

Top 10 most in-demand career and business skills for 2020

Ayodeji Awosika explains believes that if you want to live a successful life in 2020 and beyond, you will need to adopt a new set of skills. In fact, you will need to learn these skills just to be able to keep up.

Society is fragmenting into two parallel realities. In one reality, you have infinite upside and opportunity. In the other reality, you'll continue to see the gap between your standard of living and those at the top grow more and more.

At this point, you don't have much of a choice if you want to have a profitable and meaningful career or business.

You have to become a part of this new game we're playing. You have to join the new economy and let go of old ways of thinking.

Most importantly, you can't make excuses for yourself.

Are people getting lost in the shuffle of current times? Absolutely. Is it their fault? Not necessarily. It's a deep and complicated issue.

Needless to say, once you know the truth, you have to put those insights into action. Well, you don't have to do anything. Your choice.

Do you want to join the people on their way to the top or do you want to sit and watch all traditional forms of employment and upward mobility fade away right

in front of your eyes?

If you're still with me, here are the skills you need to thrive in today's times and beyond.

The ability to acquire the currency of today's times

We live in an attention economy. Those with the most eyeballs on their work, projects, ideas, etc, tend to win. You need to learn how to attract attention because, without it, even a great idea can fall flat.

Notice I said to *attract* attention.

If you want to build an audience, start a movement, gain loyal customers, or even attract the right people into your life, you're better off gaining a following as a natural byproduct of the quality of your work plus the authentic personality needed to properly display the work.

We're all flooded with people, products, and companies who are trying to get in our face and interrupt us — ads, propaganda in the media, and a slew of “influencers” who furiously create fluffy content to convince us to join their tribes.

To get attention the right way, just be so awesome that continuing to engage with you seems like the obvious thing to do. Of course, traditional marketing skills are necessary, but marketing works much better when it's connected to quality and authenticity.

What does this mean for you?

Regardless of what you're trying to accomplish, understand that ‘creating content’ is a concept that applies to almost anyone.

Display your knowledge, insights, personal experience to the world. You don't even need to have a business in mind before you do this. You can do this as an employee who never plans to quit their job.

Start putting yourself out there, get the attention first, and you can figure out what do to with it later.

Some examples are:

Blogging — Even if you don't want to become a writer, using a blog to share thoughts about your industry can attract customers, employers, investors,

and people who want to be in your network

Video — You can start putting video content online by simply turning your iPhone camera to your face and talking. Take an example like Tai Lopez. Love him or hate him, he started a 9 figure company using a video he shot with a phone.

Social Media — Here's a great example of this. Ron Caruthers is a personal finance expert. He does these amazing Twitter threads breaking down complex topics in simple ways for “laypeople” to understand. He's not trying to become a social media influencer, but his savvy use of social platforms helps him build his business.

The skill that helps you become the best in the world

In one of the best self-help books I've ever read, *How to Fail at Almost Anything and Still Win Big* by Scott Adams, he talks about the concept of *skill stacking* to put yourself in a position to be one of the best in the world at what you do.

It's hard to be the best in the world at one skill.

But, if you learn how to combine skills in a unique way, you create a rare skill set. The rarer your skillset, the more 'career capital' you have. Career capital gives you more freedom, helps you command higher rates, and gives you the upper hand because you're harder to replace.

Scott Adams is the cartoonist behind *Dilbert*. Scott will tell you he's a decent drawer, not the best. He's funny, but not the funniest. His time spent in corporate culture gave him fodder for the strip as well as the business skills needed to promote himself. Combine these skills together, and you get a unique skill set that creates a unique comic strip.

Create your 'talent stack' to stand out. First, play games you can win. Focus on strengthening your natural talents and capabilities as a foundation first, then branch out to building ancillary skills. Doing this will help you multiply the effect of your effort.

The skill that maximises your time

In a world where attention spans are shrinking, the ability to focus is at a premium. If you can learn to block out specific periods of time and enter a flow state while you work, you'll become *the right kind of productive*.

Working four hours per day on activities that move the needle, creates more output than a distracted 8 hour day.

If you focus, and focus hard, on doing the 20 per cent of the work that creates 80 per cent of the results, everything else will fall into place. Some say the 80/20 rule isn't narrow enough — more like 95/5.

People ask me about my writing 'tricks' all the time. I have one trick. I've entered a flow state and used it to produce words almost every day for five years. That's it. This one routine has led to all the positive outcomes I've had when it comes to making money online.

The steps to success are straightforward but require focus and discipline. That's it.

In your chase to 'be productive' coupled with your need to 'know all the tricks' you move further away from your goals.

The bar for discipline, focus, and the ability to follow directions is low. Exceed it and you'll win.

The ability to steer the vehicle that drives your life

Emotional intelligence has grown in prominence over the years, but, again, people get too cute with the concept.

You don't need to know your E.Q. score.

You don't need to have this detailed profile of your personality.

True emotional intelligence simply means you know how to regulate your emotions in a way that produces positive outcomes. That's it.

Some examples are:

Self-awareness — Most people can't be honest with themselves. Their rationalizations and ego get in the way of their own success. If you know who you are — both your strengths and your limitations, you can stack the odds in your favour.

Humility— Your ego tells you that you should be further along than you are, even though you haven't done the work. Fear is actually a form of self-centeredness. You think you're so important that the world cares if you fail. It doesn't. Counterintuitively, true humility is the ability to live the life you

deserve by putting your ego to the side and displaying your talents.

Patience and stability— If you have the ability to execute on your ideas, without too many unnecessary ups and downs, you'll get the results you want. The combination of certainty in your long-term goals and proactivity towards short-term actions combined with the ability to remain detached from short-term results gives you productivity superpowers.

The skill that helps keeps you from getting sidetracked

Staying positive and focusing on the upside the world has to offer sets you apart from the vast majority of society. Society is polluted with noise. From the 'sky is falling' narrative to the keeping up with the Joneses mentality to putting a major emphasis on minor things, most people get thrown off too often to succeed.

The prescription for how to reduce your signal to noise ratio is simple:

Limit news consumption— The incentive structure is such that the media has to create emotionally arousing, often negative, content to get clicks. By the nature of the industry, they simply can't give you objective narratives.

Follow (a few) smart people— My blogging knowledge comes from two or three people, tops. I consume a lot of information, but once I find a truly valid source, I quadruple down on it. You're better off following advice verbatim from a few extremely successful people than you are listening to everyone.

Focus on your output— You can only control yourself. Be the change you want to see in the world. Exhaust your resources first before looking for someone to save you. Measure your results by your effort. The noise of the world will tell you to focus on everyone else but yourself, which is what almost everyone does. Basic personal responsibility for your life will dramatically reduce your noise addiction.

Stay on this journey long enough, and you'll realize 99 per cent of all information is noise. Counterintuitively, you only need one per cent worth of truly valuable information to change your entire life.

The ability to find your tribe

Don't 'network' with people. Connect with people.

You'd be surprised at how many people you can connect with if you focus on interacting with people you actually find interesting. That, plus putting yourself out there and displaying your knowledge for the world to see, will make connecting with people, especially influential people, much easier.

When someone "reaches out to me" so they can "pick my brain" without having put much work in upfront, I have no interest in connecting with them. When I come across people who do work hard and also, you know, seem genuinely interested in my work, I bend over backward to help them.

I know dozens of top writers. How did I meet them? I attracted them by writing great content or I showed them love without asking for anything in return. I share their stuff on social media because it's actually good. I'll write reviews for products I truly love. When you operate this way, a network naturally unfolds as a result of it.

There are so many simple actions you can take, from the right headspace, that can help you connect with others:

- Buy and review their products

- Leave thoughtful comments on their work

- Share their work online

- Send people notes, without asking for anything, saying thank you for the quality of their work

- Participate in places where you can find like-minded peers, e.g., posting content about a certain niche on social media

Once people know you're legitimate and are one of the rare people in society who aren't looking to take, take, take, they're glad to connect with you.

Standing out in a sea of CVs

Jeff Goins, a writer I looked up to in my early days, used to talk about this concept of the portfolio life. Instead of having a resume filled with boring bullet points, you should be able to display what you've done.

When I Google you, a digital trail of your accomplishments should pop up:

Content and social media profiles

Projects you've done

News articles and media about you

James Altucher once said, "Books are the new business cards." In general, your portfolio of work online is your business card.

I forgot where I heard this, but there's also the phrase "Every company is a media company and every person has a personal brand."

Guess what? If you haven't actively focused on creating a brand, you have a brand, but it's not a good one.

Again, no need to "become an influencer."

But do intentionally leave breadcrumbs about what you've been up to. As Austin Kleon discusses in his book, *Show Your Work*, you want to not only put projects out there but give people behind the scenes access to what you're doing.

Document the steps you're taking to improve your life, career, or business in real-time to naturally build this online presence and portfolio. Imagine you're choosing between two potential employees on LinkedIn. One has a resume. The other has status updates about their field, videos, blog posts, and little demos of their skills scattered across their profile.

Who would *you* want to hire?

Exactly.

One of the most underrated skills of all time

Writing well is a superpower.

Even if you don't want to become a writer, learning to write will improve your life, business, and career.

Why?

Writing forces you to articulate your thoughts. Often, you'll think you know

about a subject, but writing about it makes it clear whether or not you do. Writing helps you become a better thinker and decision-maker.

Many people don't ascend in their life or career because they don't know how to communicate their own values. They have communications issues in general — how many poorly thought out emails have you received in your life?

Every CEO and company should have a blog. Top employees can use blogging to display their knowledge in the field. Every individual should have a blog to practice their critical thinking and storytelling skills.

You don't have to be Hemingway.

Anyone can learn the following:

- Basic business blogging

- Copywriting

- Succinct and persuasive emails

- Basic storytelling frameworks

- Essay writing

Look at how pervasive writing is in your life. Every advertisement has words. It drives the narratives of your favourite shows and movies. Email is still the primary channel for business communication.

The skill of writing is so universal I'd be hard-pressed to find a person who wouldn't benefit from getting better at it.

The ability to be (truly) authentic

When it comes to this attention economy we're in, *trying to become an influencer* is futile.

Never start with a goal to be famous or get attention. Focus on becoming the best version of yourself, in public, and nothing more.

The world is too competitive to just rely on objectivity to get ahead. Being your authentic self is the only way to get ahead because nobody can compete with you when it comes to being you.

You learn the rules of your game so you can break them. You study the basic techniques and strategies of your field then combine them with your unique

insights and skills. And you *never* play a character to get ahead.

Ramit Sethi wrote an amazing [article about fake vulnerability](#). He talks about online creators who intentionally overshare parts of their life and self-deprecate too much to come across as authentic. This approach only works if you're the type of person prone to sharing that way.

You become authentic by forgetting about arbitrary authenticity standards.

You build the skill of becoming authentic by pushing yourself to be more of yourself over time. Look at some of the most popular people in many different fields — many are polarizing. Because their views don't cater to everyone and even piss some people off, they create a loyal following.

You don't force people to join your tribe. You attract like-minded people into your tribe. The same rings true for networks, customers, fans, employers, and everything between. You want to draw the right situations into your life and you can't do that unless you're upfront about who you are, what you want, and your view of the way the world works.

Entrepreneurial thinking

The days of rising up the ladder as a corporate robot are dead. Without the ability to think on your feet and sell your ideas (employees still sell their services to employers) you're dead in the water.

Whether or not you want to start a business, you should [treat your life like a business](#).

You are a product— People fail in life when they sit around and hope the right situations fall into their lap. Why would people 'buy into you' if you're not packaging yourself like an offer?

You're the head of marketing and sales— Half the items I mentioned on this list involve displaying your knowledge online. Why? Gone are the days of being an anonymous 8 x 11 sheet of paper, resume, and winning.

You're the PR department— For better or worse, almost everything you do in life lives on a permanent record thanks to the internet. Again, don't pander, but understand your behavior creates a 'brand' for you, whether you like it or not.

The top employees of this century won't be salaried employees. They'll be entrepreneurial gig type workers who have a portfolio, contract with many companies, and use media to boost their profiles.

You don't need to own a factory and hold tons of inventory to own an actual business anymore. Mostly, you need a computer. Many 7 figures companies are run with 3-4 employees, total.

Many just use a series of virtual assistants, freelancers, and contractors. We're all living in this more contract-based economy. It no longer makes sense to be the "company" man or woman.

Without the initiative and drive of an entrepreneur, you'll get lost in the shuffle of a fast-paced world.

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