



A Winning Employee

Sam Garcia is an immigrant from Ecuador. He works as a mechanic at George's Garage in Arlington, Virginia. He started his job there more than 5 years ago. Today is a special day for Sam because he is receiving the **Employee of the Year** award. At the presentation, his manager Alex Johnson says, *"I am giving Sam the award today because his customers and coworkers love him, and he has excellent technical skills. I even ask him to fix my car."*

Sam has two kinds of skills that are necessary to be successful and to advance in his career: soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills are personal and social skills. Sam works well with his coworkers. He is hard-working and responsible. He never arrives late and rarely misses work. He is honest and he communicates well with his customers. Hard skills are the technical skills that an employee needs to do the job well. Sam can repair cars, trucks and automobiles. He learned from his father, who was also a mechanic. Later he took classes and he got a certification as an auto technician.

Soft and hard skills are equally important, but hard skills are easier to teach and to evaluate. People can learn and practice how to use a machine, and then take a test to see what they know. It is more difficult to teach people how to take initiative or manage their time. George Griffin, the owner of George's Garage said, *"I had this business for 20 years. Every time I fire an employee, it is because he doesn't have the soft skills necessary, not because he doesn't have the technical skills."* Soft skills and hard skills are a winning combination, and today Sam is a winner.



1. Where is Sam Garcia from? _____
2. What does he do? _____
3. What is the name of his employer? _____
4. What is the name of his boss? _____
5. Why is Sam happy today? _____
6. How do Sam's coworkers and customers feel about him?

7. How did Sam learn to be a mechanic? _____
8. What is more important: soft skills or hard skills? _____
9. Does George usually fire an employee because he doesn't have soft skills or hard skills? _____
10. Here are George's skills. Is this a soft skill or a hard skill?
 - He works well with his coworkers. _____
 - His customers like him. _____
 - He is honest. _____
 - He communicates well. _____
 - He works hard. _____
 - He is punctual. _____
 - He is responsible. _____
 - He can fix cars, trucks and motorcycles. _____

******What about you? What skills do you have?**