EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this study is the exploration of the impact of soft skills training programmes on performance in terms of their importance, usefulness and their role impact in bringing about change in attitude.

Soft Skills training programmes are conducted based on the philosophy that soft skills are required for effective work and for career growth alongside technical and domain skills. However, due to the diffuse and vague understanding of the term ‘soft skills’, it is often erroneously considered a superficial area of training, which can be done away with to save cost and minimise training budgets. Very little research has been conducted about the perceptions of trainable and trained managers and potential managers on whether they consider soft skills training programmes important, usefulness and effective in bringing change in attitude at the workplace. There was also very little research on constituent training that forms the gamut of training programmes. While soft skills are considered important, it is required to specify particular training programmes that are covered under the umbrella of soft skills training and then determine the importance, usefulness and role of each training programme in bringing about change in attitude.

Because of the diffuse nature of the terms soft skills, training programmes in soft skills are also viewed from a macro and generalised angle. Most often, requirements for training in soft skills come with a excessive expectations from corporates who ask for generalised programmes and sometimes asking for a ‘bit’ of everything in soft skills training.

Training effectiveness and transfer of learning is possible only if those who are trained realise its importance and utility. Change in attitude is possible only if those who attend training have faith in the ability of the intervention to bring in positive results. If soft skills training programmes are to be conducted, it is imperative to know whether those who attend training programmes feel that it is important and useful.

Previous studies consist of single research papers which studied the impact of a few soft skills training programmes. This study attempts to study an array of soft skills training programmes, with the objective of finding perceptions based on age, educational background and educational faculty.

For the sake of the study, 12 training programmes covered under the umbrella of soft skills were selected for the study. The research has been conducted mainly through quantitative
statistical methods while some research has been conducted qualitatively. The results of the
research and consequent recommendations were further validated with quantitative research.

The study contains nine chapters. Chapter One gives an introduction and overview to the
study, Chapter Two contains a review of related literature, Chapter Three states the
objectives, variables, hypotheses and describes the sample populations. Chapter Four
contains details of the Research methodology. The results and analysis are reported in
Chapter Five, followed by a discussion in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven presents the strategy
and suggestions. In order to validate the recommendations, a pre and post training analysis
was conducted, the results of which are presented in the validation of recommendations in
Chapter Eight. Chapter Nine presents the implications of the study for future research and the
limitations of the study

The study shows that soft skills training programmes are perceived as important and useful
for performance however, there is further scope for probing into the utility and importance of
methodologies and recognition for some training programmes like business etiquette and
assertive skills training.

This study will serve as a confirmation of the importance and usefulness of soft skills training
in performance and will help to give the specific of soft skills training programmes their due
place in the field of training. Soft Skills training will form an integral part of the performance
monitoring process along with other processes such as mentoring, counselling and coaching,
thus making the soft skills training process a part of the performance management cycle.