

Everything You Need to Know About Soft Skills Training for Your Employees

What Is Soft Skills Training?

To start, it's helpful to understand what the term soft skills encompasses. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines "soft skills" as:



"Nontechnical and non-industry-specific skills applicable to a wide range of tasks across many roles and professions, including interpersonal skills or "people skills" that enable individuals to work effectively in groups and organizations."

In the past few decades, organizations have slowly come to the realization that an employee with skills like effective communication, organizational and leadership skills is often more valuable than someone with only technical expertise.

Soft skills training can be delivered in many forms – e-learning/on-demand video courses, written assessments, in-person training, and seminars are all ways you can develop your employees' skills.

You should keep in mind that just like learning a "hard" skill like coding, soft skills also require training, repetition, and practice to be mastered. You should always consider that certain ways of delivering soft skills training will give you and your team more flexibility to deliver, assess and get feedback on your soft skills training program.

Why train on soft skills?

A study conducted by The Stanford Research Center found that **85% of job success stems from soft skills and just 15% from technical knowledge or hard skills.**

Organizations who prioritize soft skills training see:

- Better leadership
- Increased efficiency within teams
- Better employee retention

Examples of Soft Skills and Their Impact

Communication

Strong communication skills are foundational for today's employees to perform well in their roles, and everyone has an area where they can improve the way they communicate.

People Management

Knowing how to manage others well requires a strong understanding of human behavior and how to positively influence those behaviors.

Creativity

Creativity is not only useful in artistic environments. On the contrary, it is key to enabling employees to find new and innovative solutions to hard problems.

Collaboration & Teamwork

When employees understand how to collaborate well and work out solutions as a team, organizations see performance improvements across the board.

Time Management

When time is a resource you can't get back, it's important for employees to understand the difference between efficiency and effectiveness when managing their time.

Emotional Intelligence

Developing EQ is an essential skill for everyone – this is how your employees understand themselves and others, so they can better manage relationships.

Conflict Resolution

Sometimes conflict can be healthy, but often it ends up having negative consequences for your employees and organization – that's why conflict resolution skills are essential.

Managing Change

When employees and leaders are well-versed in change management, they can quickly adapt in response to new ideas, circumstances, requirements, and other changes.

Complex Problem Solving

This is the skill of figuring out a way to change what is into what's desired when the situation is messy and regular methods won't work.

Presenting

Knowing how to use PowerPoint is not enough – your employees need to understand how to present information in a clear and engaging way that leads to action.

Getting started with soft skills training

- 1. Assess employees' soft skill gaps:**

A good first step to take when incorporating soft skills training into your L&D plan is to assess where your employees stand as far as soft skills are concerned. One of the biggest challenges L&D teams run into when evaluating soft skills is the lack of skill gap analysis tools that are specifically designed to look at business skills. This is mostly because most of the skills assessment resources available have been made with the purpose of assessing hard skills or technical knowledge.

Once you have assessed your leaders and individual contributors' soft skills, it will be much easier to incorporate their specific needs into their custom learning paths.
- 2. Educate Your Organization on the Importance of Soft Skills Training**

Educating the entire organization on what soft skills are and why they are so important in today's workforce should be done early on.

Sending out informational emails and posting on internal communication boards like Slack or Teams with regularity, can be great ways to educate everyone in the organization about how business skills training can positively impact their careers.

It's also important to tailor the resources you send out to different stakeholders. Remember that one of the main goals of spending time and resources on sending out educational materials on soft skills is to encourage leadership buy-in for the program, if it's not already present.
- 3. Incorporate Soft Skills Training Resources into Your Training Programs**

Depending on what your current employee training and development program looks like, you'll need to incorporate soft skills specific training materials into your L&D strategy.

If your organization already uses an LMS or HRIS system, **off-the-shelf content** can be a great way to continue to reap the benefits of the on-demand video format and possibly introduce a more engaging approach to e-learning like microlearning formatted modules.

If you do not have an LMS or other type of online learning platform this is a great opportunity to start a conversation about the **positive impact and ROI** that incorporating an online training solution can bring to your organization.
- 4. Market Soft Skills Training as Part of Your Learning & Development Strategy**

Marketing your soft skills training program is crucial to getting employees excited and eager to interact with the training resources you're providing them. Coming up with creative incentives like small prizes for the individual that completes the most soft skills learning modules in a one month or logs the most time in the LMS are all great ways to drive engagement and utilization for your program.

Externally, it's equally crucial to clearly promote that your organization offers this type of training resources to all new employees through your job postings and interview process. Employees are looking for development opportunities more than ever when searching for new job opportunities. Promoting your soft skills training program can be a great way to attract top talent to your organization.

Delivering soft skills training

When you know that soft skills training is important to include in your training program, the question is then, "How do we deliver this in an effective way?"

Video-based microlearning and online interactive learning are effective ways to deliver complex corporate soft skills training for employees because training can be done in short, engaging bursts, and then practiced in real-life situations right away. This makes online learning highly efficient and cost-effective for subjects like **communication training, business etiquette, presenting, time management, ethics**, and more.

Breaking down complex topics into manageable chunks also makes training much more accessible than if you relied only on instructor-led training sessions to teach these soft skills. Online, on-demand content is a powerful tool for delivering effective soft skills training, especially when you use it in conjunction with on-the-job coaching and training scenarios.

Soft or business skills are becoming the focal point of all talent teams when looking to attract top talent to their organization. Yet, most organizations are struggling to understand the value of incorporating this type of training into their L&D programs and how to do so.

Learn how BizLibrary can help your employees improve their soft skills!

