



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### **Meeting the Soft Skills Demand**

The demand for soft skills in the corporate world is constantly growing while the number of employees possessing soft skills is proportionately declining. Soft skills, such as punctuality, speaking and writing in Standard English, working well in teams, and providing friendly service, are getting scarcer by the day.

The lack of basic employability skills such as attendance, punctuality and work ethic is the biggest deficiency among hourly employees.

Job-content skills today are not as important as they once were. Employers are laying greater emphasis on soft skills and therefore want people who will work hard and be team players. They are willing to train new hires in job-content skills.

Some organizations are implementing an interview screening process that employs behavioral testing to evaluate applicants on their team, interpersonal and other related skills.

Sometimes the problem lies with the organization as well. Most organizations do not clearly state what they consider acceptable behavior. Employers must set clear standards through a code of conduct for employees. This code will help align the employees to the organization's culture. Clarifying the code of conduct is especially crucial in cases where there are immigrants with little experience or where employees come from a different culture.

Soft skills are culture-based and acquire different meanings in different cultures. Workplace cultures also differ from one organization to another. Therefore, they must be clearly specified in the orientation program for new employees.

To prevent a mismatch between an employee and an organization, management must evaluate prospective employees on the desired soft skills by employing behavior-based tests. Once recruited, employees must be clearly told about acceptable and unacceptable codes of conduct in the organization.

Organizations should also conduct periodic soft skills training to reinforce certain skills. Soft skills training must include a brief introduction to the objectives of the training and their importance to the organization before embarking on the practical application of those skills under an expert's guidance.