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Futureproofing Your Career: What Are the New Core Skills

We now live in a digital-first world, with both employers and employees needing to be innovative and agile.

Coupled with that is a need for lifelong learning, given the rapid changes happening in up-and-coming jobs that require new soft and hard skills.

Nanyang Technological University associate professor (AP) Hairon Salleh said in a commentary: “Innovations and new technologies have emerged at an unprecedented rate in the last decade.

“With the emergence of novel technologies, new jobs will be created, and old ones will be lost. Navigating these opportunities and challenges, a person is expected to switch careers between three to seven times in their working life.”

He believes that further education is no longer for the select few engaged in an academic paper chase. The many who wish to seek and acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to survive and thrive in the new world order should also consider the option.

AP Hairon concluded his commentary by sharing that his favourite quote (coined by the American businessman and futurist Alvin Tofler), “Learn, unlearn, and relearn”, should be the essential dictum for all Singaporean workers today.

But what are some of the core career skills that you should look to add to your arsenal? Here are some that will help no matter where your next job is.

The ability to think critically and communicate effectively

In your personal life or the office, success is all about critical thinking. While we live in an era where artificial intelligence (AI) platforms like ChatGPT exist, humans ultimately have deep critical thinking skills that will always be valued by employers.

To think critically effectively, you need these four mental skills:

1. Locally connect ideas and concepts in your professional environment
2. Evaluate and consider all sides and arguments
3. Be able to spot inconsistencies and errors in logic or data
4. Reflect on whether or not all variables have been considered

Apart from critical thinking, communicating effectively matters too, especially with more and more jobs requiring workers to be part of geographically dispersed teams. You’ll need to be able to communicate across cultures as well. Here are some key facets of being an effective communicator:

- Listen well
- Have empathy
- Be patient
- Learn to be clear and concise
- Have a positive attitude, and be honest and open-minded
- Maintain good body language when in person

- Be able to give and receive feedback

Digital literacy is not an option

It's a fact: according to studies, strong digital skills provide a route to better-paying jobs across multiple industries. At the very least, here are some basic tech skills you'll need, whether you're working in a professional, managerial, executive, and technical (PMET) or non-PMET role:

- **Document creation:** This means knowing how to use Microsoft Office, such as Outlook, Word and PowerPoint. For those who need to use data, Excel is a must. And if you're in a job that requires document sharing, learning how to use, edit and send PDFs efficiently matters.
- **Image editing:** In today's visual world, a picture says even more than a thousand words. It's not just those working in marketing and media that create visuals or edit photos anymore, even internal presentations and client meetings need them.
- **Creating videos:** TikTok and Instagram are now the new magazines and newspapers. Everyone has a smartphone to capture videos, and can easily use online platforms to edit and caption them. Learn the different file formats, such as .webp or .jpeg, and master which online and social platforms your professional videos will work best on.
- **Storing, saving and archiving digital work:** Clicking the save button isn't sufficient anymore, and cloud storage services have now superseded thumb drives. Learn which to use effectively, and the best ways to ensure you don't lose any important data along the way.

Want to continue learning more about core skills you'll need to futureproof your career? Read on below!

<https://content.mycareersfuture.gov.sg/futureproofing-your-career-what-are-the-new-core-skills/>