

adaptability

the quality of being able to adjust to new or evolving conditions

What is adaptability? Adaptability is a soft skill that means being able to rapidly learn new skills and behaviors in response to changing circumstances. Employers usually look for adaptability when hiring new staff and the skill is often included in job descriptions because of its importance for growth within a role.

Over the past couple of decades there has been increased research and experience that shows that many career failures arise from an inability to adapt and let go of old behaviors. Whilst it's important to use our past experiences of change to inform how we might tackle the next unexpected challenge, being adaptable is about *remaining open and flexible in our approach*, accepting that we may succeed or fail along the way. In a world that is going to continue to throw new and novel situations for leaders to navigate, the need for adaptability in the workplace - to learn and unlearn - is critical to future success.

Someone demonstrating adaptability in the workplace is flexible and has the ability to respond effectively to their working conditions - even if things don't go as planned. They usually work well on their own and with team members. Employees are often expected to manage unusual situations without explicit instruction.

An adaptable employee must be able to solve problems in a fast-paced environment and trust their judgement when making difficult decisions, while still ***recognizing that what worked before is not necessarily the answer.***

Benefits of workplace adaptability There are several benefits to being adaptable in the workplace. Whether you're adaptable already or are working to be, here are some benefits of workplace adaptability:

You'll be a more valuable employee
You'll be better equipped to face challenges
You'll be happier
It will be easier for you to adapt to career changes
You'll be more relevant

How to become more adaptable at work? Whether you're barely beginning to embrace adaptability or looking to sharpen your skills in this area, consider the following ways to increase your adaptability in the workplace:

Get out of your comfort zone When you step out of your comfort zone, you'll be presented with new situations you wouldn't typically come across. The more you do this, the better you'll be able to exhibit flexibility and assess how best to approach new scenarios.

Be a better listener In order to be adaptable, it's important to actively listen to what's going on in the workplace. This is because the better listener you are, the better you'll be able to understand how a situation should be handled. This will allow you to resolve any conflict or change with ease, produce the best response and create a more positive environment for all involved.

Ask questions Consider asking your co-workers how they perform certain tasks and handle certain situations in the workplace. One of the greatest ways to learn adaptability is to not only observe but actively seek advice from others who excel in this area. Make sure your questions are professional and well thought out.

Be willing to make mistakes Though making a mistake can be disheartening, it also provides you with various opportunities such as the ability to learn a valuable lesson, share knowledge and consider a future solution. Change your mindset when it comes to your mistakes in the workplace. The better you are at embracing your mistakes, the more adaptable you'll be at managing the fallout.

Practice emotional intelligence When trying to become more adaptable, consider practicing your emotional intelligence. That is, make sure you're in control of your emotions and are aware of the emotions of those around you. This will help you shape your behavior and response to certain workplace changes and situations.