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## Wanted: new skills

In order to stay abreast of the ever-changing dynamic corporate scenario, it is mandatory to re-skill and up-skill oneself from time to time. Yasmin Taj profiles a few must-have skills that will pave the way forward for your career

Ananya has a New Year resolution and that is to get better at her work in 2013. She realises that the expectations of her employer are rising and it is time to show some extraordinary effort, if she intends to stay ahead. She might also be looking for a change, but even that entails that she enhances her existing skills and also acquire the ones that are a must to succeed during present times. So, what is it that can help her get ahead and stand out from the rest in 2013?

Experts point out that it is going to take more than just competency to get ahead at work in 2013. Organisations have become highly cautious about hiring and hence, their expectations from their employees have risen. They are looking at better performances and better results. Bhawana Pandey, head HR, Provitiv Consulting Private Limited points out, "Today's world is fiercely competitive and to sustain their success stories, it is imperative for organisations to build the skill-sets of their em-

ployees in such a way that they cater not only to the present needs of their clients, but also the ones anticipated in the future. So in 2013, working professionals do not have to just be good at their work - they need to broaden their horizons, so that they can come up with path-breaking ideas. Their life is not going to be focused only on delivering what is expected of them, but delivering above and beyond."

According to AN Bhattacharya, professor of marketing and chair of the Marketing Leadership Programme at School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL), Gurgaon, with the economy persisting to be tentative, working professionals have a bright future in 2013 to showcase their differentiated talent. "There would be trans-sectoral movements, as companies would experiment with best practices of divergent sectors. Talent would be in high demand, especially for those who have innovative adaptation skills," he states.

So, how can a working professional plan to get ahead at work in 2013? What should be the focus areas? For working professionals looking to get ahead, here are a

few most critical job skills to parlay in your work horizons.

**ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY:** Adaptability and flexibility are key qualities that could play a key role in a professional's life going forward, asserts Sweta Patra, head marketing and communications, QUEST Global. "Changing market environments and increased work demands require for individuals to adapt to a new setting and be willing to challenge the status quo. On a related level, flexibility will also be crucial to succeed in competitive environments," she explains.

**INNOVATION:** Organisations have increasingly started valuing employees who are able to bring that 'ability to innovate' to the table. "You need to be able to raise the bar. Your continual focus should be on coming up with new ways of doing existing things - ways which will add value to your customers, your organisation and ultimately yourself," states Pandey. Similarly, Bhattacharya points out, "Given the impending scenario, professionals need to

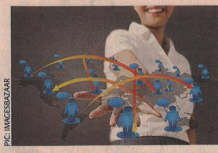


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**IN 2013, WORKING PROFESSIONALS DO NOT HAVE TO JUST BE GOOD AT THEIR WORK - THEY NEED TO BROADEN THEIR HORIZONS, SO THAT THEY CAN COME UP WITH PATH-BREAKING IDEAS**

think beyond their knowledge corridors and adopt best practices of different industries."

**COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING:** Communication and networking are two critical skills that are often ignored, but becoming extremely critical in a professional environment that is developing in India. Communication is very critical for workers to advance as it is about having the ability to clearly articulate your point of view and the

ability to create a connection through communication.

**PERSONAL BRANDING:** Experts also point out that in today's fiercely competitive world, creating your own personal brand is highly crucial. Workers also should make sure their personal brand is attractive and reflects well on employers.

**OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING:** "It is important for today's working professionals to get out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves and those around them to be creative and channelise their ideas towards the growth of the business," adds Pandey. Patra adds, "Conventional candidate preferences are also changing with companies looking out for people who are a little different and above the ordinary. People who aren't afraid to be different naturally are also known to stretch boundaries and challenge the status quo, and often come up with the best out-of-the-box thinking."

**EMOTIONAL MATURITY:** According to Gaurav Lahiri, MD, Hay Group, "Knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses and managing emotions, making balanced, effective judgments are must-have skills for 2013."

**RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING:** "Establishing open, mutually respecting relationships and acknowledging strengths in others and inspiring them to take actions to improve are traits every professional must aspire to achieve," adds Lahiri.

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