

Soft Skills: An Overview & It’s Effective Implementation

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Abstract: - This paper aims at exploring the true meaning of soft skills which are now days the most essential skills set for engineering graduates in India. Over the decades people have used different words for soft skills like communication skills, people’s skills or employability skills. For increasing the productivity of any educational institute development of human capital and the upgrading of the mentality and intellectual capacity of an institute must be the priority. In today’s fast running world and with the global environment of new millennium engineering graduates require an ever increasing range of skills. Soft skills and Hard Skills complement each other besides the fact that they are antonyms also. Soft Skills not only fulfill a role of shaping one’s life but it is an adequate skill beyond academic or technical knowledge

Key Words: Soft Skills, Engineering, Communication Skills, Employability Skills, Hard Skills.

of soft skill it is not easy to answer this question because it varies from context to context, subject to subject, culture to culture and even people to people.

Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces and facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills which are the technical requirement of a job (Wikipedia 2007)

Some of the soft skills which are considered worldwide can be narrowed down under three categories with examples:

- 1) Communication skills
- 2) Employability skills
- 3) People’s skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Engineers with effective oral communication skills keep advantage over engineers who fall short in this skill. Engineers with effective communication skills avail better jobs, promotions with other perks and privileges, occupy central position in workplace and even in dealing with customer face to face soft skills plays crucial role. “Prof. Bala Balachandaran of J.L Kellog said that knowledge is not the only tool to get ahead in globalized economic scenario. Soft skill will also provide an edge over the competition”

It is rightly quoted by Winston Churchill that “attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”

“Peggy Klans has rightly stated soft skills get little respect, but will make or break your career”

Today it is not only your subject knowledge, information and intelligence which will get you a highest position but your verbal ability, proper grammar, and non verbal communication which will improve your impression in other people’s eye.

II. WHAT IS A SOFT SKILL?

People often get confuse in using the term soft skills or at time they mistakenly use the term communication skills instead of soft skills but this question is always debatable. The dictionary meaning of soft skills is the personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. Other than the definition or dictionary meaning

Communication skills	Employability skills	People’s skills
Body language	Cooperation/team skills	Common sense
Eye contact	Problem solving ability	sociability
Etiquettes and manners	Time management	adaptability
Good attitude	Commitment	honesty
Listening skills	Self directed	Cultural awareness
Interpersonal skills	Motivated	Creative thinking
Intrapersonal skills	Project management	Willingness to learn
Writing skills	Honesty	
Group discussion	Work ethics	
	Ability to meet deadlines	
	Leadership skills	
	Presentation skills	
	Empathy	
	Punctuality	
	Decision making	
	Business management	
	Planning and organizing	
	Stress tolerance	
	Negotiation skills	

However this list could longer and examples may fall in one or two categories more depending on understanding.

III. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The first thought which comes to our mind when we speak the word soft skills is communication skills. But these two can never be synonyms or antonyms for each other because soft skills can be considered as universe and communication skills are considered as that of universe. Communication skills can be simplified by understanding the term communication. It is derived from the Latin word 'communis' which means exchanging. Any gesture, word, body language or any message which is exchanged by others is communication but when it is coined with the word 'skill' it has the greater impact because skills are the expertise therefore any message if exchanged using expertise is called communication skills.

Soft skills on the other hand is sociological term relating to person's 'EQ'(emotional intelligence quotient) the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterizes relationships with other people. Soft skills are the skills which go beyond your ability to cooperate with other people at work. Today companies and employers are looking for the candidates who are productive, efficient and pleasant from day one. If a candidate is not hands on in subject knowledge soft skills can be an excellent cover up.

IV. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND SOFT SKILLS

Once again soft skills is the vast range of positive skills sets which needed by an individual not only to get in a job but to be effective in job, maintain relationships socially and professionally and enhance career opportunities. Gone are the days when people with good subject knowledge used to be on the hit list of the employers. Soft Skills compliments hard skills and are given priority in the current business world.

Employability Skills can be defined as transferable skills needed by an individual to make them employable along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge. Employability as the name suggests being employable or ability to get employment. Soft skills and employability skills are complimentary to each other.

V. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE'S SKILLS AND SOFT SKILLS

According to the *Portland Business Journal*, **people skills** are described as:^[1]

- understanding ourselves and moderating our responses
- talking effectively and empathizing accurately
- Building relationships of trust, respect and productive interactions.
- A British definition is "the ability to communicate effectively with people in a friendly way, especially in

business."^[2] The term is not listed yet in major US dictionaries.^{[3][4]}

The acts of listening, presenting ideas, resolving conflict, and fostering an open and honest work environment all come down to knowing how to build and maintain relationships with people. It's those relationships that allow people to participate fully in team projects, show appreciation for others, and enlist support for their projects.(www.mindtools.com)

Soft skills are about getting into the professional world whereas people's skills are about retaining yourself in professional world. But both are needed immensely for organizational and personal success.

VI. CAN YOUR HARD SKILLS SHINE BY USING SOFT SKILLS

We get lots of articles, research papers online sites and other sources which reveals lot of information about soft skills, its importance, significance etc. but one thing is still unanswered, can our hard skills or technical skills or subject knowledge shine by using soft skills. The answer to this question is YES. In today's world competition is tough and you may find thousand of options for any one cause.

Similarly many are job seekers and too few jobs but the one who has soft over hard will win the heart. Not only today but from the stone age or even before then it is SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

Today is the fittest is one with hard as well as soft skills. Soft skills will make you stand out of the crowd as the best candidate for the similar openings are many where thousands of aspirants with similar qualifications are available. This is the competitive edge.

If soft skills are paid good attention by an individual can do wonders. One of the simplest ways to train oneself is to begin socializing with peers, members of the society. Even educational institutions today have changed the methodology of teaching. Many universities and colleges have started soft skills courses like soft skills, communications skills, employability skills and training. Students are not only encouraged to learn soft skills but rather they are learning their hard skills through oft skills. One of the best ways to enhance soft skills is planning activities like debates, drama competition, group discussions, sports carnival, signing competition etc because today fact can't be denied that sizable number of candidates resides in college campuses. These activities can improve their social interactions making them extrovert. The added advantage of such participation will improve their resume because companies today are looking for the overall participative candidates above the candidates who have only their academic grade cards and degrees to show. Through such activities candidates improve teamwork, leadership and capabilities which encompass all races and gender.

VII. CONCLUSION

In concluding lines it is rightly said and widely accepted that in today's cut throat competitive world soft skills has gained pace. No employers or society is in need of people who are good in communication, effective in employability skills and extrovert in people's skills. Soft Skills are gaining importance in all areas of the work industry. It is everybody's responsibility to make sure that proper grooming, soft skills, communication skills is practiced at all times. The positive side effects of such practice will increase the success rate of learners. Fact today is if you do not have technical aspect or very refined resume then also your career can reach to new heights and shine by just embracing new challenges, by communicating clearly and working on your soft skills.

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