Introduction to soft skills

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Agenda

- What are soft skills?
- Why are they important?
- The different soft skills
- Improving your soft skills
- Introduction to communication
Definition of soft skill

- Oxford dictionary
  - personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people

- Collins dictionary
  - desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude
Hard skills vs Soft skills

- Hard skills are a person's skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity

- Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects
Why are soft skills required?
Nasscom survey report

- Estimated intake at engineering institutes: 1,200,000
- No. of engineering graduates India turns out every year: Over 750,000
- Employability in IT: 25% (+1% from 2005)
- More than 50% of unemployable are untrainable!
Aspiring Minds survey

- 82% of engineers unemployable in the IT sector
- Degree of employability of IT graduates
  - IT product – 4.2%
  - KPO – 9.5%
  - IT services – 17.8%
  - Tech support – 25.9%
  - BPO – 38.2%
Summary

- Technical skill ALONE does not make someone competitive in the job market
  - In fact, computer literacy skills are assumed!
- Today’s employees have gaps in:
  - Communication skills
  - Teamwork
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Problem solving
  - Project/Time management
Soft skills

- Understanding self
- Placement orientation
- Working with others

Result: Enhanced employability
Common Soft Skills

- Strong work ethic
- Positive attitude
- Good communication skills
- Time management abilities
- Problem-solving skills
- Acting as a team player
- Interpersonal relations
- Self-confidence
- Ability to accept and learn from criticism
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Working well under pressure
• Strong work ethic
  ◦ Are you motivated and dedicated to getting the job done?
  ◦ Will you be conscientious and do your best work?

• Positive attitude
  ◦ Are you optimistic?
  ◦ Will you generate good energy and goodwill?
• Good communication skills
  ◦ Are you both verbally articulate and a good listener?
  ◦ Can you express needs in a way that builds bridges with colleagues, customers and vendors

• Time management abilities
  ◦ Do you know how to prioritize tasks?
  ◦ Will you use your time on the job wisely?
• **Problem-solving skills**
  ◦ Are you resourceful and able to creatively solve problems?
  ◦ Will you take ownership of problems or leave them for someone else?

• **Acting as a team player**
  ◦ Will you work well in groups and teams?
  ◦ Will you be cooperative and take a leadership role when appropriate?
• Interpersonal Relations
  ◦ Do you have the tools & techniques to maintain good relations with others?

• Self-confidence
  ◦ Do you truly believe you can do the job?
  ◦ Will you project a sense of calm and inspire confidence in others?

• Ability to accept and learn from criticism
  ◦ Will you be able to handle criticism?
  ◦ Are you coachable and open to learning and growing as a person and a professional?
• Flexibility/Adaptability
  ◦ Are you able to adapt to new situations and challenges?
  ◦ Will you embrace change and be open to new ideas?

• Working well under pressure
  ◦ Can you handle the stress that accompanies deadlines and crises?
Summary

- Technical skills will get you the interview, but it’s the soft skills that will help you get and keep the job
- Soft skills compliment hard skills
- Soft skills are more like life skills
Improving your soft skills

- Look for opportunities to interact with others
- Volunteer
  - This will expose you to people with different backgrounds and experience
- Select different people to work with
  - With group projects, find a new group
- Learn & practice or join courses
Communication – an introduction

- A two-way exchange of thoughts, opinions and information by speech, writing or signs
- Every individual can communicate but every individual cannot communicate effectively
Where do we communicate

- In the family
- Job interviews
- Business meetings
- Marriage proposal
- Coffee break
- With a friend
A typical scene in corporates today…
Why is it necessary

Poor communication can lead to

- **Personally**
  - Loss of self-esteem
  - Lower quality of life

- **Professionally**
  - Loss in business
The communication cycle
The source

- Why to communicate?
- What to communicate?
- Usefulness of the communication
- Accuracy of the information to be communicated
Encoding

- The process of transferring the information you want to communicate into a form that can be sent and correctly decoded at the other end
- Ability to convey the information
- Eliminate sources of confusion
- Knowing your audience
The channel

- **Verbal Channels**
  - Face-To-Face meetings
  - Telephones
  - Video Conferencing

- **Written Channels**
  - Letters
  - e-Mails
  - Memos
  - Reports
Decoding

- Listen actively
- Reading information carefully
- Avoid Confusion
- Ask questions for better understanding
The receiver

What influences the receiver

- Prior knowledge
- Blockages in the receiver’s mind
- Surrounding disturbances
Feedback

- Verbal Reactions and Non-Verbal Reactions
- Positive feedback and Negative feedback
Summary

- What are soft skills? How are they different from hard skills?
- Why are they important?
  - To improve our employability
- Examples of soft skills
- Improving your soft skills
  - Creating opportunities and practicing
- Introduction to communication
  - The communication cycle
Thank you!

Wish you all the best!