Expand Your Digital Skills

Computers and the World Wide Web have made digital skills essential to many work tasks for years, from IT specialists to employees who know how to safely eject floppy disks - regardless of industry.

But how can individuals enhance their digital abilities?

1. Think strategically

Digital skills are now a prerequisite for most jobs, yet their need is increasingly in short supply due to an increase in workplace change as traditional work shifts online and new industries emerge, creating a digital skills gap between what employers require and the available talent pool.

Coding and software application development may be advanced digital skills, but even entry-level employees must understand how to navigate basic computer applications such as word processing, file sharing, and spreadsheet navigation to complete their jobs efficiently and make use of all available tools.

Digital skills may also include being able to conduct transactions and research online via email or social media and having an understanding of digital financial services as more people manage their money online.

Data analytics is another essential digital skill. Interpreting and analyzing data is at the core of many roles spanning marketing, customer service, and operations, so having expertise in this area can help employees better comprehend trends while optimizing performance in specific business functions.

These advanced digital skills include coding, software and app development, network management, and cybersecurity - but even entry-level employees can acquire them with training and practice at home. A robust onboarding process may also help employees feel supported and welcomed within their organizations; studies by Brandon Hall Group and Gallup indicate this can increase retention rates by 82%!

2. Engage leaders and trustees

Digital skills are an integral component of work for most people and developing them can increase job satisfaction. Digital skills may range from being able to use email and Google Search effectively to more specialized ones that pertain to an industry such as software development. Furthermore, more advanced digital abilities such as product management capabilities are in demand with the explosion of Software as a Service (SaaS).

Research shows that having foundational digital skills can significantly lower the risk of being replaced by automation software, but many workers lack such foundational digital competencies. With an opportunity for upskilling employees available, there may be ways to close this skill gap through reskilling or upskilling programs.

One of the numerous flexible learning alternatives that enable workers to develop their digital abilities at their speed and effortlessly integrate them into daily activities are online courses, on-demand platforms, and individual training. Engaging key staff in this process increases engagement and support.

As a result, more people can access the advantages that digital skills bring - higher quality work, increased productivity, and the ability to work anywhere - leading to enhanced economic opportunities across businesses, particularly for those in more marginalized positions.

3. Listen and adapt

The ability to adapt quickly to an ever-evolving digital landscape is one of the key skills needed by both students and employees alike, leading them to adapt to roles and industries requiring different sets of skill sets, from writing code for new software applications and products, creating AI software with learning capability over time, and redesigning business operations in this digital era.

This can include finding mentors and role models who can provide guidance and support as you expand your digital capabilities, as well as working alongside peers and colleagues who share similar experiences or provide different viewpoints - this type of collaboration may take place either directly in person or virtually via webinars and podcasts.

Empathetic listening is an indispensable skill that enables us to understand and relate to people in a digital environment. Also, note down what was said after every encounter so that we don't forget any details later.

Listening is especially essential in classroom and lecture settings, where it can be easy to become distracted by phones or emails while the speaker presents information. Doing this shows disinterest while also decreasing how much information you retain. Be mindful of your surroundings by planning for class attendance.

4. Build confidence

Digitized skills are becoming an essential asset to modern employers. From coding to digital marketing, companies require professionals who possess these competencies. Unfortunately, this skill set doesn't

come easily or quickly: just when an employee thinks they understand a piece of software, something new pops up every day that must be learned!

No matter your role or skill level in digital technology, there's always more to be gained in terms of knowledge. While no single method can guarantee attaining these skills, there are various avenues available to upskill yourself without attending four-year universities or colleges.

Extension educators across the state offer online courses to strengthen individuals' digital skills. From basics such as web browsing and social media management to more complex subjects such as data analytics and e-marketing, these classes can be completed conveniently from within one's own home without incurring a fee or other cost.

Reaching out to local community colleges or technical schools offering digital training may also be an option, with programs typically offering flexible scheduling to fit into busy lives and individual learning plans to ensure individuals achieve their digital skill goals.

Employees armed with digital literacy have the chance to make meaningful contributions to their communities and ensure a more promising career outlook, so every individual must invest in their digital abilities.

5. Build engagement

Digital skills have become an indispensable component of the workforce, with it estimated that millions of future jobs require advanced digital competencies such as coding, software development, data analytics, and cybersecurity.

Digital skills are increasingly vital across industries and help employees perform their responsibilities more effectively. Furthermore, developing digital abilities helps employees remain relevant in the workplace by adapting to new technologies and digital workflows.

Employees need to develop skills around using cloud platforms to collaborate remotely and share data among colleagues, which is especially useful for customer service and marketing roles that rely heavily on email newsletters, offers, and product updates as ways of connecting with consumers.

Because of this, many employers prioritize candidates with strong digital capabilities when hiring, as they will likely be more efficient in their roles.

Lifelong learning is one of the best ways to increase digital capabilities over time. Attending courses offered at local community colleges or universities provides another excellent means of expanding digital skills at your own pace and budget.

Simply stated, without adequate digital skills you could soon be out of work. No matter whether it be roofers, retail workers, or CEO of Fortune 500 companies; without sufficient digital skills it will be challenging for any professional career to thrive in today's society.

6. Collect data

Digital skills have become essential to nearly every profession, even traditionally face-to-face industries like real estate. Without adequate digital knowledge and abilities, your competitors may gain an edge and surpass you.

Digitally-savvy employees can save businesses time, resources, and money while helping them maintain a competitive advantage. Strong digital skills help employees understand how technology affects and changes business processes allowing for informed decisions that improve bottom lines.

Students using digital tools to collect and interpret information can use this skill to gather and interpret relevant data sets to support decision-making processes. Furthermore, using these skills they can analyze, represent, and present data sets in multiple forms for effective communication with others.

Students using digital tools can create, read, and use spreadsheets (including formulae, functions, graphing, and visualizations). They can plan the development of computational artifacts using basic coding principles and practices as well as identify their roles within daily life and find ways to automate tasks.

Students can develop, read and use databases to organize, store, update, and retrieve electronic information. They can use search strategies to quickly locate desired items; in addition to being familiar with digital libraries, general and scholarly references as well as research tools.

Experience is vital when developing digital skills; take every opportunity available to put these into action.Talk to your manager or explore any available e-learning courses at work; otherwise, check local tech events or job centers for any classes they might offer.

7. Use internal comms

Employers now recognize the growing importance of digital skills to workplace success, so employers are looking for hires with both hard and soft skills to be successful in modern business environments. New hires must possess digital communication abilities which allow them to effectively collaborate across teams.

Internal communications play an integral part in employee engagement, which is integral to improving company performance. Being able to effectively convey company news, updates, and policies can have a dramatic effect on employee morale and retention while keeping them informed of any changes to the company's business strategy or opportunities available within their workplace.

Internal communicators' primary mission is influencing and persuading others to take action, whether that's through creating company-wide social media campaigns, encouraging open dialogue during one-to-one meetings, or organizing informal coffee afternoons - getting people to see things differently is at the core of effective internal communications.

Strong decision-making capabilities are an essential soft skill for internal communication professionals. No machine could ever replace human decision-making skills; thus it's essential that professionals possessing these capabilities can quickly make informed decisions based on knowledge and experience.

Understanding the business landscape is another invaluable soft skill that will set you apart from other internal communicators. Understanding how companies operate and what drives their financial decisions will equip you for any eventualities in your future career.

8. Plan learning options

Digital skills are increasingly vital across a range of careers, from roofing and retail sales to CEO. No matter your field of endeavor, digital literacy has become essential if you want to stay competitive - or else risk being left behind.

No matter your position or industry, digital skills development should never be left to chance. Depending on the role, this might include researching information online, managing data and content, understanding basic coding/programming languages such as Java/Python, etc, as well as using platforms/e-commerce systems effectively. You could even acquire more specific abilities like data analytics, a strong social media presence, and digital marketing experience to get ahead in life!

The COVID-19 pandemic has hastened change, prompting many businesses to move from physical headquarters to an "anywhere" mentality and shift their operations digitally. Therefore, we all must make time to develop digital skills to stay ahead of this shift.

 Thanks to online resources, finding an appropriate course shouldn't be hard - many free courses even provide structured instruction with certificates of completion to show progress!

If you prefer a more tailored learning experience, many online learning providers also provide customized training packages. These training options can be tailored specifically to meet the needs of each learner and can include workshops, online courses, or face-to-face sessions with experts; providing more structured approaches to digital skill development which may lead to formal qualifications like an apprenticeship or degree program.

9. Make it scalable
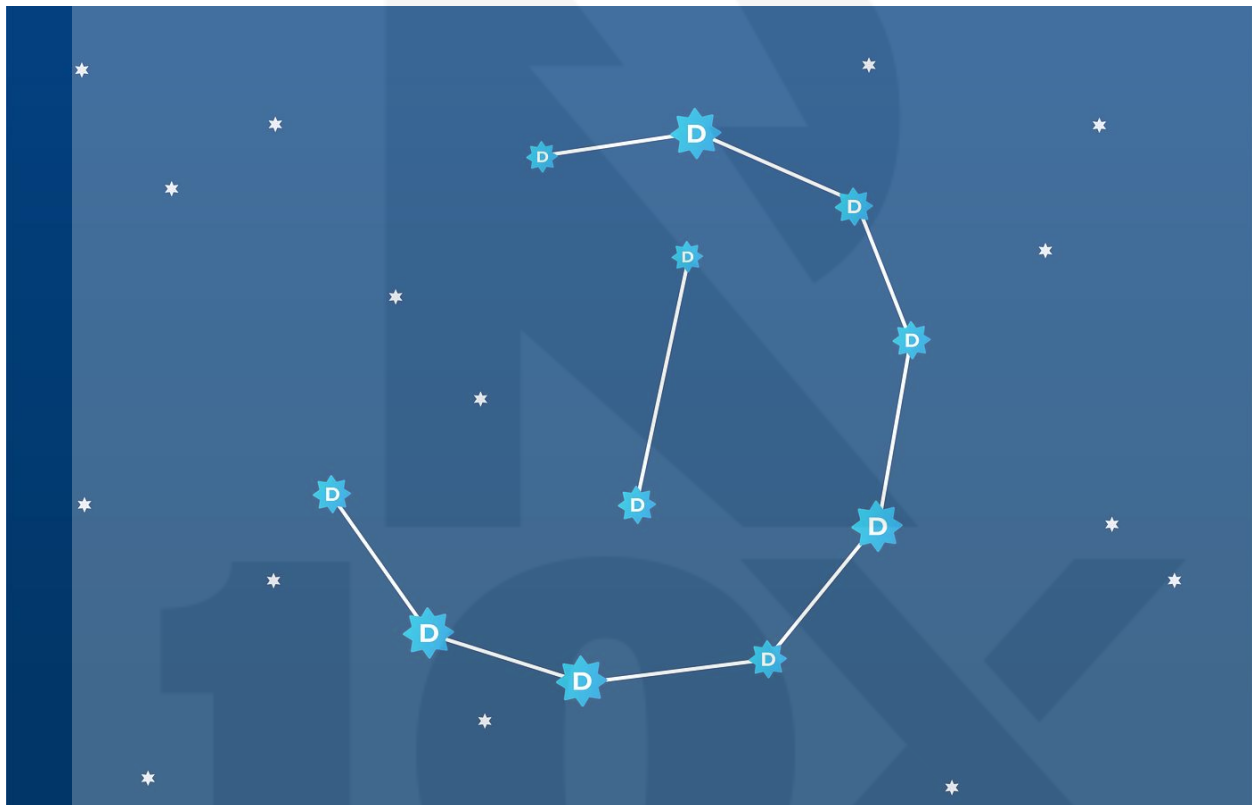
Digital skills have become an indispensable aspect of life and work today, as technology becomes ever more automated. Workers must constantly upskill to stay relevant; however, this can be challenging for some individuals who may not have been exposed to new technologies before. Finding accessible and

affordable training options is essential to developing digital skills; there are many chances out there just waiting for you.

Along with applications and websites devoted to educating users on new technology, many free online tutorials and courses cover the essentials. Joining a certification program can provide you with essential credentials in your sector, while LinkedIn Groups or Forums allow you to ask professionals questions directly. Another crucial component of remaining current with trends is committing to ongoing learning.

Strengthen your digital skills daily through small steps: For instance, creating a personal website or using an app to organize notes and tasks could be your starting point; you could then move on to more ambitious projects such as writing an eBook or developing digital products. To further broaden your knowledge on tech topics, read blogs or podcasts covering broad or specific tech-related subjects.

Upskilling digital skills is one of the most impactful investments you can make as a business. Not only will it boost productivity; it may even save your organization money over time by cutting errors and inefficiency costs. By placing digital literacy at the core of your organizational strategy, you can ensure your employees are ready for today's work-anywhere economy.

10. Have fun

As technology becomes ever more pervasive in the workplace, digital skills have become an absolute requirement for employees in every field. Even jobs not directly dependent on tech such as roofers or shop assistants require staff with basic digital tool knowledge for tasks like tracking stock. Recording and sharing this data digitally also plays an integral part in keeping inventory accurate - something customer-facing roles such as customer service or marketing demand of them as well.

There's also plenty of opportunity to develop more advanced digital skills. Coding for software or products is becoming an integral component of many businesses and developing AI-powered software is revolutionizing business operations. While such abilities might lie outside most people's comfort zone, they could help individuals advance in their careers.

Assembling and expanding their digital skills is made easy by accessing free resources available online that provide ample guidance. Examples include websites teaching how to use various tools, apps, and systems; TechBoomers offers online lessons on popular digital tools while others such as Microsoft 365 offer detailed guides that explain exactly how they should be used.

For deeper and more focused knowledge, some books and courses provide comprehensive learning on specific subjects. Some are intended for beginners while others can be tailored specifically towards experienced users. Furthermore, certain courses specialize in helping improve digital skills - some focus on building digital literacy foundations while others aim to train users specifically on workplace technologies.