

BUILDING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE – SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Today's Agenda/Outcomes

- What is a successful soft skill program?
- What are the most effective ways to help non-traditional and traditional workers transform their soft skills?
- How do you assist businesses with identifying soft skills gaps?

New Definitions

WHAT IS A CAREER?

Old definition of a “career”: a job or profession that someone does for a long time; a period of time spent in a job or profession.

New definition of a “career”: **Jobs or professions** that someone does for a long time; a period of time spent in **many** jobs or professions

What Makes a Business Competitive?

Employees who have good people skills can help increase business productivity and competitiveness.

**The Competitive Edge:
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

What Makes a Worker Competitive?

- Technical Skills
- Knowledge
- Education
- Experience

But do they know how to apply and share these assets?

Definition of Soft Skills

- Soft skills have more to do with who people are than what they know.
- Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that affect how one interacts with others.
- Soft skills are difficult to change or acquire.

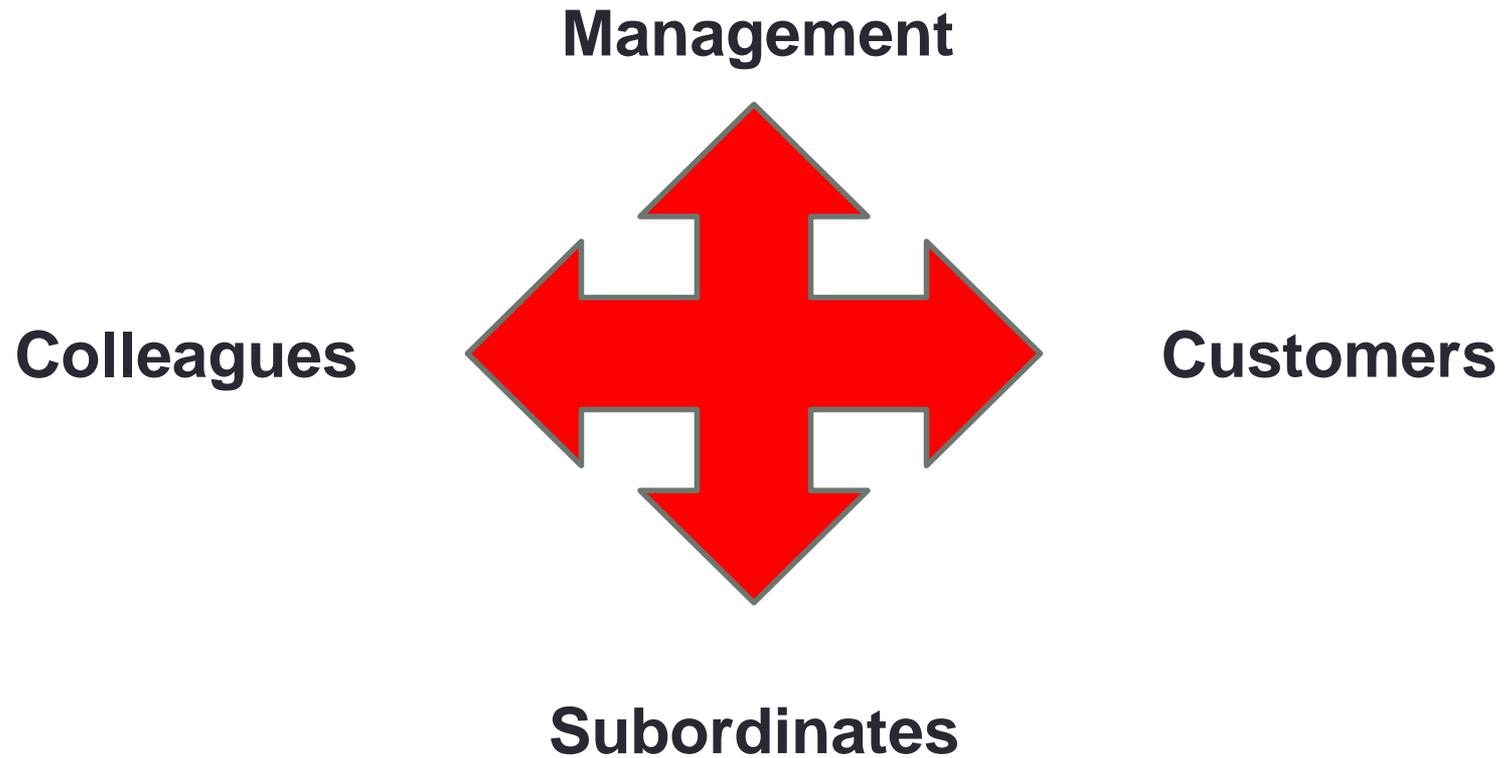
Priority Business Soft Skills

1. Teamwork and Collaboration
 - When to be a leader or a follow

2. Adaptability
 - Passion for learning, growing and stretching

3. Problem Solving
 - Ability to trouble shoot and solve problems quickly and independently

4. Communication



5. Critical Observation

- Ability to analyze, interpret information, question and reach conclusions.

6. Conflict Resolution

- Ability to influence, negotiate and resolve conflicts and differences of opinion.

Behavioral: Can Be Learned

- Problem solving
- Troubleshooting
- Anticipation
- Critical observation
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Adaptability
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation

Personality? Think of your kids

- Judgment
- Maturity
- Ability to reason
- Initiative
- Work independently
- Self-motivated
- Flexible

Who Should Develop Soft Skills in Employees?

- 95% of business respondents said employees are the most responsible for developing good soft skills
- 76% said it's the responsibility of employers
- 66% said it's the education system
- What about the family?

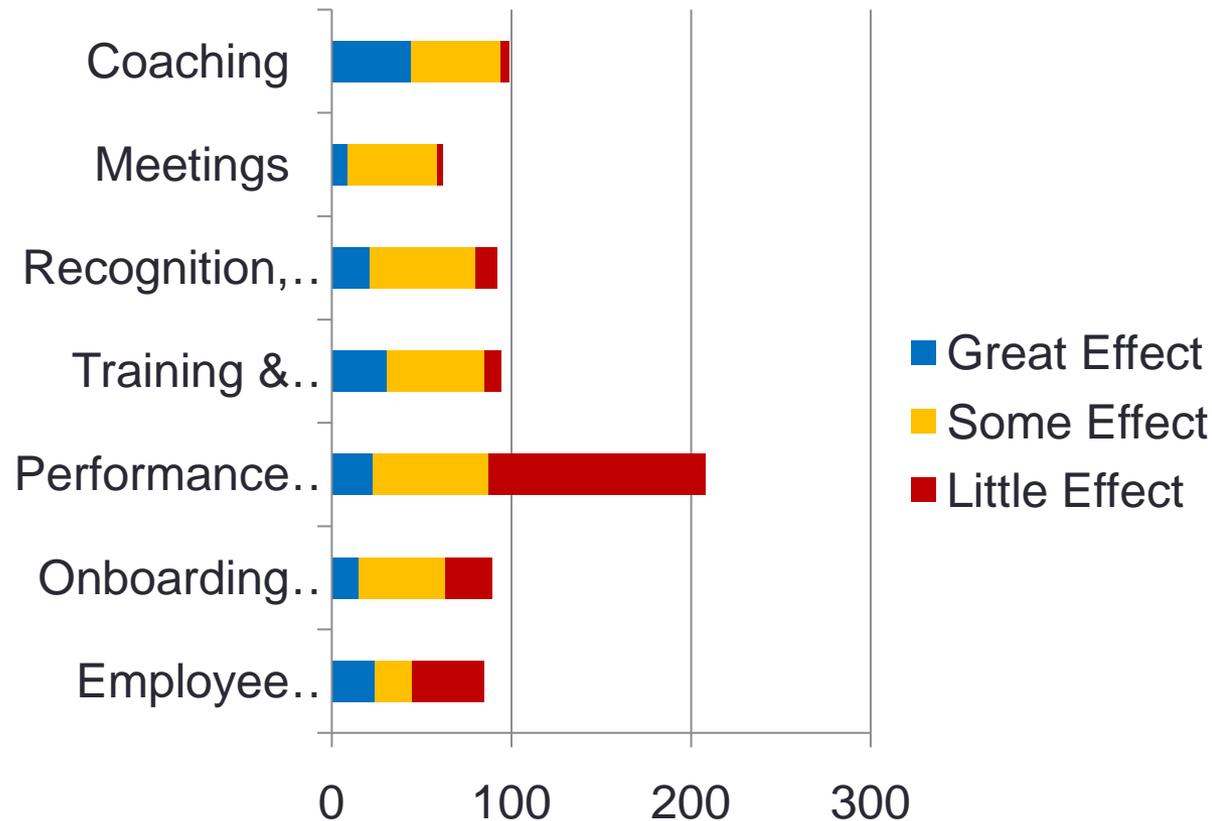


Washington State
Human Resources Council

Affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management

**EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES ON SOFT SKILLS:
2014 Survey Report**

The Most Effective Methods for Improving Soft Skill Development and Performance



Where Do You Begin?

1. Assess the organization – what are the hotspots?
 - Low productivity
 - Dissatisfied customers
 - High employee turnover
 - Employee dissention
 - Declining sales
 - Difficulty retaining customers

Where Do You Begin?

2. Survey customers to determine unmet needs and level of customer satisfaction.
3. Interview or survey employees to determine their opinions and perceptions on the work environment.
4. Compare and align the customer and employee gaps.

What Works Best?

- Customized training programs that address the needs/gaps of specific businesses or industry sectors.
- Instructors from industry who can provide real world experience and learning examples.
- Training that provides mentors or coaches for each participant. Reinforcement and support are essential for changing behaviors.
- Training that provides role playing opportunities.

Examples

Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Grant

- Develop training and support programs to help English language learners gain technical and soft skills for sustainable employment
- Training programs involved labor, employers, adult schools, community college, and federal workforce development -- **PARTNERSHIPS**

Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Workplace English for Environmental Services Workers

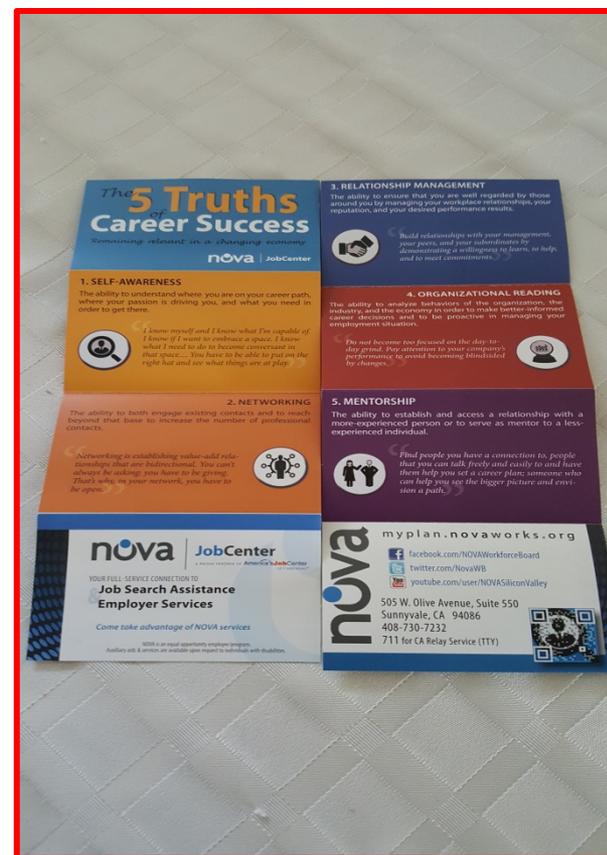
- **Employer, adult school, labor** partnership
- Provide technical skill upgrading (computer use and hospital systems)
- Improve English communication
- **Increase confidence** and importance of career mobility
- Small class size to allow participant support and **coaching**

English Language Learners Ladders to Success (ELLS)

- **Partnership** between **adult schools** and **workforce development**
- Skill-building for successful job search and career development (interviewing, Internet search)
- Digital literacy
- Improve English language skills
- **One-on-one coaching** and advising provided by job developer and instructor

NOVA ProMatch

- Weekly meetings intended for professional job seekers
- Workshops that help with **networking**, interviewing techniques and resume
- Career **coaching**
- Presentation skills enhancement
- Peer support



<http://myplan.novaworks.org/interview.php>

Workplace Excellence Series

- <http://workplaceexcellence.net/>
- Ten modules (used individually or as a series)

Adaptability	Writeability
Dependability	Presentability
Transitionability	Respectability
Suitability	Workability
Reasonability	Communicationability

Workforce Trends and Truths

- Globalization and technology allow and require businesses to constantly shift operations and revise business models to address changing market demands.
- World-wide there is a continuing shortage of good paying jobs resulting in fewer jobs for adults and youth.

Who Will Get the Jobs?