

SOFT SKILLS UNLEASHED: ELEVATING YOUR CORE INTERNAL AUDIT SKILLS

IIA Houston

April 8, 2024

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Global Business Consulting

Introduction

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What We're Talking About Today

1

How are we seen as Internal Auditors?

2

What does it mean when we say “soft skills”?

3

Becoming a Trusted Advisor

4

Diving into some critical soft skills

5

Generational differences

6

How we can improve and the future of soft skills

How Are We Seen As Internal Auditors?

Internal Auditor



What my mom thinks I do



What my friends think I do



What my boss thinks I do



What my colleagues from other departments think I do

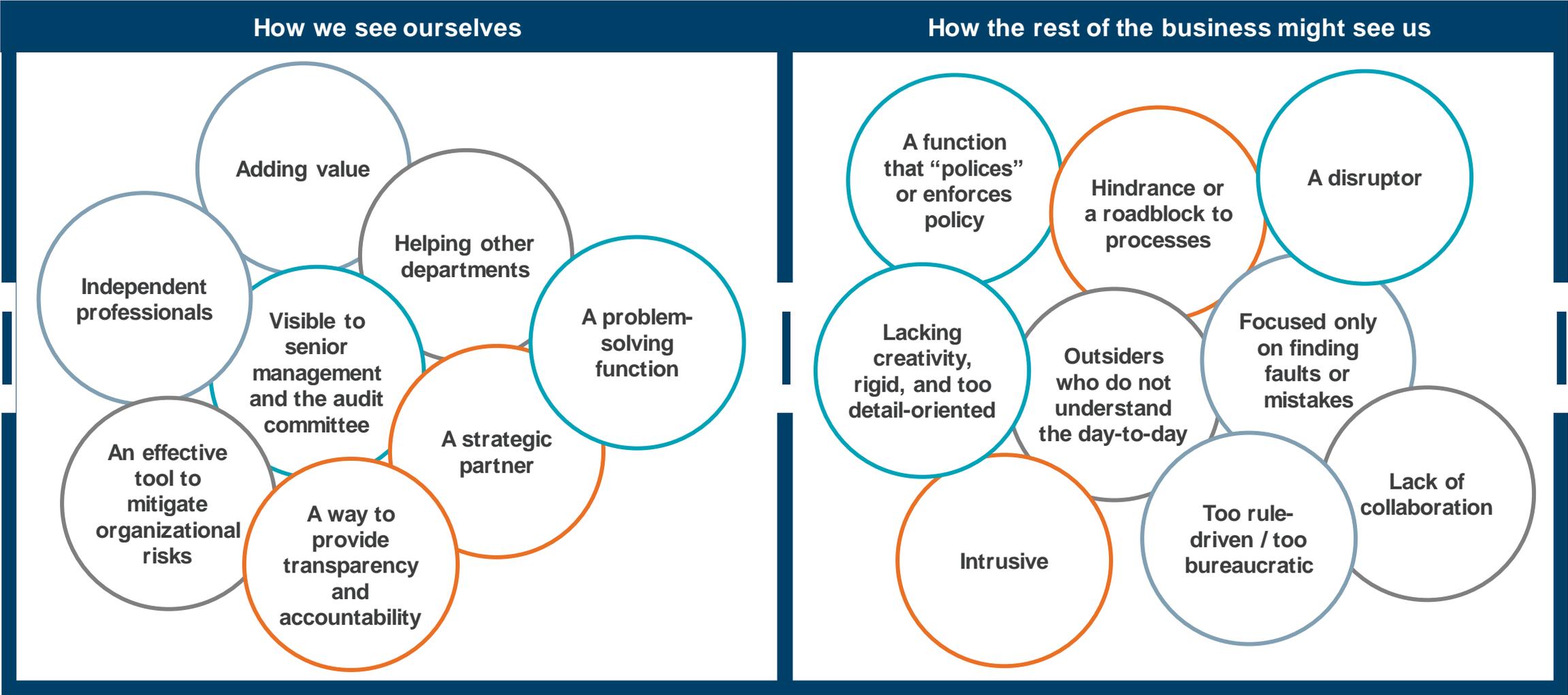


What I think I do



What I really do

How Are We Seen As Internal Auditors?



What Do 'Soft Skills' Mean?

Soft skills are how people communicate and work well together. They are personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.

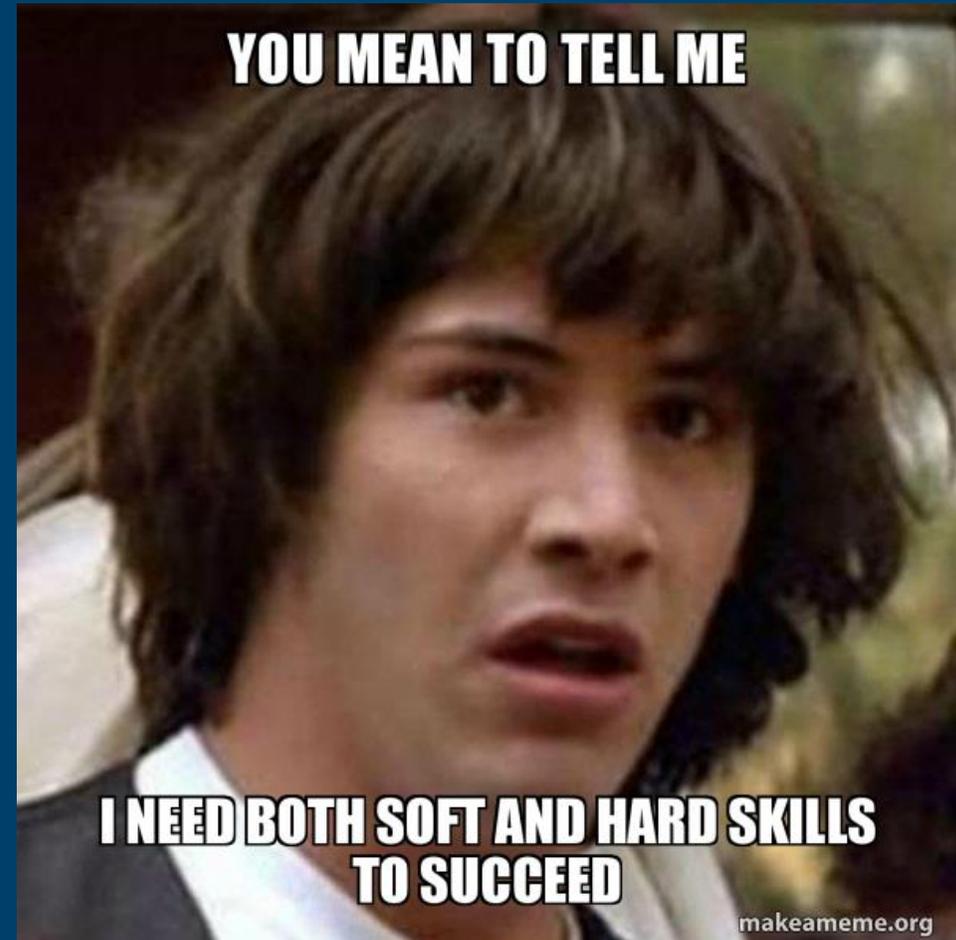
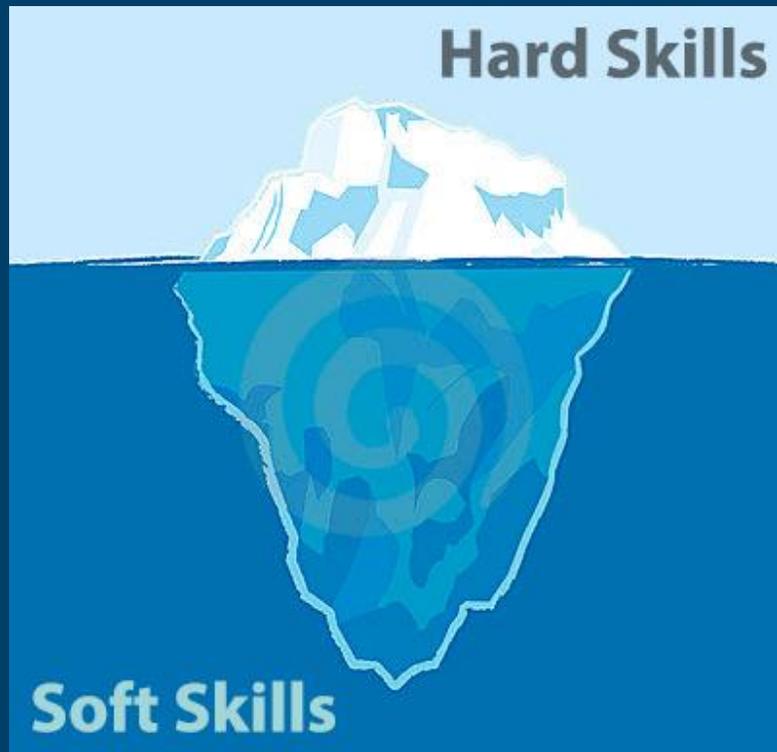
Does this describe most of your interactions as internal auditors?

Or is this reaction more common?



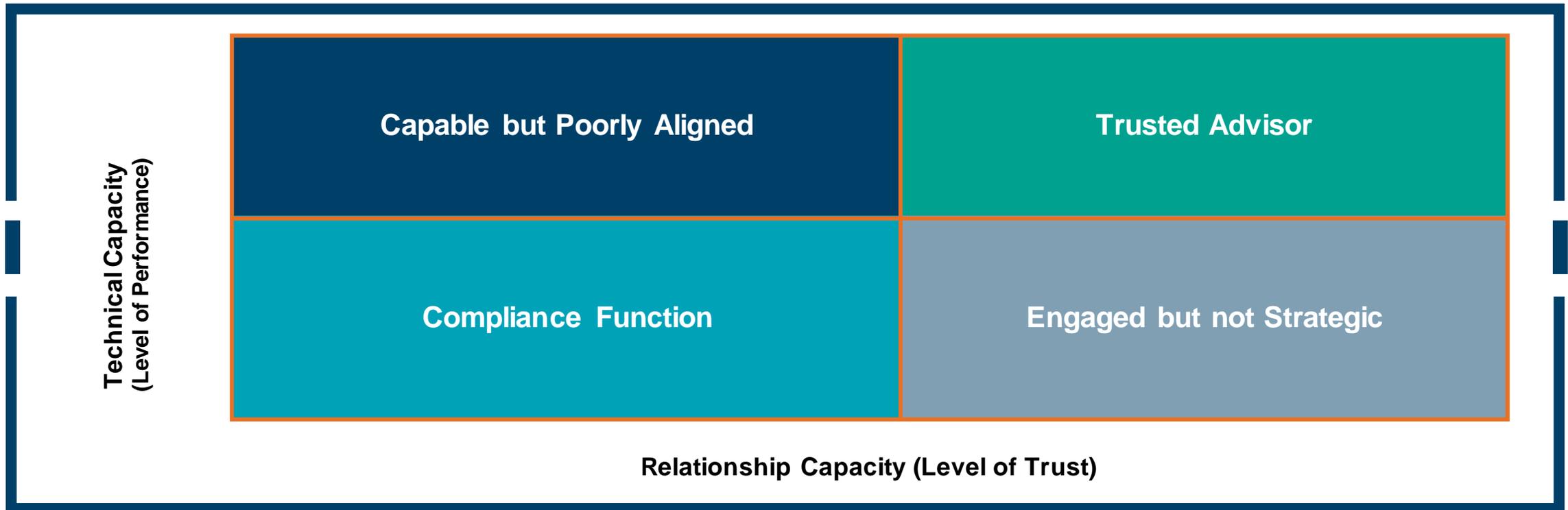
Are Soft Skills Really “Soft”?

Soft skills have a bad reputation –
hard skills get all the attention



Trusted Advisor

How we can use soft skills to be seen as a Trusted Advisor



Emotional intelligence can be more important than technical competence.

Key Soft Skills

A few areas we should focus on...



Communication



Interpersonal Skills



Adaptability



Negotiation Skills



Curiosity



Self-Awareness



Communication

How we may be perceived:

- Auditors love to find things and document them in a negative way
- We do not listen to the business

How we can improve our image:

- Verbal communication
- Written Communication



Interpersonal Skills & Relationship Building

How we may be perceived:



Interpersonal Skills & Relationship Building

How we can improve our image:



Network



Build trust



Be collaborative



Interpersonal Skills





Adaptability

How we may be perceived:

- Internal audit is behind the times
- Doesn't keep up with technology
- We are not flexible in approach

How we can improve our image:

- Allow for some flexibility in the plan
- Embrace technology
- Stay informed



Negotiation Skills

How we may be perceived:

- Internal auditors do not negotiate
- We have the final say

How we can improve our image:

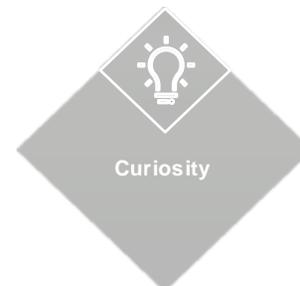
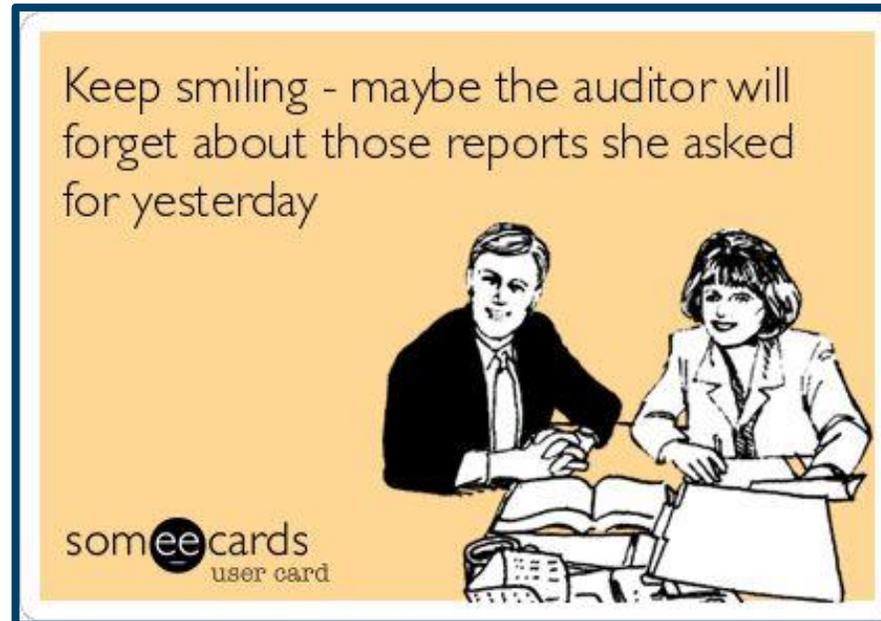
- Be open to feedback
- Emphasize win-win strategies
- Be reasonable
- Remember what we discussed before about networking and building rapport?



Curiosity

How we may be perceived:

- Internal auditors do not focus enough on why a problem exists – only that a problem exists that needs to be fixed



How we can improve our image:

- Be curious – seems simple right?
- Don't be afraid to keep asking questions

Self-Awareness

How we may be perceived:

- Internal auditors are laser-focused
- We don't understand how findings and recommendations impact others

How we can improve our image:

- Pay attention
- Reflect regularly
- Understand your triggers



Generational Differences

1 Communication styles

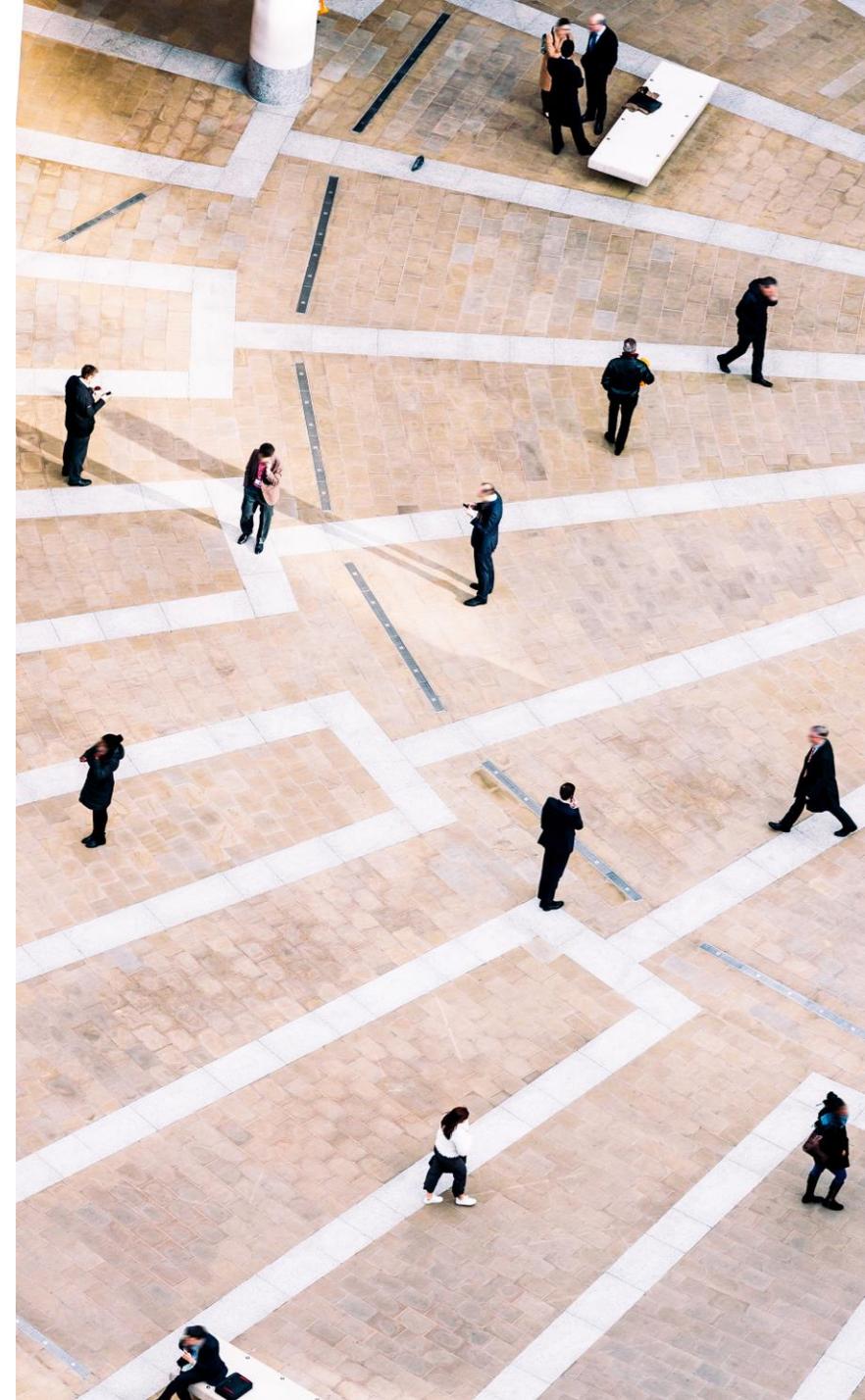
2 Collaboration and teamwork

3 Adaptability and learning agility

4 Conflict resolution

5 Leadership styles

4 Work / life balance



The Future of Soft Skills

Use of Artificial Intelligence



ChatGPT

Title: Executive Summary: Audit Re

Introduction:

This executive summary provides a
derived from the audit of the procure
within [Company/Organization]. The
efficiency, and compliance of the P2

Key Findings:

1. Process Efficiency: The audit ident
resulting in delays in procurement
primarily attributed to manual pro

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the audit, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the P2P process:

1. Automation: Implement an integrated procure to pay system to streamline procurement workflows, enhance transparency, and improve process efficiency.
2. Policy Compliance: Strengthen adherence to procurement policies and procedures through regular training, communication, and monitoring mechanisms. Enforce strict controls to prevent unauthorized purchases and ensure proper documentation.
3. Internal Controls Enhancement: Enhance segregation of duties, implement dual authorization controls for high-value transactions, and establish robust vendor management protocols to mitigate risks associated with fraud and errors.
4. Vendor Management Improvement: Develop comprehensive vendor performance evaluation criteria, enhance competitive bidding processes, and establish clear contract management guidelines to optimize vendor relationships and drive cost savings.

Wrap Up

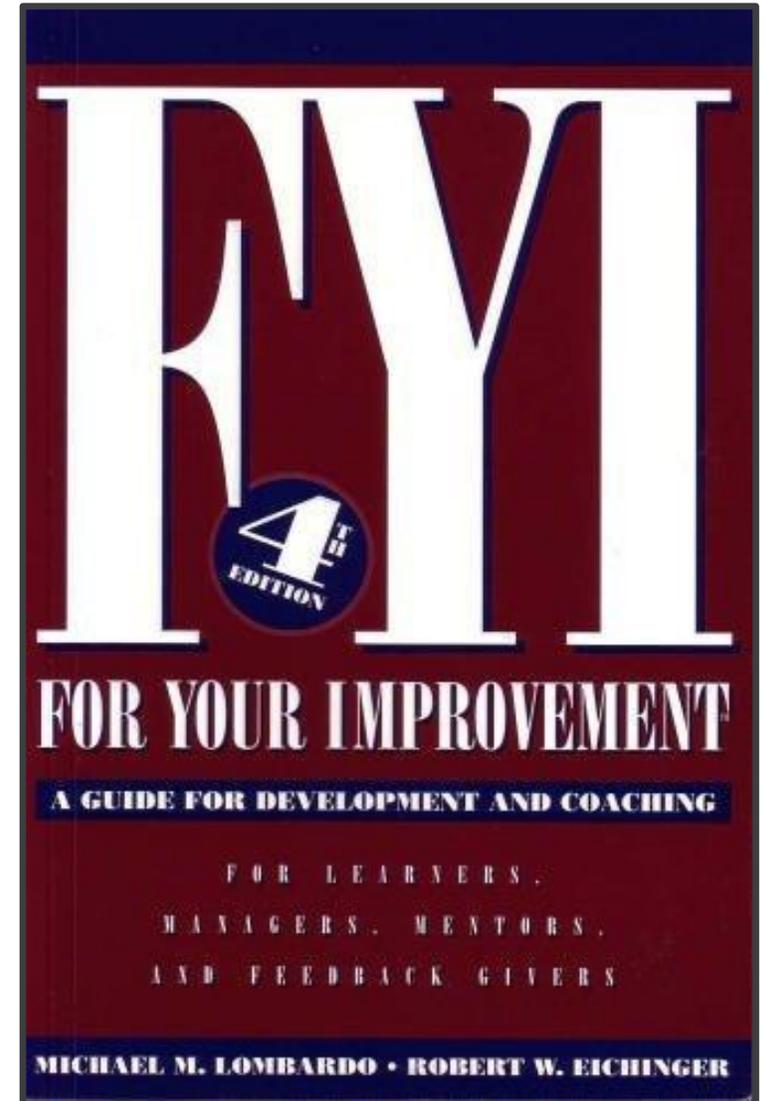
- 1 Improving your soft skills is an ongoing process

- 2 Requires consistent effort and practice

- 3 Set specific goals for yourself that result in taking small steps each day

- 4 Be open to feedback

- 5 Celebrate your progress!



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