

IS THERE A SOFT SKILLS GAP?

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MGMT1103: Essential Skills for Teams Collaboration

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INTRODUCTION

Soft skills are personal traits or characteristics that determine how we relate or interact with others in the workplace (Doyle, What Are Soft Skills, 2022). They are as important as technical (hard) skills and can impact performance in the workplace and the company's bottom line and goals.

This paper explores the reality of today's job market concerning the supply and demand of soft skills. It briefly highlights what employers are looking for and attempts to answer the question: **is there a soft skills gap?**

IS THERE A SOFT SKILLS GAP?

The reality of today's job market is that hard (technical) skills are not enough. We live in a fast-changing, dynamic era with technological advancements, globalization, shifts in societal values, remote work environments, increased diversity, etc., and the need for soft skills cannot be overemphasized. There is a high demand for soft skills as employers now actively look for people with the right mix of hard and soft skills. Soft skills feature prominently in 2 out of 3 job advertisements posted globally (America Succeeds, 2021) and 6 out of 10 professionals agreed that soft skills are just as important as hard skills in the workplace (Castrillon, 2022). Some of the most sought-after soft skills are **communication, leadership, teamwork, time management, adaptability, conflict management, and problem-solving** (Danao, 2023).

It is said that hard skills may get you noticed, but soft skills get you the job and help you keep it (Castrillon, 2022). Soft skills are no longer optional. They are prominently mentioned in the job advertisements and interviews are geared towards assessing behaviors rather than technical knowledge (Castrillon, 2022) (Bika, 2023). Hence, job seekers are becoming more aware and are working on their soft skills.

Unfortunately, soft skills are hardly taught in academic institutions. Employers noted that new college graduates may have technical knowledge, but many lack soft skills. In one survey, 75% of employers said they found it difficult to find college graduates with the soft skills they needed (McGovern, 2023). A few institutions, e.g., Bow Valley College, are now infusing soft skills into the curriculum to help bridge this gap.

There is indeed a soft skill gap. In one survey, 80% of employers reported experiencing soft skill gaps (Hiring Monster, n.d.). Post-pandemic, and with the shift to remote work, the gap has widened as people do not interact face-to-face, and nuances (e.g., body language) can be lost in virtual communication. However, all hope is not lost. Employers are investing more in soft skills training to bridge these gaps. They are developing training programs, personal and professional development programs, etc. to address these gaps and minimize the loss of revenue a lack of soft skills can cause (Hiring Monster, n.d.).

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Peer Evaluation

Use the rubric below to evaluate each participant

Score 5	Full Participation
Score 4	Good Participation
Score 3	Participated
Score 2	Minimal Participation
Score 1	No Participation

Team Member	Score #
Atai Okokon	5
Oluchi Ruth Osuafor-Humphrey	5
Deepanshi	5
Niriya	5