

CAREER FUNDAMENTALS

Professor Dr. Md. Shah Azam

Department of Marketing

University of Rajshahi



HARD SKILLS VS. SOFT SKILLS

What's The Difference



CONCEPTUALIZE SKILLS

- During the job application and interview process, employers look for applicants with two skill sets: **hard skills** and **soft skills**.
- University students and all other potential candidates should acquire adequate knowledge on those skills and also understand the difference between them.
- **Hard skills** are teachable abilities or skill sets that are easy to quantify. Typically, you'll learn hard skills in the classroom, through books or other training materials, or on the job.
- **Soft skills**, on the other hand, are subjective skills that are much harder to quantify. Also known as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," soft skills relate to the way you relate to and interact with other people.



EXAMPLES OF HARD SKILLS

- Proficiency in a foreign language
- A degree or certificate
- Typing speed
- Machine operation
- Computer programming
- These hard skills are often listed in a job application and in any many other expression of interest (EOI). Clearly mentioning hard skills in the cover letter and on the resume, attract employers or managers attention and provide ease in recognizing and evaluation of a candidate



EXAMPLES OF SOFT SKILLS

- Communication
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Patience
- Persuasion
- Problem Solving Abilities
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Work Ethic



EMPLOYERS VIEW: HARD OR SOFT SKILLS?

- While certain hard skills are necessary for any position, employers increasingly look for job applicants with particular soft skills. This is because, while it is easy for an employer to train a new employee in a particular hard skill (such as how to use a certain computer program), it is much more difficult to train an employee in a soft skill (such as patience)



TOP SKILLS EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR

- Generally, employers seek candidates having a diversity of skills. The top skills employers seek in candidates for employment are listed as:.
 - Analytical
 - Communication
 - Interpersonal
 - Leadership
 - Positive Attitude
 - Teamwork
 - Technical
- It is good idea to think about those skills while students are at growing level i.,e. at undergrad level, and acquire them through the academic programs and also their involvement with many extra curricular activities and community services. Candidates become competitive by incorporating those skills on the resume, and cover letters, and also mentioning them during job interviews.



EMPHASIZE BOTH HARD AND SOFT SKILLS

- During the job application process or in any EOI, candidates should emphasize both of their skills i.,e., hard skills and soft skills.
- Acquiring a range of hard and soft skills may provide candidates with the opportunity to develop a strategy to place him/her in a convincing way. More clearly, if a candidate lacks a particular hard skill required by the employer, he/she can emphasize a particular soft skill that he/she knows would be valuable in the position.
 - For example, if the job involves working on a number of group projects, candidates should be sure to emphasize his/her experience and skill as a team player and his/her ability to communicate with the team members.



HOW TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR SKILLS

- You'll want to make sure potential employers are aware of your skills throughout the job application process. This means highlighting your hard and soft skills on your resume and cover letter, and also weaving in mentions of your skills during job interviews.
- **Incorporate skills into your resume.** On your resume, you can include a skills section that lists out relevant skills. As well, you can point to your skills in job description. For instance, if you're applying for a job where you'll need to have legal knowledge, and also communicate with clients successfully, you can include similar experience in job descriptions.
- **Include relevant skills in your cover letter.** Your cover letter is also an opportunity to highlight both sets of skills. When it comes to soft skills, however, rather than saying you have a soft skill, demonstrate that you have it.
 - For instance, rather than saying "I have leadership skills," you can say, "At my role at Company ABC, I steered the sales team to record numbers, creating a bonus structure that generated strong results."
- **Share your skills during job interviews.** During interviews, the STAR interview response technique can help you show off soft skills.
 - STAR stands for **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult.



STAR INTERVIEW RESPONSE TECHNIQUE

- STAR stands for **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult.
 - **Situation:** Describe the context within which you performed a job or faced a challenge at work. For example, perhaps you were working on a group project, or you had a conflict with a coworker. This situation can be from a work experience, a volunteer position, or any other relevant event. Be as specific as possible.
 - **Task:** Next, describe your responsibility in that situation. Perhaps you had to help your group complete a project under a tight deadline, resolve a conflict with a coworker, or hit a sales target.
 - **Action:** You then describe how you completed the task or endeavored to meet the challenge. Focus on what you did, rather than what your team, boss, or coworker did. (Tip: Instead of saying "We did xyx," say "I did xyz.")
 - **Result:** Finally, explain the outcomes or results generated by the action taken. You might emphasize what you accomplished, or what you learned.
- Using this method of answering interview questions lets you provide concrete examples or proof that you possess the experience and skills for the job at hand.



STAR INTERVIEW RESPONSE TECHNIQUE

- The **STAR** interview response technique is also a method for answering behavioral interview questions. Behavioral interview questions are questions about how you have behaved in the past. Specifically, they are about how you have handled certain work situations. Since past performance can be a good prediction of the future, interviewers ask these questions to see if candidates have the skills and experiences required for the job.
 - Examples of behavioral interview questions include:
 - Tell me about a time you had to complete a task under a tight deadline.
 - Have you ever gone above and beyond the call of duty?
 - What do you do when a team member refuses to complete his or her portion of the work?



HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW USING STAR

- Since you won't know in advance what interviewing techniques your interviewer will be using, you'll benefit from preparing several scenarios from the jobs you've held.
- First, make a list of the skills and/or experiences required for the job. You might look at the job listing for suggestions. Then, consider specific examples of times that you displayed those skills. For each example, name the situation, task, action, and result.
- You can also take a look at common behavioral interview questions, and try answering each of them using the STAR technique.
- Whatever examples you select, make sure they are as closely related to the job you're interviewing for as possible.



EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS USING STAR

- **Example Question 1:** Tell me about a time you had to complete a task under a tight deadline. Describe the situation, and explain how you handled it.
- **Example Answer 1:** While I typically like to plan my work out in stages and complete it piece by piece, I can also achieve strong work under a tight deadline.
 - Once at a former company, an employee left days before a big project of his was due. I was asked to take it over, with only a few days to learn about and complete the project. I created a task force, delegated work, and we all completed the assignment with a day to spare. I think I tend to thrive under tight deadlines.
- **Example Question 2:** What do you do when a team member refuses to complete his or her portion of the work?
- **Example Answer 2:** When there are team conflicts or issues, I always try my best to step up as team leader if needed. I think my communication skills make me an effective leader and moderator. For example, once I was working on a team project, and two of the team members got into an argument, both refusing to complete their assignments. They were both dissatisfied with their workloads, so I arranged a team meeting where we rearranged the assignments for the team. This made everyone happier and more productive, and our project was a success.



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SOFT SKILLS

- **Be open to feedback**
- **Communicate often**
- **Emphasize teamwork**
- **Build positive relationships**
- **Get outside of your comfort zone**
- **Get ready to learn**
- **Adapt to workplace changes**
- **Observe others**
- **Work through conflict**
- **Take on a leadership role**
- **Arrive at work on time**



THE IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

- **Increased employee relations**
- **Decreased company cost**
- **Less training needed**



Top skills for your resume

Soft skills:

1. Communication
2. Teamwork
3. Problem-solving
4. Adaptability
5. Leadership
6. Self-motivation
7. Active listening
8. Critical thinking
9. Conflict management
10. Organization

Hard skills:

1. Data analysis
2. Cybersecurity
3. Programming
4. Marketing
5. Accounting
6. Design
7. Writing
8. Cloud computing
9. Specialized machinery
10. Foreign languages



YOUR TARGET?

- **Gain all necessary hard and soft skills**
- **Be humane and ethical**
- **Progress in such a manner which will generate the ideal global atmosphere for the future generation to live and work**

