

# Business Skills

## ACHIEVE RESULTS

- Gain competitive advantage
- Drive business transformation
- Increase productivity
- Reduce costs
- Train globally, 24 x 7
- Increase job satisfaction
- Retain employees
- Eliminate knowledge gaps

*The SkillSoft Business Skills library helps business professionals increase customer satisfaction and achieve work-related and career objectives.*

## THE WORLD'S PREEMINENT LIBRARY OF BUSINESS SKILLS COURSEWARE AND SIMULATIONS

With over 4,500 courses across 14 major solution areas and 15 languages spanning information technology, soft skills, and business acumen, SkillSoft is the clear industry leader in e-Learning content solutions for business skills. Through our focus on today's most relevant business skills, and our track record in fast and effective execution, SkillSoft is delivering best-of-breed e-Learning content that is unrivaled in terms of depth, breadth, up-to-date relevance, interactive learning design, and Web deployment flexibility.

SkillSoft's Business Skills library focuses on behavioral skills (or soft skills) for business professionals. These skills are key to performance regardless of job responsibility. It also concentrates on the skills and knowledge that are relevant to the various areas of functional responsibility in today's business organizations. These skills are critical to business professionals' ability to work better with business associates and customers, make better business decisions, and move more effectively toward achieving their most important work-related and career objectives.

# Quality Content

## CURRENT, HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

SkillSoft frequently partners with market-proven sources for our Business Skills library content. Our business content partners include the Project Management Institute, the Wharton School, and others. SkillSoft complements these content partnerships with our ability to research and create fresh, extremely up-to-date content in key subject areas based on our customers' needs. Keeping our existing courses current and relevant is a critical element in SkillSoft's content development priorities. Our track record is second to none when it comes to updating our existing business courses to keep them current and refreshing them with the newest learning-design innovations.

## CPE, CERTIFICATION, AND COLLEGE CREDIT

An important testament to the quality of SkillSoft content is the credit recognition these courses have achieved from a growing number of colleges and professional certification programs. Several colleges and universities award college degree credit to learners who successfully complete SkillSoft courses, including the University of Phoenix and others. SkillSoft courses have also been approved for Continuing Professional Education credit by programs such as Project Management Institute's PMP certification, NASBA, ONA (accredited as an approver of continuing education by the ANCC), Institute of Supply Management (ISM), Certified Financial Planner (CFP), and the Board of Registered Nurses (BRN).

## TRANSLATED AND LOCALIZED COURSES

SkillSoft leads the e-Learning industry in translating our Business Skills library into a wide range of languages, complementing our core library with e-Learning courses in 12 languages, including UK English, Latin American Spanish, Castilian Spanish, Canadian French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, and Traditional), Korean, German, and European French. When translating content for other global markets, SkillSoft also takes care to localize the content to reflect relevant differences in business cultures.

To date, SkillSoft has created over 900 localized business courses. This investment in localized business skills courseware is by far the largest of any supplier of e-Learning content. The number of translated/localized business courses and the number of languages covered will continue to expand rapidly, growing by an additional 200 to 300 courses annually.



With over 1,600 courses within the Business Skills library, the 8 major business-focused solution areas address needs that span virtually every functional area of Global 5000 business organizations.



## E-LEARNING DESIGN EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS SKILLS INSTRUCTION

SkillSoft's award-winning business skills content incorporates proven learning design methodology for effective and engaging interactive learning. And we do this within the technology and network bandwidth constraints that are critical to making sure that SkillSoft e-Learning solutions can be deployed to audiences in our Global 5000 customers' existing network infrastructures.

Our instructional design model is based primarily on the proven concepts of performance-oriented instruction, mastery, and the sequencing of instructional activities and strategies. The model draws heavily from adult learning principles that emphasize learner initiative, self-management, and experiential learning. The design of each SkillSoft business course starts with the definition of learner-focused performance objectives and proceeds to the selection and implementation of instructional strategies and learning activities appropriate to those objectives. Frequent practice questions or exercises, along with assessments, measure learners' achievement of those objectives.

SkillSoft's design, development, and quality assurance standards and processes are all geared toward ensuring each course meets our exacting requirements for the best instruction possible. Each course in our Business Skills library includes:

- Learning outcomes specified by performance goals and objectives
- Content and learning activities based on specified objectives
- Instructional strategies and multimedia elements tailored to the specific course content
- Instructional strategies appropriate for the content and learning level, such as examples, behavior modeling, and simulation
- Frequent practice questions or exercises to ensure learner understanding and engagement with the content
- Levels of learning appropriate for the content and the target audience
- Assessment based on the knowledge and skills specified in the objectives
- Pre-assessment to evaluate knowledge prior to instruction
- Post-assessment, called mastery, to evaluate knowledge after instruction

*The SkillSoft learning experience delivers business results because it is solution-based, customer-centric, and, most importantly, learner-centric.*



## BUSINESS SKILLS SOLUTION AREAS

- Professional effectiveness
- Management and leadership
- Project effectiveness
- Finance, HR, and administration
- Sales and customer-facing skills
- Business strategy and operations
- Safety and health
- Financial services industry

## THEORIES AND PRINCIPLES

The theories and principles of our instructional design model are actualized via:

- Friendly, intuitive graphical user interface
- Course structure and interface that supports self-paced, learner-controlled instruction
- Unlimited access to instruction and mastery assessments
- Standardized templates to create unified and predictable functionality
- Rich variety of presentation, practice, and assessment templates supporting high levels of learner interactivity and engagement
- Standardized, yet flexible, flow of instruction

SkillSoft courses cover a broad range of business and professional effectiveness curriculum areas. Some are very straightforward, such as Finance. Others are “softer” or more behavioral (such as Working with Difficult People), calling for a different set of instructional presentation and practice strategies. In addition, we have a strong commitment to reach the highest possible levels of learning in each course—including as much application and analysis as possible supported by strong foundational learning at the knowledge and comprehension levels.

Our instructional design model supports the selection of the most appropriate instructional strategies for the content type and level of learning. Professional skills focusing on behavior changes are best learned by observing and modeling the actions and attitudes of others. Application and analysis-level skills are best acquired through increasingly complex examples, case studies, and RolePlay™ exercises. Learners are actively engaged in all levels of learning through frequent interactivity, practice, feedback, and reinforcement.

## BUSINESS SKILLS INSTRUCTIONAL FEATURES

- Case studies
- Simulated dialogs
- Animations
- Audio-enabled learning
- Online job aids
- Accelerated Path
- Speaking to learners with visuals
- Learning object design
- SkillSimulations
- RolePlay simulation exercises
- Competency-based learning



## INSTRUCTIONAL FEATURES AND STRATEGIES IN OUR BUSINESS SKILLS COURSES

### RolePlay Simulation Exercises

RolePlay exercises present learners with realistic interactive simulations of everyday workplace scenarios. RolePlays have multiple possible outcomes based on learners' responses to the simulation's interactions. When integrated into course topics, RolePlays allow learners to freely explore the impact of handling realistic work situations in different ways. During a RolePlay, the learner can explore alternative responses to see the impact of those choices. This user-driven exploration is key to real learning. People learn as much, or more, from their mistakes as from the things they do correctly. With thousands of RolePlay simulations integrated into our Business Skills library, we are a clear industry leader in delivering simulation-enriched e-Learning solutions.

### Simulated Dialogs

The ability to observe behaviors and their outcomes (positive and negative) is a key strategy for teaching the professional and behavioral skills commonly termed "soft skills." The simulated dialog strategy gives learners an opportunity to observe and listen to the conversations of two or more people. The inclusion of "character" audio enhances the emotional and tonal qualities of the conversation, while the varying facial expressions and body language offer another layer of interpretation. These features, combined with the spoken words of the characters, provide realistic vignettes or scenarios in which varying aspects of a behavioral skill can be presented.

# Learning Experience

## Case Studies

A case study strategy describes a complex situation, often in the form of a story, and then asks the learner to explore its characteristics and possible resolutions. Complexity is the primary difference between case studies and examples that can be easily presented and practiced through other types of strategies, such as multiple-choice and matching questions. Case studies are used to achieve learning at the application and analysis levels and to present examples of content within appropriate business contexts.

## Animations

Animations are a key extension of our leading visual design. We use animations when movement is an important part of the teaching point and when the content requires the learner's eye to be drawn to a specific area of the screen. Examples of content areas where animations can enhance learning effectiveness include instruction on process and dataflow diagrams, hierarchical and dependency relationships, and changes in state or perspective. Our animations, as is true with all our business courses and simulation products, require no plug-in technologies or special servers to deliver.

## Audio-enabled Learning

Another key feature in our business skills instruction is audio-enabled learning. This feature, which can easily be turned on or off according to learner preference, greatly enhances engagement and retention for many learners. Audio can be especially key to the instructional effectiveness of behavior modeling, RolePlay exercises, and SkillSimulations.

## Online Job Aids

Job aids are performance support tools that complement learning and assist in the use of knowledge and skills in the workplace. Job aids vary significantly in format and content, depending on their purpose. Generally speaking, job aids can be informational, procedural, coaching guides, or decision-making assistants. They are particularly useful for activities or procedures that aren't easy or practical to memorize, and for refreshing knowledge previously learned but infrequently used. Job aids are course "takeaways" that can be used as they are or edited and customized to meet specific learner or customer needs. It's also easy to replace or augment the original course offerings with organization-specific job aids that have been independently developed.

## Accelerated Path

This feature lets learners demonstrate content proficiency prior to instruction. Based on assessment results, our courses provide guidance to the learners to help them bypass content that they already know. With employee time away from the job widely recognized as the dominant expense in any business training effort, the savings offered by Accelerated Path™ can be very compelling.

### Speaking to Learners with Visuals

Meaningful visualization of content is one of the hallmarks of SkillSoft's unique and captivating e-Learning design. People think in images and pictures. Instruction on "people skills" is strengthened by photo-quality illustrations of people modeling the behaviors being taught—bridging the gap between human and computer interaction. We believe strongly in the learning impact of photo-quality visuals. Photo-quality images can effectively capture the broad range of complex behaviors and concepts typical of SkillSoft business courses. Most importantly, meaningful, relevant, and eye-catching visuals create mental images that stay with you long after you complete a course. SkillSoft uses a creative and high-impact "billboard" approach to embedding text within graphics. Adding key words, labels, or succinct text headlines to reinforce or emphasize key teaching points is much more effective and far less frustrating than presenting the learner with a complex graphic that can't be easily related to the content or instructional point.

### Learning Object Design

All of SkillSoft's 1,600+ Business Skills courses are built with our leading edge e-Learning object design. This object-based design powers the Search-and-Learn™ feature built into SkillSoft's SkillPort™ e-Learning management platform. With Search-and-Learn, learners can instantaneously search through a database of thousands of instructional objects to look for help with a specific issue ... and are presented with a targeted list of hotlinks to courses, topics, job aids, and SkillBriefs that match the search criteria. This kind of immediate performance support is indeed one of the most compelling promises of e-Learning, and it is available today with SkillSoft's e-Learning content and the Search-and-Learn capabilities of SkillPort.

### SkillSimulations

SkillSimulations extend the learning advantages of RolePlay into larger, more complex e-Learning experiences. SkillSimulations are expanded business simulations designed to give learners an opportunity to practice new skills in realistic work situations. Each SkillSimulation, typically 20 to 40 minutes in duration, provides learners with an opportunity to practice applying objectives and content drawn from multiple courses in a SkillSoft series. Learners practice these skills by navigating through different scenarios in which they encounter a variety of business problems. As in real life, learners have the opportunity to select different courses of action, and the scenario unfolds according to the learner's choices. Events such as telephone calls, meetings, and interruptions add to the reality of each scenario. SkillSimulations, with integrated links to their corresponding SkillSoft course series, provide a powerful learning experience that allows the learner to immediately apply newly gained knowledge to challenging business situations. This results in engaging learning experiences and real skill transfer.

# Learning Solutions

*SkillSoft provides learning solutions that deliver a business foundation, and allow learners to practice their skills in realistic role-play and business-modeling scenarios.*



## SUPERIOR E-LEARNING

- 40 different professional certifications
- In use by over 2,500 business organizations worldwide
- Continually evolve rapidly based on the experience and input of our customers
- Proven SkillSoft e-Learning content, technology, and services
- SkillSoft e-Learning delivers manageability, scalability, reliability, affordability, flexibility, and speed



### Competency-Based Learning

With over 1,600 courses and simulations across 8 major solution areas (and 22 curricula), SkillSoft's Business Skills library provides comprehensive learning and performance support solutions for the workforce. Organizations are continually challenged with the need to quickly determine what learning programs are relevant and necessary to develop their employees' competencies and skills while accomplishing business objectives.

To respond to this growing demand, SkillSoft has created Curriculum Guides that identify courses related to needed competencies and job functions. It combines a broad, yet simple, competency model listing key behaviors with course suggestions to help associate required learning with your organization's development needs.

## ADDITIONAL SKILLSOFT CONTENT PRODUCTS

### Information Technology Library

Complementing SkillSoft's Business Skills library, the SkillSoft IT library encompasses a comprehensive and diverse e-Learning content library containing over 7,000 hours of learning. It was developed to facilitate the creation of specialized solutions around leading technologies, IT initiatives, and evolving job roles and competencies.

The IT Library can accommodate multiple IT training requirements and certifications—functional solution approaches or vendor-specific hardware and software training. It allows businesses to certify the skills of a globally dispersed staff with standardized course materials through every stage of the IT learning curve. SkillSoft supports more than 40 different professional certifications from leading software, hardware, networking, and web service companies. The IT Skills library comprises six major IT-focused solution areas.

# Proven Results

The six major IT-focused solution areas



Books24x7 Referenceware

Through the innovative Referenceware™ products of our Books24x7® subsidiary, business and information technology professionals can access content from more than 2,500 unabridged IT and business titles and 300,000+ knowledge objects. Our patent-pending technology platform gives users the ability to perform multi-tier searches of Books24x7's Referenceware: ITPro, BusinessPro, and Office Essentials. The Books 24x7 Referenceware libraries include offerings from more than 65 leading publishers, including AMACOM, ASTD, Harvard Business School Publishing, McGraw-Hill, Microsoft Press, and Sybex and Wiley.

## SUMMARY

In use by over 2,800 business organizations worldwide, SkillSoft's e-Learning solutions have a customer-proven track record that outdistances any other supplier of e-Learning content. Continuing to evolve rapidly based on the experience and input of our customers, the combination of SkillSoft e-Learning content, technology, and services represents the most proven solution for organizations who value manageability, scalability, reliability, affordability, flexibility, and speed in e-Learning.

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