

# Gympass

**CHALLENGES AND SUPERPOWERS  
IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK**



# Summary

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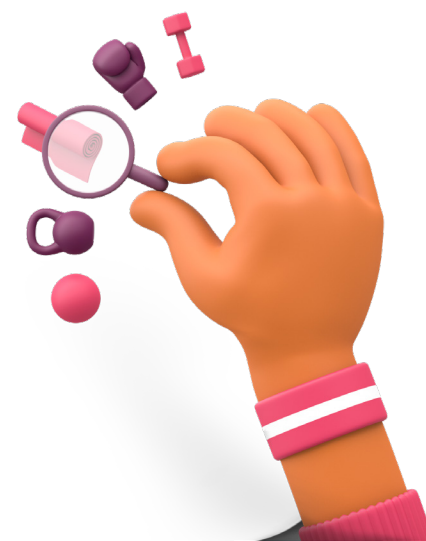
# 1. Introduction

In past decades, we became accustomed to seeing companies hiring professionals **according to their technical training**, experience and field knowledge. Being aware of the specifics of a given role would go a long way toward guaranteeing a successful career to any dedicated individual. But as the labor market evolves, so have selection criteria. In today's world, beyond qualifications, knowhow and experience, **behavioral skills are also a must** when it comes to finding the perfect candidate.

But while this trend has been repeated constantly within the realm of human resources, it has only recently taken on great importance in companies' talent-acquisition processes. **Social and emotional skills are now among the most sought-after attributes for companies.**

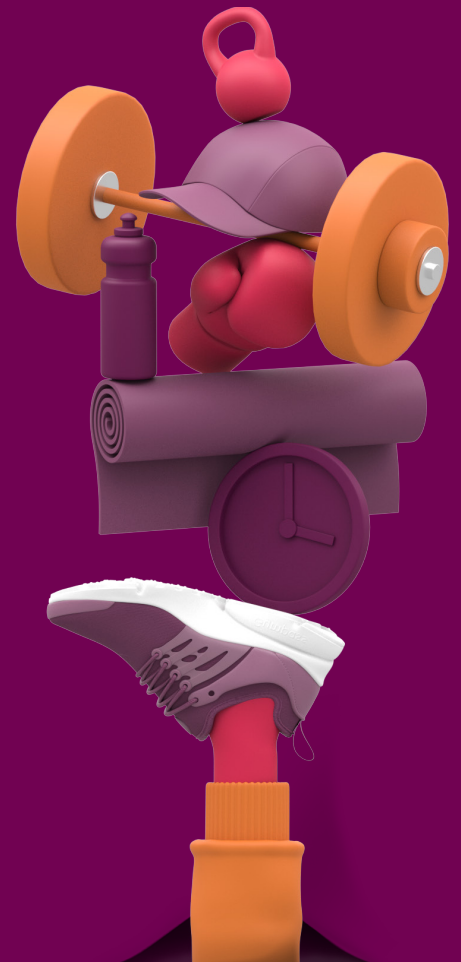
Representing a large umbrella of traits – from the ability to collaborate to the talent of self-management – so-called “behavioral skills” are closely monitored and highly regarded, even more so as the world adjusts to the demands of new forms of labor.

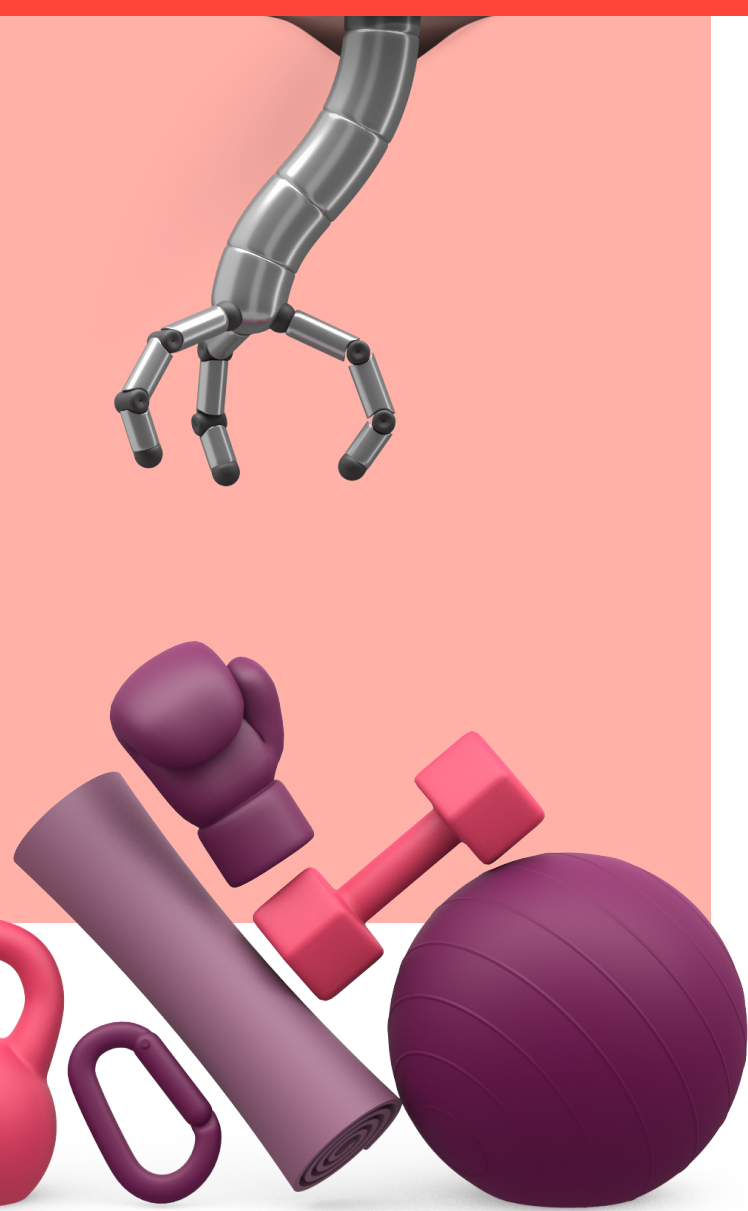
This guide aims to introduce HR leaders and executives to the crucial skills that will help them build a thriving workforce that urgently needs qualified professionals.



## 2. A new working environment demands new priorities

Strong social skills are often the difference between a good employee and a great one. Technical knowhow aside, workers with so-called “soft skills” are more likely to immediately gel with their team members on the job. Of course, during the hiring process, companies strive to be 100% certain of the measurable attributes they are looking for in prospective candidates, which makes the process of filtering through resumes easier and more streamlined. However, finding the ideal fit for the job is a more sensitive task. Traditionally, the focus has been on hard skills, experience and top-notch references, but recruiters must now be aware of essential but hard-to-measure keys to success. The difference is subtle but crucial.





## What are 'hard skills'?

Let's imagine you are looking at the resume of an ideal candidate for a management vacancy. The position requires team management skills, leadership and a willingness to travel. The candidate's so-called 'hard skills' include fluency in three languages – English, French, and Spanish – proficiency in math, a focus on strategic planning and ten years of experience in a managerial role at a multinational corporation.

At this stage, the candidate appears to be the ideal fit for the job, meeting all of the measurable qualifications required for the vacancy. But hiring should never be based solely on hard skills.

## What are 'soft skills'?

'Soft skills' are interpersonal traits that, while difficult to quantify, can often be perceived during social interactions. Perhaps the candidate on the other side of the table shows themselves to be friendly, a good listener or a strong communicator. But the intrinsic skills expected from a leader, for example, must also be carefully evaluated. You want to make sure that your future manager is capable of interacting harmoniously and effectively with their team, and whether they show a high level of **emotional intelligence**.

While some **soft skills** can be acquired, others are often inherent personality traits. Natural leaders or gifted public speakers are gold mines that should be sought out and put to good use.

## A perfect balance

A thriving company will always be one step ahead and develop a positive balance between technical and social skills.

Business owners, leaders and employees must realize that improving their ability to interact with others will help them carry out their duties faster, more efficiently and more cost-effectively. In other words, by using soft and hard skills, employees can increase the value they add to their company and their own careers.

### Here are some of the benefits of possessing soft skills in today's working environment:

- ▶ Give an excellent **first impression**. When employees possess social abilities, they know how to present themselves positively and create real connections.
- ▶ Make people aware of their strengths and weaknesses and help them identify and establish the correct professional image to convey.
- ▶ Provide confidence to walk into any environment and **use the right body language** to control the situation.
- ▶ Help employees switch smoothly and comfortably between situations and environments where **cultural differences** exist.



- ▶ Gain the **friendship and trust** of colleagues by demonstrating self-honesty and openness to self-development.
- ▶ Assist the workforce with the 'little things,' such as remembering people's names, birthdays and other relevant information important to developing interpersonal bonds.
- ▶ Help colleagues to navigate the corporate environment, understand hierarchy and use power in a positive manner.
- ▶ Make people aware of potential dangers or threats and help them negotiate their way through harmful situations.
- ▶ Help build a harmonious and happy work environment.
- ▶ **Directly influence the productivity of their leaders and colleagues.**



# 3. Social and emotional skills are superpowers

Every position has its non-negotiable hard skills and experience which are fundamental to the job, and the same is true for soft skills. The right social abilities can become veritable superpowers in the workplace, helping to improve employees' communication, time-management, teamwork and creativity. Possessing interpersonal assets can turn leaders into role models for the rest of the organization. But have you ever wondered what to look for in terms of the most sought-after soft skills?



### Excellent communication

Businesses must recognize the ability to communicate effectively at all times and in all situations. In order to succeed as part of the workforce, employees need to know not only how to talk, but also how to properly express themselves and listen. Excellent communication skills allow workers to deliver compelling, powerful messages with the right amount of courtesy and empathy.



## Curiosity

**Curious and driven individuals are more likely to become experts** in their respective fields. Recruiters are always on the lookout for lifelong learners, as their innate curiosity and desire for knowledge invariably translate into professional breakthroughs and improved interpersonal relationships.



## Creativity

**Creative individuals find it easier to make wiser decisions** and solve problems. The ability to think outside the box is not only important for typically creative and inventive job positions – it is crucial for all vacancies, as it shows that a candidate can learn from experience and apply knowledge to specific situations when appropriate.

## Analytical skills

Companies need people with the ability to think critically and analytically, allowing them to read information and identify trends to improve their organization's business. In a world where warehouses full of data are available at the click of a mouse, having the ability to select what truly matters and transform it into ideas and solutions is one of the most important soft skills a person can possess.





## Teamwork

In today's labor market, no-one works alone. Technological advances have made it easier to connect with other professionals all around the world and develop new business, and someone who constantly exchanges experiences with others is someone who is constantly growing as a professional. In today's working environment, there is a need for employees that can set aside goals and dedicate enough time to collaborate with their peers toward reaching a given objective.

## Leadership

To be a leader is not merely to be the one in charge. Leadership is the ability to persuade other people to work together in order to reach a shared goal. Team members that can successfully express their opinions and influence others are precious commodities.





## Empathy for feedback

While companies often have transparent feedback processes, leaders and coworkers must know how to communicate this information constructively and clearly, helping others understand exactly what needs to improve, while not diminishing the value of their work.

## Self-management

The demands of the coronavirus pandemic have created a new way of working, increasingly measured by one's capability to deliver, perform and interact, even when they are working from home. **Recruiting people that know how to self manage** saves your company time and adds value, with the ability to prioritize that which is essential for the business at any given time.



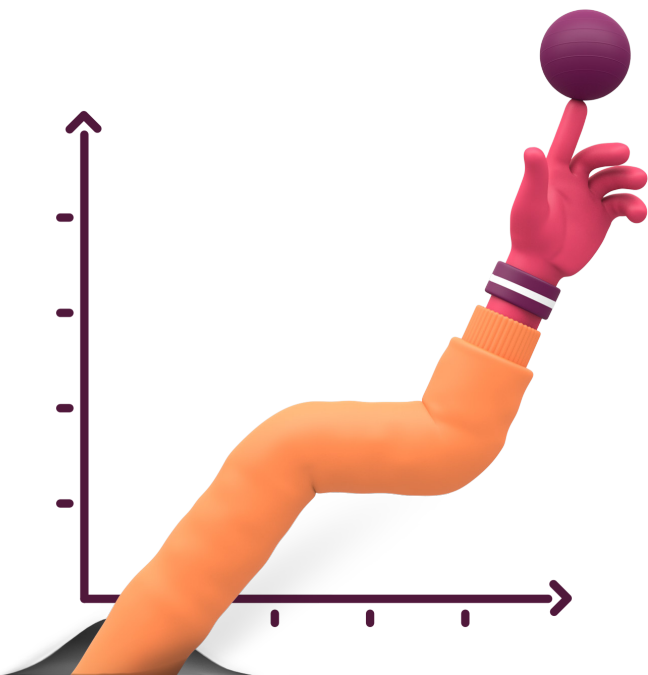
# 4. How to develop social skills

Typically, people learn how to socialize, adapt to different environments and manage conflicts during their childhood years. But crucially, everyone learns these skills in different ways and to different degrees. When analyzing soft skills during the recruitment process, turning candidates' characteristics into adaptable and appropriate skills for the work environment is no easy task and must account for each individual's strengths, weaknesses, social and economic conditions, and mental health. Here are a few tips to help your workforce leverage these crucial soft skills.



### **Make openness to change a priority**

First and foremost, people have to be willing to change. While your employees may already have a specific set of soft skills, there is always room to acquire more and improve upon them. The openness to grow and learn is in itself an important soft skill, as it takes courage and self-knowledge to welcome new attitudes that will help the team and the company move forward.



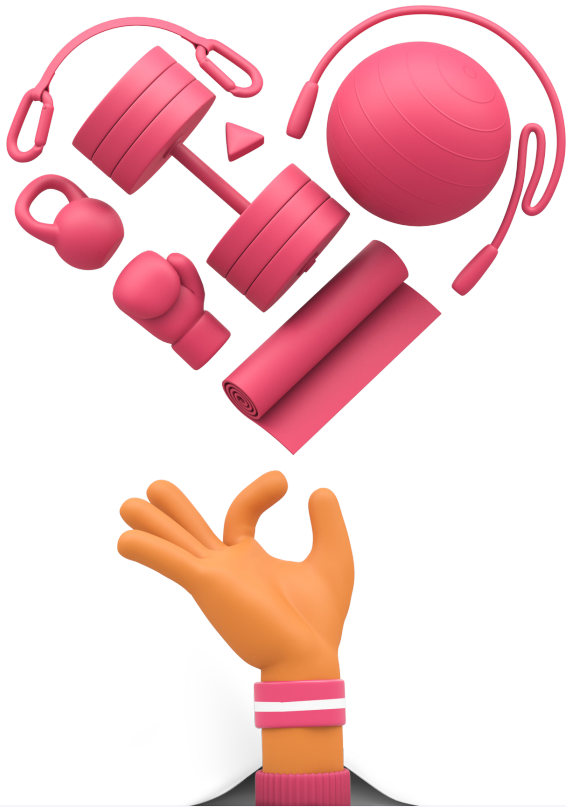
## Set clear goals

If leaders define a clear vision of what they want for the future of their organization, it will become easier for employees to follow directions. A business' achievements are directly linked to the efforts of its staff and the quality of communication between them.

## Make education accessible

Learning is the key to success. Becoming educated about soft skills means that leaders can help people enhance their own abilities by knowing whatever they can about them. There are many accessible **tools** available that can help HR professionals and executives achieve personal and professional development. Furthermore, seeking the help of specialized professionals can add to this process and serve as a positive example.





## Endorse strong relationships

Soft skills are linked to how employees relate with one another. While physical restrictions are often in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, no one can grow while being socially distant on an emotional level. While it takes real effort to build and nurture healthy relationships, they can promote surprising growth and development in people's lives.

## Be aware and learn how to identify assets

By reflecting on how candidates talk, walk and act, you will become a master in recognizing which ones are the most developed and others who may require improvement. Being aware and identifying flaws is not always easy, but it can help employees overcome obstacles and move forward on the path to personal growth. Making use of assessment tools to evaluate the company's priorities means giving your workforce clear objectives while also helping in dealing with feedback regarding soft skills.



# 5. Conclusion

People are born with their own set of soft skills, before life shows them the need to develop new ones. Though it may seem like an uphill struggle, finding skilled people and helping the rest of your workforce to develop social abilities begins by tapping into these skills and making the effort to improve them, until they become a significant asset to your organization. Boosting people's soft skills is always a work in progress, but it is the key to build better relationships and reach professional success.



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