

4 modern skills every business student needs

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Every business student needs certain skills if they want to thrive in their respective fields after graduating. Skills like communication, project management, teamwork, critical thinking, etc., are, of course, vital. But they are not enough in the modern world. With that in mind, let's take you through four modern skills that every business student must have.

AI leadership

There's no doubt that AI is the one skill that everyone should be mastering right now, irrespective of their academic background or profession. Business students must also adapt to this reality.

However, while common technical AI skills are vital, business students must also focus on building leadership skills that will enable them to follow up on the AI boom in their respective workplaces.

A McKinsey report, *Superagency in the Workplace: Empowering People to Unlock AI's Full Potential*, found that nearly every company is investing in AI, yet only one percent believes they've reached true maturity. The report suggests that the biggest barrier isn't the workforce; it's leadership that hasn't yet caught up.

To prepare, business students should go beyond learning the tools and technologies. They need to stay curious about how AI is reshaping industries, understand its real-world impact, and build the vision and adaptability to lead in this rapidly changing landscape.

Ability to replace PowerPoint slides with data dashboards

Companies today sit on mountains of data, but not all of them know how to use this data with purpose. The future belongs to those who can extract meaning from the numbers. Data storytelling is now a leadership skill. Here, one gets to explain things like why the data was collected, how it was done, what purpose the data and the analyses driven from it serve, and so on.

A business graduate who understands data visualisation tools and ethical use of information becomes a translator between analytics and leadership. People who work with data use numbers as narratives. Basically, you'll be presenting pitches, ideas, and performance metrics using data dashboards instead of Canva or PowerPoint. That's how you impress people in the modern business world.

Knowing when (and when not) to jump on a trend

As I am writing this, there's a viral trend where brands are posting fake "apology letters," the kind that go, "We're so sorry for making our products too good to resist." Cute? Maybe. Cringe? Absolutely.

Sure, anything can be used as a marketing tool these days if you're willing to ignore the consequences. But here's the thing: some companies should genuinely be apologising for poor service or subpar products, not pretending to be cheeky about their "greatness." If you work in marketing for one of those businesses, you need to pause before joining the internet circus.

Not every trend deserves your logo slapped on it. Ask yourself: does this fit your brand's tone? Will it make sense to your target audience, or will it just look desperate for clicks?

Advanced skills in Excel and Sheets

Even though AI is now seamlessly built into tools like Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets, mastering these platforms yourself remains an essential professional asset. Think of it like learning to drive: just because modern cars can park themselves doesn't mean you shouldn't know how to operate the vehicle safely. You need to understand the underlying mechanics to verify accuracy, troubleshoot errors, and customize solutions when automation lacks the necessary context.

At the very least, sharpening your manual Excel and Sheets skills ensures you are prepared for high-pressure moments, such as technical interviews.

When a hiring manager asks, "What's the formula for calculating a final account balance?" they aren't just asking for a specific function; they are testing your logic and data literacy. You don't want to rely on AI to bridge that gap. Nailing the answer on your own proves you have the foundational knowledge to validate AI-generated insights, making you a driver rather than just a passenger.

REFERENCE: McKinsey & Company (January 28, 2025). Superagency in the workplace: Empowering people to unlock AI's full potential.

CRAFTING FUTURE CEOS

BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology

BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT), a leading institution for fashion and business education in Bangladesh, blends industry-focused curricula with hands-on learning. BUFT's BBA programme is shaping agile, future-ready business leaders for a competitive global market.

The Daily Star (TDS): In which year was your Business School or BBA programme established, and how has student enrolment grown since inception?

Md. Muinuddin Khan (MMK): BUFT's Department of Business Administration began its BBA in 2013 and has grown into a multidisciplinary faculty that blends industry



"BUFT's robust network of corporate linkages allows students to frequently visit partner companies, participate in industry workshops, and gain exposure to real corporate environments that enhance their professional readiness."

PROFESSOR MD. MUINUDDIN KHAN
Dean, Faculty of Business Studies, BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology

focus with academic rigor to produce workplace-ready graduates.

TDS: Which programs are offered and how large are intakes?

MMK: The department runs BBA and MBA programs. Annual intakes are capped to protect quality, with current enrollment levels reflecting steady growth and selective admission.

TDS: How experienced is the faculty?

MMK: The school fields a large faculty body including many PhD holders, combining academic scholarship with practical industry experience to mentor students closely.

TDS: What teaching approach does BUFT use?

MMK: Teaching is experiential and applied: live projects, case studies, business simulations and industrial visits ensure students connect classroom theory with market realities.

TDS: How does BUFT ensure employability?

MMK: Strong industry linkages, targeted specializations, internships and guest lectures create a direct pipeline from classroom to employers, especially in garments and manufacturing sectors.

TDS: Which specializations stand out?

MMK: Programs emphasize clothing merchandising, supply chain management and entrepreneurship—areas aligned with Bangladesh's economic strengths and employer demand.

TDS: What learning facilities and student support exist?

MMK: Blended learning options, scholarships, credit waivers for high performers, and executive courses for professionals widen access and support diverse learner needs.

TDS: Does BUFT provide global exposure?

MMK: Yes. International MoUs, exchange programmes, short study tours and collaborative research give students global perspectives and opportunities for cross-border learning.

TDS: How is innovation and new skills integrated?

MMK: Emerging topics like AI, fintech and sustainability are being woven into curricula. Student innovation challenges and startup support translate classroom ideas into market ventures.

TDS: What are the school's future priorities?

MMK: BUFT plans new postgraduate diplomas in Garments Business Management and Supply Chain Management, expanded global partnerships, and upgraded labs focused on sustainable technologies to deepen interdisciplinary learning.

TDS: Why choose BUFT's Business School?

MMK: For those seeking industry-relevant specializations, strong employer ties and a practical learning environment that prepares graduates to compete locally and globally, BUFT offers a focused, career-ready pathway.



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