



ABBOTT HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE FORUM  
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

# Top Killers

- EDITORIAL, *T. RASSAF*
- MEDICAL ERRORS: IS PREVENTION POSSIBLE? *J. KIAM*
- RISING MULTIMORBIDITY IN OUR AGEING WORLD, *H. ROBERTSON & N. NICHOLAS*
- CHRONIC INEQUITIES, *P. MAGUIRE ET AL.*
- WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF BREAST CANCER SCREENING? *E. MORRIS*
- A MOVING TARGET: THE FUTURE OF CARDIOLOGY, *H. INCE & G. D'ANCONA*
- FROM TREATMENT TO PREVENTION IN DIABETES CARE, *H. AANSTOOT*
- ROBOTICS AND AI TO ANSWER HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES, *J. BOCAS*

REDEFINING THE ROLE OF HOSPITALS - INNOVATING IN POPULATION HEALTH, *A. LOURENÇO*

A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE ON COLLABORATIVE CARE DELIVERY, *C. KUZIEMSKY*

RISK AND PERMISSION, *R. MILLAR*

ARE SOFT SKILLS IMPORTANT? *M. VIRARDI*

SEPARATE AND CONCENTRATE—

A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL FOR GENERAL HOSPITALS? *L. KUNTZ ET AL.*

5G OPENS THE FUTURE OF TELESURGERY, *A. DE LACY*

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DEMENTIA CARE, *A. LEOTSAKOS & K. PETSANIS*

OBSTACLES TO ESTABLISHING COMPETENCE IN RADIOLOGY, *P. SOLÍS*

EUROSAFE IMAGING: BE A STAR FOR YOUR PATIENTS, *L. BONOMO*

EFFECTS OF SMOKING ON CAROTID ARTERY STRUCTURES AND HAEMODYNAMICS, *D. SIMÃO ET AL.*

DIGITISATION 4.0: THE TRANSMISSION OF PATIENT DATA, *U. HORNSTEIN & G. FÜCHSL*

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM...JOIN THEM, *J. BLICKMAN*



©For personal and private use only. Reproduction must be permitted by the copyright holder. Email to copyright@mindbyte.eu.

# Are soft skills important?

Soft skills give a huge competitive advantage when it comes to convincing a prospective employer or a prospect that you are the man or woman for the job.



**Michael R. Virardi**

Speaker. Trainer. Author.  
Cyprus

michael@michaelvirardi.com

michaelvirardi.com

@Michael\_Virardi

Just how important are soft skills in helping you advance in life? A study by Harvard University noted that 80% of career achievements are determined by soft skills and only 20% by hard skills.

The term ‘soft skills’ was coined in 1972 by the U.S. Army, which, at the time, assigned more weight to hard skills, as the latter were considered to have a more specific on-the-job application. However, later studies came to strengthen the value of the role that soft skills play in one’s life and accomplishments.

Soft skills usually refer to a wide range of abilities, including people skills, social skills, communication skills, character traits, attitudes, career attributes, emotional intelligence quotients, etc, many of which form the basis of our personality and how we are perceived by others. This set of skills is mostly innate —“in the genes”—while “hard” or “technical” skills are acquired through study and/or practice. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that anyone with a normal, functioning brain can accumulate a certain number of hard skills, such as how to operate a machine or draw up a balance sheet, but the same does not hold true for soft skills, which is precisely why they are so hard to find.

Employers tend to ascribe considerable value to their personnel’s soft skills, especially in those lines of business which call for a great deal of interaction with clients and/or colleagues. They know that there is much to be gained, both in quantitative (increased productivity and profits, reduced costs, etc) and qualitative (heightened morale, increased workplace satisfaction, etc) terms, by hiring and retaining employees who possess a great set of soft skills, such as good manners, optimism, graciousness, honesty, empathy and reliability. Hard skills can be added to complement this much more valuable skill set.

Although soft skills are wide-ranging, below is a “top ten” list of business-oriented soft skills as compiled by Eastern Kentucky University:

1. Courtesy – Having good manners, knowing and implementing etiquette, being gracious and respectful, saying please and thank you
2. Flexibility – Being adaptable and willing to change, a teachable lifelong learner who accepts new things and is able to adjust

3. Communication – Ability in speaking, writing, presenting and listening
4. Integrity – A person who is honest and ethical, with high morals and personal values, and does what’s right
5. Interpersonal skills – Being personable, friendly, nurturing, warm and empathetic, with a sense of humour, self-control, patience, sociability and social skills
6. Positive attitude – Being optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy and confident
7. Professionalism – This means being businesslike, well-dressed, poised and with a good appearance

“EMPLOYERS TEND TO ASCRIBE CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO THEIR PERSONNEL’S SOFT SKILLS”

8. Responsibility – Being accountable and reliable, resourceful and self-disciplined, this person gets the job done, wants to do well, works conscientiously and shows common sense
9. Teamwork – Being cooperative, getting along with others, always acting in an agreeable, supportive, helpful and collaborative manner
10. Work ethic – This means being loyal, self-motivated, on time, willing to work hard and showing initiative

Remember that impressions—especially first impressions—count a great deal. If you can master most, or even some, of the above soft skills, you will equip yourself with a huge competitive advantage when it comes to convincing a prospective employer or a prospect that you are the man or woman for the job. ■

## Acknowledgements

A very special thank you to my personal friend Spyros Yiassemides for his invaluable help on the research for this particular blog post.

Adapted with permission from michaelvirardi.com/all\_blog