

Why Soft Can Really Be Hard

When it comes to essential skills, there are many different ways of describing them. Employers usually refer to "hard" skills, such as reading, writing, working with numbers and being able to analyze and work with data and information of many kinds. There's no doubt that these skills are "essential" when you're looking for employment, already employed or preparing yourself for a more challenging, higher paying job.

But they are only one piece of your essential skills toolkit. Believe it or not, sometimes they are the easier ones to develop. By comparison, "soft skills" can be a far greater challenge. Soft skills are the ones you need in order to provide excellent client service, build and maintain relationships in the workforce, be an effective team member or supervisor, and work well with others. When you have strong soft skills, they show employers, your staff and customers that you can accept responsibility for your actions, acknowledge the points of view of others, be tolerant and flexible, be willing to help others, and manage difficult situations in the workplace.

Think about where you work or the various workplaces you go to in your daily life; the bank, the hardware store, the grocery store, the drug store, the nursery, the library, the township office, the local newspaper or your health care provider. Whether you're a boss, an employee or a client, soft skills can often make or break your experience. Here in Renfrew County, we often take these kinds of skills for granted; as we enjoy the excellent service we receive at our local businesses, government offices and community programs. That you are greeted well, listened to, and assisted in obtaining the goods or services you are looking for, can seem effortless.

The problem is, the importance of these soft skills is often undervalued, and there is far less training provided for them than hard skills. For some reason, organizations seem to expect people know how to behave on the job. They tend to assume that everyone knows and understands the importance of being on time, taking initiative, being friendly, and producing high quality work.

It is important to focus as much on soft skills training and development as you do on traditional hard skills. The Training and Learning Centre of Renfrew County will be offering Summer School for Adults. We will be scheduling a day for soft skills training, which will include dealing with difficult situations and customer service skills. Continuing students and new students are welcome.

Please contact TLC at 613-628-1720 to find out more about Summer School for Adults.