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The 12 Most Important Skills You Need To Succeed At Work

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Whether you're a new graduate trying to figure out how to get a leg up in your career, or you're a mid-career professional looking to secure your next promotion, you might be wondering what are the most important skills you need to help you get where you want to go. While it's, of course, important to develop your industry-specific hard skills, what's just as critical to your success are your soft skills. Soft skills are how you function in the

workplace and interact with others. And while they're not easily taught in a classroom or measured, they are key skills that we all need to have. Additionally, in our more globalized, fast-changing work environment, there is now a premium on the kinds of soft skills that allow you to keep pace with the [future of work](#). So, if you're looking to accelerate your career, here are the 12 soft skills that you need to succeed.

1. Learnability

We'll begin with learnability because it is arguably the [most important](#) 21st-century skill you will need to succeed. Alvin Toffler said, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." That's because, in an environment where new skills emerge as fast as others fade, success is less about what you already know and more about adapting your skills by growing and expanding your knowledge base, so you can use new information and skills to respond to whatever is happening.

2. Resilience

Setbacks and failures are a part of life, but how you choose to deal with those roadblocks is what is critical to your success.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back in the face of obstacles and failures. When you are resilient, you don't focus on the ups and downs. Instead, you stay focused on your long-term goals, and you never lose confidence in your ability to prevail. By helping you face challenges and difficulties, resilience also enables you to handle stress more positively.

3. Agility

As the work landscape shifts, learning to be agile is a critical skill, as yesterday's solutions do not solve tomorrow's problems. At the heart of being agile is shifting gears when the context calls for it

and responding accordingly to the needs of your workplace, clients or industry trends.

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4. Collaboration

In our increasingly hyper-connected world, we're no longer expected to work just as individuals or only in silos. Our projects have become more complex, so the ability to work effectively as part of a team has also grown in importance. Given the increasingly global nature of work, your ability to collaborate, share knowledge and contribute to teams that can capitalize on a diversity of thinking and perspective in ways that everyone can benefit and drive to the shared outcomes is critical.

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5. Verbal communication

Advancing in your career is not just based on what you do. There's a good chance that at some point in your career you'll have to use strong verbal communication skills so you can sell others on your ideas, products, or services. Whether you're needing to explain your value when you are being considered for a promotion, presenting as part of a team project, or speaking on stage, you need to be able to communicate well and convey strong, persuasive ideas.

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6. **Written communication**

We live in an era of tweets and sound bites, but good written communication skills still matter when it comes to your career. Whether you are sending professional emails, communicating with a client, trying to deliver a coherent business plan, or anything in between, you should be able to communicate quickly, accurately and effectively.

7. **Empathy**

The ability to empathize with others, or see things from their perspective by understanding their emotions and reactions, is a fundamental part of how we interact with one another.

Communicating genuinely and authentically with others is vital because even in instances when you disagree with your coworkers on elements of a work project, for example, empathy allows you to demonstrate to others that they are seen and heard.

8. Creativity

Creativity is a crucial skill we all need because, in our fast-changing times, employers value employees who can look beyond the present and imagine future possibilities for their company. Creative workers are the ones who ask why. They question, they are curious, and in so doing, they develop new ideas and solutions.

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9. Problem-solving

How often do you go beyond your immediate job as assigned and instead, use more knowledge, facts, and data to see gaps and solve problems? Being a good problem solver is essential because employers value people who can work through challenges on their own or as an effective member of a team by defining the issues, brainstorming alternatives, sharing thoughts, and then making sound decisions.



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10. Leadership

The importance of building the right culture at companies cannot be overstated, so having the skills to be able to coach and

empower others, and to motivate those around you do their best work, is highly valued for success.

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11. Negotiation

Whether you're in salary discussions, finalizing a deal with a client, or trying to find common ground with your teammates during a project, having strong and effective negotiation skills are extremely important. Being a good negotiator allows you to get to reach goals while you build relationships, which is a significant part of being successful in your career.

12. Technology

Technology is changing at an unprecedented pace, so even beyond the technical skills you need to master for your job, keeping up with technology is essential because of the tools that help you manage your career, differentiate yourself in the market, brand yourself, and build the critical relationships that you need to be successful.

Regardless of your chosen career path, building your soft skills is critical so you can set yourself apart from others in a competitive landscape.

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