3 Skills Every Employee Should Have Regardless of Role, Company, and Industry

What skills should your employees have regardless of role, company size, and industry? In this Viventium blog, we discuss 3 key skills which help organizations succeed.

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Cloud computing, UX design, artificial intelligence, and other technical skills. These are the top abilities that every employee at every company needs to possess. Don't believe us? Good! You shouldn't! The reality is that none of the above are the most important capabilities for employees to have. Of course, you'd never know that based on the countless articles, blog posts, and TED talks that make it seem like your company is doomed to fail unless every one of your workers becomes an HTML wizard. So what skills should your people have regardless of role, company size, and industry? Soft skills. Indeed, 91% of talent professionals say that having soft skills is important to the future of recruiting and HR, according to LinkedIn's 2019 Global Talent Trends report. Such interpersonal skills are often hard to define and even harder to appraise, but they are often far more consequential than hard skills when it comes to increasing individual and organizational success. Sure enough, 89% of talent pros say that bad hires typically lack soft skills. Soft skills are especially vital because they're highly transferable. People will be able to apply them no matter where they are in your organization, which is critical given that the pace of change often requires employees to take on new tasks on a continual basis. Here are the top soft skills for which you should be training your people:

1. Leadership

"But leadership training is just for people managers," you might be thinking. No, management training is for managers. Leadership is a trait that transcends hierarchy. Someone may not be managing – or leading – a department, that person may at times have to lead a project. The right leadership training will help employees get buy-in from colleagues, mitigate risk, and spearhead initiatives from inception to completion. But all of that pales in comparison to the most paramount outcome of leadership training. It's not that people will become better leaders, though that's all well and good too. Rather, they will learn how to create other leaders. That is, the best leaders are those who develop other leaders. Leadership training is therefore as much about improving individual skills as it is nurturing a broad culture of leadership, one in which all workers have the confidence and courage to steer their careers, their departments, and the organization toward greater success. That's why it's worth identifying effective leaders within your organization and asking those individuals to share their experiences and advice. Such an approach also helps underscore the power of leaders growing leaders.

2. Communication

Many of us tend to view communication skills in terms of presenting to groups of people. But communication extends well beyond presentation. From verbal to non-verbal communication, from talking to a roomful of executives to speaking one-on-one with a colleague, from composing emails to participating in meetings, from creating a PowerPoint deck to . . . well, you get the point. Pretty much everything we do at work relies on being able to communicate effectively. No matter your position in a company, you'll eventually have to inform, inspire, or influence others to achieve personal or organizational goals. Yet here's the main reason why communication is so important: You can have the most awesome idea ever, but that idea will ultimately only be as good as your ability to communicate it. This leads to another important point: Hard work alone is usually not enough to advance professionally. It takes expert communication skills to advance a career, as well as propel your company forward. Ultimately, training your people to be better communicators is really about training them to be better workers, period.

3.Collaboration

Remember when you used to be able to work independently all the time with little interaction with fellow coworkers? Remember how none of your work impacted your colleagues much, and likewise, their efforts didn't make much of a difference to your job? Of course, you don't remember any of this. Because the days of working in a vacuum never happened, and they never will. Today's workplaces are matrixed environments that demand collaboration. At the same time, numerous research studies show that conflicting goals and priorities are some of the biggest roadblocks to collaboration and teamwork. It's therefore important to train your people to be better at collaborating with each other. Sometimes, this may mean diversity and inclusion training – but not the lame kind that feels like mandatory compliance training. Rather, helping people to be more collaborative often lies in encouraging them to be more open and respectful of others' ideas. It's also about rewarding teamwork, not just individual results, as well as assessing people based on how they've helped others become better at their roles. That last point is particularly significant because it underscores that building skills are not just about training. Sure, instructor-led sessions and individual coaching are great ways to infuse leadership, communication, collaboration, and other skills into your company, but unless your performance management framework appraises people based on how they demonstrate such skills, no amount of training is going to make a true difference. In other words, managers should pay attention to how their people communicate with one another, work together, and lead any number of projects. Oh, by the way, there's training to help managers do that too!

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