

## SOFT SKILLS IN STATUS QUO

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### Abstract:

In modern era there is a hue and cry of development of soft skill. This article deals with the importance of the recent notion of soft skills, its contents, importance and the way of its development. Here an effort has been made to bring into light the wedded relationship between soft skills and the current competitive era. It focuses on the latest mantra to exist in the competitive world which is soft skill. It acts as source of stimulus to lead both personal and professional life peacefully. Soft skill is elaborated here as a protection jacket to face this competitive world.

**Key Words:** Soft Skill, Personality, change, Competition

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**Introduction:**

Students having brilliant academic profile are abstained of getting a job, or the personnel, technically expert are unable to clear the interviews and some are even unable to sustain the job. Even people are facing difficulties to lead their both personal and professional life or either. Smart workers are preferable in comparison to hard workers. So what is the core reason behind all these problems? The one and only reason accepted by the researchers, academicians and professional gurus behind all the reasons is lacking of Human Skills/People Skills or Soft Skills. The core reason behind all these problems accepted by the researchers, academicians and professional gurus is lacking of Human Skills/People Skills or Soft Skills.

The Industrial Revolution, which started in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, transformed the world. With the coming of steam – power, it become possible to produce goods cheaply and with greatly reduced labour, and the era of mass production and marketing began. Then the era of MNC'S were introduced where not only technical but also human skills came into life. In the context of current scenario it has come to understand through the educated mass that a lot of effort is put into honing the “people skills”, even before they start identifying their career paths. Soft skills play an important role in the development of the students and professionals' overall personality, thereby enhancing their career prospects and its maintenances. One must undergo training in soft skills which will provide strong practical orientation to him/her and help in building and improving their skills in communication, the effective use of English, business correspondence, presentations, team building, leadership, time management, group discussions, interviews, and inter-personal skills. It's often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get (and keep) the job.

We are living in an era of constant change. Because businesses and academy are becoming less dictatorial and more social, the understanding and value of soft skills to an organization are growing daily. It was researched on a couple reasons why soft skills are important, but those were just the tip of the iceberg. The more looked at the distinguishing traits of people, who are advancing their careers, the more it is convinced that soft skills are more important today than ever before.

## What is Soft Skill?

**Soft skills** is a sociological term relating to a person's "EQ (Emotional Intelligence Quotient)", the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills complement hard skills (part of a person's IQ), which are the occupational requirements of a job and many other activities.

Soft skills represent various traits that mark people in varying degrees and help to achieve high professionally, academically and socially. Soft skills and hard skills are correlated and both complement each other. To attain improvement in profession, we must equip with both soft as well as hard skills so broadly speaking Soft skill is the ability required and expected from persons for finding a suitable job, its growth, its maintenance and promotion. Soft skills are essentially to be categorized as Self Development Skills, Interaction Skills, Leadership skills, Organization Skills and Communication Skills.

### **Soft skills are very important**

- To handle interpersonal relations
- To take appropriate decisions
- To communicate effectively
- To have good impression and impact to gain professional development

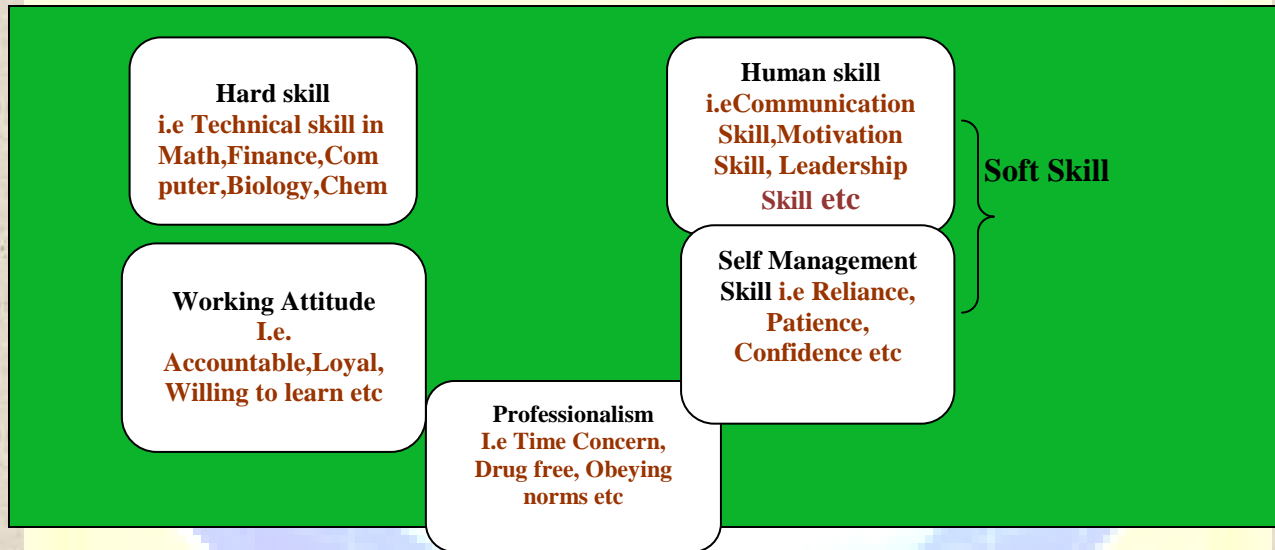
"Soft skills are very important in business. It is essential to be technically sound, but one should also have the ability to convey the idea to the masses in the simplest possible manner," says Mayurkumar Gadewar, an ERP consultant with Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

"Soft skills training are essential because we do not have it in our academic curricula. Therefore, corporate houses have to take up the task of grooming employees who are the link between the company and the external world, so that they are able to present themselves better," says Sumeet Mehta, an equity research analyst with Fortis Securities Ltd.

### Soft skills in practical terms

Researchers believe that there are five Building Blocks to Career Success – Professionalism, Work Attitude, Self Management Skills, People Skills, and Hard Skills. These five components are critical to finding jobs and succeeding on the job. Soft skills represent two of these building blocks ( Fig: 1) and are the most important in career success.

**Figure-1: Five Building blocks of carrier growth**



- **Self Management Skills** – those we use to manage how we perceive ourselves and manage our reactions to unexpected situations. How can we succeed if we don't project or feel confident to take certain actions? How can we succeed if we cannot control our angry response to a customer that complains all the time?

- **People Skills - those we use to influence how others perceive us, our work, and our ideas.**

For example, we may have a brilliant idea, but if we can't communicate it, no one will give us the support to implement it. If we worked hard, but no one knows about it, does it count? Probably not. We have to subtly self-promote, so that the right people can appreciate all of our hard skills and soft skill.

So to achieve the proficiency in order to excel and outstand amidst the crowd of technically and academically highlighted ones we should equip our self with proper skills especially soft skills.

**Contents of Soft Skill:**

Soft skills are essentially people skills those are non-technical, intangible, personality-specific skills. These are briefly categorized under:

<p><b>Interpersonal Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attitude awareness</li> <li>Conflict handling</li> <li>Co-ordination &amp; cooperation</li> <li>Adaptability</li> <li>Etiquette</li> <li>Team building</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Motivation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision making</li> <li>Learning</li> <li>Self-appraisal</li> <li>Self-discipline</li> <li>Self-marketing</li> <li>Stress resistance</li> <li>Positive attitude</li> <li>Time Management</li> <li>Perception without errors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegating skills</li> <li>Listening skills</li> <li>Presentation skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem solving</li> <li>Clear thinking</li> <li>Trouble shooting</li> </ul>

**Identification of Skill**

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Soft skills can be identified in the following aspects:

### Knowing Yourself

- When someone does SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, and Opportunity & Threat) of himself or herself. Strength and weakness belong to the internal environment which can be under control. But opportunity and threat can not be under control only precautions can be taken to face the challenge nicely.
- During Personal Self Evaluation or assessment after projects or crises one can analyze his or her ability and drawbacks.

### Feedback from others

- For professional Appraisals and Evaluations by seniors, juniors, colleagues, customers & for students appraisal by teachers, and seniors.
- Feedback from people you respect and your critics.

### External Information

- Top 60 Soft Skills at Work.
- Take Soft Skills Tests.

### Development of Soft Skills :

1. Perceiving Oneself Accurately.
2. Be empathetic
3. Having positive attitude
4. Communicating openly
5. Be aware of the self concept
6. Having interest towards positive Learning
7. Managing one's own time.
8. Stress Management
9. Sociability as an art

## 10. Problem Solving Skill

### 1. Perceiving Oneself Accurately.

To perceive someone accurately, he/she should perceive himself or herself accurately. i.e. self awareness must be there. Regular interaction with peers, subordinates, seniors and frank communication with others with clarity in thoughts and also mutual understanding will commonly adopt practices for perceiving someone more accurately. The right perception can be great source of personality development. **Ex-**Mr Jack, the senior manager perceived one of his executive to be an excellent communicator. So he undersigned a crucial task of handling new client but Rabi, the executive couldn't perform the task as he is an extrovert not a good communicator

### 2. Be empathetic:

There is a great difference in between Sympathy & Empathy. Empathy is something more than sympathy. Empathy means perceiving a situation as the perception of others.

**Ex-**A road accident is there, the victim is crying in pain, all people present there are seeing and discussing about the problem i.e. sympathy. In the same situation one person came front to take the victim to the hospital i.e. Empathy. So it is better to be empathetic to understand others & a great skill/

### 3. Having positive attitude

Positive attitude makes matter because it can shape someone's personality. This optimism motivates a person to find out the +ve thing in any -ve situations & give the courage to face any challenge. **Ex-**Ram failed in the exam, If he is having -ve attitude, he will be depressed, may leave the study or may even commit suicide. But if he is possesses +ve attitude then he will take it as a challenge, will be more serious or can think that it's better to be fail then getting 3<sup>rd</sup> class

### 4. Communicating openly

Communication gap or inadequate communication is a major obstacle or barrier in soft skill improvement. Clarity in communication can put the right message at the right person, & also at right time .Ex- In an FMCG group the sales manager interacting with his employees regarding products, target customers, area of selling, targets to achieve etc .If the communication won't be open or proper then there will be a communication gap among them and many queries, doubts and confusions will arise. So it's quite impossible to perform perfectly after 100% efforts also.

### 5. Be aware of the self concept

When people successfully accomplish what they want, it develops a sense of Self Esteem or Self Regard then it is called as Self Concept. Accordingly someone can study own then others'.

### 6. Having interest towards positive Learning

Interest towards learning is impressive. But learning towards positive things is acceptable. Let's discuss one example. Ex-A young star can learn smoking or positive attitude. In this example the first activity is a example of negative learning & later one is the example positive learning. So positive learning is a measure component of soft skills which develops the personality of an individual.

### 7. Time Management

'I don't have time'. This is a sentence which is heard or said everywhere and many a time. God gifted us with 24 hours of time a day. Every one should know how to manage time effectively and efficiently. Other wise one will spoil his time and unknowingly other's also. So to manage time properly one should know the way of setting, prioritizing and organizing his goals. The art of saying 'NO' is the best way for time management.

**8. Stress Management:** Closely related to time management is the management of stress. While stress can have a positive influence and compel us into new action, resulting in new awareness and exciting perspectives, it may also result in anger and depression, affecting one's health



adversely. One must learn how to fairly defend his rights, protect his free time, handle seemingly unreasonable demands, and manage the complex politics of a challenging role, one will win respect in the workplace, and mark out as someone who can maturely and positively handle difficult situations.

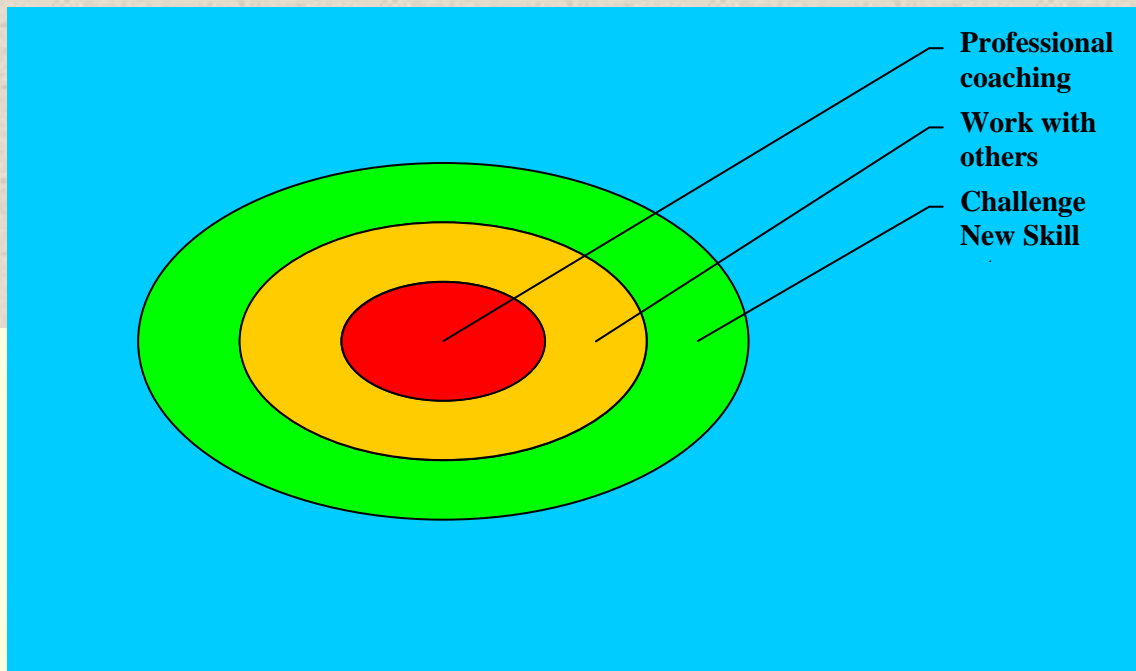
**9. Sociability as an art:** According to Aristotle, 'Man is a social animal'. Man can't live alone; he strives for affiliation and social acceptance. A few people are found to be socially inept. In such case, it becomes a liability. For the success and survival of the people it is essential to develop the trait of sociability. Therefore, this skill becomes the core skill and one of the fundamental features of the common skills.

**10. Problem Solving Skill:** People say that problems are the part of life but according to a learned person problems are the heart of life. It makes us more challenging, updated, and enables us to excel in the competitive world.' A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner' goes the saying. In fact when the going gets tough the tough gets going. Hence the problem solving becomes the tenth most crucial skill amongst all common skills.

#### **Ladders of Soft Skills:**

As discussed above soft skills can be learned or developed. Like above 10 points there are many other points by which soft skills can be developed. It is a never ending long term process. But in reality there are following three ladders by which soft skills can be learned.

**Figure-2: Methods for Soft Skills Learning**



### 1. Professional Coaching

- Targeted at changing Beliefs and Attitudes.

### 2. Work with others

- Meetings
- Volunteer Work
- Developmental & Training

### 3. Challenge New Skill Sets

- Opportunities- Every task / job has an associated soft skill set.

### Conclusion:

Soft Skills are the need of the hour. It encourages all the participants of the existing modern world beginning from students, teachers to professionals. Learning of soft skill is a continuous process. In comparison to way or methods of learning soft skills, the interest in learning plays important role. Now through management course & different types of training programmers are

taken into hand by different well known Govt. & Private organizations to make people aware of its importance & utilization.

According to psychologist Daniel Coleman 'a combination of competencies that contribute to a person's ability to manage his or herself and relate to other people-matters twice as much as IQ or technical skills in job successes'. Recent studies reveals that the single most important soft skill for a job are interpersonal skills, followed by written or verbal communication skills with capability and the ability to work under pressure.

Customer driven markets, rapid adoption of information-based economy and globalization have constantly changed the work environment and thus compelling the competitive world to adopt the changing skill for the existence. Change is the role of life. Soft skills act as stimulating agent to cope in the changing environment. Simply to fare the challenge of 'Change' the reliance on, and demand for, soft skill is increasing day by day. Soft skills are not a replacement for hard- or technical-skills. In many instances, the soft skills are complementary and serve as a key to unlock the success with highly effective performance in people with the requisite hard skills. In simple words soft skills & hard skills can act as two sides of a coin for better management, whereas either is incomplete.

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