

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS



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Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills

Hard Skills

Hard skills are specific, quantifiable skills such as writing, mathematics, reading, the ability to use a computer, etc. These skills are able to be defined and measured, unlike soft skills. Hard skills can be improved upon through specific training and studying and are often specific to the particular occupation in which a person seeks. These skills will help a person get the job done efficiently and effectively, thus being valuable to succeed in the workforce, specifically in the job field in which one chooses. There are many ways to improve on hard skills, whether it is studying through text, watching tutorial videos or taking classes.



Soft Skills



Unlike hard skills, soft skills are difficult to quantify and are less tangible skills, but that does not take away their effectiveness in the workplace. Soft skills include skills such as listening, problem solving, teamwork, workplace etiquette, personal skills, work ethic, and much more. Soft skills are less concrete, making them a bit more difficult to improve upon, but that is not to say there is no hope. Soft skills may take longer to develop than hard skills, and often take a lot of work to personally master, but if one is dedicated, he or she can focus on being more confident and communicative in the workplace, making them a more viable candidate for nearly any job.

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services produces short-term and long-term occupational projections for the state of Arkansas. These projections are combined with skills and knowledge data from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) to estimate worker skills and knowledge that are more in-demand. When a skill is determined by the US Department of Labor to be moderately important and moderately required for an occupation, that occupation's projections are factored into the skills projections. Skills can be divided into basic skills and cross-functional skills. Basic skills, such as reading comprehension or critical thinking, facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills across a variety of domains. Cross-functional skills, such as problem solving, social, or technical skills are developed capacities that facilitate performance of activities that occur across jobs. Knowledge such as mathematics and science or law and public safety, represents the acquisition of facts and principles about a domain of information.

The skills listed in this publication are based on data from the 2022-2024 Short-Term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections for the state of Arkansas.

Life Goals

Setting short- and long-term goals for yourself in the workplace and in life is essential in motivation and seeing your progress as you navigate through your career and through life. Ask yourself questions about where you want to be at certain stages in your life and in your career. The spaces below allow you to write out your aspirations to make them more tangible and more concrete, and it will allow you to make your goals more "real." Take a few minutes to jot down your career and life goals in the spaces provided below.

Where do you hope to see your career in the next six months? _____

Where do you hope to see your life in the next six months? _____

Where do you hope to see your career in five years? _____

Where do you hope to see your life in five years? _____

Where do you hope to see your career in ten years? _____

Where do you hope to see your life in ten years? _____

What are your overall career goals? _____

What are your overall life goals? _____

Succeed at Work Today

It's very important to take a long-term approach to your career and professional success. At the same time, it is crucial to remember that your most important job is the one you have right now. You set yourself up for success later by succeeding at work today. These tips are about how to do just that.

Act Self-Employed

Wouldn't it be great if you were your own boss? Well, in a way, you are. Even if you work at a huge company owned by somebody else, you are ultimately responsible for your own boss - the CEO of ME INC. But all bosses have customers. And your number one customer is your supervisor. To succeed in the world of work, YOU MUST DECIDE to keep your customers happy. The buck stops with you.

Concrete Steps

- Define your "ME INC." What kinds of products or services do you provide? What kind of reputation do you want to have with customers?
- Decide and write down your long-term goals. What do you want to be doing five and ten years from now? How do you get there? (Hint: Great customer service is a must.)

Be a Team Player

Even though you are thinking of yourself as self-employed, you're not a solo artist. You're working on a team with many other people who are the CEOs of their own "ME INC." Learn their names. Learn the team culture. Make friends. Build trust. Show empathy. Speak and communicate honestly and plainly. Find ways to make your teammates look good. Being a team player will strengthen your "ME INC." brand.

Concrete Steps

- Get to know your teammates. Ask them questions. Rely on their expertise. It makes them feel important (and they should because they are). BUT...
- DON'T dump your work on your teammates. They're there to help you do your job better, not to do it for you.
- Next time a boss tells you "good job" on a project, say thanks, but also pay it forward by telling your boss what a great job your teammates did.

Develop Personal "Soft" Skills

Broadly speaking, "soft skills" are skills you need, whatever your job. Most of the skills are common sense. Listen closely to what your boss and your teammates say, and ask questions. Communicate clearly. Encourage people. Appreciate the diversity of your team. Manage conflict. Serve your customers. Be professional. Show up on time. Organize your work and plan well. Bring solutions to your boss, not just problems. Be friendly.

Concrete Steps

- Introduce yourself to someone you don't know with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Set your morning alarm early enough so you have plenty of time to get ready for work without having to rush.
- Pick a problem at work to solve or a process to improve, come up with a solution or improvement, get your boss' approval if you need it, and then EXECUTE.

Never Stop Learning

No more teachers, no more books, right? WRONG! The key to succeeding at work is to learn from day one at your job and continue learning for as long as you're there. Almost every job requires you to learn new equipment, new policies, and much more. Improve your skills and uncover new ones: How to serve your customers better; How to manage your time better; How to be more productive; How to communicate better. Seize those opportunities.

Concrete Steps

- Pick a skill that you want to strengthen (like public speaking or carpentry or writing), do some research, and plan to get trained in that skill.
- Learn the big picture: What the top leaders at your company really want to accomplish, and how your job fits into that vision. Then, do it.

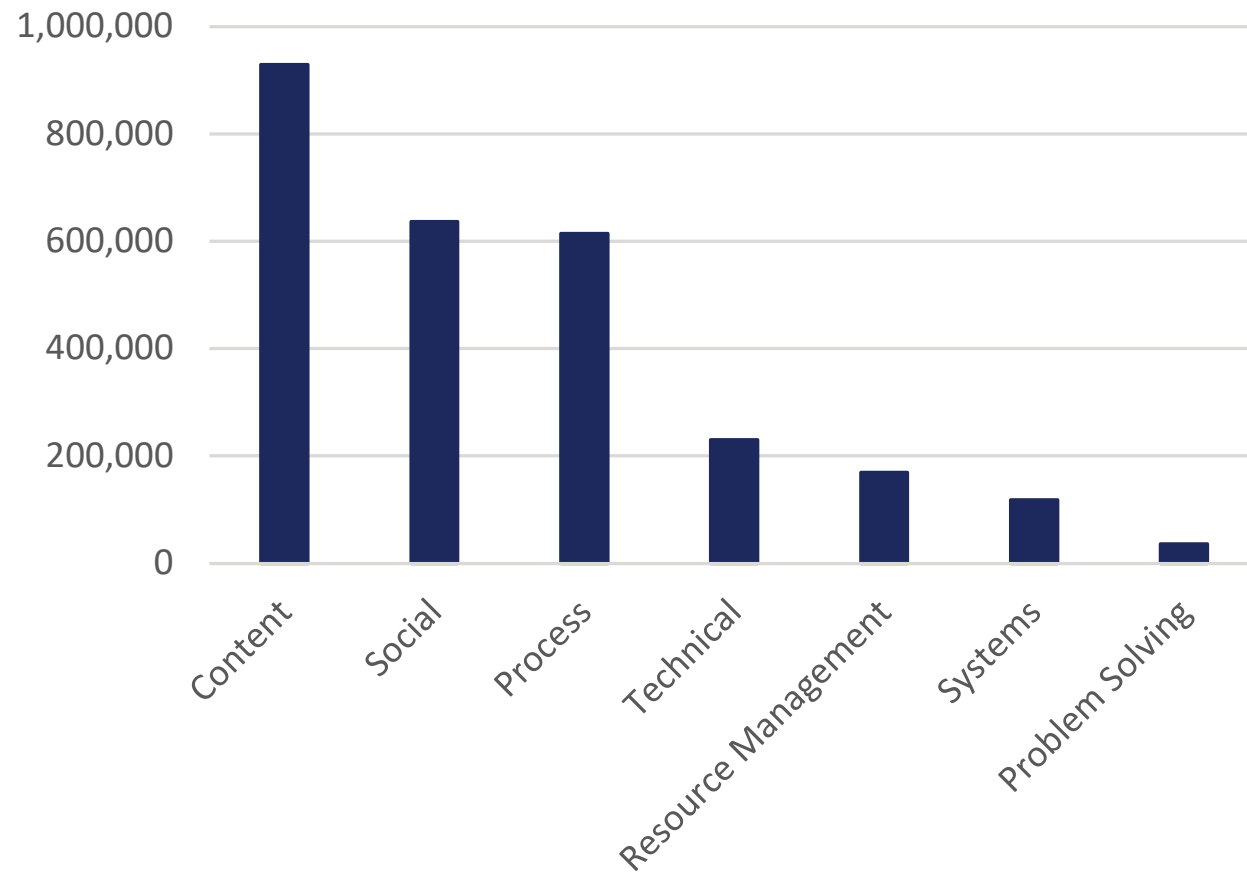
Top 15 Content Skills

(Developed capabilities that facilitate learning or more rapid acquisition of knowledge)

Skills	Job Demand	Definition
Critical Thinking	289,378	Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
Active Listening	278,956	Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
Speaking	266,573	Talking to others to convey information effectively.
Reading Comprehension	238,039	Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
Monitoring	230,180	Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
Coordination	206,877	Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
Social Perceptiveness	184,438	Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
Service Orientation	141,517	Actively looking for ways to help people.
Time Management	140,683	Managing one's own time and the time of others.
Writing	115,691	Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
Judgment and Decision Making	110,525	Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
Active Learning	72,640	Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
Operation Monitoring	67,203	Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
Operation and Control	62,881	Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
Persuasion	58,243	Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.

Top 7 Cross-Functional Skills

(Developed capacities that facilitate performance of activities that occur across jobs)



Skills	Job Demand	Definition
Content	928,938	Background structures needed to work with and acquire more specific skills in a variety of different domains.
Social	636,211	Developed capacities used to work with people to achieve goals.
Process	614,572	Procedures that contribute to the more rapid acquisition of knowledge and skill across a variety of domains.
Technical	230,180	Developed capacities used to design, set-up, operate, and correct malfunctions involving application of machines or technological systems.
Resource Management	169,494	Developed capacities used to allocate resources efficiently.
Systems	118,627	Developed capacities used to understand, monitor, and improve socio-technical systems.
Problem Solving	36,675	Developed capacities used to solve novel, ill-defined problems in complex, real-world settings.

Top 15 Knowledge Domains

(Learned sets of facts and standards required by many work situations)

Skills	Job Demand	Definition
English Language	275,454	Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
Customer and Personal Service	271,668	Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
Mathematics	215,492	Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
Education and Training	191,729	Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
Administration and Management	174,667	Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
Computers and Electronics	156,910	Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
Administrative	130,336	Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
Public Safety and Security	106,360	Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
Mechanical	97,892	Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
Production and Processing	85,124	Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
Sales and Marketing	82,031	Knowledge of principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.
Psychology	65,792	Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
Personnel and Human Resources	46,955	Knowledge of principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.
Transportation	42,724	Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
Food Production	34,557	Knowledge of techniques and equipment for planting, growing, and harvesting food products (both plant and animal) for consumption, including storage/handling techniques.