

COMPETENCY: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS 101



The bible says that King David showed excellence in character and in competency. “So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them with his skillful hands.” (Psalms 78:72)

Soft Skill Competency

People typically get hired for their technical skills. And though one can rarely do well without technical competencies, it is in the competency of people skills where people often drop the baton and hinder their advancement in career and life success. Soft skills are sometimes associated with people skills, social skills, or professional skills. Emotional Intelligence, covered a little later, comprises some of these.

A Harvard study shows that 85% of career success is related to your people skills, or professional competencies (the other 15% are technical skills.) It’s what makes one stand out in a positive way from among their peers. As you focus on mastering the technical skills of your job, take advantage of opportunities to pursue training in people skills or “soft” skills as well.

And the survey says...

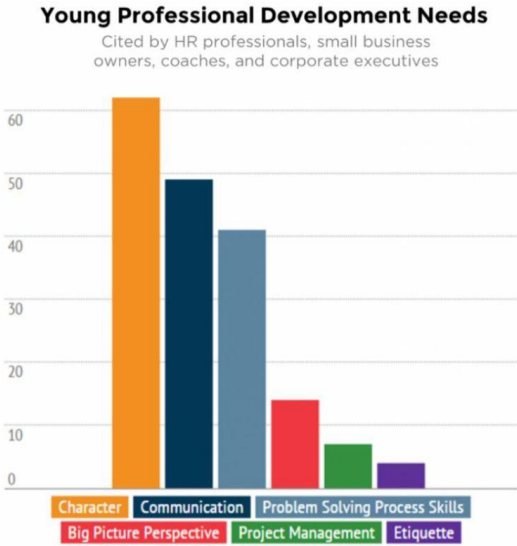
Several years ago we surveyed employers, leaders, bosses, HR folks, and young professionals themselves asking them what they thought the top development needs of young professionals were. We took the responses and clustered them by category. Character development was revealed as the number one area of need. We’ve covered character in another section of this resource. Second was professional

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skills, with subsets being some important people skills. What didn't show up in any significant way were technical skills. The graph shows the top development needs from the survey.

Since that survey employers have mentioned to us critical thinking skills as one of the top development needs of young professionals. (It's also important for "adulting" as well as living faithfully as we follow Jesus in our culture.)

Below are groupings of some of the top professional and soft skills to focus on, with Tier One Skills being ones that seem to have a consensus among employers as being a top priority.



Tier One Professional Skills

Communication Skills Conflict Resolution Skills Workplace Etiquette Managing Emotions	Basic Logic & Critical Thinking Project Management Building Trust	Big Picture Thinking Problem Solving Skills Time Management
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Tier Two Professional Skills

Selling Your Idea Facilitating meetings Organizational skills	Building Collaborations Working Cross-Culturally	Networking Understanding Financial Statements
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Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is also essential to doing well in the workplace. In her article, *Why Emotional Intelligence Is Important In Leadership*, career development professional Lauren Landry says that "Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around you."

The four core competencies of emotional intelligence include:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social awareness
4. Relationship management

As mentioned, emotional intelligence has some overlaps with soft skills. Some employers now assess employees for emotional intelligence. So it's important to know what your growth edges are. There are many resources available online on how to grow your emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence and Faith

Emotional Intelligence is about relationship with oneself and others. Brokenness was introduced into both of those originally complete and perfect relationships during the Fall of Adam and Eve. This brokenness is partly to blame for our clouded or distorted perceptions. Pride, pain, and self-centeredness can distort our self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. So, some of emotional intelligence is tied to spiritual issues. This makes sense because we

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are created spiritual beings. It follows then that we ought not to ignore the spiritual connection to developing emotional intelligence. Jesus is the direct catalyst and focal point in this spiritual facet in emotional intelligence development. We were spiritually dead but became spiritually alive in Him. Through Him, we have access to the Holy Spirit.

Don't underestimate how prayer and the Holy Spirit can help you grow emotional intelligence. Through obedience to God's Word and the power and counsel of the Holy Spirit our minds can be renewed. We gain insight into our heart and motivations. As we use His Word as our mirror, we will become more aware of the areas of our lives that need His transformative touch. He can bring about the Fruit of the Spirit which exponentially expands one's emotional intelligence. Christ changes our hearts to become more others-focused, a key aspect of emotional intelligence.

People skills? Check out the bible!

The bible is rich with insights into many of the people skills that are required to do well at work and home. It says much about communication, conflict resolution, critical thinking, problem solving, how to relate to one another, self-management, and building trust, just to name a few. To go deeper into these topics from a biblical perspective, just google "What the bible says about _____" and you'll pull up many resources.

Developing excellence in technical skills, people skills, and emotional intelligence is essential for career success and leadership effectiveness. But remember that someone can become excellent in these things but if they lack good character, could still end up as someone no one wants to work with. Though created for good, in our brokenness we can use these skills in broken ways. By submitting to Christ how we develop and use these skills, we can infuse into our work environment and leadership the things that are truly good, redemptive, and productive.



Ask Your Mentor

1. What do you believe are some of the top development needs of young professionals in your industry?
2. Why do people do poorly, not advance or get fired in this profession? Can you think of anyone specifically that you could share about?
3. Who do you highly respect in your profession and why?
4. How has your faith influenced your development of any of the people skills mentioned above?
5. How would you rank the Tier One skills above in order of importance? How about the Tier Two skills? Why?
6. How have you gone about developing the skills mentioned above? How have you benefitted?

Go Do

Brutally Honest Personal Inventory. With a teachable heart and humility, ask someone middle-aged or older who knows you well to use the below evaluation to rate the various professional skills. Scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being beginner level and 4 mastery. Create a plan to work on one skill and start practicing at work or school. Be prepared to share with your mentor how it went.

Self-Management

Managing Emotions	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Conflict Resolution Skills	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Schedule & Time Management	Rating: 1 2 3 4

Developing Influence

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Building Trust	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Selling Their Idea	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Adds Value to Peers	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Understands their positional role	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Respects colleagues	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Respects Authority	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Brings a positive influence to the work environment	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Discerning in talking about faith at work	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Attempts to follow Golden Rule	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Maintains high ethical standard	Rating: 1 2 3 4

Communication

Cross-cultural	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Presentation Skills	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Timely & appropriate	Rating: 1 2 3 4

Productivity

Works productively	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Works efficiently	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Works with excellence	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Seeks to solve problems and add value	Rating: 1 2 3 4

Etiquette

Proper Use of Texting, Emailing & Social Media	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Dining Etiquette	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Workplace Etiquette	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Dressing Appropriately	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Networking	Rating: 1 2 3 4
Avoids Unhealthy Workplace Politics	Rating: 1 2 3 4

Any recommendations for improvement or mutually agreed upon action steps to build proficiency?

Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study

1. Are there any of the specific skills that you would like to unpack, role play, or practice with your mentor?
2. Start with a google search to explore what the bible says about communication, speech, or conversation.
3. Start with a google search to explore what the bible says about resolving conflict.
4. Can you (protégé) think of people that exhibit any of the above skills well? (And share that with your mentor.)
5. To what degree does the emphasis of the above people skills align with the worldview or culture of where you were raised?
6. Can you (protégé) think of any situations at work or school connected with any of the above skills that you have questions about that you would like to process with your mentor?

Sources & Resources

- 7 Interview Questions For Measuring Emotional Intelligence by Harvey Deutschendorf, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3057294/7-interview-questions-for-measuring-emotional-intelligence>

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- Assessment- Emotional Intelligence 2.0, <https://www.talentsmarteq.com/emotional-intelligence-2-0/#Emotional-intelligence-2.0>
- Podcast with Transcript- Episode 15: Step 3 Emotional Intelligence: Social Awareness, <https://edgegodin.com/episode-15-social-awareness/>
- Website- <https://emotionalintelligenceinchrist.com/>
- Video- Crucial Conversations (Summary): Get Better at Difficult Conversations and Resolving Conflict, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aqrlb8WvSGs&t=82s>
- Video- Applying Biblical Principles To Resolve Conflict | Ken Sande, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ3Ae_UqZN8