Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills | How to Master Both
By Amy Bergen

You may have heard valuable workplace skills grouped into two categories: "hard" and "soft." Just about everyone has a bit from both Column A and Column B.

But what's the difference between the two categories? And how can you express the value of these skills during the job application process?

Determining soft skills

Some hard skills, like degrees and active certifications, can be listed on a resume. Soft skills, however, are best revealed through resume details, the story you tell in your cover letter, and the extra info you offer in an interview.

The full range of soft skills is too extensive to list, but here are some that employers in multiple fields will appreciate:

- Dependability and follow-through
- Flexibility
- Open-mindedness
- Critical thinking
- Honesty and integrity
- Good communication
- Motivation
- Vision
- Work ethic
- Teamwork
- Organization and prioritizing

Show, don't tell

But listing these words on a resume doesn't tell an employer much. To borrow some old-school writing advice: when it comes to soft skills, show, don't tell.

The best way to talk up your soft skills in a job application is to give examples of when you've used them effectively. You don't even need to use the actual words; let your actions speak for you.

Did you train new employees and walk them through the specific lingo of your workplace? That shows both communication and leadership.

Did you pull off a project with multiple moving parts, in school or on the job? That demonstrates organization, prioritizing, and patience (and teamwork, if you worked with a team).

Have you worked with a range of clients in a direct service position? You probably have flexibility, adaptability, and patience.

Have you come up with initiatives, ideas, or projects on your own, whether or not they got off the ground? That's a good example of vision and motivation.

See full article on the Idealist Blog.

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