

**Recognizing a Soft Skills Gap, and Promoting Soft Skills in the Workplace**

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### **Recognizing a Soft Skills Gap, and Promoting Soft Skills in the Workplace**

Education, certifications, and experience can help get your foot in the door with an employer, but soft skills will open the door, help you excel as an employee, and help you stand out among your coworkers. In many jobs there is a gap of soft skills. This means there are people with technical skills, but an absence of soft skills. These skills may be more important than technical skills, because they go hand in hand with technical skills and expertise to help people reach their full potential (*Why Soft Skills Matter: Making Sure Your Hard Skills Shine*, 2016). Soft skills that employers are looking for are well developed listening skills, excellent communication skills, critical thinking skills, effective prioritization, attention to details, ability to self-reflect, and authentic motivation to learn (“Accentuating Soft Skills for Employment, Workplace Success,” 2019). These skills demonstrate the competence and depth the employer seeks in a valued employee.

Your resume is a great platform to illustrate your soft skills. Talking about them in your professional summary, describing situations in where you demonstrated a soft skill to accomplish something, and using descriptive words in your previous job titles are excellent ways to show you have soft skills. You do not just write that you have the soft skills on your resume, you must give examples, and feature the soft skills that would align with your role and career. It is wise to examine the position you are interested in. Find which skills they require and figure out which skills you hold that would align with this position (“Accentuating Soft Skills for Employment, Workplace Success,” 2019). You should then highlight these specific skills on your resume through examples and in your job history. This will help make a striking first impression and the employer should then be able to recognize who you are and why they should consider you for an interview and potential employment.

In the interview, you can demonstrate the use of soft skills by describing how you have displayed these skills in your previous positions. It is important to respond to questions with how you navigated the situation, not only with the outcome of the situation. When asked about a time where you showed effective leadership skills, it would not be sufficient to say, “I have been the lead of many successful projects.” A descriptive answer of, “During the many times I have served as a leader on projects, I harnessed the strengths of each team member and helped guide the project to a timely, successful completion (Consultants, 2019).” The objective is to display your soft skills along with your technical skills.

On the job, practicing your soft skills and using them along with your technical skills will ensure you excel in your position. You may not have the experience in the beginning, but being friendly and positive while learning the ropes will cause people to be drawn to you, and want to work with you. They will gravitate towards the positivity because no one wants to work with someone who is unhappy all the time (*Why Soft Skills Matter: Making Sure Your Hard Skills Shine*, 2016).

It is very good to be confident in your work and decisions, but employers do not want someone who is overly confident to the point that they believe their work is beyond reproach. Constructive criticism is a part of a productive work environment. Personal accountability, and conflict resolution is also very productive, and can be demonstrated by admitting when you have made a mistake, taking constructive criticism, and being respectful of others’ opinions (Consultants, 2019).

Overall, encouraging other people in the workplace to work on developing soft skills will help you and the organization you work for (Consultants, 2019). The more you surround yourself with authentic soft skills such as conflict resolution, accountability, clear and effective

communication, attention to detail, professionalism, and self-motivation, the bigger impact they will have on you and your success.

### References

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