



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

AI is making way for a new era of soft skills. Here's how

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SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

A common argument that often pops up nowadays is that AI is killing jobs. While such a bold statement may hold some truth for roles like data entry and supply chain optimisation, the fact that the rise of AI has given birth to new jobs and opportunities often goes unnoticed. With AI gaining popularity across various workplaces, there arises a demand for skilled professionals capable of effectively handling a crisis communication: A lesson from Coca-Cola operating AI models to yield the most desirable outcomes. Moreover, beyond these roles, there is a growing need for positions that AI simply cannot replicate, owing to its inherently non-human nature.

The fact remains: AI cannot replicate soft skills

A recent blog by LinkedIn Learning supports this notion, indicating that the three most sought-after skills by employers in 2024 are: communication, customer service, and leadership. These skills are indispensable in almost any job, yet notably, none of them can be adequately replicated by modern AI. While it can be argued that automated customer service may outperform human agents in answering queries efficiently, AI cannot emulate the empathy, flexibility, and personal understanding that a human agent provides during customer interactions. Furthermore, communication and leadership, being inherently human traits, are cultivated through years of physical interaction with fellow humans in a variety of social settings. This, yet again, is a trait that AI cannot replicate.

According to a finding by Ryan Roslansky, CEO of LinkedIn, since November 2022, LinkedIn has witnessed a remarkable 21-fold increase in job postings mentioning 'GPT' or 'ChatGPT', a testament to how much value modern organisations place on employees with relevant AI skills. However, despite this undeniable emphasis on AI skills, Roslansky notes that there has also been a notable rise in demand for soft skills such as communication and flexibility. "In fact," he states in his blog, "based on LinkedIn's June 2023 Executive Confidence Index, 72% of US executives agree that soft skills are more valuable to their organisation than AI skills."

The ever-human trait of learning from experience

If there's one lesson we've learned from modern AI, it's that the demands of the job market can change rapidly. From the shift to remote work during Covid-19 to the recent surge in demand for AI-related skills in contemporary jobs, predicting the next significant trend in the ever-evolving job market is a tall order. However, certain timeless skills will always remain relevant. Seasoned leadership abilities and adaptability, refined through experience across different industries and workplaces, are among these enduring competencies.

If you're someone who has led different teams across different industries, you have been exposed to a wide range of workplace challenges, management styles, and organisational structures. As an experienced leader, you can adapt your approach and rethink strategies whenever an unforeseen situation may arise, and, based on your years of knowledge and emergency handling, you

will be able to identify best practices and implement them effectively in new situations. This adaptability in leadership - a wholly humane trait through and through - has resolidified itself as the skill modern companies want in higher-level employees.

It's the humane skill that counts

During a 2023 interview, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, shared that degree or coding skills are not a requirement to get hired by Apple. Instead, the tech giant leader focused on three key soft skills: collaboration, curiosity, and creativity. While Cook probably didn't have AI skills in mind when sharing his company's hiring strategies, the pattern of companies valuing skills that cannot be replicated by AI is once again seen here. While it's true that AI can, and is meant for, handling repetitive tasks and data analysis, it often lacks contextual understanding and creative problem-solving abilities. This is where the aforementioned skills come in: the innovative curiosity of the human mind, when put into action through productive collaboration, can find unique and creative answers to the toughest of problems.

At the end of the day, it is impossible to tell what the most in-demand professional skills will be several years down the line. With transient technical skills often becoming devalued owing to the ease and accessibility of generative AI models, banking on the evergreen reliability of soft skills seems like the way to go. So, instead of resisting the ever-changing trends, embrace them - and look into ways to further improve your soft skills. If not anything else, these are the skills that are sure to take you far in your long, winding professional journey.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

BRAC University
Senior Officer/Assistant
Manager, Outreach and
Student Recruitment



Deadline: July 1

Eligibility:

● Bachelor's degree with excellent academic credentials in Business Studies or in a relevant field from a reputed university. Master's preferred.

Minimum experience: 2 years

Banglalink
Campaign Planning
Manager



Deadline: June 27

Eligibility:

● Bachelor's degree preferably in Business/Computer Science.

Minimum experience: 4 years

Care Bangladesh
Manager, Program
Analytic and Learning



Deadline: June 29

Eligibility:

● Master's degree in Sociology, Development Studies, Statistics or any other discipline.

Minimum experience: 5-6 years

GENERAL
Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

General Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
Executive, Sales Training

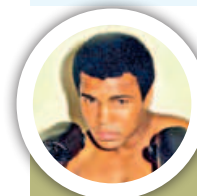
Deadline: June 29

Eligibility:

● B.Pharm/M.Pharm from any UGC-approved university.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Don't count the days, make the days count."

MUHAMMAD ALI

THE STORY OF NVIDIA

The world's most valuable company

AZMIN AZRAN

There is a new winner in the race to become the world's most valuable company. On June 19, 2024, American tech giant Nvidia surpassed Microsoft to become the company with the highest market cap in the world - an eye-watering \$3.34 trillion.

While previous members of the \$3 trillion club, Apple and Microsoft, have vast consumer popularity to go with their enormous value, Nvidia operates from the background, relatively speaking. To video game and computer enthusiasts, Nvidia has long been the most popular and dominant graphics processing unit (GPU) manufacturer in the world. In fact, that is how the journey of Nvidia began.

In the early 1990s, when computers had just started entering the public consciousness, Nvidia's founders - Jensen Huang, Chris Malachowsky, and Curtis Priem - predicted a crucial detail in the future of computing. Video games, already popular at the time, were about to become the largest driver of revenue among computer applications, and increasingly complicated and visually engaging video games required computers that were capable of performing massive computations at breakneck speed. The central processing unit (CPU) of the computer bore that burden until then, but Jensen Huang and co. realised that this task could be more efficiently executed through dedicated GPUs that functioned parallel to CPUs.

All of this was discussed in an outlet of

Denny's - an American-style diner chain - where Jensen Huang had worked as a busboy when he was a teenager. In 1993, however, when Nvidia was founded, Huang was a division head at LSI Logic, building specialised integrated chips (IC) for various computer products. He left that job to found Nvidia, a name that the trio came up with later by dropping the "i" from invidia, the Latin word for "envy".

Nvidia then embarked on the journey to solve the GPU problem, and it was a stop-start journey that began with a product called NV1 in 1995. It was a "graphics accelerator", which used quadrilateral (four-sided) shapes as the building blocks of computer graphics, as opposed to the triangles that were used by competitors. The triangle approach won, and the NV1 ended up being a failure. Because of this, Nvidia lost a substantial contract with Japanese video game console manufacturer Sega, and were at one point close to going bankrupt. But Sega saw the potential in Nvidia, and invested \$5 million in the company.

The company was struggling when it shifted strategies to develop a graphics accelerator that worked with triangles. This new product, called the RIVA 128, was launched in 1996 and became a massive success. But even as it was released, the unofficial company motto had

become "Our company is thirty days from going out of business". RIVA 128 changed that reality, and gave Nvidia the launchpad it needed to start the GPU revolution.

In 1999, the company released a product whose name gamers today will be able to relate to. The GeForce 256 was Nvidia's first proper GPU, and the name GeForce has managed to stick around to the present. Throughout the 2000s, Nvidia became bigger and bigger, acquiring much of its competition, and became a member of the S&P 500, an American stock market index for only the 500 biggest companies in the country.

At this point, Nvidia was among only a handful of companies who produced consumer grade GPUs, alongside AMD - another American chip manufacturer. Nvidia made GPUs for Sony's PlayStation 3 and Microsoft's Xbox. The company invested heavily in research and development (R&D) throughout, continuously improving its technology and taking video gaming technology to a whole new level.

In 2016, the GTX 1080 and 1070 were launched, bringing Nvidia massive success in the realm of PC gamers for whom discrete GPUs such as these marked a huge technological jump. These came on the back of GTX 700 and 900 series graphics cards, and Nvidia had become the overwhelmingly

dominant force in this space.

Subsequent releases such as the GTX 1600 series, and the RTX 2000, 3000 and 4000 series have given Nvidia an unassailable share in the discrete GPU market. As of the first quarter of 2024, 88 percent of discrete GPUs in use today are Nvidia products, leaving competitors AMD and Intel (a new entrance) in the dust.

But video games and PCs were not enough to take Nvidia to the heights where it is now able to challenge software and mobile giants like Apple, Microsoft, and Google. What got them there was the buzzword of our times, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Companies that use AI to develop cutting edge products like OpenAI's ChatGPT or Google's Gemini require computers that are capable of computing enormous mathematical calculations. Nvidia's GPUs, which were already capable of executing complicated mathematical functions for graphics usages, could also be used for the maths required for these AI training models.

At first, AI researchers needed to format their data to fit Nvidia's graphics focused products. In 2006, Nvidia introduced a new architecture, called CUDA, that would simplify the use of its products as parallel processors for computational problems.

Things have only gone from good to better since. When cryptocurrency started ballooning in value during the Covid-19 pandemic, Nvidia GPUs became the primary tool with which miners completed the computational tasks needed to produce more

bitcoin, and Nvidia's sales skyrocketed as a result. Shortly followed by that were the large language models (LLM) that brought the power of AI to the forefront of public imagination, and as every tech company in the world started getting their hands dirty to develop their own AI products, Nvidia's GPUs, which would aid them in this process, fell massively into demand.

Nvidia was prepared for this. The GV100, followed by the AI100 and subsequent models, have started targeting AI data centres where GPUs power the processing of massive amounts of data, engaging them in complex matrix calculations that are the building blocks of today's AI models. The rise of AI, and the competition between other tech giants to get their noses ahead in the AI rat race has benefitted Nvidia, who alongside developing their own AI products, supply the tools necessary to create machine learning models.

Nvidia stock has almost tripled since the beginning of 2024, and shows no signs of slowing down. Some who are sceptical think that this is all a result of an AI bubble, but Nvidia's standing is backed up by solid technology and consistently growing revenue. Jensen Huang, the superstar CEO and founder of Nvidia whom Mark Zuckerberg has called the "Taylor Swift of the tech world", cuts a calm but intimidating figure, as it's his shoulders and his company's on which the much promised AI future of mankind is being built.