>[14]</sup>. Life skills are considered to be very important as They mentally prepare us to face any odd in our lives and we are ready psychologically to face any challenges that life throws upon us. These skills helps us to remain optimistic and adaptable throughout inculcates happiness and satisfaction within us.

They include motivation, being flexible, managing the prseeure that we bare, maintaining right attitude and aptitude towards life, handling stress at various level and many other things.

Thompson rightly asserts that good people skills are therefore premised on the ability to recognize one's own feelings and the impact they are having on other people. Without this awareness, interactions between people can be distorted or undermined by the unacknowledged influence of feelings of anger (Thompson, 2015)<sup>[18]</sup>. So, as per the understanding peoples skills include good listening skills, perseverance, being sanguine, and they teach us to comminicaye in the best possible manner and with the best of our abilities (Hornby, Sydney, & Deuter, 2015)<sup>[9]</sup>

### Employability Skills

These soft skills act as the building blocks of one's career. These are the skills that are required to make a person employable. As per various reading the school leavers are do not possess these skills at all and hence they face problems in then later stage of their life.They face issues in

group discussions, Curriculum Vitae and successfully passing the various rounds of the interviews at organisational level. Hence this lead to not getting jobs in good organisations. Today the organisations are looking for employees who are not only having excellent skills relevant to their genre but also possess soft skills which are the demand for Today's world as these skills make them different from the crowd.

These are the skills that makes a person comfortable in any task they are into it starts from making an attractive CV, participation in various discussions and getting the right job for yourself. It acts as the life blood to survive in this world of competition today. It comprises of various skills as logical and analytical, analysing and solving problems at all levels, Intellectual capacity, creativity, Leadership and communication skills. (Chaita, 2016) <sup>[4]</sup>. To be aware of soft skills we need to have a sound understanding of hard skills as well so that it becomes easy for us to clearly see the difference.

Hard skills are the specific skills required for the jobs people are into. For example-accounting, networking, programming etc. These skills can be learned at any time and are practical in approach. (Hannon, 2015) <sup>[8]</sup>. For example today many students are doing different degree courses which help them in acquiring different jobs as per their interest and forte for reaching heights in their professional life. They make them eligible for the kind of job they are into. The importance of hard skills cannot be denied, any employer who is seeking for hiring will definitely check for the hard skills required for a specific job and if at all they find that the candidate is not efficient enough, the application or the candidature is rejected there and then. (Lland, 2013) <sup>[12]</sup>.

The best thing about hard skills are that they can be measured. where as if we compare them with soft skills they cannot be measured and are not quantifiable but they act as a major condiment in getting a candidate the job. Dorsey says the soft skills are those important skills that defines whether the employee is successful or not in their job and how is he as a person in professional as well as personal life. Today we see and read that many successful Professionals fail though being the best in their field as they do not possess the soft skills as they are unable to cope up with many things. Undoubtedly we get the calls from various organisations for the interviews on the basis of our hard skills but what makes them clear are the soft skills.

Similarly skills like or skills also plays a very important role as they refer towards the commitment of the employee towards their job, their interpersonal skills, their attitude towards other employees, their flexible nature and a zeal to learn. these are the basic requirements of any jobs which helps in understanding Responsibilities and functioning of various things in the organisations.

Klaus met people across different countries and found that they are excellent in their technical or hard skills but when it comes to their soft skills which are not what is required they are unable to relate themselves with people which affect them in various ways. She provides lessons on how to manage stress level at different time at work place She also talks about the greatness the soft skills possess and how are they important in our lives and how important they are to maintain our professional life and relationships.

Today soft skills are recognised as the major element for a Successful career growth Today, the employers are

looking for candidates who are committed, believe in team work, possess leadership abilities, can handle stress and pressure at work place and can manage time effectively.

Our society comprises of different people and being social means how we communicate or interact with people, we need to understand that what can be the right reaction, right words which can lead to a conversation, where non-verbal skills also plays a major role. (Lecroy, 1983).

There are a lot of people who do not know how to communicate with people and hence they get into troubles of worsen relationships with others. Carnegie says that if at all we want to win people then we need to do good to them and this will need investing of time and energy in a very subtle way. If we are genuine in our approach then we will win people be it at the personal front or professionally. (Carnegie, 2010) <sup>[3]</sup>

There are times when there are employees who are the best in every aspect but fail when it comes to team work as they just want to think about themselves and look only for their personal growth, but they need to understand that this hampers the growth of the organisation as a whole, if the people do not grow. Ramesh says that for an organisation it is very important that the entire organisation grow and not just one individual, as organisational growth is most important than personal growth. (Ramesh & Ramesh, 2010) <sup>[6]</sup> Later he tells about what can be achieved when we work in a team. He says that working in a team is a two way process where the person contribute towards the goal of the group and in return he expects that he should be motivated to reach to his personal goals too. Commitment play a very important role when we talk about an organisational working which every employee must possess.

Makkar says that it should be mandatory to have administrative, managerial or interpersonal skills set to prove the commitment towards your work. Besides this value is very important too every employee should value and respect the vision and mission of the organisation they are working into and need to understand the role it plays in the development of the country. (Makkar & Kumar, 2012) <sup>[13]</sup> It is very important for the organisation too to communicate the thought process, the mission and the vision of the organisation to its employee so that they be committed towards it. Success of the organisation is the success of the employees and vice versa and because of this the committed performance is achieved.

To have a better working environment it is important for the employees to have good problem solving skills and this can only be achieved if they are good in attitude, optimistic in their approach, can communicate effectively and are flexible. Another skill that plays a major role is Interpersonal skills. It plays a major role as the organisation is diverse people with different backgrounds, different mindsets, and different thought processes come together to work in a team for successfully running the organisation, hence an attitude of acceptance plays a very crucial role in making a team and working together for each others benefits. These relationships can be maintained only through sound soft skills. How the organisation communicates with its employees reflects the perception of the company that how much it trusts its employees and value them and this leads to satisfaction in work and commitment towards the organisation. (Krizan, 2011) <sup>[10]</sup>

A good amount of information moves in all the direction at workplace amongst many employees. According to

Chambers, Poor Communication is the cause of maximum problems at organisational level. Later he spoke about improvisation in communication skills. Specially in the technical field as they have to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. He also gave the various tips to improve the communication skills. Chambers says, "As you sharpen your communication abilities, hopefully others will follow suit (...)" (Chambers, 2001) <sup>[5]</sup>

Another very important factor to bring the best in the organisation is Emotional intelligence, which is managing the emotions in an optimistic way so that one can communicate effectively and can understand the other person to avoid various conflicts that may arise within the organisation, any relationship can fail if the emotions lack, whether it is personal or professional. It is very important to have a high EQ level as it's not only important for the individual but also other people who are connected in different ways with each other. Weisinger tells that if the EQ is high it will be a benefit for both the parties who are communicating with each other as the understanding level rises. It is done by giving equal importance to others' feelings and emotions and taking them to different levels for a successful work environment, this not only helps the individual but all the concerns.

So, we can say that soft skills play an eminent role at work place. Klaus's famous saying, "Soft skills get little respect but they either make or break your career" (Andriotis, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>, this line is very much used while delivering on soft skills across the world, as the importance of these skills cannot be denied at various junctions now and has become crucial at all levels. Today many educational institutions have introduced soft skills in their syllabus so that a student is well aware in advance about the importance of soft skills along with the hard skills that he is learning so that they can reach the pinnacle of success.

### Communication Skills

Communication is the key for every successful professional, the more you are able to communicate properly the more you rise high in life. It is the key factor for any organization (Sethi & Adhikri, 2010) <sup>[17]</sup>. All the communication from top management to the bottom level reaches through communication only. The entire information reaches to all the juniors in the department through communication only. People working in the organization are connected worldwide due to the expansion because of mergers and acquisitions. It's all because of the globalization, communication has become the major factor for proper functioning of any organization. It acts as the life blood and the employees are the people who pass it on from one person to another. It is required in every phase in an organization for eg, motivating the employees, planning, inspiring or accomplishing the short or long term goals, all is communicated. Miscommunication can be hazardous for any organization as it can affect the work life balance of the employees and also the employers. It can have a severe impact on the success ratio of organization or self. Communication has to be clear and there should not be any place for ambiguity and it is also important to understand as in who is the receiver then only there can be a two way communication (Tripathy, 2018) <sup>[19]</sup>. Communication is a very important part of the soft skills but it also has other aspects like Reading, writing and listening which are considered to be equally important. (Giffin, Fundamentals

of management).

It has always been a coveted choice for all the recruiters to find candidates having possessed with excellent communication skills.

Enhancing your communication skills can influence your career to next level of excellence –and your daily success at work. Our ability to communicate impacts efficiency, effectiveness, reliance between you and your employer. It distinguishes you from others. It creates a brand YOU.

### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been crucial for career progression and success. When we conjoint our cognitive intent with emotions, it reflects in better problem solving, enhanced productivity and improved relationships. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize one's own emotions and subsequent behaviour.

Daniel Goleman, a pioneer in the research of emotional intelligence assert that it is the key differentiator to attaining success in life. It is the ability to manage your emotions and subsequently understand others' to create harmony and long term relationships. (Caramela, 2018) <sup>[2]</sup>.

An individual's capability to manage emotions, empathetic behavior, and get along well with people is some of the characteristics of high emotional intelligence. Merely putting yourself into another's shoes is not EI but to act upon and understand others in reality, makes you a person of high emotional intelligence.

Human intent cannot be replaced with machines. The human connect is irreplaceable in all aspects with anything else. The importance of emotional touch cannot be ruled out.

Robotics as of now can't strive with humans on Emotional Intelligence.

Human intent in the imminent scenario required to be inventive to recognize the advantages of new ways of adopting novel technologies.

It is undoubtedly the most important skill required to advance one's career prospects and growth.

People with high emotional intelligence have always been inclined to having great time management skills, giving apt priority to task undertaken. They use time as the most invaluable resource helping surge ahead for accomplishing their goals. (Marvel, 2012) <sup>[15]</sup>.

### Adaptability

Numerous of your personality variables will aid in dealing with certain circumstances at work. Adopting the new circumstances at work makes you more agile to perform. Recruiters want people who can be pliant to new circumstances. It has always been desirable to be flexible in the workplace for number of reasons. Adaptability leads to more productivity. Recruiters value candidates showcase adaptability as a key element of their personality and professional outlook. Recruiters want people who can respond positively to change and new ways of working, who are passionate and confident to rise to the challenge of dealing with the unknown, unfamiliar and prove they can cope with the new and unanticipated.

Your ability to manage change makes you robust to acclimatize in difficult situations. It makes you resourceful and a person with self-efficacy, who can turn adversity into opportunity. This is the reason, recruiters want to hire candidates who have the ability to adjust to all the ongoing changes.

### **Creativity**

Importance of creativity cannot be brushed aside. We have witnessed the ever evolving role of creativity during this havoc called Covid 19. Many of the enterprises have shifted to deliver their services in healthcare domain. Mercedes F1 have started to gear up to produce state of the art breathing aids. Creativity as an attribute has always been the first choice for recruiters.

Experimentation, learning to unlearn, think beyond obvious are the keys to develop creativity quotient in you. Organization will require human inventiveness to design, redesign and challenge the status quo, invent new verticals and ways of doing things.

It is going to be never ending quintessential quality to be successful in all the endeavors of life.

### **Learning Agility**

It is a never ending learning process, a thirst for knowing more always. It delves deep into the desire of learning, unlearning and relearning.

Recruiters today rely more on your learning agility than intelligence. The reasons are quite obvious as to thrive and flourish in today's multifaceted business arena, we need to be agile, adaptable, and open to new ways of doing things.

In the current scenario, business environment has been very dynamic and volatile than ever before.

Work force with high learning agility seek out and learn from unaccustomed experiences and then implement those lessons to prosper in the next new situation. It starts with reconnoitering something novel, something beyond imagination. It helps people to know what to do when they don't know the solution.

It is unleashing your true potential to get desired results. It is about facing challenges with novel strategies or solutions

### **Conclusion**

Soft skills have always been an integral part of any human being and plays a pivotal role in one's career success. Further, soft skills paves the path for healthy collaboration and creates a conducive work environment for everyone.

The role of softskills in Individuals career progression cannot be brushasided, failing which we remain stagnatic and disoriented in our career journey. Having right set of softskills creates better career opportunities and propels plethora of chances for career advancement.

Soft skills entail a pledge to self-improvement and continuing drill to improve your professional persona. Soft skills play an indispensable role to forming your triumph, and make you a winner in all spheres of life.

### **References**

1. Andriotis N. The Top Soft Skills to Train Your Employees, 2018.
2. Caramela S. How Emotional Intelligence Is Linked to Career Success, 2018.
3. Carneige D. How to win friends and influence people. London: Random house, 2010.
4. Chaita MV. Developing graduate employability skills: Your pathway to employment. Florida: Boca Rotan Universal, 2016.
5. Chambers H. Effective communication skills for scientific and technical professionals. New York: basic, 2001.
6. Giffin RW. Fundamentals of management. Boston.

7. Giffin RW. Fundamentals of management. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015.
8. Hannon K. Getting the job you want after 50 for dummies. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
9. Hornby, Sydney, Deuter, the Oxford Advanced Leraners Dictionary of Current English. The Oxford Advanced Leraners Dictionary of Current English. United Kingdom: United Kingdom: Oxford University, 2015.
10. Krizan AC. Business communication. Australia: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2011.
11. Lecroy C. Social skills training for children and youth. Haworth Press, 1983.
12. Lland A. Soft skills: Be professionally proactive. N.P.: Iland Business Pages, 2013.
13. Makkar U, Kumar H. Customer relationship management. New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill, 2012.
14. Manoharan PK. Education and personality development. New Delhi: APH, 2013.
15. Marvel MR. Encyclopaedia of New Venture Management. Thousand oaks, SAGE, 2012.
16. Ramesh G, Ramesh M. The ACE of Soft Skills: Attitude, Communication and Etiquette for Success. Noida: Dorling Kindersley, India, 2010.
17. Sethi A, Adhikri B. Business Communication. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Education, 2010.
18. Thompson N. People skills. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
19. Tripathy M. Inducing people management skills in order to achieve organisational excellence. International Journal of Communication Research. 2018; 8(3):224-229.