



Hiring for soft skills

Identify soft skills during recruitment with our step-by-step guide.

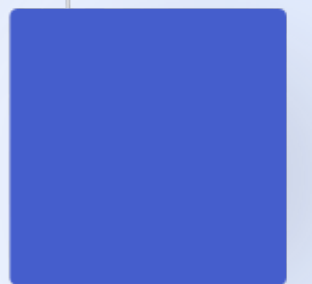
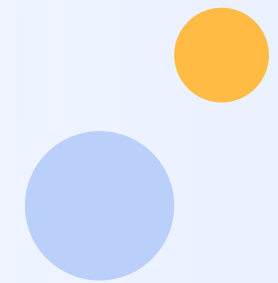
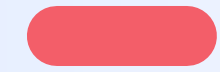


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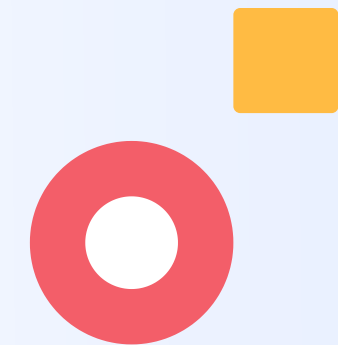
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What are soft skills?

Defining soft skills and their importance to the future of work.



Soft skills defined

The term soft skills refers to everything from social and emotional intelligence to communication skills and mindsets. In the workplace, soft skills can be understood as the behaviour traits, people skills and ways of thinking that influence the way an individual works.

Soft skills vs hard skills

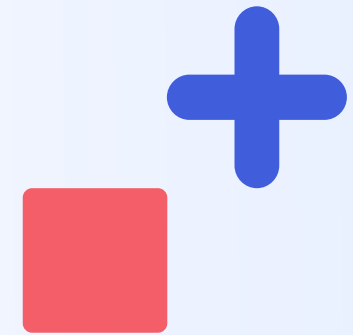
Hard skills refer to the technical skills we learn in a role. They matter but when it comes to overall employee performance and long-term company health, soft skills matter most. Non-technical skills like the ability to communicate, adapt and learn are crucial for success at work. If a top candidate doesn't work well in a team then you're likely headed for trouble.

When you assess soft skills during the recruitment process, you are more likely to find the right candidate.



91% of talent professionals agree soft skills are very important for the future of recruiting and HR.

Source: [LinkedIn](#)



The future of work

Soft skills are essential for building a modern workforce. COVID-19 has ushered in an era where skills like resilience, adaptability and lifelong learning are a must. Learn what's in store for the future of work with these key statistics.

1

Reskilling will become a must.

50% of all employees will need to reskill by 2025.

94% of employers now expect employees to learn new skills on the job.

Soft skills are critical in determining how receptive people are to learning new things.

2

Internal mobility will be commonplace.

20% increase in internal mobility since the onset of COVID-19.

Learning and development budgets will rise in response. Employees will need to be flexible and adaptive to cope with these changes.

Sources: [World Economic Forum](#) & [LinkedIn](#)



3

Virtual recruiting is here to stay.

70% of talent professionals agree virtual recruiting will become the new standard.

Recruiters who have relied on meeting people in-person to assess soft skills will require new options.

4

Recruiting budgets will likely decrease.

1 in 2 talent professionals believe their budgets will downsize.

Recruiters will now need to assess more candidates with less resources.

5

Remote work will remain commonplace.

75% of workers think employers will continue to support remote work.

Remote work done well requires employees with skills like adaptivity, resilience and great communication.

Sources: [World Economic Forum](#), [LinkedIn](#) & [The University of Sydney](#).

Soft skills in hot demand

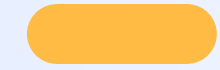
The soft skills essential for a high-performing, future-ready workforce in any industry relate to the way we think and manage ourselves.

A top candidate will have at least some of these skills.

- Adaptivity
- Business acumen
- Customer focus
- Growth mindset
- Problem solving
- Teamwork

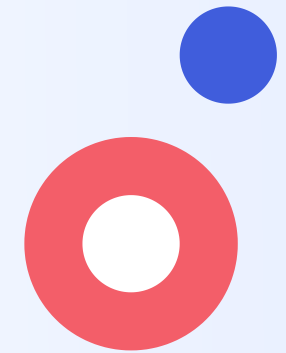
- Humility
- Leadership
- Lifelong learning
- Motivation
- Resilience

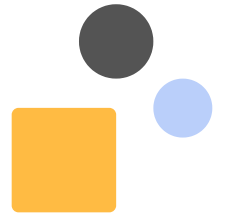
See page 16 for example interview questions designed to identify these soft skills.



How to identify soft skills while recruiting

Choose the right soft skills and use interview rubrics to test for them.





Choosing soft skills

Before you start recruiting for soft skills it's important to know exactly what you are looking for. Not every role will require a long list of soft skills, usually three to four will do the trick!

The challenging part can be deciding what skills matter most for the role at hand and the hiring company.

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We should not expect everybody to have all of the soft skills. The skills needed will be dependent on the role.

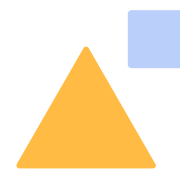





Professor Eileen Baldry
Deputy Vice Chancellor Equity
Diversity and Inclusion at UNSW Sydney

Source: [All About Soft Skills webinar](#)

Identifying soft skills

Here's how you can identify which soft skills to assess during recruitment. It always helps to do this exercise with a group.



- 1 List the skills needed to do the vacant position well.
- 2 Add skills based on the company's culture and values.
- 3 Narrow the list to bare essentials.
 -  It helps to imagine you need to hire someone in 24 hours or less.
- 4 If you can't identify obvious skills, outline which behaviour traits enable the skills on your shortlist.
 -  You can frame questions like this, "What behaviour traits enable independent work?"
- 5 Make sure everyone defines the soft skills you have chosen the same way.
 -  Specify something like 'great communication' as 'active listening' or 'good written communication'.

Example use case

Need help identifying the right soft skills to assess for your job roles? Get a free consultation with one of our experts. [Book now.](#)

Call Centre Consultant

Role requirements

- Technologically adept
- Can work shift hours
- Strong verbal communication ●
- Exceptional customer service ●
- Works well under pressure ●

Company values

- Flexibility ●
- Teamwork ●
- Growth ●

Soft skills needed

- Customer focus
- Communication
- Resilience
- Teamwork

Links to:

- Resilience
- Communication
- Customer focus
- Teamwork



Using interview rubrics

Once you've identified the soft skills needed for a position, it's time to assess them. Using interview rubrics, also known as standardised interviewing, is a great way to do this fairly.

An interview rubric is a set of questions and marking criteria used to assess candidates. Rubrics allow you to ask every candidate the same set questions and compare them using an objective criteria.

You can design a rubric to specifically uncover the soft skills you are looking for.

A great rubric will include a set of open-ended questions and a simple marking criteria that encourages fairness. For best results, focus on what a candidate says, not how they say it, what they look like or the ethnicity or gender they identify with.

When to assess soft skills

The earlier you start assessing soft skills the better. Using rubric-style interviewing at the beginning of the recruitment process will help you move higher quality candidates through the funnel.

Manual vs digital rubrics

You can use interview rubrics or standardised interviewing with manual or digital methods. Here are the main differences between them.



DIY questions and marking criteria _____

Human data collection and analysis _____

Limited to one interview at a time _____

Prone to human bias _____

Adds human touch _____



AI-assisted question and criteria set up _____

AI-assisted data collection and analysis _____

Can interview thousands of candidates at once _____

Prone to algorithm bias _____

Humanised AI interaction _____

Spotlight:

RWWA

screens for soft skills

Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA) wanted to start screening for soft skills earlier in their recruitment process. The team chose Curious Thing's AI voice interviewer to interview all eligible candidates and get an insight into their soft skills before second round interviews. This provided the team with an invaluable step in their recruitment process. Here's what Matthew Thomas, former General Manager of People and Culture had to say about it.

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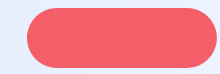


Curious Thing has changed our whole style of interviewing. Data collected from our digital recruiter allows us to have deeper, better-informed discussions with our candidates.

Matthew Thomas
Former General Manager of People and Culture
at RWWA

Source: [RWWA x Curious Thing case study](#)





11 questions designed to identify soft skills

Take your cues from these example questions designed to assess soft skills.



Adaptivity

Business acumen

In this section, we describe 11 of the most in-demand soft skills and provide examples of questions that can be used to identify each. Remember, everyone interprets skills differently, this is our version.

Key:

- What it means
- Example question
- Why it works

The ability to adapt to new environments and remain flexible in order to meet goals.

A deep and applied understanding of how a business operates and achieves its goals.

Talk to us about one of your biggest work challenges. What did you learn?

You're about to start planning a big project. How would you start the process?

The way a candidate responds to a large challenge will make adaptive traits evident.

The way a candidate starts a big project will provide insight into their understanding of how a business operates.

Customer focus

The ability to put oneself in the customer's shoes and provide a great experience.

Have you ever gone above and beyond for a customer? What happened?

This will reveal what 'above and beyond' means to the candidate and highlight their attitude to customer service.

Growth mindset

The desire to continue to grow and expand one's comfort zone.

Tell us about a time you stepped outside your comfort zone. How did you approach the situation?

This will reveal whether the candidate actively tries to step outside their comfort zone and the way they do so.

Humility

Showing modesty and having a realistic understanding of one's importance.

Have you ever regretted making a particular decision? In hindsight, what would you have done differently?

We all have regrets, what we learn from them and how we'd approach them again says a lot about our character.

● What it means ● Example question ● Why it works

Leadership

The ability to inspire, lead and manage people.

What do you consider to be your greatest leadership achievement to date and why?

A candidate's notion of their greatest leadership achievement will provide insight into their management style.

Lifelong learning

The willingness and ability to continue learning new knowledge and skills.

Have you ever turned a failure into a learning opportunity? What happened?

If a candidate is able to assess and learn from their failures, chances are they value lifelong learning.

Motivation

Being energised to show up day-to-day and perform a role well.

When looking for a new job, what are the top three things you consider?

The main motivation behind a job search will provide insight into how a candidate operates.

● What it means ● Example question ● Why it works

Problem solving

The ability to identify problems and then develop frameworks to solve them.

Have you ever discovered a brand new problem at work? How did you work through it?

In answering this question, candidates will talk through how they identify and solve problems.

Resilience

The ability to cope with challenges like stress and high pressure.

Have you ever worked in a project or task that required multiple attempts? Tell us about it.

Was the candidate able to remain calm while needing to repeat a task? Their answer will highlight their innate resilience.

Teamwork

The ability to collaborate, support and grow with a team.

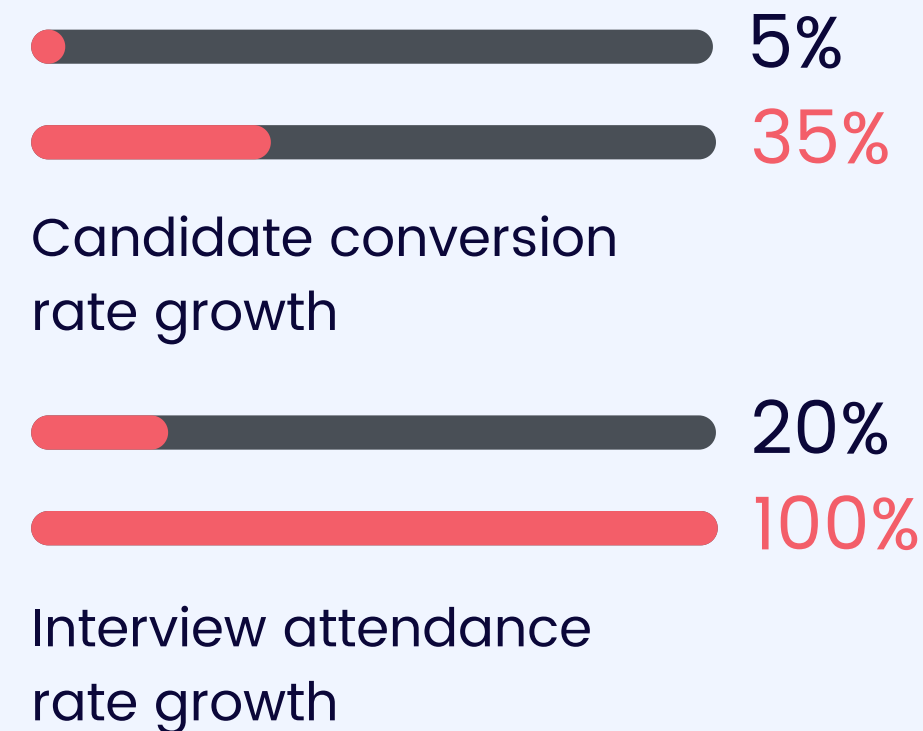
Have you ever faced or witnessed conflict within a team dynamic? What was your response?

The way a candidate handles conflict within a team can say a lot about how they operate in a team dynamic.

● What it means ● Example question ● Why it works

Spotlight: Viventis interviews thousands

Asking candidates open-ended questions is a must when recruiting for soft skills. The trouble is, it can be time consuming. Viventis tackled this problem by using Curious Thing's AI voice interviewer. Curious Thing screened thousands of candidates for soft skills while the the Viventis team focused on other work.



We implemented Curious Thing to combine human resources with AI technology and the results have been extraordinarily successful.

Ezekial Fernando
Recruitment Technology and Strategy Leader
at Viventis

Source: [Viventis x Curious Thing case study](#)

Hiring for soft skills



About Curious Thing

This publication was brought to you by Curious Thing. We hope you found it helpful!

Curious Thing is a tech company with AI at its core. Curious Thing's AI voice interviewer is designed to screen candidates for behaviour traits. Our AI interviewer solution can screen thousands of candidates at once, saving you time and money. By providing hiring managers with data regarding key soft skills and personality traits, our solution makes shortlisting easier and gives you vital information to use throughout the rest of your recruiting process. Our process has been created by experts in AI and machine learning, human resources and psychology.

[Get in touch](#) with our team to learn more about how you can use Curious Thing to assess soft skills.





Go beyond the resume

www.curious thing.io

