



HIGHLIGHT YOUR SOFT SKILLS

Hard skills are job-specific and teachable. You learn them in your coursework and job experience, and they're easy to document. Soft skills? Not so much.

But they are increasingly what separates job candidates from the pack. According to LinkedIn's 2019 Global Talent Trends report, creativity, persuasion and collaboration are the top three soft skills valued by employers.



What hiring managers look for:

Creativity

The ability to uncover or develop something new and unique—a perspective, an idea, a solution, a product—that has value.

Communication

The ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and verbal forms. Required in nearly every job in some form.

Persuasion

The ability to convince others to take a specific action, consider alternate ideas or share your point of view (like hire you!).

Critical Thinking

The ability to think logically through a problem or issue, identify the relevant factors and develop a range of options that can lead to the solution.

Collaboration

Joining your thought processes and ideas with others to solve a problem, meet a challenge or complete a task.

Multi-tasking

The ability to manage multiple tasks at once. Requires time management and organizational skills.

Teamwork

Putting the group objectives first, working efficiently and respectfully with individuals with varying backgrounds and personalities.

Leadership

The ability to guide and motivate. Able to see a big-picture goal, break it down into achievable actions, and leverage the strengths of others to complete them.

How to showcase your soft skills

Just about any job you can think of requires soft skills—interacting with other people, dealing with problems, multi-tasking—in order to succeed. In addition, soft skills are highly transferable, providing employers maximum flexibility in deploying their people. Here's how to highlight yours:

Match your skills with the job description

Identify the soft skills in description of the jobs you apply for, and treat them as keywords.

In your cover letter Pick two or three soft skills listed in the job description and weave them into your cover letter. Be specific, and make it a story. Something like:

As a marketing intern at XYZ Company, I worked closely with two peers to complete prospect profiles for a new product within the pre-launch deadline while managing several other tasks assigned to me. I provided detailed written weekly status reports to my supervisor.

Integrate soft skills into your job search materials

Be sure to include soft skills in your description of your qualifications, both general, like on your LinkedIn profile, and job-specific, in your resume and cover letter.

In your resume Highlight your soft skills in your descriptions of professional and coursework experience. For example:

Led the project team, working with people across multiple departments to complete the project within the launch time frame and budget.

Cover soft skills in your interviews

Think about examples of your soft skills as part of your interview preparation process.

In the interview Use the job description as your guide. Bear in mind that the interviewer may not be skilled at uncovering soft skills in their questions, so you may need to work them in on your own. For example:

How you interview demonstrates soft skills—how well you prepare (work ethic, attention to detail), eye contact and body language (interpersonal skills), the clarity of your answers (listening, communication skills).