

# The Skills Companies Need Most in 2020—And How to Learn Them



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What skills does the workforce value most? At LinkedIn Learning, we surfaced timely data from our network of over 660+ million professionals and 20+ million jobs to reveal the 15 most in-demand soft and hard skills of 2020.

Whatever your goals are for 2020— to take on a bigger project, [start a new job](#), lead a team— learning these skills can help you stand out for that next opportunity.

Consider this your guide to the skills most worth learning this year *and free courses to help you learn them on LinkedIn Learning.*

That's right. For the entire month of January, we've unlocked courses that will help you hone these highly sought after skills—for free. So dive into the list and start learning the skills companies need most.

## The Soft Skills Companies Need Most in 2020

What you need to know about 2020's trending soft skills:

Soft skills are the essential interpersonal skills that make or break our ability to get things done in our current jobs and take on new opportunities ahead.

Topping this year's list are creativity, collaboration, persuasion, and emotional intelligence—all skills that demonstrate how we work with others and bring new ideas to the table. Four of the five most in-demand soft skills remain in their top spots year over year, further reinforcing that these skills are evergreen—they're likely to remain the top skills that companies want in star employees.

The one variation in the most in-demand soft skills list indicates that companies are gravitating toward talent with interpersonal and people-oriented skills. 'Time management', a more task oriented skill, [fell off the top soft skills list](#). 'Emotional intelligence' took its place. While task-oriented skills remain critical to our success at work, the data shows that employers value our ability to work well with colleagues.

### **The top 5 most in-demand soft skills are:**

#### **#1 Creativity** - Same as 2019

Organizations need people who can creatively approach problems and tasks across all business roles, from software engineering to HR. Focus on honing your ability to bring new ideas to the table in 2020.

#### **Learn creativity in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Banish Your Inner Critic to Unleash Creativity](#) with Denise Jacobs

More recommended courses:

- [Creativity For All](#) (Weekly Series)
- [Creative Exercises to Spark Original Thinking](#) with Amy Wynne

#### **#2 Persuasion** - Same as 2019

Leaders and hiring managers value individuals who can explain the “why.” To advance your career, brush up on your ability to effectively communicate ideas and persuade your colleagues and stakeholders that it's in their best interest to follow your lead.

#### **Learn persuasion in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Persuading Others](#) with Dorie Clark

More recommended courses:

- [Leading Without Formal Authority](#) with Elizabeth (McLeod) Lotardo and Lisa Earle McLeod
- [Persuasive Coaching](#) with Brian Ahearn

#### **#3 Collaboration** - Same as 2019

High-functioning teams can accomplish more than any individual—and organizations know it. Learn how your strengths can complement those of your colleagues to reach a common goal.

**Learn collaboration in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Being an Effective Team Member](#) with Daisy Lovelace

More recommended courses:

- [Shane Snow on Dream Teams](#)
- [Teamwork Foundations](#) with Chris Croft

#### #4 Adaptability - Same as 2019

The only constant in life—and in business—is change. To stand out in 2020, embrace that reality and make sure to show up with a positive attitude and open-minded professionalism, especially in stressful situations.

#### Learn adaptability in this course—free through January 31:

- [Managing Stress for Positive Change](#) with Heidi Hanna

More recommended courses:

- [Developing Adaptability as a Manager](#) with Dorie Clark
- [Finding Your Time Management Style](#) with Dave Crenshaw

#### #5 Emotional Intelligence - New

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, evaluate, and respond to your own emotions and the emotions of others. New to the most in-demand skills list this year, the need for emotional intelligence underscores the importance of effectively responding to and interacting with our colleagues.

#### Learn emotional intelligence in this course—free through January 31:

- [Developing Your Emotional Intelligence](#) with Gemma Leigh Roberts

More recommended courses:

- [Social Success at Work](#) with Todd Dewett
- [Influencing Others](#) with John Ullman

### The Hard Skills Companies Need Most in 2020

What you need to know about 2020's trending hard skills:

While the most in-demand soft skills are all about how we work together, the most in-demand hard skills are the ones changing *what* we're working on.

Many of these skills will continue to evolve rapidly. For example, for the first time this year, blockchain not only made the list of top skills, but topped it—highlighting an increasing awareness and demand for the wider applications of this skill.

Trending data also reveals that data-driven decision-making skills like business analysis (#6), up ten spots from last year, are essential in today's workforce. As companies continue to collect and analyze more data than ever before, they need

people who can help interpret and take action on that data to drive growth for their business.

**The top 10 most in-demand hard skills are:**

**#1 Blockchain - New**

Blockchain was born in 2009 to support the use of cryptocurrency. But blockchain's novel way to store, validate, authorize, and move data across the internet has evolved to securely store and send any digital asset. The small supply of professionals who have this skill are in high demand.

**Learn blockchain in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Blockchain Basics](#) with Jonathan Reichental

More recommended courses:

- [Blockchain Beyond the Basics](#) with Jonathan Reichental
- [Blockchain: Learning Solidity](#) with Emmanuel Henri

**#2 Cloud Computing - Down 1**

Today, companies are built and run on the cloud. They need talent who have the skills to help them drive technical architecture, design, and delivery of cloud systems like Microsoft Azure.

**Learn cloud computing in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Learn Cloud Computing: Core Concepts](#) with David Linthicum

More recommended courses:

- [Azure Administration Essential Training](#) with David Elfassy
- [Cloud Native Development](#) with Chris Bailey

**#3 Analytical Reasoning - Same as 2019**

Data has become the foundation of every single business. Organizations want talent who can make sense of it and uncover insights that drive the best decisions for the business.

**Learn analytical reasoning in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Strategic Thinking](#) with Dorie Clark

More recommended courses:

- [Learning Data Analytics](#) with Robin Hunt
- [Power BI Top Skills](#) with John David Ariansen and Madecraft

**#4 Artificial Intelligence - Down 2**

Artificial intelligence (AI) augments the capabilities of the human workforce. The people who can harness the power of AI, machine learning, and natural language processing are the ones who will help organizations deliver more relevant, personalized, and innovative products and services.

**Learn Artificial Intelligence in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Artificial Intelligence Foundations: Machine Learning](#) with Doug Rose

More recommended courses:

- [Big Data in the Age of AI](#) with Barton Poulson
- [Introducing AI to Your Organization](#) with Jonathan Fernandes

**#5 UX Design - Same as 2019**

It seems like the average attention span of consumers decreases every year and they have little patience for products that aren't intuitive. Organizations need more expertise to help them build more human-centric products and experiences.

**Learn UX design this course—free through January 31:**

- [Getting Started in User Experience](#) with Chris Nodder

More recommended courses:

- [Learning Adobe XD](#) with Tom Green
- [Interaction Design: Software and Web Design Patterns](#) with Diane Cronenwett

**#6 Business Analysis - Up 10**

Business analysis made the most significant jump of any skill on our list. It's one of the few hard skills every professional should have, as most roles require some level of business analysis to make decisions.

**Learn business analysis in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Business Analysis Foundations](#) with Greta Blash

More recommended courses:

- [Data Analytics for Business Professionals](#) with John Johnson
- [Data Driven Presentations with Excel and PowerPoint](#) with Gigi von Courtner

**#7 Affiliate Marketing - New**

With the decline of traditional advertising and the rise of social media, affiliate marketing is rapidly rising as a must-have hard skill. Affiliate marketing leverages company partnerships or influencers that are hyper-targeted to a particular audience.

**Learn affiliate marketing in this course—free through January 31:**

More recommended courses:

- [Marketing Tools: Digital Marketing](#) with Anson Alexander
- [Improve SEO for your Ecommerce Site](#) with Sam Dey

#### #8 Sales - Same as 2019

You'd be hard pressed to find a company that doesn't need great sales people—those who can effectively manage a sales team, understand the sales funnel, work with cross-functional partners, and sell into the highest levels of the business.

**Learn sales in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Social Selling Foundations](#) with Derek Pando

More recommended Courses:

- [Cross Functional Sales Teams](#) with Jeff Bloomfield
- [Sales Enablement](#) with Meridith Powell

#### #9 Scientific Computing - Up 3

Scientific computing skills are held by data science professionals, engineers, and software architects, and others. Companies need more professionals that can develop machine learning models and apply statistical and analytical approaches to large data sets using programs like Python, MATLAB, and others.

**Learn scientific computing in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Parallel and Concurrent Programming with Python 1](#) with Barron Stone and Olivia Chiu Stone

More recommended courses:

- [Learning MATLAB](#) with Steven Moser
- [Introduction to Quantum Computing](#) with Jonathan Reichental

#### #10 Video Production - Down 3

Consumers have an insatiable appetite for video content, so it makes sense that video production continues to be a priority for companies. [Cisco estimates that video will account for 82% of global internet traffic in 2022.](#)

**Learn video production in this course—free through January 31:**

- [Social Media Video Strategy: Weekly Bites](#) with Ashley Kennedy

More recommended courses:

- [Connecting with Your Audience Using Video](#) with Jaime Cohen
- [Social Media Video for Business and Marketing](#) with Ashley Kennedy

We hope that with insight into what companies need today, you feel ready to cultivate the essential soft skills and hard skills, and empowered to own your career.

That's what Quay did. A rising leader at MGM Resorts International, Quay used the 2019 list and LinkedIn Learning courses to strengthen her analytical and persuasion skills and earn herself a promotion.

**Watch how two of the top skills in 2020 helped Quay reach her goals:**



*Methodology: "The skills companies need most" was determined by looking at skills that are in high demand relative to their supply. Demand is measured by identifying the skills listed on the LinkedIn profiles of people who are getting hired at the highest rates. Only cities with 100,000 LinkedIn members were included.*



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