

Curriculum Based Soft Skills Training Transmit the Success of an Individual

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ABSTRACT: Soft skills enable the students with a strong conceptual and practical framework to build and develop managerial skills to enhance the team building. They also play a vital role in the development of the students' personality, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills thereby enhancing their career prospects. Training in soft skills develops strong practical orientation and awareness about the real scenario of working environment to the students and help them in building and improving their skills in communication. These skills also empower the students from within and strengthen them to face any given situation. Soft Skills are essential to fine-tune the student's attitudes, values, beliefs, motivation, eagerness to learn, willingness to share and embrace new ideas, goal orientation, flexibility, persuasion, futuristic thinking, comparison, diplomacy, manners, etiquette and various skill sets of communication. In this global dependency and international technological scenario every student needs to meet the requirements of job and professional responsibility. Students need to fine tune their soft skills before starting their carrier perspectives and have to be taken care of their professional skills and make them ready to get a positive beginning to the corporate world.

Keywords: Soft skills training enhances the individual's ability to face the global phenomena

Soft skills enable the students with a strong conceptual and practical framework to horn the interpersonal skills. In this technological age the relationship between individual and organization is getting more and more complex, it is not only to have an excellent IQ but also deals with one's feelings and understanding the feelings of others in any given situation. It helps the individual to complement academic intelligence or cognitive capacities (IQ) with a human sensibility. Soft skill is a sociological term for an individual's Emotional Intelligence (EQ). The online encyclopedia Wikipedia gives a very broad definition of soft skills, which leaves a basic understanding about soft skills and needs much discussion on this:

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

It can be broadly defined as personal attributes enhance an individual's interactions, job and career prospects. Whether it involves face to face customer interaction or even indirect correspondence over telephone or e-mail, employees, who had had an apt reply at soft skills will achieve both individual as well as organizational success. Hence soft skills is critical to showcasing one's hard skills; both can be considered to be two sides of the same coin - one without the other has no impact.

Being good at number crunching and scoring high marks in subjects are not the only criteria for success but also understanding the situation and complete the task with at most care is important in professional as well as personal life. At the edge of core competency and personal traits the soft skills play a vital role in refining one's behaviour. Soft Skills are imparted to fine-tune, the student's life skills and employable skills and also they will be able to deal with different situations meticulously and responsibly. With the help of soft skills the students can survive and sustain in the fierce global competitive spirit.

Soft skill is not a visible skill like the domain subject content in a person but it helps in improving the overall personality of the person. It concentrates more on fine tuning the character and trying to give a finishing touch to the personality. It includes communication skills, interpersonal skills, group dynamics, team work, body language, etiquettes etc. These skills can be self-developed, interactive, communicative and transferable skills. According to Harvard Business School suggests that hard skills or technical skills contribute only 15% of one's success while remaining 85% of contribution by soft skills. Even the Stanford Research institute also shared the same opinion and reveals that interpersonal skills play an important role in one's success. In this technological and global competency, it is a fact that high prominence is given to acquire adequate soft skills beyond academic or technical knowledge in every student. It is an understanding fact that the technical skills only determine how well one can do his job but soft skills will tune how far one can perform well in life both personally and professionally, which will impart the success of an individual.

The speed at which the education system responds to the increased demands of the economy for highly educated people will determine the future development of national economies. Such occurrence will directly influence the economic structure in the sense that national economies with highly educated population will be able to ensure more favorable structure of production, resulting in better position in exchange relations with other countries. The companies from transitional economies need to possess knowledge and specialized skills. Apart from hard skills or technical knowledge, soft skills can be considered as specialized skills to gain the prominence.

When it comes to Indian context, the onset of economic liberalization and the Indian market is also becoming global, so the attributes of soft skills are to be imbibed by Indian youth to show their real potential at international levels. Soft skills will

help the student to improve their positive attitude, good interpersonal skills, effective listening, time management, communication skills, and self-confidence coupled with enthusiasm, would make the youth achieve greater success in a competitive environment. It is said that hard skills may earn and can make a person qualify for an interview call but it is the soft skills which will help to win the job. The clear opinion of CEOs and HR Managers today are suggesting that companies can create better working environment, if they hire people with good soft skills and then train them to develop their hard skills in the required area of specialization. Lack of soft skills has been pointed out by MNCs as a reason for not preferring even high academic profile candidates. If the soft skills training is imparted along with hard skills right from the beginning of the academic course will help the students to face the cut throat competition. As a positive side, along with the academic qualification the students need to focus on their soft skills, will lead to employability potential of the student.

The students need to develop diverse range of abilities such as communication skills, strategic-planning skills, self-awareness, analytical thinking, leadership skills, teambuilding skills etc. The blend of both hard skills and soft skills is essential for personal, professional and social success. Purdue University defines soft skills as "The cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark each of us to varying degrees." Their list of soft skills includes work ethic, courtesy, teamwork, self discipline, self -confidence, conformity to prevailing norms, and language proficiency. Hard skills are nothing but technical knowledge or expertise in the specialized field of interest and also considered as academic qualification of an individual. Soft Skills have two parts. One part involves developing attitudes and attributes, and the other part involves fine-tuning communication skills to express attitudes, ideas and thoughts as well. The right approach to get success in work is the perfect integration of ideas and attitudes, with appropriate communication skills in oral, written and non-verbal areas. Attitudes and skills are integral part of soft skills. Each one can influence and complement with each other. Companies are looking for the candidates who are smart enough to handle with different personalities and who can assimilate into diverse work environment.

Soft Skills training has become an essential area of focus to the students to win a job in the Global scenario. These skills include the ability to listen well, communicate effectively, be positive, handle conflicts, accept responsibility, show respect, build trust, work well with others, manage time effectively, accept criticism, work under pressure and demonstrate ethics.

According to Serby Richard (2003) modern corporate requirements are such that they look specifically for those candidates who can add value to their organization with their soft skills. The students should be in a position to use their soft skills to get into a job and surviving in the working environment. If these skills when they are constrained, the job acquisition and sustainability becomes tougher. It is expected from all those candidates who wish to get an edge over their competitor should refine their soft skills because it is not possible to survive as single entity within the workplace. Everyone should be able to see the bigger picture, to appreciate one's role as a team player and to bring additional personal skills to the interested profession.

Soft skills are those skills that add more value to the hard skills adorned by an individual. Martin Carole (2008) comments that hard skills are more "Along the lines of what might appear on your resume" whereas soft skills are 'Cluster of personality traits, social graces, personal habits, friendliness and optimism.' Soft skills are not a substitute for hard or technical skills, but they act as harmonizing skills that serve up to unlock the prospective for highly effective performance in people even with good hard skills. Companies are going global, and often, technical experts are called upon to do a variety of non-technical tasks which can acquire with defined soft skills. At present, soft skills are placed higher than strategic management skills and process management skills.

Coming to the technical education, the soft skills for engineers include the ability to lead, motivate and delegate. They are important at every level of organizational responsibility and should always be evident. Being the most technical person in his or her field is not always enough to succeed unless he or she can combine this with the ability to convince others. In today's world, where the survival of the fittest is the norm, it has become imperative to sharpen one's technical skills, and more importantly, soft skills. Technical skills can be learnt, applied and measured to an established degree; whereas the same cannot be applied to soft skills.

Students need to possess two types of soft skills; they are personal skills and projectional skills. Under personal skills they have Intra and Inter personal skill like analytical skills, attitudinal skills, existential skills, self-managing skills and management skills. Whereas verbal and non-verbal skills come under projectional skills. In verbal skills listening, speaking, reading and writing come under, where as non-verbal skills include body and paralanguage.

Technical and job - related skills are a must, but they are not sufficient when it comes to progressing up the ladder. Soft skills play a very essential role in this vigorous advanced technical age. Today there is a huge mass of qualified job seekers existing in the society and the competition within them for job acquisition and job sustainability is becoming tougher. To get an edge over the competitors they are left with no other choice but to add worth to their hard skills, with the help of the soft skills they can exhibit their true potential in the global context. If one has got good advanced soft skills then definitely he will be able to establish himself as distinct amongst other job seekers. Furthermore, adequate communication skills are a prerequisite for a range of other soft skills like moderating discussions or conflict management. Another pair of soft skills frequently lacking in tertiary education is critical and structured thinking. Both go hand in hand with problem solving abilities. Especially in today's information society it is of high importance to critically filter the endless stream of incoming data, analyze it, and make informed decisions based on it.

Today lack of competence in soft skill is marked as one of the reasons of poor rate of employability of technical graduates. Though it is true that soft skills need to be inculcated at a very young age at home but the role of soft skills training in schools and colleges cannot be ignored. Irrespective of the target group or the institution where it is imparted, soft skills training programs aims to improve a whole range of skills, like assertiveness, negotiation skills, communication skills and the skills to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. Soft skills are perceived as those capabilities that are inherent in an individual. These competencies exist in every individual to a particular level. But if these skills are not used or if the individual who adorns

these skills is unaware of it then that individual will never be able to utilize his or her inherent skills. Soft skills training will make the individual aware of his or her hidden capabilities and to refine it for the overall development and success of the individual. Everyone can get benefit from the soft skills training irrespective of the skills they have inherited.

Objectives and aims of soft skills training program are pertained that the students should be able to:

- i) Develop effective communication skills
- ii) Develop effective presentation skills.
- iii) Conduct effective business correspondence and prepare business reports.
- iv) Become self - confident individuals by mastering inter - personal, team management, and leadership skills.
- v) Develop all - round personality with a mature outlook to function effectively in different circumstances.
- vi). Develop broad career plans, evaluate the employment market, identify the organizations to get good placement, match the job requirements and skill sets.
- vii) Take part effectively in various selection procedures adopted by the recruiters.

At the Soft Skills training programs training should be imparted to fine - tune the students' personal skills and projectional skills so that they will be able to deal with different situations diligently and responsibly. Soft skills strengthen them from within the perspective of an individual. These skills empower them to understand *who are they?*, how best they can come across as competent individuals in any given situation. One can acknowledge about this truth, a person can undergo a simple self-training or guided training to improve the lacking skills. In a brief, it means that negatively perceived personal traits could be changed or successfully covered by undergoing self-imposed training. Only the prerequisite is that the one, who acknowledges one's weakness and takes the decision to change it. Training will become most likely unsuccessful if one is not fully convinced that whether it will be helpful or not. The educational system should understand how much importance do they place on teaching soft skills as a part of the academic orientation.

No interviewer is going to ask the candidate whether he has soft skills or not; they're going to create a situation and try to examine how best a candidate can implement the soft skills in and around the given task. Every company needs to have concrete examples ready to talk about so that they can paint the picture of a well-developed and skilled future employee who is ready to work and contribute to the company. They are ready to give training on hard skills after getting into the job but should be focusing more on pre-refined soft skills and creating opportunities to test them. To gain pre requisite soft skills every student needs to brush up his skills in a structured curriculum design.

At present scenario most of the higher educational institutions are focusing more on soft skills training. The teaching methods in the soft skills training should include lectures, projects, role plays, mock interviews, group discussions, presentations, quizzes, debates and reading dedicated books, attending courses, and joining clubs or societies to broaden their horizon, like debating societies, or scientific societies and various other participatory sessions. The emphasis will be on learning by doing. Since the method of training is experiential and highly interactive, the students imbibe the skills and attributes in a gradual and subtle way over the duration of the program. The students will not only learn the skills and attributes but also internalize them over a period of time. Internalization ensures that the skills and attributes become part of the students' nature. Subtle changes are bound to occur in their behavior and outlook, and these will make them more self-assured and confident.

Moreover, the behavior changes will be gradual and natural and will not appear artificial or put on. Thus, the changes in them will be genuine and positive. Parents and teachers have superior influence on a young person's aptitude in soft skills. According to sociologists, not only parents and educators, but also the whole social environment and upbringing of a child will have major impact on its personal traits. But, with the change in time, nuclear families have set in and along with technological developments led to the loss of our culture and traditional values.

Soft skills are not based on theory but they are the positive traits expected in a good human being and have to be developed as a habit. One may or may not be born with all positive traits, but if one has the basic attitude, one can learn from one's mistakes and from their experiences. To be more precise, it is all about how an individual behaves and interacts with the society. In recent years, the corporate world felt that soft skills are crucial at the workplace and its training must be a part of the curriculum during education. In career terms, soft skills soften the edges and provide a competitive advantage over others. However, those who ignore this critical aspect of personality learn its importance the hard way when their promotion is overlooked.

A critical view may be taken that these skills can be taught to a person. Yes, one can be taught as to what communication is and how to communicate. But, your basic behavioral tendencies will have its impact when the theory is put into practice and that is where the soft skills gain prominence. Every individual is unique in his nature, traits and talents. They can be sharpened by soft skills and they can be easily fit into any given scenario.

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