



Robert Half[®]
Finance & Accounting

Building Your Soft Skills

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The Value of Soft Skills

- Involvement on project teams
- Interaction with other departments
- Presenting to clients, colleagues
- Describing financial information to non-financial audiences



Skills in Demand

- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Written and verbal communication
- Flexibility
- Initiative



Collaboration

- Team or group approach is common
- Successful collaboration requires:
 - Diplomacy
 - Tact
 - Negotiation
 - Willingness to let others lead
 - Ability to listen
 - Openness to new ideas and approaches



Leadership

- Inspire, motivate team members to successful completion of project
- Use big-picture perspective to anticipate the needs of the company
- Understand business objectives and priorities
- Ability to solve problems is key



Written and Verbal Communication

- Explain financial data and regulatory requirements, make suggestions and offer solutions to senior management and others within company
- **34%** of CFOs surveyed ranked communication skills as the characteristic that impresses them most during an interview with a prospective employee



Flexibility

- Ability to adapt to change cited by **35%** of CFOs as necessary for success
- View change as an opportunity, not an obstacle
- Don't just respond to change, help bring it about when it will benefit your company



Initiative

- Immediately assume ownership of a project
- Be proactive in finding resources and solutions
- Propose innovative approaches
- Alert executives to issues or developments that could impact the company



Soft Skills in the Job Search: The Cover Letter

- Stay focused
- Write clearly and concisely
- Demonstrate knowledge of the company
- Avoid typos



Soft Skills in the Job Search: The Resume

- Keep it simple
- Emphasize your accomplishments
 - Leadership positions (i.e., in student groups)
 - Writing or public speaking recognition
- Avoid typos
 - **34%** of CFOs surveyed said typos or grammatical errors were the single most common mistake job seekers make on their resumes



Avoid Resumania®

- “Through my career experiences I have become inept at communication skills.”
- “I was instrumental in helping the company go through bankruptcy.”
- “Skills: Office management, keyboard skills, Internet, database, communication, sense of humor, writer, designer, published humorist/cartoonist. Stuff.”
- “Am allergic to copy toner and scoundrels.”



Avoid Resumania®

- “Job duties: I assassinate drivers their new hours of service.”
- “I’m looking for a position position.”
- “I prefer a fast-paste work environment.”
- “I am very interested in the accounting stuff position.”
- “Additional skills: I am a Notary Republic.”



Avoid Resumania®

- “Dead Sir or Madam:”
- “I tought intro-to-writing courses.”
- “If U hire me, I’ll provide excellent customer service. U will not have any regrets!”
- “Although I am seeking an accounting job, the fact that I have no actual experience in accounting may seem discouraging.”



Soft Skills in the Job Search: The Interview

- Making a good first impression
 - Dress appropriately
 - Arrive on time
 - Be pleasant to everyone
 - Let the interviewer lead



Soft Skills in the Job Search: The Interview

- Do your homework
 - **47%** of CFOs polled said little or no knowledge of the company is the most common mistake candidates make during job interviews



Soft Skills in the Job Search: The Interview

- Prepare to discuss your skills, experience, career plans and goals
- Articulate your thoughts
- Describe how you can contribute
- Be a good listener
- Send a thank-you



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