

These are the Essential Skills You will Need Now and in the Future

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Introduction

The world has always been taking a turn in terms of what the future is going to look like. For years now, it has been everywhere that the globe is going digital and many people have started increasing their knowledge in that area such as coding. Because of the global pandemic that we are currently facing, the working world is going to take an even bigger turn. The ability to work from has become ever more important and necessary for businesses to continue running during this time. Even after the Corona Virus threat has passed, the permanent shapeshift of the conduction of work has already occurred.

In this article, a few essential skills needed to work well from now on as listed by Forbes (2020), will be discussed with an in-depth analysis of why each skill is important in the new world that is coming to be. The reality is that each year, the skills that are believed to be important in the present moment are deemed to obsolete in the next five years (Forbes, 2020). This is as a result of the world not being stagnant, business evolves and the ways of conducting business evolve as well.

Why are skills essential?

A skill as defined by Merriam-Webster (2020), is the “ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance.” For any activity that you intend to fulfil, you need the necessary skill for you to execute it successfully. Skills vary according to the tasks that need to be fulfilled. For example, doing your job at your usual workplace and doing the same job at home during the lockdown requires some varying types of skills. At work, you may feel the pressure of having your manager and colleagues around, doing their work so you end up doing yours too.

On the other side, being at home means that you are alone and there is no one there to check up on you to see how you are doing. In this setting, you will need self-control and a sense of goal achievement for you to actually do your work well. This does not go to say that the only environments that we will be working in will be in the home but many companies are indeed beginning to advertise jobs for remote learning.

Below are the various skills that have appeared at the top of the wanted list as availed by the Forbes company. NB this does not provide an all or nothing guide on the skills that are and will be essential soon.

Creativity, judgement and decision making

Although creativity has always been a beneficial skill to possess, it has become more important and will, in the near future become an essential skill. Business development is moving at a fast pace with numerous ways of conducting business. According to Landry (2017), “creativity is important because it is a differentiator”. It is not enough anymore to have grasped the concepts that you learnt in school but taking that knowledge and tweaking it in a way that is beneficial to growing the business. The number of growing businesses appearing in the world has sparked more of a need for companies to differentiate themselves from the next company.

Outside of the workplace, creativity while working from home has become a major need. Without the usual comfort of being in an office, one must now find ways in which they can make that space conducive for their working. Be it tailoring the environment to suit the need of your job or finding ways to keep the business running while you are away from each other.

With creativity comes the need to be able to make decisions and good judgement. For example, if there is a business emergency for work while you are at home, you need to be able to deal with it without always having to consult the one who is directly above you or the consulting your teammates. Being separated from each other means that decisions may take longer to reach. Where you could walk across the room and ask for an opinion or answer, now you have to pick up the phone or send an email and hope for a timely response. This may not always be possible because, for a long time, people were taught to put their cell phones aside and focus on their work. A question that we may ask now is, with the way things have changed, is this rule or piece of advice still applicable seeing that work has shifted its playing ground digitally?

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, also widely known as “EQ” is defined as “as knowing your own emotions as well as the emotions of others.” Tagney (2018), adds on to this by saying that emotional intelligence is the “remaining puzzle piece; without it, a business professional may never reach their fullest potential”. Emotional intelligence is a construct of five different components which are self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation and social skills. These individual components are important to be successful and help others.

With the growing use of technology and machines replacing many jobs that were previously run by a human, the demand for people with a high EQ will become more apparent. Individuals with high emotional intelligence may become a scarce resource in high demand because of the human aspect that machines lack when interacting with people. Yes, machines are replacing jobs but they can never completely rule out the aspect of human interaction.

Interpersonal skills tie in with having emotional intelligence. The world has undoubtedly become a global village where people from all over the world have started interacting with each other, either in person or using virtual means. To be successful in your job, communication with potential business partners and clients is important. How the message is brought across may make or break a potential deal that could cost the business and possibly the individual at hand, a lot. These skills do not only stop at how you speak but the body language is also a part of it (Forbes, 2020). You may say the right things but

using the wrong tone or looking uninterested and this may jeopardise whatever project at hand.

Leadership

For any business or company to run smoothly, it needs a good leader who will lead it in the right direction. It is important to note that leadership is not only limited to the title that one is given in any environment but it counts most in the day to day activities carried out even without the title formally being given.

There are several reasons why leadership is important now and will become even more important in the future. Some among others include guiding subordinates who look up to the manager or the leader in question. Paving a clear path for others to follow makes the job that needs to be done, easier to do. Leadership also includes motivating employees. The pace of business has increased and this may easily overwhelm employees. It is good to have someone supporting you throughout. Without this, the business may start to decrease, putting a strain on your organisation and its performance.

Diversity and cultural intelligence

As mentioned before, the world has become a global village, meaning that people from different countries, cultures, religions and beliefs have started working together to achieve a common goal. In this aspect, it is crucial for one to be aware of the people they are working with and to know a bit about their background as well. Showing some interest in the people you work with may increase trust in the team and motivate each other to work well together.

Alongside culture and other differences, disability awareness has increased significantly and everyone is entitled to an equal chance to an opportunity where they can deliver. Being ignorant of this only makes one undesirable to potential employers and people they may work with in the future. The statement “ignorance is bliss” does not always apply.

Technology

The fourth Industrial Revolution known as 4IR or Industry 4.0 has brought about the need to constantly grow in the technological aspect. There have been many new terms coming up with the such as artificial intelligence, big data, virtual reality, blockchains, among others. These areas cover pretty much all aspects of an organisation and soon everyone will need to be able to at least understand what each one is about and how to use it in the workplace. At the most basic level, employees in most roles will be required to access data and determine how to act on it. This requires some technical skills.

This explains why many schools have placed a heavy emphasis on the teaching of computers as a part of their curriculum. Computers are no more just for “the guy with glasses” but rather has become an essential skill that everyone must obtain. Coding has become a basic skill that everyone needs to learn and the resources that offer this have become widely available for anyone to take the chance and learn. Use this opportunity to gain a new skill and you can put this on your CV!

Conclusion

The future is here and it has been coming for a while. Its direction changes every day with the activities that take place in the world each time. Always keep yourself in the know-how of what is going on and what may be needed by employers and the business world at large. Your CV cannot remain stagnant as there is constant change. Ensure that you do not get left behind in the new world that has arrived.

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