

Why you should keep upskilling?

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The world will never come to a standstill, so why should you? Every day, new ideas are being brought up and the global market changes with them. Being aware of the changes in the landscape is an important aspect of your life if you are going to stay on the market or create your venture. This is why it is important to continue upskilling. According to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2009), essential skills are the skills that people need for learning, work and life. They are used in the community and the workplace, in different forms and at different levels of complexity.

The World Economic Forum (WEF), surveyed the top skills to have in 2025. The results highlighted two skills that are not to be looked over. These are Analytical Thinking and Innovation, and Active Learning and Learning Strategies. It is crucial to always look into the future and align oneself with the new face of the world in the long term.

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 obsolete in the next five years (Forbes, 2020).

Why are some skills essential?

Merriam-Webster (2020), defines essential skills as 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.

Top skills to start looking into

Resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility

The way we have always known our world to have drastically changed. An example is working from home. It is so easy to burden yourself with work and forget to draw the line between work and home. CIO (2007), highlights that a person who has a high-stress tolerance level would have a high tolerance for ambiguity and be emotionally steady in a crisis. They would be able to handle deadlines being moved up and even welcome the challenge of working until something is finished. This is something that employers have already started looking out for. On the other hand, someone low in stress tolerance would become emotionally stressed in a crisis and only feel comfortable when they know their schedule

for the next few weeks. After making a mistake in a presentation, they might obsess about it for days (CIO, 2007).

Active learning

Active learning is a crucial component in the learning process, for effective learning to take place at work in the classroom (Kapur, 2020). It is important because it promotes recall and has a deeper understanding of new ideas material. By doing this, it becomes easier to learn something and know how to do it as you learn. Employers look at this and think of the costs saved on training employees. With passive learning, one simply reads without critically thinking about what they are meant to learn and how to apply it to the everyday world.

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 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.

Creativity, judgement and decision making

Although creativity has always been a beneficial skill to possess, it has become more important and will, soon 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 business appearing in the world has sparked more of a need for companies to differentiate themselves from the next company.

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 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 timeous 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 “knowing your own emotions as well as the emotions of others.” Tagney (2018), adds 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.

Individuals with high emotional intelligence may become scarce resources 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 body language is also a part of it (Forbes, 2020).

Diversity awareness

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.

Conclusion

It seldom happens where you get to one point thinking “now I can start upskilling”. This should be a continuous process. Waiting too long to change or add on to what you know will create too big of a gap for you to fill in, effectively. Ever chance, you get, use the time to learn

new things, employers are hunting for individuals who have no problem in learning new things while at the same time, coming up with new ideas.

If you are at work and something strikes in your mind, do not be afraid to vocalise it, it is not known where it can go.

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