Four Crucial Soft Skills for Success in IT
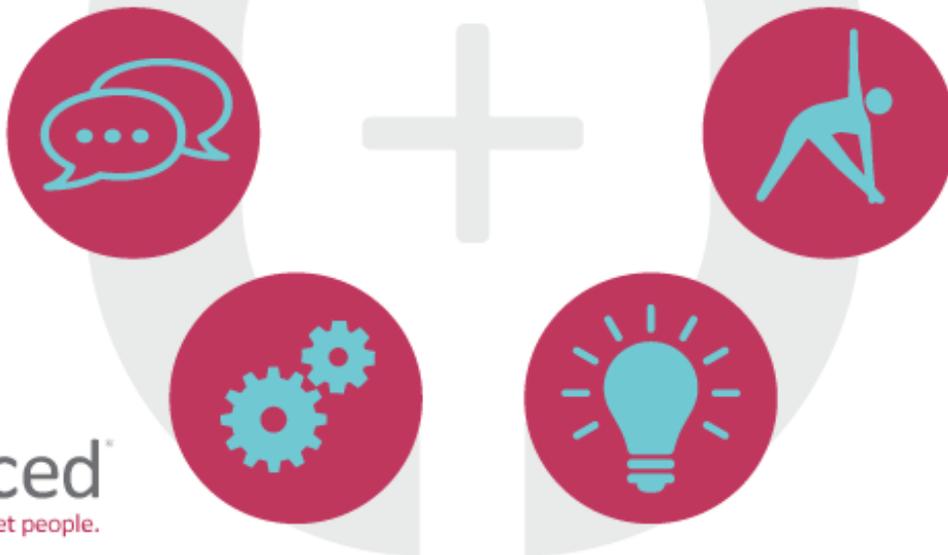
The IT industry can be a challenging and dynamic environment. So, in order to be successful, IT professionals often have to go beyond focusing on just their technical expertise. Skills such as effectively explaining a complicated product to an end user, or quickly adapting to challenges from an unexpected service outage, can be extremely valuable.

Whether you're just starting out as a Junior Programmer or you're already a Senior Developer, possessing the following four soft skills will significantly help you to achieve your career goals.

Communication Skills

In the IT industry, communication is one of the most vital soft skills to possess. From the perspective of an IT employee, you're going to have to explain complicated problems, solutions and processes in way that's clear to understand. At the same time, whether it's a new piece of software, technology or a product ready to be rolled out, there's always something new to learn. Knowledge share is crucial within this field. A lot of learning occurs on the job and hence, being able to teach and explain things to others with clarity and patience can really bolster your career.

As well as being able to convey an idea in a way that can be easily understood, intently listening to others is equally as important. Listening closely to exactly what your client or manager wants is key to ensuring you deliver precisely what is expected. If there's anything within a brief you don't understand, don't be afraid to clarify it before you begin working.

Honing your communication skills can have a positive impact on your career. Being able to better communicate with your peers, managers, clients and stakeholders, can enable you to build better and stronger relationships all-round. This can have a direct influence on opportunities later on in your career and serve as a stepping stone to leadership responsibilities.

Flexibility

A career within the IT sector can come with a lot of sudden changes, whether from setbacks caused by technical problems or last-minute issues with vendors. If you're someone who is adaptable, positive and keen to immediately find a solution, then you'll be highly sought after. In an industry which faces frequent disruption due to the latest innovations, embracing changes head on can help lead you to stronger career opportunities later down the line.

Due to the dynamic and flexible nature of the IT industry, contracting has become hugely popular. Developing your own adaptability whilst being quick on your feet can hugely benefit you if you're looking to strike a better balance between your work and personal life, through being a contractor. If you already have these soft skills but not sure if contracting is the right career choice for you, read our guide to discover more.

Teamwork

It can often be tempting for an IT professional to isolate themselves at work, preferring to work alone to get a job done. However, a group of experts can bring a huge variety of talents, skills and perspectives to the table. It's for this reason that a strong team will always accomplish far more than what one person can do alone. Demonstrating you're a team player can allow you to work achieve great results whilst highlighting your communication skills, especially your ability to negotiate.

When you're working as part of a dynamic IT team in a high results driven environment, there can occasionally be conflict. Being able to find common ground, negotiate and resolve issues are excellent skills to have in this, or any, industry. Practicing them can go a long way in helping you stand out for possible team leader positions or roles which require conflict resolution, such as Account Management.

Innovation

The IT industry is constantly at the forefront of innovation. To stay ahead of the game, employers need to be creative and develop solutions and products that meet the constantly changing needs of consumers. This has led to innovation and creativity to become a critical skill for employees to possess. If you can prove that you're a creative innovator, then you're much more likely to stand out from the crowd.

However, it's one thing to be able to create a great product to a brief, it's another entirely to offer an innovative solution to a problem. An employer will want someone who is a creative problem solver, who can think on their feet and take the initiative to offer creative solutions, and not just temporary fixes. Don't allow your creativity to be stemmed, instead embrace it and use it to get ahead in your career, as this can really set you apart from the crowd.

Summary

When it comes to being successful throughout your career, proving you have the technical skill is half the battle. Demonstrating that you're excellent at communicating, a flexible team player and a creative innovator can highlight you as a strong employee and a potential leader. If you need some help with getting connected to fantastic roles that will let you utilise both your technical and soft skills, get in touch with one of our recruitment specialists today.