

Netwatch

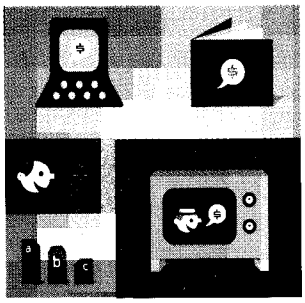
By Jim Carroll

Your guide to business & accounting on the Internet

The 12 skills for success

Has your professional training kept you up to date with the skills you will need as you go forward in your career? Even though you might have had lots of technical training and have kept up with the latest issues in taxation, corporate governance and other cutting-edge issues, you might be missing out on some of the most important skills you will need in the future. We are entering an era in which so-called soft skills are becoming just as important as traditional professional skills, if not more so.

Why is this the case? We live in a world of incessant change — involving business model turmoil and competitive disruption, rapid innovation and market change, continuous business transformation and new workplace models. Your success will come from your ability to navigate this world of change, spot the opportunities, deflect the threats and navigate uncharted waters. And that's where soft skills come in.



With that in mind, I found the results of a survey by the Association of Graduate Recruiters in the UK compelling. The survey provided insight as to the 12 key career skills for the future and, from my perspective, the list clearly identifies the attributes, attitude, skills and capabilities that all accountants must develop:

- **Self-awareness.** The ability to identify your skills, values and core strengths. In other words, knowing who you are and what you can do.
- **Exploring opportunities.** The ability to identify, research and seize opportunities. Someone who can grab the future and shape it, rather than being shaped by it.
- **Action planning.** The ability to take the initiative and take the lead.
- **Networking.** The ability to collaborate and work with others, particularly with respect to sharing and generating knowledge by working with others.
- **Matching and decision-making.** The ability to apply core skills and talents to changing circumstances and to make decisions through opportunity identification.
- **Negotiation.** The ability to negotiate a win-win agreement despite the challenges that surround you.
- **Political awareness.** The ability to understand and perceive the unique, evolving relationships and organizational dynamics around you.
- **Coping with uncertainty.** The ability to change goals, direction and activities based on changing circumstances, combined with the ability to take risks.
- **Development focus.** A clear understanding that knowledge is the key to future success and the skills to generate needed knowledge on a just-in-time basis.
- **Transfer skills.** The ability to apply current capabilities to changing circumstances and opportunities.
- **Self-confidence.** A belief in one's core strengths and capabilities, despite the challenge that can come from the regular buffering of constant change.
- **Self-promotion.** The ability to project self-confidence in order to take on further responsibility and pursue opportunity.

It's a good list and is worthy of serious reflection. The fascinating thing is while it is from 1995, the list has aged well; it provides a compelling overview of what we need as we go forward. Spend some time on the Net researching soft skills to ensure they are part of your career toolkit for the future.

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SITES ON SOFT SKILLS

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