

SOFT SKILLS

Definition: The personality traits which we exhibit during specific situations and have an efficient control over are known as Soft Skills. These include interpersonal skills and communication skills as two primary categories. Soft skills are an important criteria which employers look for in the potential candidates to be recruited. Some examples of soft skills are effective communication skills, teamwork, dependability, adaptability, conflict resolution, flexibility, leadership, problem-solving, research, creativity, work ethic and integrity.

Importance of Soft Skills: Knowledge is one of the most essential components for us to grow as individuals and community. But knowledge extends beyond the books towards manners, way of speech and gestures in the world outside and more importantly within the realms of work space. Soft skills test one's ability to work within a team and the ability to execute tasks with dexterity. Most companies search for this trait of sociability within their potential employees so that their companies function smoothly. Soft skills also complement one's hard skills like knowledge of the subject and a competent understanding of the way to go about the task at hand. Soft skills also inject one with the practical knowledge of the world which can mostly be acquired while working with other individuals with different bents of mind and abilities.

Need for Soft Skills in Academic and Work Space: Team-work and communication are the major elements of soft skills which are the primary requisites in any workplace. A work space requires its respective departments constituting various teams to coordinate well among themselves to ensure its overall effective functioning. In order to achieve this, team spirit among each member of the organization as well as proper ways of communication are indispensable. It is due to this reason that every organization or company looks for candidates with strong potential for soft skills who would contribute towards the improvement and flourishing of the organization.

LISTENING SKILLS

Ear is that sense organ which facilitates the faculty of hearing. The stage following hearing is listening. We hear various different sounds throughout the day which are carried forth to us by the air around us. But those sounds do not register in our brain for long because our mind is occupied by more important things or tasks to do. But if we hear something intently or full of concentration in order to serve a purpose, then it is referred to as 'listening.'

Types of Listening

The various types of listening are:

1. **Appreciative Listening** – This is a type of listening behavior where the listener searches for some information or element in order to appreciate it. This type of listening involves listening with the intention of enjoying. For example, listening to your favourite song.
2. **Empathetic Listening** – This kind of listening is people-oriented where the emphasis is on the speaker and understanding his point of view or identifying with his position. For example, listening to someone's issues in life and comforting that person.
3. **Comprehensive/ Active Listening** – This type of listening involves making sense of the message listened to. For example, listening to a lecture.
4. **Critical Listening** – This kind of listening occurs when one listens for the sake of analyzing, critiquing and making judgments about the speaker or the message.

Importance of Listening in Academic and Professional Communication

1. Knowing the organization
2. To address the grievances of some employees
3. Formulating better policies
4. Increasing confidence
5. Forming a bond
6. Boosting productivity
7. Spotting sensitive areas
8. Open Door Strategy