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Top 10 Emerging Skills That C-Suite Leaders Need

People skills have long been on the must-have list for the C-suite, but senior executives today also have to influence, negotiate and innovate at speed to steer their organizations through fast-changing, volatile business conditions.

Building the leadership bench is a major priority for HR, but to attract the right team, it's important to know what emerging soft (cognitive and social) and hard (technical) skills a modern high-performing leader needs. Here are the most in-demand skill sets today according to Gartner research.

Top 10 hard skills witnessing the greatest growth in demand for the C-suite (2015-2018)

1. AI
2. Data science
3. Machine learning techniques
4. Cybersecurity
5. DevOps
6. HR management system proficiency
7. Amazon web services proficiency
8. HR pay system proficiency
9. Internet of things
10. Customer success

Demand has increased most for hard skills around artificial intelligence, data science, machine learning techniques and cybersecurity—skills that enable senior executives to drive digital strategies and advocate automation to drive efficiency. The rising demand for cybersecurity skills demonstrates the need for all C-suite executives to support the risk management that accompanies a greater use of technology and data.

Top 10 soft skills witnessing the greatest growth in demand for the C-suite (2015-2018)

1. Design thinking
2. Strategic management
3. Adaptability
4. Complaint management
5. Data governance
6. Customer satisfaction
7. Sales skills
8. Customer relations

9. Sales leadership
10. Demand planning

Design thinking, strategic management and adaptability are the soft skills with the highest growth in demand for C-suite executives. The focus is on the customer—with demand for complaint management, customer satisfaction and customer relations skills making the list, as well as sales skills and [sales leadership](). These all reflect the need for the entire C-suite to really understand how to acquire, retain and sell to customers effectively.

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