

## **People Skills-The Underrated Skills: A Must For Personal Effectiveness**

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**Abstract:** In this increasingly competitive employment environment, it's essential to work as effectively as possible. Personal effectiveness is pivotal for our success. There are different challenges prevalent in our work place that can affect our efficiency. The high amount of stress, day to day problems, busy schedules and other irritants of life are some of them. All exerts require hardihood in personal and professional effectiveness at work. Personal Effectiveness encompasses in itself a variety of soft skills, ranging from being organized, to handling and managing time, stress, to set and accomplish targets and other meeting deadlines. The need of the hour in the world of employment is such candidates who are ingenious, humane and self-directed with adroit soft skills. Mere work experience and academic knowledge is not enough for the ingress and growth in the corporate world. The employability skills are progressively befitting the world of hard skills for the young generation. While these vocational skills may show you directions to walk on the paths of opportunities, but it's your people skills that will help you to walk through those roads not taken by everyone. They hold a capacious place in one's career development, so it is very necessary to master these skills for personal, professional and technical development.

**Keywords:** Soft Skills, People skills, personal effectiveness, hard skills, communication skills

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### **I. Introduction**

There is no renouncing in the fact that soft skills perform a critical role in both personal and professional life. Without having soft skills, life looks impossible. The people skills are running parallel with hard skills in terms of their respective importance. Soft skills are now a segment of everyone's life in this technical era. In earlier time, they were lacking in their life, but in today's time, some people are aware about the demand of the soft skills. There are certain soft skills which are related to our communication ability, our responsibilities, teamwork, self-motivation, values and commitment with others. These skills reflect our attitude in front of someone. Soft skills are a necessity in modern era to achieve the success in jobs or in business career.

Having soft skills, we can deal with our competitors and easily cope up with our troubles and chaotic situations which occur in our personal as well as social life. With soft skills, person is able to handle conflicts with flexible personality and maintain his/her positive attitude with everyone. Developing the skills and wisdom for the area we work in is not only valuable to the organization we are working for; it's also a great way of improving our job satisfaction. Knowing our job well also means that one can make clear decisions about where one wants to reach in the future.

Every day we spend couple of hours and energy on achieving the set targets and goals. Owing to respective distinctiveness, the same tasks are accomplished with different costs by different people. Our potency depends on our intrinsic attributes – talent and experience that we have heaped in the quest of attaining personal development. Aggrandizing our personal efficiency is the felicitous way that connects the elements of the success as you journey through it.

In practice, personal effectiveness implies getting better, like:

- setting an example to others for becoming a highly effective team leader
- encouraging team development through effective deputation
- improving the efficiency of team meetings
- handling conflict situations
- successfully keeping an eye on the work of the team
- providing useful response to colleagues, guiding for better team performance
- developing a self-evaluation system within the team
- managing time and priorities
- communicating with a different types of individuals and groups

Scholastic societies have recognized the need for bestowing soft skills to their students along with the academic qualification (the hard skills) to ensure their professional competence.

Soft skills are different from the hard skills and are identified as the pillars of foundation for building the gap in varied talents in India today. It is important to interact with the clients and to work in co-ordination manner with the team. This reflects on the work quality and productivity. Soft skills are more to do with who we are than what we know. The hard skills may be the foundation to a successful career. However, they need to be welded with soft skills. PDP (Personal Development Programme) is introduced in many universities in west, where a conscious effort is made to assure that students are acquainted of the necessity to acquire the time management skills, decision making, conflict resolution, team-work, self-awareness, motivation, etc.

These topics are a few that are mentioned from a galore of various topics which are essential in today's fast changing world. In today's industrial science driven world, professionals also need to be adequately prepared. Their profiles may be readily sketched in terms of three components: (1) their knowledge—the core subject abstract they know and concepts they understand; (2) the skills they use in administering and utilizing their knowledge, such as communication, leadership, evaluation and teamwork; (3) the attitudes that dictate the goals—personal values, concerns, preferences and biases.

People skills or Soft skills can be categorized as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. They also enhance the ability to work properly in job when employees are under pressure or stress. That is why; soft skills are weighed as the interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are very much observable to others and they are the potential of an individual to interpret and manage his/her own feelings, actions, motivations and that of others in the social arenas. Intrapersonal skills deal with feelings, thoughts and emotions that are stirred up within an individual. This skill is not apparent because it is within a person and the individual next to them may not be aware of it.

## **II. Review of Literature**

Throughout the world a lot of studies are in process for the relationship between various employability skills and performance. These studies were conducted in different fields, such as construction, health, retailing, IT, education, and hospitality. Some of the studies closely related to this topic of research are reviewed here.

Boyatzis (1982) studied the relation between soft skills and organizational skills. He used in his study multiple methods to study potentialities of employees and concluded that the basic roles of management require soft skills.

James Manktelow in a leading management and career skills training community, in (1995) began his research into practical skills needed to make progress in his career. Mind tools soft skills training community teaches members skills in leadership, team management, communication, problem solving, project management, stress management etc. Proper coaching is vital to function effectively. He concludes that employees should be given admittance to easy and accessible soft skills training but he does not discuss other variables like age, gender, background etc. that may hamper or help effectiveness in performance level.

Knight's (2011) study focused at understanding the effectiveness of a management course of international studies in enhancing personal traits and skills that would consequently improve their employability. It was like a case study, wherein 4 students had enrolled for Airline management and financial statement tutorial course. The entire course work became the actual study in itself. The way they dispersed the various business course of actions revealed the varied skills they had acquired. The outcomes were based on the capabilities of the students as far as the simulations situations were concerned. The 4 participants proved to have increased a lot of personal effectiveness and skills through this course.

Nealy's (2005) study is qualitative study that looks at integration of people skills through active learning in management course of study. It also looked at how such training could impact first generation learner and value the impact through non-traditional method. 20 first generation learners were selected from a class of 60 in this study. The study was two phased: Initially classes were handled in a traditional, lecture discussion mode on the variety aspects of soft skills. Later on students were divided into groups and were expected to discuss analyze and solve problems. This simulation allowed for students to interact, conduct mock interviews etc. As far as human relation' aspect was concerned, they had to understand situation related to work place, and be culturally sensitive. They were also exposed to professional code of morality and allegiance. The feedback from the participants in terms of what they learned through the 'active learning' simulations has a list of skills which are very essential in work place. The article concludes on a positive note that such opportunities provided to college students would surely help them develops 'soft skills' which helps in productive performance of 21st century work place.

Goswami (2013) concluded that the need of soft skills with technical skills is equally in demand to build up the personality of life. The study describes the soft skills in IT sector for students as well as employees.

Today's companies need not only hard skills but they need soft skills to obtain the objectives of the business. In this study the author also underlined the fact that technical skills can compete with others for success but to know about success soft skills is also must.

Pachauri and Yadav (2013) in their study lay emphasis on that the teacher and educational institutes play important role to enlighten the soft skills and hard skills in the students because they have become an indispensable part of our life. These skills also meet the expectations and needs of the students. They mentioned seven skills in this study like communication skills, critically analyzing skills, life-long skills and information management, entrepreneur skill, ethics in professionalism and leadership skills. These skills are selected by pedagogues to identify and interpret the study of softs for students.

Peggy Klaus (2007) book entitled 'The Hard Truth about Soft skills' is a very practical guide that takes one through real world situations where in soft skills matter a lot in work place. A confederate trainer and an executive trainer, Klaus has conducted various workshops and training sessions in Soft skills. The author details the importance and need of soft skills. She details her various experiences with participants in her workshop who are famous lawyers, doctors, scientist who have amazing technical skills but have a huge gap in their soft skills and hence missed opportunities and at times faced a derailed career. According to her the soft skills complement the hard ones and are essential for success in work place.

Bradford and Robin (2004) discussed the significance of 'Soft skills' in 'Leadership Excellence'. a qualitative study, it deals extensively on the changing need of the hour. Knowledge and expertise is distributed across organization and what is very important is that excellence is achieved if and only if everyone's 'competencies' are utilized to the maximum. According to the authors 'team competencies' create synergy which provides crucial support to positive decision making. The study also discusses the importance of mutual competence for leaders and probes into 'individual competencies' like the capability to learn, open to feedback, traipsing out of comfort zone etc. The study concludes on an interesting note that the so called 'soft' competence is the 'toughest' to acquire. National Skill Development Corporation (2009) is one of its kinds in India, wherein there is a public private partnership aiming to publicize skill development.

Most studies show that India would have the maximum number of workforce in the coming years and the major challenge is to get them job ready or industry ready. By 2022 the target is to empower and enhance the skill of close to 500 million 42 people. The NSDC has classified sector wise the skill gap and has mapped the demand and supply aspect also; though the study reveals the urgency for people to be trained across various industries both production and service. It is interesting to note that the Education and Skill Development service too shows a gap in the demand and supply side. The teachers and trainers are the backbone of any nation and the workforce in this educational service sectors also need to be trained in the relevant field in the right way. In identifying the skill required for teachers and trainers, 'Soft Skill' happens to be one major skill that would help them be successful teachers.

### **III. Soft Skills –Meaning & Definition**

Soft skills are personal attributes and interpersonal skills that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. Soft skills typify one's relationship with other people. They permit you to work well in teams, solve problems, manage time, and take personal accountability for your work. Soft skills are today's power skills. They are an amalgam of mutual conversation and social inclination that are in great demand across all industries and jobs. Soft skills are frequently known as personal skills, non-academic skills, life skills, interpersonal skills, employability skills, behavioral skills, non-technical skills, social skills and emotional intelligence. Soft skills are the personal traits, personality traits, built-in social cues, and communication abilities needed for success in the job. Soft skills delineate how a person synergizes in his or her relationships with others. Soft skills include attitude, communication, prolific thinking, work mannerisms, teamwork, networking, decision making, positivity, time management, motivation, flexibility, problem-solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.

#### **Definitions:**

Soft skills are essentially people skills or personality specific skills.

**According to Hewitt Sean (2008)** soft skills are non-technical, indefinite and personality specific skills which actuate an individual's strength to be a leader, listener and adjudicator, or as a conflict resolver.

Soft skills are more of a characteristic of attitude and behavior than of knowledge or technical competence (Tobin, 2006).

**Purdue University** defines soft skills as the agglomeration of certain behavioral traits, social poise, communication skills, personal habits, goodwill, and optimism that stamp each of us to vacillating degrees.

Their list of soft skills includes work ethic, courtesy, teamwork, self-discipline, self-confidence, conformity to prevailing norms, and language proficiency.

**Martin Carole (2008)** comments that Soft skills are different and distinct from Hard Skills. Soft skills are those skills that add more value to the hard skills adorned by an individual.

Soft skills are not an alternative for hard skills, but they act as symphonizing skills that bring us at par with the good technical skills. (Wikipedia, 2007).

#### **IV. The Most In-Demand Soft Skills Today**

In today's competitive industrial market, getting a job offer is not an easy task. These interpersonal skills are usually looked by the recruiters and have been on the radar of employers all the time. Here are some of the extra attributes graduates should master to ensure a prosperous career:

- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills
- Management skills
- Mentoring skills
- Self-promotion skills
- Negotiation skills
- Presentation skills
- Creativity skills
- Time management skills
- Confidence
- Problem solving

**Table 1: Attributes of soft skills**

1.CommonSense	2. Good attitude	3. Communication skills
4. Group Discussion	5. Etiquette & Manners.	6. Body Language
7. Cooperation &Team skills	8. Adaptability.	9. Flexibility.
10. Follow rules / Instructions.	11. Initiative	12. Responsibility
13. Reliability.	14. Honesty.	15. Integrity
16. Dependability.	17. Work ethics.	18. Punctuality
19. Grooming	20. Accountability	21. Interpersonal Skills
22. Intrapersonal skills	23. Motivational skills	24. Creative thinking skills
25. Problem Solving Ability	26. Public Relations	27. Willingness to learn
28. Time Management	29. Prioritizing Tasks.	30. Performance Excellence
31. Commitment	32. Ability to meet deadlines	33. Listening Skills
34. Judgment	35. Leadership skills	36. Decision Making
37. Self-direction	38. Presentation Skills	39. Change Management
40. Project Management	44. Personal hygiene	42. Self-Supervising

43. Personal energy	47. Empathy	45. Intellectual Ability
46. Sociability	48. Business management	49. Motivation

### V. Need for Soft Skills

In this growing world of wisdom we all end up with common knowledge as basics. What separates us from one another is how perfectly we can utilize our skills and knowledge. These skills enhance inter-communication with supervisors, colleagues and customers and improve the fallout of how others perceive us. In the glad-handing society of today, it is the need of the hour to be amenable to others; if not so then the people around you may tend to circumlocute. Furthermore, the success of any work depends upon how to do and how to get it done by others. It is very important to get along with people in all spheres of life whether it be in the corporate world, or even in personal life.

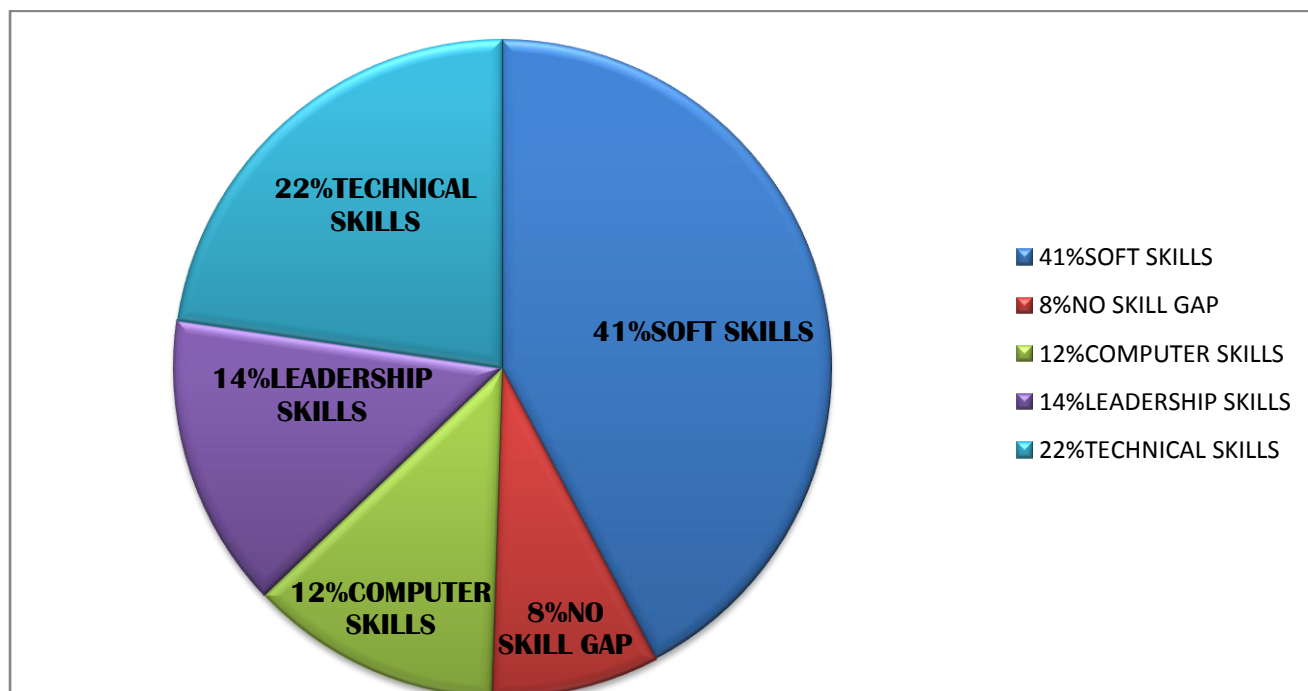


Fig.1: Need for Soft Skills

Today’s companies mostly look for the social skills of the candidates during an interview. People may define their technical skills but it is hard to describe the soft skills. So there are some ways through which soft skills can be learned. People skills can be acquired from peers and seniors. Some mentoring sessions from some experts can be a great help to job seekers. Soft skills hold a central place in customer-based jobs. It is very important to deal with various customers and so it requires a great of art to handle the queries and complaints with politeness.

Your work morality, your demeanor, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a multitude of personal traits are the soft skills that are pivotal for professional growth. Analyzing, admeasuring, instigating, and team building are easy to acquire with the help of effective social skills. These attributes may help in building leadership roles. Learning how to get along with people – and showcasing a positive attitude – is vital for success. Soft skills and hard skills are two sides of a same coin and with the help of both they help your organization use its technical expertise to full advantage.

Soft skills are acquired and improved through careful guidance and vigorous practice. It is important to make a pitch for your students to develop their social and transferable skills, as and when mingled with their experience and knowledge can accelerate their career to its desired destinations. It's important to recognize the special role soft skills play within a team, within oneself, and within the organization.

Be it esprit, communication skills or being a quick-thinker, expressing and showing definitively the appropriate soft skills can make inspired candidates catch the eye among the crowd. Soft skills are desired in

routine life in every place as much as they are needed in a workplace. The demeanor of today's job demands creativity, confidence, assertiveness and leadership skills.

## **VI. Importance of Soft skills for Different Professions**

### **6.1 Importance of Soft Skills for Teachers**

For teachers, the competence to use effective soft skills can make or break a career. While it may seem obvious that such skills would factor importantly in a classroom, soft skills are also paramount when working with parents, administration and other teachers. Such skills can improve teacher effectiveness.

1. Helps them make their classes more interesting: - Soft skills are fruitful for teachers to make class interesting and captivating. Teachers may use the innovation techniques to attract the students.
2. To serve as an example for the students: -Soft skills cannot be taught via a book or by a long lecture. Teacher is the only one who has the dexterity to improve the soft skills of the students. Students often imitate and follow their mentors therefore it is the duty of teachers to provide the knowledge of soft skills so that students can differentiate between hard skills and soft skills and get success in this stiff competition.
3. To interact with students at their own level: - It is vital for educators to deal with different students according to their own level. Soft skills may help them to give proper information to the students.
4. Enables them to be good leaders: -.Teachers can lead the students and encourage the students to come forward to be a leader. So teachers need to be leader firstly.
5. Make them much more approachable: - Soft skills make the teachers more approachable. Teachers should guide the students towards right path and right things. They should build the good relations between them so that they can share their problem with them.
6. Allows them to be sensitive to the needs of the children: - Teachers should have the emotional feelings towards students who need to be encouraged. With the help of good soft skills teachers may become considerate and sensitive to the needs of the students. A student gravitates toward success when taught by an effective teacher. Differences in teacher effectiveness can be "the dominant factor affecting student academic gain."

### **6.2 Importance of Soft skills for Students**

Soft skills are important for fine blending the student's attitude to learning, motives, values, and deal with different situations culpably and diligently. Emotional intelligence and soft skills strengthen students from within, which makes them a good predictor of academic success.

1. Helps them in making friends: - Soft skills help them to make friends and good relationships with others. There are many students who are reluctant to interact with their friends and cannot enjoy the company of friends. They need soft skills for better communication.
2. Assists them in understanding the lessons being taught:-The main motive to attend the classes for students is to build or improve the skills in their life. If they do not have the skills they would be unable to understand the lessons being taught. It is very important to have the soft skills to increase the efficiency of language and create the sense of manners.
3. They are needed for any presentations they need to give: - Students, in their school and college life, have to give number of presentations. For this, soft skills are must to be effective in delivering presentations. In this way, they put their best step forward increasing their morale.
4. They need soft skills to help them express themselves during examination: - Having soft skills are vital for students to express themselves clearly in the examinations. They can express in proper manner and write correct answer in exams.

### **6.3 Importance of Soft Skills in Business Environment**

Talking of skills in business, the first line of significance is by and large towards abilities, training and knowledge of specific skill sets. These are referred to as hard skills. Soft skills, however, are often overlooked, yet they also play an important role in day-to-day operations.

1. It helps them to communicate with clients better: - Soft skills plays crucial role in business or job. For getting success, employees need to have soft skills. The key soft skill is communication with clients. Better communication skill helps to build the reputation of the employee in the company.
2. To interact with co-workers and work as a team: - Team work is one of the crucial soft skill which helps to maintain the environment of the company. Working in team or working with others leaves positive impact on the mind of every employee. Working in a team, one may grow faster, do better and get better results than working individually.

3. Allows them to get across ideas to seniors: - Soft skills are mandatory for employees to get across ideas to seniors. In company, they have to share their ideas with their seniors to gain more knowledge. Having soft skills they can share every matter with their seniors.
4. Build relationships across departments: - Soft skills also help employees to build relationships among different departments. Employees may build good relations through good communication, team work and creativity.
5. Create open environment: - Soft skills help them to create open environment in company. There should not be any biasness among workers. If there is partiality, it leads to chaos, confusion and conflicts leaving an adverse effect on them. This may spoils the work environment of company.
6. Building leadership: - It has been said that leaders are formed, not born. To launch yourself into a better career, developing leadership skills can be a ticket to success. Leadership qualities can foster the better execution of decisions and plans. With leadership, they can be strong their relations.
7. Fostering motivation: -Soft skills help employees to be motivated towards everything. Motivation generates positivity resulting in positive attitude of the employees towards the objectives of the company.

Thus, soft skills are an essential part of any modern business. This means it is a process that employees themselves shouldn't be left alone to address - enterprise heads should take a controlling role in soft skill development and improvement. In nutshell, following points underline the importance of soft skills in different areas:

- Enhance the confidence of the person.
- Without having soft skills, hard skills are meaningless.
- With communication skills, people can talk effectively in their interview or in business matters or with their society.
- Soft skills help to improve the attitude of people and learn work with team.
- People can solve their problems and cope up the conflict with others.

Today' workplaces have become interpersonal. Soft skills are useful for coping up the problems which create in relations and reduce the communication gap among people. Having soft skills you can be the leader of the team, you can solve problem, motivate others as much as easier. For getting success, soft skills are must. These skills help to leave a good impact on profession also.

## **VII. Mastering Soft Skills**

Soft skills triggers us to come forward in life to be as a remark which we can be estimated .Soft skills develop through experience, and we are able to breed them by framing a little structure, putting focus and repetition. Hard skills might be helpful during in getting the interview but soft skills are only one thing which is useful to get success in your career. Soft skills are considered as your personal capabilities that determine the ability of you to do work with others. Others things which make you expert in your fields that are job performance and communication. On one hand where technical prowess is very important, these skills are much arduous to teach. These may be factors which are decided for getting and keeping your dream job. There are eight basic soft skills which are mandatory to have in person's life to obtain success and further development. The time you spend will never be wasted in broadening your skills. Even whatever you want to do in your life, soft skills are helpful or you learn more and more soft skills, even if you change your career five times. These are the starting points to learn if you want that you must follow in your life:

### 1. Communication is Key

The key factor is interpersonal communication. Some ways by which we can improve:

- Eye contact during communication
- Focus on body language
- Speaking practice like in formal or formal way.

### 2. Teamwork

Another thing is teamwork which is important skills for doing work together.

- Check out the environment.
- Work with open mind.
- Build strong relation.

### 3. Creativity

It is a skill which is helpful to sharpen the mind. The main source of workplace is creativity. Some ways by which we can improve it:

- Switch up the environment where we are doing work and stayed with creative people.

4. Accept and Learn from Criticism

The main factor of workplace is coped up with criticism. With this, we can accept some problem and conflict and also learn from them. There are some ways which have been observed for improving it like Positive behavior

- Listen others carefully
- Sharing of the thought or thinking.

5. Motivate & be positive

Positive attitude is also important skill and try your best to motivate others. Be optimistic and motivate from others also tell us about soft skills. For improving it, there are some ways like:

- Be optimistic
- Be resilient
- Be happy in everyday

6. Be Adaptable:

Flexibility is also vital for everyone. It can enhance one's potentiality of people to interact others and build strong relationships, which are something; every leader should possess to be successful. By some ways you can improve this skill like

- Remove the ambiguity
- Be open-minded person
- Be flexible.

7. Learn to Listen:

To improve this skill by some ways include:

- Eye contact,
- Fully interactive
- Pay attention and with concentration.

8. Have a Sense of Humor: - The great asset of person is humorous sense. For the improvement of health, interacting with each other, in difficult situation, working with colleagues and being overall successful in life are the way of having a sense of humor. There some ways to create a sense of humor skill:

- Be positive
- Find the funny side which is appropriate for business

The fusion of skills when mingled with right education is the perfect recipe to success and being unique candidate in any classroom or working environment.

## VIII. Conclusion

In today's workplace, soft skills are taking place of the hard skills. Learning of soft skills plays important role in people's life, for both their personal and professional life. Every working person needs to help develop their career. Leadership, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and many more skills are considered as soft skills. For progressing and learning, soft skills have a huge role, it can be said that they can develop your career. Soft skills empower you. If you have soft skills, you can choose every path of career and get success. Indeed, soft skills have become part of life which is essential in today's scenario. Soft skills teach how to behave, how to interact and communicate with other. Communication skills are most important, and they will help me get a job." It is not going to replace years of school and college education, but it's a quick way of correcting what's missing, like giving finishing touches to what's already there.

"Hard skills are helpful for getting interview, however through soft skills you can get—and keep—the job."

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