

## Kenji Matsushita on Soft Skills – Answer Key

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### Pre-listening

A. Match the following expressions with their meanings:

Expression		Meaning
1. to lay someone off	<b>4</b>	to do something that helps someone
2. to let someone down	<b>1</b>	to fire someone from a job
3. to have an effect or impact on someone	<b>2</b>	to disappoint someone
4. to do something to the advantage of someone	<b>3</b>	to influence someone

B. Discuss or answer on your own:

- How do people usually react to being laid off?  
**Sample answer: They usually are angry. They might blame others.**
- Have you heard the term **soft skills**? “Hard skills” refers to technical or occupational skills you need in a specific job. Guess. What do you think the term **soft skills** might refer to?  
**Any answer that is reasonable is OK here.**

### Listening activity

A. Listen to the entire interview. Try to catch the following main ideas:

- Who is Kenji?  
**A business man. President of a multimillion dollar company. A leader.**
- What are **soft skills**? (answer with a synonym or example)  
**People skills, organizing, communicating**

3. What is Kenji good at doing?

**Any of the following: organizing people, communicating, influencing people (also, firing people).**

B. The following table includes a list of conclusions that can (or cannot) be drawn from the listening. Read each statement. Do you think it is a reasonable conclusion to draw?

Listen to the audio again. If the conclusion is reasonable, mark the TRUE column. If it is not true, mark the FALSE column. If it is impossible to say, based on the listening, mark the last column. Explain your answers. (NOTE: you may have to listen more than once to explain your answers.)

	<b>I know this is TRUE because...</b>	<b>I know this is FALSE because...</b>	<b>?</b>
1. Kenji is a successful business man.	<b>X He was the president of a multimillion dollar company.</b>		
2. Kenji enjoyed being the president of a large company.			<b>X</b>
3. Kenji is self-motivated.	<b>X He has done self-schooling and studying after hours</b>		
4. Kenji is good at managing people.	<b>X He has been able to organize people</b>		
5. Soft skills help you communicate with people	<b>X</b>		
6. Kenji likes laying people off.			<b>X</b>
7. Kenji gets along well with people.	<b>X people apologized for letting him down.</b>		
8. People were angry when Kenji laid them off.		<b>X People apologized when he laid them off.</b>	
9. Kenji doesn't care about his own personal success.		<b>X He works for the advantage of</b>	

		<b>both himself and others.</b>	
10. Kenji thinks it is important to be able to influence people.	<b>X At the beginning he said his success is related to his people skills. His example has to do with how he influenced people.</b>		

## Post listening

### A. Focus on language

The interviewer had two questions for Kenji:

**Question #1:** Why are soft skills important for a leader?

**Question #2:** What is an example of a time when your communication had an impact on people?

However, the interviewer didn't just ask these questions. Instead, he worded his questions in a way that makes them seem friendlier and less demanding.

1. Can you remember what the interviewer actually said? Try to complete the sentences below:

Question #1: Could you tell me a **-little bit** about why you think soft skills are **+so** important for a leader?

Question #2: Can you give our listeners an example of a time when you felt that your communication had an impact on people?

2. Now listen to the podcast to check your answers and complete the sentences.

- Circle the two modals that are used to soften the questions?
- Underline the two phrases that say "We want your opinion because you are an expert" not "This is a test. We want to see if you have the right answer!"
- Put a + beside an intensifier,
- Put a - beside a minimizer.

3. Think of two questions you would like to ask Kenji. Make the questions sound friendly and less demanding. (Optional: Role-play asking Kenji the questions, and answering the questions the way you think Kenji might.)

*Sample answers:*

*Could you –maybe explain why you think people apologized instead of getting angry at you?*

*Can you give us –a few examples of what you consider to be good communication skills?*

**B. Think:** Look at the list of soft skills in the text box. List 3 other soft skills that you think are important in any work environment.

1. Which of those soft skills do you think played an important role in Kenji's success?

**Possible answers: good listening skills, good communication skills, a good work ethic (worked extra hours), an ability to organize people.**

2. Check off the 4 soft skills you think are most important in your occupation.
3. Circle two or three of the soft skills that you are particularly good at.

**C. Discuss:** Role-play a job interview. The interviewer should ask the job-seeker to describe his or her strengths (*Remember to make the question sound friendly!*). The job-seeker should choose 2-3 soft skills, and give examples to show that he or she has those skills.

**D. Write:** Imagine you are writing a job description for your occupation, and you've already written a paragraph describing the qualifications and hard skills a person in that job would need. Now write a short paragraph describing the soft skills a candidate would need. Use words like **must, should, needs to** and **it is important**. You could begin with the following topic sentence:

Sample paragraph:

The Emergency Nurse candidate must have certain soft skills. First and foremost, she or he should be flexible and have an ability to work well under pressure. The candidate needs to be a team player who works well with other medical professionals. It is also important that the candidate is able to communicate well with patients, and has good listening skills. Finally, the Emergency nurse candidate must be creative and able to problem solve.