



# TEN ESSENTIAL SOFT SKILLS TO MASTER



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Let's first determine what "soft skills" are

According to Wikipedia:

*"Soft skills, also known as common or core skills, are skills applicable to all professions. These include:*

- *critical thinking*
- *problem solving*
- *public speaking*
- *professional writing*
- *teamwork*
- *digital literacy*
- *leadership*
- *professional attitude*
- *work ethic*
- *career management*
- *intercultural fluency"*

All hotel recruiters or service industry employers agree that technical or work skills are important. And they will definitely give you an edge for recruitment or promotion.

But what is just as vital, for determining how successful you will be in the workplace, are your "soft skills".

And there are 10 essential soft skills you really need to master if you want a long career in the Hospitality Industry.

You can have more soft skills but these are the 10 essential skills, or qualities, a top-notch hotelier must possess in order to thrive and prosper in the hospitality industry.

## 1. Good Communication Skills

When your job involves dealing with different kinds of people on a daily basis, communication skills play a big role in your success.

When you can express yourself clearly and well, you come across as more confident and less prone to misunderstandings.

When a job requires you to relay information, pacify or placate an irate guest, make an upsell or simply make a guest feel at home with friendly conversation, the person who can express themselves clearly, succinctly and effectively will shine above the rest.

## 2. Active Listening Skills

Just as it is important to be able to communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly to someone, you also need to have excellent listening skills to be a great hotelier.

We can only provide what guests truly need and want effectively, if we take the time to listen to what they are asking AND understand both their verbal and non-verbal cues.

Active listening means focusing completely on what the other person is saying. It is making a conscious effort to absorb what they are trying to say or explain. And not be distracted by your own thoughts, processing of information or rehearsing what you plan to say to that guest in response.

Active Listening helps you to truly hear and understand others better. The bonus is Active Listen makes it easier for you to provide a better, quality service.

## 3. Empathy

The hospitality industry is a people-driven industry.

To succeed, or rise through the ranks, a person who has empathy and above-average [emotional intelligence](#) is someone any hotel would be happy to have, nurture and promote.

When you seek to understand what the guest needs, on a deeper level, by placing yourself in their shoes, you are able to provide a service that is thoughtful, personal and authentic.

You will also be able to connect and engage with guests better, and make them feel that you genuinely care about their hotel experience.

#### **4. Multi-Tasking & Time-Management Skills**

Part of what makes a job in a hotel particularly challenging is the fact that there are times when you have to deal with several things bombarding you all at once.

This might be a long queue of guests standing in front of you or a telephone ringing incessantly. Someone from another department needing your help with something, a ton of paperwork you need to get done before the end of the day and e-mails that are waiting to be replied to.

If you are easily overwhelmed, this could spell disaster.

People who can naturally (or learn to) separate their mental and emotional space effectively, and prioritize and systematically address lots of things competing for their attention, have a very strong chance of succeeding in the hotel industry.

#### **5. Decision-Making & Problem-Solving Skills**

The hotel is a place where many decisions need to be made in a snap - every single day.

With the sheer number of people being served, and the volume of transactions happening constantly, not every decision can wait long enough for a supervisor or a manager to handle it.

Because of this, one valued trait of a good hotelier is the ability to make educated and calculated decisions at guest contact point.

With the available resources and information to hand, a skilled hotelier with top notch Essential Soft Skills, can make 'a call' that will be beneficial both to the guest and the hotel.

This is easier said than done, though, and the confidence to be able to do this usually stems from years of experience in the industry.

#### **6. Anticipation Skills**

Anyone can simply follow instructions. Or get the guest what they ask for.

However, what puts exceptional hoteliers a step above the rest is their ability to give guests what they need before they even ask for it.

The ability to anticipate a guest's needs comes from a combination of hotel work experience, having vital information about the guest, a solid knowledge of what the hotel has to offer and a genuine desire to delight the guest.

When a guest's needs are anticipated correctly and respectfully (be careful not to assume!), it can leave a lasting impression that will keep them returning to the hotel again and again.

## **7. Teamwork**

A hotel has many different departments, working together to provide a seamless experience for the guests. A good hotelier must be able to work harmoniously with all of their colleagues.

Their colleagues, in this instance, are not just those who work within the same department. But also those who work in other departments.

When you are a good team-player, you are able to gain the trust and cooperation of other people. This makes it easier for all of you to do your jobs. And achieve the ultimate goal of delighting the guest.

To really ace at this you could take advantage of the Hotel's cross-training programs. These will give you better insight into how other Departments operate and help you build relationships in those departments.

## **8. Attention to Detail**

So many things go into making sure a guest has a memorable and problem-free stay in the hotel. From the point of making a reservation, through to the journey back to the airport.

Every single detail must be checked and double-checked. One tiny break in the service sequence can potentially ruin the entire stay for a guest.

A good hotelier knows that the *'devil is in the details'*.

He or she will double check the booking notes prior to the guests arrival, pay attention to and anticipate the guest's needs, and make sure that the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed from check-in to check-out.

## 9. Flexibility

Now more than ever, hotels look for employees who can adapt quickly.

Hoteliers can be called on to work in a different department to cover sick or maternity leave or because the hotel has been unable to recruit an open position.

In a country prone to typhoons, floods and earthquakes hoteliers may be asked to work a double shift to help with damage limitation preparations, or because a teammate has been unable to get in to work.

The COVID pandemic and its aftermath has also brought with it a lot of changes, pressures. Many hotels have found themselves operating without a full quota of staff and those who are employed are being asked to double up on their roles, and take on other tasks and duties.

Things are changing at a rapid pace, including how things are done at work.

Employees who can *roll with the punches*, and *sway with the wind*, are highly valued. Especially now as more and more hotels turn to multi-skilling, to maximize the current available manpower.

## 10. Service-mindedness

Last but certainly not the least, a good hotelier should possess the heart to serve.

Working in the hotel industry is not as easy as it looks. Sometimes it can almost drain the life out of you.

But if you are innately **service-minded**, you will be willing to go the extra mile to make your guests not just satisfied, but delighted. And your bosses will notice that!

These ten soft skills are essential for a successful career in the hospitality industry.

And they are crucial to delivering a customer experience that is heartfelt and memorable. This will also build guest loyalty and boost your hotel towards success.

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