# GMAT                    Issue                    PDF

69. Whether the ability to work
with others is more important than specific knowledge and technical
competence depends on the specific job as well as the complexity of
the jobs technical aspects. In general, however, social skills are more
critical than technical competence to the ultimate success of an
organizational unit. Admittedly, some level of technical competence
and specific knowledge is needed to perform any job. Without some
knowledge of the systems, procedures, and vocabulary used in ones
department or division, an employee cannot communicate
effectively with peers or contribute meaningfully to team goals. By
the same token, however, nearly every jobeven those in which
technical ability would seem to be of paramount importancecalls for
some skill in working with other employees. Computer
programmers, for example, work in teams to develop products
according to agreed-upon specifications and timelines. Scientists and
researchers must collaborate to establish common goals and to
coordinate efforts. Even teachers, who are autonomous in the
classroom, must serve on committees and coordinate activities with
administrators and other teachers. Moreover, employees can
generally learn technical skills and gain specific knowledge through
on-the-job training and continuing education (depending on the
complexity of the skills involved). Social skills, on the other hand, are
more innate and not easily learned. They are, therefore, requisite

skills that employees must possess at the outset if the organizational unit is to succeed. In sum, specific knowledge does admittedly play a more critical role than social skills in some highly-technical jobs: nevertheless, the ability to work well with other employees is ultimately more important, since all jobs require this ability and since it is more difficult, to learn social skills on the job. 100Test