Essential Soft Skills

Any Software Architect need to have 12 soft skills to be a successful architect. These skills can be grouped into 3 groups:

1. Relationship skills
2. Personal Skills
3. Business Skills

These classification are based on relative priority; that is, if you don't have relationship skills, the other two areas don't matter.
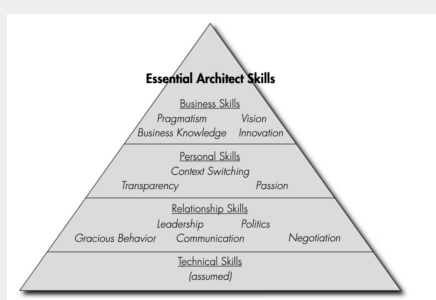
Pyramid of Skills

Figure Pref-1   Essential architect skills

Gracious Behavior

❝Behavior is a mirror in which every one displays his own image.❞

-- Johann Wolfgang

The Technical Ceiling
One of the challenges that the very best technology folks (the gurus) often have is that they are often a complete pain to deal with. Their approach and means of interacting are completely focused on correctness to the minutest detail.

The road to gracious behavior begins with the following steps:

✔ Choosing relationships over correctness
✔ Learning to delegate
✔ Realizing that life is reflexive
✔ Acting as though words are seeds
✔ Dealing with others with integrity and honesty without bluntness
✔ Confronting issues in a timely manner
✔ Providing a professional service
✔ Forgiving and forgetting past offenses

Gracious Behavior (cont)

Basics:

✈ Learn to smile (Be approachable)
✈ Learn to proper posture (Stand up or sit up straight with your feet directly under you, shoulders back, chin up.)
✈ Learn to engage others in small talk. (Prime the conversation, put others at ease, begin to build a relationship.)
✈ Learn to focus on others, not yourself.
✈ Be present; be where you are.
✈ Learn to be helpful. (What the other person needs? How can you best help the individual?)
✈ Learn to be concerned. (The world is not just about you.)
✈ Learn to be friendly. (Become a friend – the more you interact with others, the higher the likelihood that you will enjoy the work you do.)
✈ Learn to build trust. (If you say something, do it. If you have an issue with someone, deal directly with that person, rather than discussing it with others.)
✈ Learn to listen. (Repeat what you have heard; don't draw conclusions; ask questions of genuine interest.)
✈ Be knowledgeable; share information not conclusions.
✈ Allow choice. (One of the best ways to direct a decision is not to dictate, but rather to present selectable alternatives – it allows the other person to take ownership.)
✈ Do not stay at the point at hand and go off on a tangent.
✈ Be aware of the entire context of the discussion, and do not repeat unnecessary information or stay outside it.
✈ For the more senior architects, remember that executives are people, too. Treat them like normal people, and they will respond as such.

Communication

Learning to communicate effectively is a lifelong process – there is always rooms for improvement. Communication of Architects is based on

1. Communication Principles
2. Communication Strategies
3. Communication with Executives

📢**Communication Principles**
✔ **Listen First, Talk Later** --
✔

📢**Communication Strategies**

📢**Communication with Executives**