Soft Skills

By the end of this video you will be able to…

- Recognize important job skills as "soft skills"
- Appreciate the role of soft skills in interview success

Technical and Soft Skills

Soft Skills
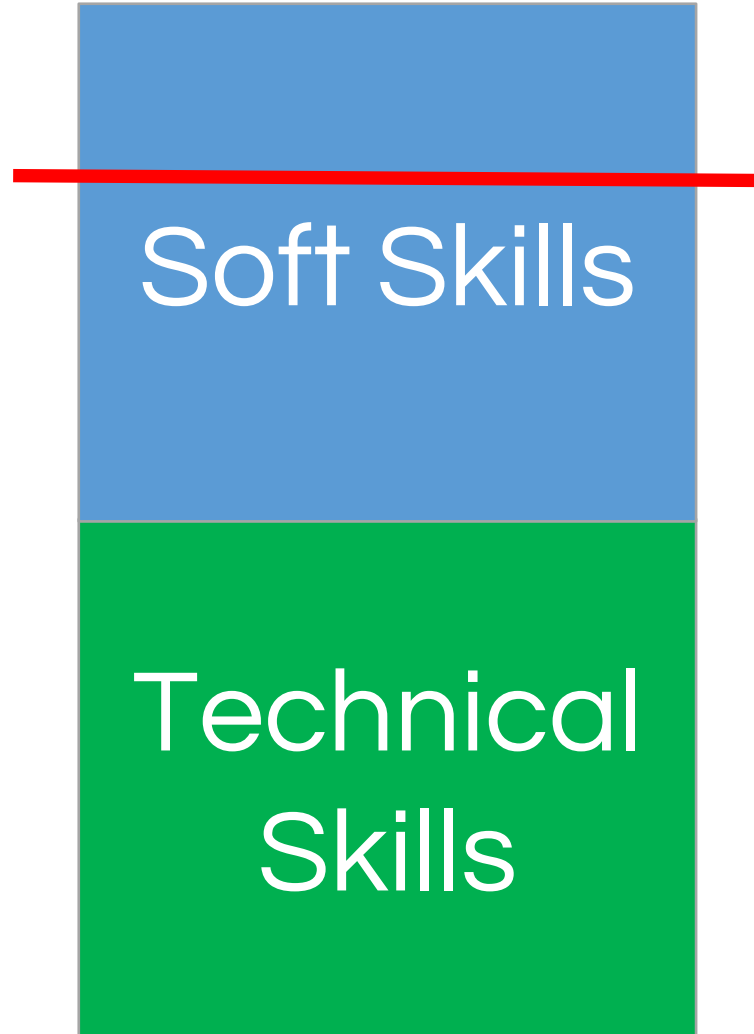
Bar for Success

Technical Skills

Soft Skills

"**Soft skills** is … the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, interpersonal skills, managing people, leadership, etc. that characterize relationships with other people."

Wikipedia

Soft Skills in Industry

"We formally define the practical intelligence of IT professionals as the **managerial**, **intrapersonal**, and **interpersonal skills** that are used to resolve IT-related work problems."

Joseph et al. Practical Intelligence in IT: Assessing Soft Skills of IT Professionals. Communications of the ACM, 2010.

Skills	Benefit

Skills	Benefit
Interpersonal	Teams + Support

Skills	Benefit
Interpersonal	Teams + Support
Communication	Teams + Beyond

Skills	Benefit
Interpersonal	Teams + Support
Communication	Teams + Beyond
Leadership	Advancement

Research Results: Benefits

"My colleagues and I have consistently found that cognitive and personality traits are equally predictive across a great variety of labor market and social outcomes."
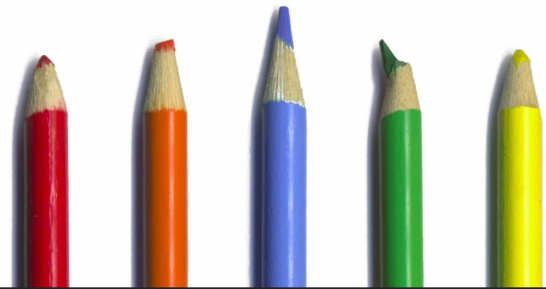
James J. Heckmann
Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago
"Hard evidence on soft skills",
in Focus Vol. 29, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2012–13

Research Results: Benefits

How Children Succeed
Paul Tough

http://www.amazon.com/How-Children-Succeed-Curiosity-Character/dp/0544104404/

Your Experience

Concrete Example

Concrete Example

MISSED HINT

Before Video:

What I'll show you next is an example from a "bad" interview. The actors in the video are successful (Google?) software engineers role-playing what a bad interview commonly looks like.

In this clip, the interview has already begun and the candidate is being asked to write a data structure capable of insertion, deletion, and random retrieval. The details of the question aren't really that important for now.

What is critical, is that the candidate has already made a fairly common mistake of diving into the code before discussing the problem and his proposed solution with the interviewer. Let's see how the interviewer tries to get him back on track.

< Bad_Interview_Part1_missed clue at 0:59-> 1:34 >

Concrete Example

MISSED HINT

After Video

What we saw here is an interviewee missing a hint!

Even after prompting, we see the candidate continue to dive back into his draft code rather than stepping back at a high level. The interviewer is trying to get the candidate to step back and see that this present choice of data structure may not be the best, so that they'll have time to explore other options before actually coding.

This may seem like a minor mistake, missing a hint, but if you watch the entire whole mock interview, you'd see that going down the wrong path because of a missed hint ultimately cost the candidate so much time that the candidate never arrived at either a fully working solution OR a highly efficient solution.

If you're thinking right now "but missing a hint isn't a job skill, that's unfair", recognize that communication with your teammates IS an essential job skill. The interviewer's hint, and the candidates response, is partially there to test to whether the candidate will be a good communicator with teammates and colleagues.

Concrete Example

Before Video

Let me show you one more example. In the next video clip from the same "bad" example interview, the candidate has just proposed using binary search to lower the runtime of part of his solution. Focus on the candidate's demeanor during this exchange.

<Bad_Interview_Part2_at 2:09 -> 2:23 – interviewer asks for runtime of binary search>

Concrete Example

After Video

The interviewee actually knows the answer, but does his answer instill confidence in you? It might be his technical knowledge is weak and he's guessing, or it might be that his confidence is failing during the interview and he's not conveying his understanding well. Either way, this is going to be seen by the interviewer as a weakness.

Certainly, practicing on problems like these (which you'll see in Week 4) along with brushing up on your technical skills can help with your confidence.

But we'll also be discussing non-technical strategies throughout the course which can help with interview jitters and help you better present your understanding with confidence.

Soft Skills

Bottom Line

Soft Skills can make or break an interview and this course aims to help you improve them.

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Next: Introduction from Google Engineers