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Hybrid competence is the newest soft skill with an outsize impact on your career. Here's how you can work it into your résumé.

Bischof, Jackie. **Business Insider, US edition; New York** [New York]. 29 May 2022.

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Abstract

None available.

Full Text

- Employees who are "hybrid competent" are strong relationship builders and flexible thinkers.
 - The ability to be competent at hybrid work is not entirely within your control.
- * Illustrating your competencies on your résumé can set it apart from others.

Mastering multiple video calls and instant messaging platforms, maintaining relationships and managing teams remotely, switching between home working and in-person catch-ups.

After two years of working in a distributed environment as a result of the pandemic, some workers might not realize the breadth of skills they've developed as a result. But these are skills that are worthy of highlighting on a résumé, and could help you land your next job.

They are also likely to determine how well you do in your current one.

"Hybrid competence" has an outsize impact on a person's ability to navigate their career in a distributed environment. That's because it's not just a set of skills, but also a "source of power," according to Mark Mortensen, associate professor of organizational behavior at INSEAD, who has researched remote work for years.

The more competent you are at hybrid working, the more likely you are to get the resources and support you need to do your job successfully — even if you're not in the room with the person making those decisions.

Skilled hybrid workers are organized and excellent relationship builders

While more data still need to be collected on what exactly constitutes a highly competent hybrid worker in the pandemic era, Mortensen says some traits have started to surface, including the ability to multitask, think flexibly, and navigate networks to become visible and trustworthy, and thus able to secure resources to do the job.

"Someone who has better network awareness management — and part of that could be better EQ — is going to fare better in this complex environment," Mortensen says.

These skills are not all necessarily innate, but can be taught and practiced.

Sophie Wade, a work futurist and author of "Empathy Works: The Key to Competitive Advantage in the New Era of Work" agrees, and uses the example of people who, prior to the pandemic, had built successful careers as freelancers, entrepreneurs, or project managers.

"When you look at some people who in the past have worked effectively in multiple locations — they have trained themselves to be very at good at working on both small and large projects, and are often self-motivated, self-directed, and typically very organized." She counts herself among those, adding: "It was a competency I learned."

Clear communication, as well as the ability to quickly create and foster connections, are hallmarks of good hybrid workers, she says.

Being "hybrid competent" is not fully within our control

Mortensen adds an important caveat: Our ability to be competent at hybrid working can be contingent on the environment we're working in. "It's not only about a skill, it's an intersection between a set of skills, and a set of personal and environmental conditions," he says.

In some cases, there are "contextual factors" that you can't control — such as a sick toddler, or an incessantly barking neighborhood dog — which are going to make it difficult to be a star worker from afar.

If your company can support you through any challenges you have working remotely, you are more likely to be able to deal with them.

Managers can help by setting boundaries around communication (and communicate well when they do), and make sure they're discussing pain points, and putting in place processes that help to facilitate hybrid work.

"A direct and obvious example is coordination and scheduling," Mortensen says, to make the most of having teams in the office versus at home. "The autonomy we give to people, which is exactly what they are demanding, has to be balanced with basic coordination. That's where managers can step up, by helping to do that heavy lifting."

How to demonstrate hybrid competence on a résumé

Ward describes your résumé as effectively the "first piece of remote work" that you can show you're able to do, in that it's your chance to demonstrate that not only are you a clear communicator, but that you understand precisely what it takes to succeed in a role.

Ward suggests making your résumé not only chronological, but "functional" too, pointing out what you consider your top skills and how you've put them to use in a hybrid environment in a way that's relevant to the job or the company to which you're applying. This could entail pointing out how you successfully ran a project virtually, managed a distributed team, facilitated remote brainstorming sessions, or executed to deadline across various time zones.

"Put in those elements that show the 'how,' not just the 'what,'" Ward says. "That's a lot of what we're moving to in work."

You'll want to follow through on this throughout the interview process, she adds. "Every interaction that the candidate has — whether written or on the phone or on Zoom — every single piece needs to demonstrate that they are a good remote worker."

In addition, you can illustrate how you've maintained social connections while being apart from your colleagues, advises Mortensen — what's also referred to as "social network skills."

Regardless of whether companies choose to pursue distributed or office work policies, "we need connections," he explains. In this way, the types of skills we have developed as a result of hybrid working "are immutable."

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