**Importance of communication skills**

Soft skills – skills not specific to one’s field of expertise, this includes how one responds to challenges, communication skills, people skills, attitude, public relationships… etc..

Hard skills – knowledge, field expertise, experience. etc.

Valued soft skills:

1. Leadership skills
2. Communication skills
3. Motivation skills
4. Teamwork skills

First impressions matter, the way you dress, carry yourself & present yourself in an interview. Excellent hard skill sets account to less when the soft skills are lacking.

**Effective communication**

A, B, C & D of effective communication; each metric has three elements.

A1 – what needs to be communicated, one should know what he is talking about

A2 – what is the time limit allowed for communication, important to prepare the presentation. If there is no timeframe, one can proceed as he pleases. Be picky about the points to be presented.

A3 – understand the audience, what matters in a presentation is what interests or what is relevant to the audience not the presenter. Include the points that will interest & engage the audience. (Audience research)

B1 – prepare, proper prior preparation prevents poor performance. Overconfidence kills!

B2 – practice, practice the presentation before the delivery!

B3 – rehearse, rehearse the presentation with people with subject expertise, people you are comfortable with. Welcome feedbacks!

C1 – attention grabbing opening, presentations must start with a start that immediately attracts the attention of the audience. Ask questions to engage the audience.

C2 – body of the presentation, structure the contents coherently, make statements in a flow that is easy to follow through & understand. Eliminate junk phrases like “I mean, you know, to be honest…. etc.”

C3 – come up with a memorable close. Help the audience retain what was presented, a concise takeaway message!

D1 – vocal variety, adjust the volume, tone & phase to keep the attention of the audience. A monotonous speech will quickly loose audience engagement

D2 – maintain eye contact, try to maintain eye contact with everyone in the audience.

D3 – body language, use your hands to enhance the communication.