

## Soft Skills Quick Reference Tool

### Skills

### Soft Skills Training May Be Needed If You See These Behaviors ...

#### Communication Skills

Verbal communication

Struggles to talk or get ideas across · Speaks too loudly or softly · Avoids conversations

Non-verbal communication

Uses closed body language (crossed arms, no eye contact) · Misses others' non-verbal cues

Written communication

Written projects include grammatical errors or misspellings, lack logical construction, etc.

Listening skills

Attention wanders · Ignores the remarks of others · Fails to listen to directions · Interrupts

Participates in team/group discussions

Hesitates to speak in a group/ resists asking questions or sharing opinions · Often dominates conversations

Provides/receives feedback effectively

Displays anger, defensiveness, distress when receiving feedback · Avoids or struggles with giving feedback

Public speaking

Struggles to write and/or deliver speeches · Displays difficulty speaking to groups

Presentation

Lacks proficiency with PowerPoint/other presentation tools · Delivers presentations poorly

Negotiation

Hesitates to negotiate terms for contracts/job aspects, etc. · Lacks ability to compromise

Influence/persuasion/motivation

Unable to gain buy-in of others when needed · Unable to motivate others

#### Professional and Work Skills

Organization

Unable to set/achieve goals · Work projects consistently lack oversight · Fails to adhere to schedules

Collaboration/teamwork

Does not encourage/support others · Hesitates to ask for/provide help · Hesitates to join in · Causes team conflict

Critical thinking

Lacks analytical skills · Does not question assumptions · Fails to consider varied perspectives

Problem solving/troubleshooting

Allows situations/issues to decline or become problematic · Unable to identify problem causes · Doesn't seek input from others

Decision making

Decisions reflect inadequate information gathering or poor risk vs benefit assessment · Reluctant to make decisions

Work ethic/dedication

Lacks initiative/self-motivation · Does not accept responsibility/accountability · Fails to meet goals/deadlines

Creativity/innovation

Lacks curiosity/imagination · Resists taking intelligent risks/trying new things · Doesn't question assumptions

Resilience/adaptability/flexibility

Low tolerance for uncertainty · Doesn't manage change effectively · Difficulty adjusting to unexpected circumstances

Time management

Fails to create/adhere to schedules · Misses deadlines · Chronically late · Inability to prioritize

Planning/setting/achieving goals

Lacks skills to set/achieve goals · Fails to plan/execute projects · Doesn't measure progress

<b>Professional and Work Skills (cont'd)</b>	
Stress management/work under pressure	Does not identify and minimize stressors · Takes on excessive extra work · Fails to ask for help when needed
Accountability/responsibility/dependability	Does not take ownership of behavior/work/results (makes excuses) · Fails to take initiative · Seen as unreliable
Integrity/ethics	Fails to show respect for others · Does not deliver on work expectations · Conduct does not reflect honesty/values
Assertiveness/initiative	Does not express ideas/opinions well · Does not work proactively/waits for direction · Unduly pushy/aggressive
Technology capabilities	Lacks proficiency with work technologies · Fails to regularly update existing technology skills
Continuous improvement/learning mindset	Does not actively pursue learning/development · Lacks knowledge-sharing skills/motivation · Turns down stretch assignments
Effectively manages difficult people/situations	Gets derailed by conflict with co-workers · Lacks ability to work through disagreements · Chooses inaction vs solving problems
Business etiquette	Does not understand/apply appropriate workplace behavior · Lacks consideration/respect for others
Diversity/inclusion	Lacks understanding/awareness of cultural and other differences · Fails to accept others/seek others' perspectives
Research skills	Lacks ability to vet information sources · Unable to define information needs · Does not actively seek new knowledge
Knowledge sharing	Doesn't find and share learning content or new processes/solutions with others · Hoards information to keep control
Customer service/relationship management	Unable to <i>read</i> or relate to customers · Does not identify customer needs/solve problems · Mishandles upset customers
<b>Personal and Interpersonal Skills</b>	
Self-awareness	Lacks cognizance of own strengths/weaknesses · Fails to reflect/learn from past behavior
Confidence	Demonstrates little acceptance of self/others · Lacks assertiveness · Fails to demonstrate positive <i>can do</i> attitude
Emotional intelligence/social skills	Difficulty interpreting situations/emotions accurately · Lacks mastery of most soft skills · Lacks self-control
Ability to manage stress	Fails to identify and minimize stressors · Chooses unhealthy responses to stress · Lacks work/life balance
Self-directed/lifelong learner	Displays little interest in learning/gaining new knowledge · Not motivated by growth opportunities, prefers status quo
Resourceful	Lacks creativity/imagination · Lacks desire/ability to solve problems · Fails to act with initiative · Lacks persistence
Courteous/polite/respectful	Fails to use etiquette · Does not demonstrate consideration for others · Lacks attentive listening skills
Open-minded/able to see others' perspectives	Lacks empathy · Lacks curiosity/does not ask questions · Unwilling to challenge biases and assumptions
Positive attitude/enthusiastic	Displays low energy/lack of enthusiasm · Lacks self-motivation · Seen by others as negative or disengaged
Integrity/honesty	Does not adhere to company values · Fails to act with integrity · Lacks respect for others
Empathy	Inability to relate to others emotionally · Rarely validates others' feelings · Does not display active/reflective listening
Relationship building	Focuses on self rather than others · Difficulty building trust · Lacks good communication skills · Fails to show respect
Networking	Difficulty/discomfort connecting with peers/colleagues · Rarely volunteers · Does not participate in professional groups
Conflict and issue management/resolution	Avoids conflict/contentious situations or issues · Lacks skills needed to find solutions or compromise
Effectively manages difficult people/situations	Lacks tact/diplomacy · Ignores/mishandles disagreements or conflict · Unable to set boundaries with difficult people

Leadership and Management Skills	
Team leadership/team building . face-to-face	Unable to motivate/direct teams or encourage collaboration · Lacks results orientation
Team leadership/team building . virtual/remote	Lacks technical/managerial skills to direct and support remote/virtual teams
Leadership/development of individuals	Fails to delegate · Individual reports lack direction/underperform · Irregular or inconsistent performance discussions
General management skills	Lacks ability to plan, organize work · Individual reports lack needed resources · Employees feel under- or micro-managed
Meeting leadership/management	Meetings lack agendas, produce no results · Too many/too few meetings held · Group discussions lack focus
Project leadership/management	Work projects lack plans · Project execution fails consistently · Deadlines are frequently missed
Strategic planning	Struggles to create business objectives · Fails to identify trends/opportunities/threats · Lacks enterprise focus
Coaching/mentoring	Fails to build rapport/trust with employees · Can't identify/address development needs · Unable to effectively transfer knowledge
Talent development/instruction/teaching	Lacks needs-assessment skills · Lacks teaching/training skills · Fails to measure development results
Prioritizing and delegating tasks/work	Sets unrealistic schedules · Fails to clarify objectives · Ineffective at assigning work
Problem solving	Situations/issues decline/become problematic · Problems/outcomes not fully defined · Diverse input not sought or considered
Analysis and evaluation	Difficulty identifying credible information sources · Fails to view other perspectives · Lacks assessment skills
Brainstorming and innovation leadership	Lacks skills to lead brainstorming sessions · Fails to drive new product/service development · Rejects <i>out-of-the-box</i> thinking
Conflict and issue management/resolution	Avoids conflict/contentious situations or issues · Unable to resolve or mediate issues · Overly authoritative approach to conflict
Diplomacy/tact	Fails to show respect for others · Unable to see other perspectives · Lacks cultural/diversity awareness
Performance management	Fails to set performance expectations · Lacks skills to provide feedback well · Avoids addressing problem performance
Crisis management	Unable to manage stress well · Lacks analytical skills · Low tolerance for uncertainty · Unable to bring calm to chaotic situations

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