



Session 2: Soft Skills

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Soft Skills

- Soft skills are personal attributes that enable a person to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.

Soft skills assist people to navigate their environment, work well with others and achieve their goals.





Difference between Soft and Hard skills

- Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured, such as typing, writing, math, reading and the ability to use software programs.
- Soft skills are less tangible and harder to quantify, such as etiquette, getting along with others, listening and engaging in small talk.
- Soft skills are applied differently at different environments to achieve success and meet targets for a given task.



Video on soft skills





Soft skills required for online work

- Communication skills
- Inter-personal skills/client relations
- Listening skills
- Negotiation skills
- Time management skills
- Research skills
- Organizational skills



Communication skills

- Communication is the transfer of information between parties to enable easy interaction with others.
- Effective communication is integral in online work. Lack of it causes misunderstanding and personal issues with clients.
- Importance:
- Communication enables work to run more smoothly. With communication, there is clear comprehension of instructions given for easier execution of tasks.



Communication skills Activity

Get into groups of three or four

Assume that you are going for a trip

What are the three best items you would carry to the trip?

- If clothes, would you carry for cold or warm weather?
- If money would you carry cash or a credit card?



Cont' Communication activity

- Now share what three best items you would carry to Mombasa
- You notice with this question, you are more specific and are aware of the actual items you would require.
- That is the essence of communication.
- You get clear instructions and do not have to redo a given task again



Interpersonal skills–Client relations

- Interpersonal skills are used every day when we communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups.
- Interpersonal skills enable freelancers to communicate and interact well with the clients they work with.
- Great interpersonal skills are highly valuable in creating great social relationships with clients.

Importance:

- A proper client relation enhances chances of long term engagement and better rating in online work.



Negotiation skills

- This involves constructive engagements for the benefit of all parties involved. Mostly intended to reach a win-win situation.
- Some online jobs have fixed budgets. However in some instances you can bid for a job that has a provision for negotiation.
- It is important as a freelancer to be able to identify these categories of jobs so that you can be able to get the best out of those that do not have fixed budgets.
- Apart from the fixed and flexible budget aspect it is also important to note as a freelancer you can negotiate on time changes and additional tasks with/without change.



Negotiation skills– Activity

- The main aim of this activity is to allow you to understand the concept of bargaining, application of soft skills in order to reach an agreement.
- 1 Seller and 2 Buyers
- The seller is selling sweets/bananas at 10/=
- The buyers should try to negotiate so that they buy the product at a less value than the actual and the seller should convince the buyers to buy the product at the actual value to achieve a win-win situation.

Lessons learnt:

What determines the selling/buying price?

- Quality of product
- Bargaining power of the buyer
- Cost of production/Time taken to manufacture the product

NB: You should charge your task reasonably do not over quote and do not underquote the price.



Time management

- Time management is the art of being on time. This includes delivering tasks before deadline. Managing time every day and being conscious enough to stick to schedule is a great time management skill.
- A freelancer should learn how to manage their time in a way that work is not compromised. It is not the amount of work that can be done in a given time but how efficient one is with time.
- Prioritizing work e.g. starting with the easy tasks then moving to more complex tasks helps the freelancer to manage time well and meet the client's work deadline.



Listening skills(Active listening)

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening enables provision of good service by understanding what a client requires, and generally how he/she wants their work delivered.

To listen actively:

- Ensure you are in a quite place
- Avoid physical interruptions
- Avoid having conversations with other people while speaking to the client



Research skills

- This is the ability to search for, locate, extract, organise, evaluate and use or present accurate information that is relevant to a particular topic.
- This is a highly valuable skill in freelancing that clients always look for. Freelancers who can do decent research have a firm foundation in online work and can mine vast knowledge on a specific topic.

Activity

- Give suggestions of how you would search for AJIRA via google.
- Keywords are important to get the right content that the client is looking for



Organizational skills

- Organization is the ability to use time, energy and resources effectively to achieve goals. With organization, there is an effective use of resources, project scheduling and a step by step flow of ideas.
- Organizational skills enable a freelancer to collect information and arrange it chronologically to give the desired result.

Importance:

- The ability to meet deadlines, work independently and plan for future projects.



Organizational skills activity

- Keep your workplace neat . Remove any bags on the table and unnecessary items.
- If available, have portraits to motivate you, work planners, timetables etc. on your desk.

**ORGANIZING IS
WHAT YOU DO
BEFORE YOU DO
SOMETHING, SO
THAT WHEN YOU
DO IT, IT IS NOT
ALL MIXED UP.**



Review questions

- Discuss 5 other soft skills you will need in online work.
- Give a scenario where soft skills helped you overcome an obstacle
- Which is the most important soft skill? Why does that skill stand out?



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THANK YOU