

hard skills vs. soft skills

what's the difference and why does it matter?

HARD SKILLS

Specific and quantifiable knowledge or abilities; usually absolutely necessary for success

Can be demonstrated through tangible evidence such as a degree, certificate or examples of work

- Computer Skills
- Foreign Languages
- Math Skills
- Programming Skills

Career skills generally fall into two categories — hard and soft. The former involve specific knowledge and abilities, such as technical proficiencies and data analysis. The latter focus on emotional intelligence and behavior, such as communication and problem solving.

Most employers recognize both types of skills as important for any work environment.

The key difference between hard and soft skills is how they're gained and utilized in the workplace.

Hard skills are often gained through education or specific training. They include competencies like how to use a certain machine, software or another tool. Soft skills are more often seen as personality traits you may have spent your whole life developing. They are called upon when you manage your time, communicate with other people or confront a difficult situation for the first time. Put another way, hard skills could be defined as your technical knowledge whereas soft skills are your overall habits in the workplace.

SOFT SKILLS

Unquantifiable attributes that cannot be proven but must be demonstrated through work style and approach

Successful demonstration of soft skills is left to subjective opinion

- Communication
- Leadership
- Team Work
- Creativity

Both types of skills are equally valuable. A study by CareerBuilder, a global leader in human capital solutions, which included 2,000 Human Resources professionals and spanned multiple industries, found that 77 per cent of those surveyed believed that soft skills were as important as hard skills.

Since that's true, how do you make sure you put your best foot forward at work?

Step 1: Assess Your Skills To determine your skills, you'll first want to complete a self-assessment and take inventory. Then, in an excel spreadsheet, write down as many skills as you can think of. Don't worry about breaking up your soft and hard skills, just start writing every skill that you can think of in no particular order.

Step 2: Organize Your Skills Once you have a list of all of your skills—hard and soft—start placing them into the right pot. Hard skills are those that are easy to quantify and prove either through work examples or hard documentation. On the other hand, soft skills are far more subjective and will require more specific evidence to demonstrate. Then, once all of your skills are set in the right pot, start prioritizing them based on what's most important to your career. Books and online articles, quizzes or courses can also help in "growing" a particular skill.

Step 3: Demonstrate Your Skills Finally, you want to practice both your soft and hard skills at your workplace. For hard skills, this won't be too difficult. Your daily performance will attest to your technical strengths. Soft skills are a little more challenging. For example, for a soft skill such as communication or prioritization, you'll want to practice, expand and demonstrate your abilities, so that your management has examples of your worth as an employee.

Closing Thoughts A balance of hard and soft skills proves you're a valuable part of any team. Their value go hand-in-hand for employers and only by knowing how to leverage both of them will you have the ability to be truly professionally satisfied.

Just remember that it's not enough to say, "I'm a great team player." Anyone can say that.

Because a good supervisor or employer is observant, your regular demonstration of your skills will be your best representation of your worth to the company.



CareGivers
of America
Home Healthcare Services