

Soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, are personal attributes that relate to your way of dealing with work and interacting with others. Enhanced soft skills ensure personal efficacy, provide an edge when job-seeking, and increase the potential for obtaining a promotion. Soft skills are important to employers across all industries.

So how do you develop your soft skills? The answer is through experiential learning, or 'learning by doing' followed by reflection on the activity. Experiential learning can include a variety of activities such as internships, studying abroad, field work, projects, volunteering and more besides. Consider what soft skills are important for the industry you want to work in and think about what experiences you can undertake to enhance the required aptitudes.

Top soft skills sought by employers with recommended experiential activities:

What:

To be a good leader means more than simply being 'in charge'. Key skills required for leaders include organization, communication, reliability, problem-solving, empathy, motivation and more.



Step out of your comfort zone and take on more projects - whether professionally or through your school or a local not-for-profit organization. Sign up to be a mentor or a student leader, volunteer to organize events for local groups or associations, take on a leadership position at your school or in your community or manage a new project.

What:

Being a good team player is more than being part of a group. It involves establishing trust, being fair, creating an inclusive environment, motivating others, collaborating, negotiating, synthesizing information and contributing to a productive outcome.



How:

Develop these skills by becoming involved in a group such as a club, student organization, a sports team or a professional association. Gain experience working in a team through volunteering, undertaking an internship or working on a group project.

What:

Communication is one of the top skills all employers look for.
While verbal communication is highly important, a good communicator also focuses on listening, effective written communication, and non-verbal communication such as hody language



How:

Enhance your communication skills by joining groups such as Toast Masters, giving presentations, facilitating meetings, taking minutes of meetings or volunteering at events or at your local school. Don't forget to ask others for feedback as this will help you to continually improve.

What:

A professional challenge doesn't simply refer to a disagreement or conflict but can include a multitude of situations including technological disruptions and operational changes. Your ability to resolve the problem quickly and effectively is what employers are expecting to see.

Demonstrate your ability to creatively overcome challenges by implementing innovative solutions.

PROBLEM SOLVANIE How:

Enhance your problem-solving skills by becoming involved in experiences such as school projects, group work, internships, or travel. Reflect on any challenges you faced and how you overcame those challenges. You can even take an entrepreneurial approach and creatively resolve any challenges in your community.

What:

Adaptability means being comfortable with change, which is critically important in today's rapidly evolving workplace. It also means rebounding when things don't go to plan whilst staying motivated. To be adaptable you must be open-minded, flexible, positive and resilient.

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How:

Enhance your adaptability by forcing yourself to take risks with new or different projects, embrace learning about novel and disruptive technologies in your industry and encourage curiosity/positivity amongst others when faced with a sudden or dramatic change.