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How to Become a Better Communicator

Participant Workbook



How to Become a Better Communicator

On-Demand Seminar
Participant Workbook



Produced by: **SkillPath® Seminars** • *The Smart Choice®*

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SYMBOL KEY

Symbols used in this workbook:



Introduction: A brief overview of the session you are about to begin



Learning objectives: A guide to a session's key points intended to help focus your attention on important elements and essential take-aways



Summary: A quick review of what you have learned in the current session

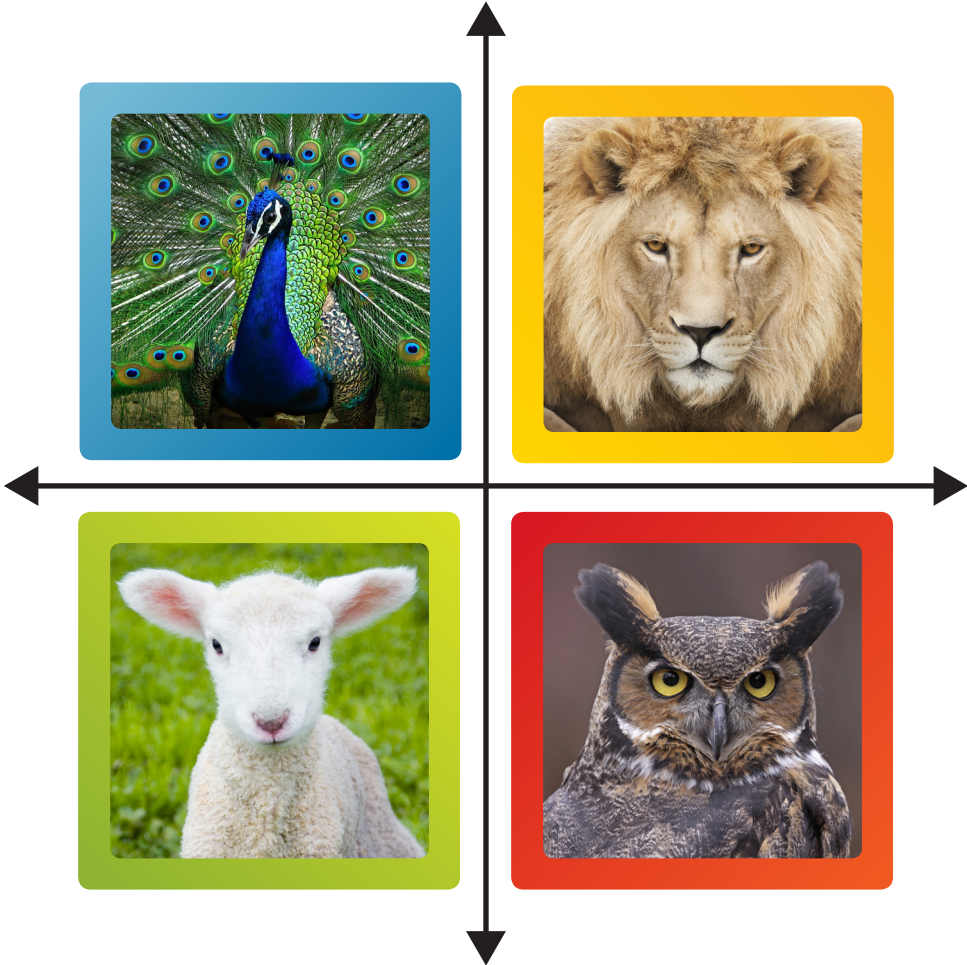


Personal Action Plan: An opportunity to apply your newly learned skills and knowledge to your specific work environment



SkillTip: A short, quick and to-the-point productivity tip

COMMUNICATION ROADBLOCKS



CREATE RAPPORT, BUILD TRUST AND ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY

“Communication works for those who work at it.”

—John Powell



The first aspect of communication is building rapport with others. Until this aspect of communication is established—nothing else will be accomplished. People won't listen to someone they don't feel a connection with because that connection is the bond on which trust is built. Your credibility will be acknowledged once others trust you.



Learning Objectives

- Describe how to establish rapport and how to ensure your words and actions tell others you're a credible, reliable professional
- Describe how to “break the ice” and get a good conversation going, even with a stranger
- List skills used to master mouth management skills
- Outline the steps you can take to increase the level of trust, cooperation and support from your co-workers, your employees and your boss

The Secret to Quickly Establishing Rapport and Conversing Easily With New Acquaintances

Start by examining your own conduct

- What is your body language saying?
- What is your voice tone?
- Do your voice tone and body language correlate with your words?
- Are you taking a moment to actively listen and acknowledge others?

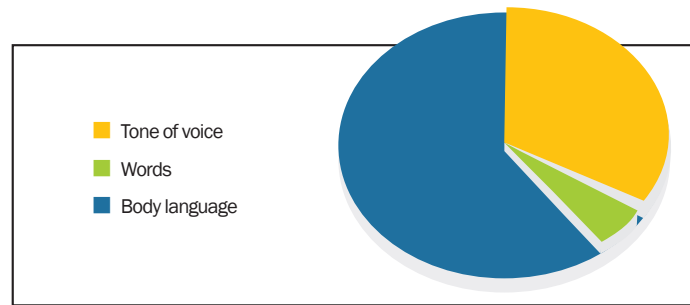
Build rapport

- Ask questions and listen
- Listen with your ears, eyes and body

Improve your conduct

- Smile
- Lean forward in conversation, to show interest in what another is saying
- Open up your arms (someone with crossed arms can be perceived as less approachable)
- Make eye contact; it shows you are actively listening to the conversation

Total communication



Becoming the All ELECTRIC Communicator

As you begin your journey to more effective communications, use the ELECTRIC acronym as a touchstone.

E	Energy to pay attention and notice people
L	Listening skills
E	Enthusiasm for people's answers and conversations
C	Confidence that people want to talk to you
T	Talking topics that draw people into the conversation
R	Reaching out abilities and a willingness to include everyone
I	Interest in observing your surroundings and asking questions based on what you see
C	Connections that are meaningful

Ensure Your Words and Actions Tell Others You're a Credible, Reliable Professional

How do others assess your conduct?

- Develop your own code of conduct—this can be the established code of behavior set by your company or one you live by
- Be a model for others in your company
- Be supportive of co-workers
- Only discuss group issues in group discussions; too often credibility and professional image are damaged by “gossip”

Increase trust at work—establish a support network

- Get to know your co-workers, their interests and their backgrounds because this will lead to:
 - Group collaborations that run smoothly
 - People who support you and the effort you make at work
- Support your supervisor because this will:
 - Help your supervisor reach his or her objectives
 - Show that you can be a team player

“Break the Ice” and Get a Good Conversation Going, Even With a Stranger

Use “icebreakers” to start conversations

Four sure-fire ways to get a conversation started:

1. Give someone a sincere compliment and follow it up with a question: *“I like your report; how did you come up with the concept?”*
2. Introduce yourself: *“Hi, my name is _____; what’s your name?”*
3. Make a light-hearted comment: *“That was some game last night.”*
4. Ask an open-ended question: *“How do you like the weather we’ve been having?”*

Establish rapport by asking questions that can set people at ease as you get to know each other. The purpose is to start a conversation but avoid questions that:

- Pry into their personal lives
- Push views that disagree with others’ views

How to Be Immediately Accepted Into Any Group of People Even if You Seem to Have Nothing in Common With Them

The common goal in communication is a mutual exchange of ideas. You don’t need to know a person well to share that common goal.

Being open to a mutual exchange of ideas:

- Let go of fear because it serves no purpose
- Take a chance—say hello!
- Think of what you want to learn from this interaction
- Don’t be on the defensive because your body language or voice tone will betray you—maintain a relaxed disposition
- Smile—your million-dollar asset
- Use mirroring (mimic the conduct of the other person/people), so that you have a means to pace yourself and have a reference point

What Are the Reasons We Enter Into Conversation?

We get into conversations for different reasons at different times and in different settings. Here are some of the reasons we enter into conversation:

- *Information*—to learn from the person we are talking to
- *Contacts*—to network or connect with the person on a business level
- *Friendship*—to get to know more about someone on a personal level. For some, this is the foundation for business networking.
- *Convenience*—we need someone to talk to at a gathering

How Are Your Mouth Management Skills? It's Vitally Important to Your Credibility That You Know How to Keep Confidences *Confidential* and Secrets *Secret*

Speech habits and behaviors that destroy your credibility:

- Spreading rumors
- Using profanity
- Tentative speech
- Opinionated speech
- Gaps in logic—be consistent and reliable in the information you present
- Vacillation—don't be indecisive and fluctuate between points. You want to be sure of your information BEFORE you present it to others.

Discretion and confidentiality in the workplace:

- Keep confidential information private
- Stop rumors and go to the source

Steps You Can Take to Increase the Level of Trust, Cooperation and Support From Your Co-workers, Your Employees and Your Boss

There are four steps you should be aware of as you try to increase trust after preliminary introductions. These steps will help you increase the level of trust, cooperation and support in the workplace.

Step 1: Don't tell all! You don't want to disclose all your information in a work environment. Be friendly without telling your whole life story.

Step 2: Be yourself! If you try to show off all your good qualities and overdo it, people are going to know that you are trying too hard.

Step 3: Talk about your goals and the struggles you might have. People like to be helpful and will try to provide you with direction or encouragement.

Step 4: Make new friends. Get to know people and don't be afraid to let your guard down a little.

Avoid Sending Contradictory or Confusing Signals About Yourself

Keep in mind that when you communicate there are several factors that affect the message you're sending. Individual characteristics and personal emotions come into play in addition to the words you are saying and your body language.

Factors that affect communication:

- If you “communicate” in an abrupt and short manner, the person receiving that message will not be getting a positive image and that affects communication as much as body language, voice tone and words
- Also, people have set individual impressions of you—regardless of what you're saying or how you're saying it. That impression or image alone can overtake your message and cause miscommunication. For example: If you're usually an opinionated person or an introverted person, your characteristics will impact how the listener interprets your message.

Four focus points for clear communication:

1. Focus your message: Rather than saying—“I need the Johnson file,” you might say “I need the budget outline for the Johnson file.”
2. Get your listener's attention: Make certain that the message is of mutual interest and importance. “I'll need the budget outline so we can get done with the final stages of approval and relax.”
3. Get past the personal roadblocks: Ask the listener for feedback or revise the message based on feedback from the listener. This provides interaction and a chance for supporting information. “What did you think of this project? Do you think any changes need to be made to the budget outline?”
4. Use active listening: Really try to visualize what the other person is trying to say, and this will give both of you the opportunity to make mutual choices, or the opportunity to make changes before final processes are made. “I hadn't realized the resource fees were so low. Didn't we have field research for this project?”



Personal Action Plan— Creating Trust

Now that you've examined some aspects of conduct, outline how you would improve your conduct to create trust.

Building trust means building rapport with others. What are some techniques you can apply when building rapport with others at work?

How can you use total communication to build rapport?

Using icebreakers to begin a conversation can help you build rapport. How can you use an icebreaker to help you begin establishing rapport with another person?

Why is it important for you to master mouth management skills in your position? What are some improvements you can make?

What are some steps you can take to increase the level of trust from others in your work environment?



The information in this section helped you become aware of your conscious and unconscious communication and gain control of your body language, voice tone and the impression you have on others through your actions. These are powerful tools in communication that will help you achieve successful workplace interactions.

MAKING AN IMPACT—HOW TO HAVE POWER AND INFLUENCE WITH PEOPLE

“Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true.”

—Charles Dickens



Making an impact and influencing people can be accomplished through interpersonal interactions and teambuilding. Learning how your actions impact others will give you control over how relationships can unfold. To have power and influence with people, you have to understand and try to provide what others want out of your interaction in order to get what you want.



Learning Objectives

- Describe why it really does matter whether or not people like you—and how to make it happen
- List three things you can give away that will return you the loyalty, devotion and friendship of others
- Describe the 15 vital interpersonal skills shared by influential people and outline the six major components of personal charisma

Why It Really Does Matter Whether or Not People Like You—and How to Make It Happen

- When people like you, they will help you achieve goals, provide you with solutions instead of obstacles and make all work-related projects more effective through increased productivity
- When the boss likes you, it could mean raises, bonuses or promotions
- When co-workers like you, they might provide things that you need faster or simply make your workday easier to cope with

Three Things You Can Give Away That Will Return You the Loyalty, Devotion and Friendship of Others

These three aspects of creating a greater community within the company are factors which govern human nature and provide people with motivation to work with and for you.

1. Offer acceptance and open up to others
2. Give approval and support the decisions of others
3. Express appreciation verbally

Three Sure-fire Ways to Make Enemies—and How to Avoid It

Making enemies at work is never a good career move. If you foster a “dog eat dog” kind of work environment, you’re inviting people to become aggressive, resentful and unproductive. Everyone’s busy competing against each other rather than working together.

Sure-fire ways to make enemies	How to avoid them
1. Always be right or make others look wrong—this will humiliate others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Say, “I may be wrong; let’s look at this together ... ” or “Do you have a different approach?”
2. Tell people they shouldn’t feel the way they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No one has the right to do this, because whatever a person feels—they are <i>entitled</i> to that emotion
3. Ridicule and abuse people; people won’t work well for you if they are mistreated. Additionally they will have the right to seek legal aid if abused.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don’t do it. This is a form of mental and emotional violence that has no place in the workplace. ■ When you’re frustrated with a co-worker, discuss the behavior that’s bothering you using “I” statements and discuss a mutual solution

The Secret of Socrates—How to Get Others to See Your Point of View With the Gentle Method That Has Worked for More Than 2000 Years

The secret of Socrates is to be “agreeable” and to get the other person to say “yes” as many times as possible. Use logic to get your point across and have people agree with your logical sequence—before they realize it, they are agreeing with your point of view and it makes sense to them.

The gentle method:

- Ask questions the other person has to agree to because then there is common ground you can work from
- Begin a discussion by emphasizing the things you agree on because it’s a good springboard for additional ideas and brainstorming solutions to trouble areas
- Get the other person saying “Yes” immediately—because then you’re on the same page and moving forward

15 Vital Interpersonal Skills Shared by Influential People— How Do You Measure Up?

Cultivating these skills for yourself will help you interact well with others and deal with difficult situations gracefully. While you may not possess all these skills yet, you probably do have a few natural interpersonal skills already.

Vital interpersonal skills:

1. Able to work with people
2. Possess social poise, self-assurance, confidence
3. Considerate of others
4. Tactful and diplomatic
5. Exhibit self-control
6. Able to analyze facts, understand and solve problems
7. Able to make decisions
8. Maintain high standards
9. Tolerant and patient
10. Honest and objective
11. Organize time and priorities
12. Delegate
13. Create enthusiasm
14. Persuasive
15. Have a high concern for communication

The Six Major Components of Personal Charisma—and What You Can Do to Further Develop These Qualities in Yourself

Think of charismatic people such as Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Princess Diana and Nelson Mandela. These people seem to have a natural charisma; however, personal charisma is a skill that can be learned and developed. The most important aspect to keep in mind is, by listening to others and giving them what they want, you can get what you want.

Provide others with confidence in your abilities by:

1. Demonstrating a high energy level; it's infectious and people will want to be around you
2. Paying attention to your appearance. Looks do matter.
3. Being able to take care of yourself
4. Being well spoken
5. Accepting compliments and admiration graciously. When you turn away a compliment, you are essentially saying that the person giving the compliment is mistaken.
6. Smiling—you'll look happy and peaceful



Personal Action Plan— The Power to Influence

How would it benefit you if people liked you more in your work environment?

How can you use the gentle method to get your point across to others at work?

What five vital skills shared by influential people can you apply to your position at work?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are three sure-fire ways to make enemies? How can you avoid making enemies at work?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



You've explored the impact of interpersonal skills and interaction in this session. Likability in the workplace gives you power in interactions and sets the stage for group collaborations. Your demeanor has as much impact on your relationships as on your position.

CLEAR AND ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

“Speech is power. Speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



The purpose of communication is to share your ideas with others. Clear and assertive communication helps you express your thoughts with clarity and validity. Communication skills enable you to deal with difficult situations and help you to express your point of view and defend it if necessary.



Learning Objectives

- Describe how to think on your feet when challenged
- List the nine steps of assertive communication and three easy-to-use assertive listening techniques
- Outline how to effectively handle put-downs, slurs and insults and positive techniques for delivering constructive feedback
- Detail how to accept and learn from negative feedback and how to handle criticism in front of others

Never Be Put on the Spot Again! Learn How to Think on Your Feet When Challenged

When put on the spot:

1. Listen. Pay attention to what is being said.
2. Pause to organize your thoughts
3. Repeat the question (so you can be sure you clearly understand what is being said to you without misinterpretation)
4. Give one main idea
5. STOP! Don't end on an excuse.

The Nine Steps of Assertive Communication That Will Put Power and Confidence in Your Words

Nine steps of assertive communication:

1. Use “I” statements
2. Keep responses short
3. Slow down verbally
4. Deepen your voice
5. Monitor your tone of voice
6. Watch nonverbal messages
7. Listen
8. Maintain eye contact
9. Sort your emotions from your thoughts

Three Easy-to-Use Assertive Listening Techniques That Will Make All Your Communications More Effective

Using ALL your skills

- A** Ask questions to open the channels of communication
- L** Look consistent with your communication
- L** Listen attentively

Genuine listening means you are able to FOCUS

- F** Focus on the person telling the story, rather than gazing around the room or answering your cell phone
- O** Offer feedback and reflection by commenting on the portions that most impacted you
- C** Clarify by asking questions as needed
- U** Use expressions and gestures to reflect your feelings
- S** Share a similar story or situation to deepen the conversation

Effectively Handle Put-downs, Slurs and Insults

You may or may not have encountered a situation in your workplace where slurs, insults or put-downs are directed toward you. However, many people feel the need to put down others to make themselves look better, and someday you may be on the receiving end of such negativity.

Here are some tips on how to effectively handle such a scenario:

- Allow the other person to slow down or to vent feelings (Listen)
- Admit when you are wrong (“I apologize for ...”)
- Acknowledge the other person’s feelings (“Obviously, you feel ...”)
- Assert yourself about the way the other person is acting (“I don’t like ...”)
- Make a short statement to bring the encounter to an end (“I can understand your point; I’d like a little time to think it through.”)

Positive Techniques for Delivering Constructive Feedback to Co-workers, Employees, Even the Boss

Here are some techniques to help get through the process:

Feedback	Be descriptive and concentrate on facts. Do not be judgmental or insulting.
Focus	Discuss tasks that can be modified, not personal attributes. Focus on work-related modifications.
Discuss specifics	Examine specific issues, incidents or situations. Generalizations cannot be categorized and made into facts.
Timing	Do not wait until a week has passed to discuss an issue (by then the factual information is hazy). However, discussing the issue in “the heat of the moment” can cause aggression.
Public displays	Do not critique in front of others.
Setting	Plan an appointment to discuss the issue, and make it a formal discussion, noting the content of the meeting.
Emotion	There is no room for emotional outbursts. To give constructive feedback is to provide objective information about performance.

How to proceed:

- Begin by noting the specific factual information to be covered and how to improve the performance
- Rehearse how you plan to deliver the feedback. Focus on the action or subject; do not compare one employee to another.
- Confront the issue because in the long run you are addressing a means to improve the productivity of the other person and your company
- Balance out some positive feedback with the negative

Five Features of Fabulous Feedback

1. *Forget* any personal issues or triggers you may have around the subject
2. *Find* something to appreciate in the person's behavior
3. *Focus* on the facts. Discuss a specific incident.
4. *Follow* through with questions
5. *Forge* a collaborative solution

Accept and Learn From Negative Feedback Without Becoming Hurt or Angry

Handling feedback calmly:

- Be your own best critic
- Know your strengths and limitations
- Assume the best intentions
- Recognize that everyone needs feedback to grow
- Separate yourself from the feedback
- It's OK to dislike your behavior and still like yourself
 - Think about improving, not labeling yourself
 - Deal with the issue; forget personality. You are responsible for your behavior; others aren't.
 - When the intention to learn from your mistakes overcomes your fear of failure, you're less likely to view negative feedback as a personal put-down

How to Handle Being Criticized in Front of Others

- Listen to the criticism without interruption. Don't say a word—not: “But,” “wait a minute,” “time out” or “no.” LISTEN!
- Keep calm and ask polite, reasonable questions. Respond with facts to the other person's questions. If you are being unfairly criticized LEAD the speaker through questions to the alternative. This type of Socratic approach will keep the situation defused and calm.
- If it is your error, offer to correct it. Make an effort to listen to suggestions.
- Thank the person for the criticism—because they are helping you improve your job performance. Regardless of whether it was an error on your part or not ... thank the person for the initiative to improve your performance. Don't take it as a personal attack or internalize it. Constructive criticism in the workplace is about performance, not about the person.
- Return to your workplace and don't discuss the exchange

Reacting with aggression and getting into an argument with the speaker causes a scene and portrays you in a negative way.

Withdrawing from the situation and harboring self-contained resentment doesn't hurt anyone but yourself.

Your boss criticizes you; how do you react?

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Thoughts	I can't handle this I'd better be nice I shouldn't say what I think	I have rights—you do, too! How should I handle this? What are my options?	I'm better than you I'm more important than you
Emotions/Feelings	I feel powerless I feel controlled I feel victimized I'm angry! (but I keep it in)	I feel powerful I feel confident I am in control	A N G E R
Behavior	I become passive I submit I give up I say “Yes”	I am firm I hold my ground I offer my observations	I become aggressive I confront I “put my foot in my mouth”
Results	I lose, you win	I win, you win	I might win You lose I lose, you lose I lose, you win



Personal Action Plan— Assertive Communication

What are some techniques you can use in your position to defend your ideas when you are challenged?

What are some steps you can adopt to help you clearly and assertively communicate?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What assertive listening steps can help you become a better communicator?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



It's not always easy to deal with new situations or with negative feedback; however, when you use the feedback to upgrade your work, you demonstrate you are a professional who is open to improvement. Using assertive listening and communication, you can guide a situation to a successful conclusion.

COMMUNICATING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND IN TOUGH SITUATIONS

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”

—Anthony Robbins



Often in communication, barriers can be avoided if there is an understanding that a person's perceptions, cultural background and personality are often different from your own. This means you have to be able to get your ideas across despite these differences and become sensitive to other people's personality types.



Learning Objectives

- Describe the seven most difficult personality types and how to deal with each
- Outline the six basic steps for dealing with all negative behavior
- Outline how your thinking style affects your ability to handle difficult people

How to Recognize the Seven Most Difficult Personality Types and How to Deal With Each

The Negative Person	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finding fault doesn't come up with solutions so the negativity accomplishes nothing. Including them in the process to find a solution may diminish or stop the negativity.
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Put the responsibility on the individual to find an answer other than "no." Reinforce their efforts. ■ Do follow up
The Blameless Person	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "Touch base" often and see how they are doing, see if they need help or direction ■ Keeping up a friendly rapport will keep you informed about team projects and tip you off to any obstacles
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State the performance issue in clear, objective terms and then listen to their feedback ■ Tell them how to fix the mistake and set a time and date for a follow-up meeting to talk about how the problem was fixed ■ During the follow-up meeting, compliment the person for fixing the mistake ■ Confront the "blaming" tactics ■ Reinforce with them that making mistakes is okay. What's not okay is placing the blame on others.

The Loner	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide them with the chance to do individual work, and then slowly include the loner in group meetings ■ Ask for their opinions when the group meets and include them in the process of planning the next step in your project
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learn what incentives motivate the person ■ Discuss some individual sections of a group project they can work on, and then how this work can be incorporated into the group work
The Cyclical Person	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide praise for the times their output is high
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Suggest they organize their day using either the Outlook® calendar feature, or a written daily planner
The Whiner	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Empower the person by asking them to create solutions to their grievances ■ People whine because they feel they have no control. Point out what's in their power to change/control. What are they willing to do?
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have the person state specific grievances ■ Ask the person what they think would be a good solution ■ Have them implement the solution
The Antagonist	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Get the facts and follow some of the basic recommendations for negative people ■ Ask the antagonist to provide some solutions
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Look at the employee's past record ■ When dealing with an antagonist's insubordination, make sure to check company policies and be consistent
The Hand-holder	
If they're a co-worker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If the high-maintenance person is needy because of a lack of confidence, be sure that you very carefully and thoroughly go over the "how-to" part of the assignment
If you supervise them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Set up meeting times and dates ahead of time ■ Refuse to enable the neediness ■ During the meetings reinforce the needy worker for what they have accomplished. Ask for updates on progress. Hold them accountable for the work. ■ Let them know you have confidence that they will complete the tasks satisfactorily

Six Basic Steps for Dealing With All Negative Behavior

1. Identify the behavior that is difficult
2. Determine the preferred behavior
3. Devise a plan for changing the behavior
4. Involve the difficult person in the planning
5. Set deadlines for improvement and checkpoints for reviewing progress
6. Be willing to change yourself

An EASY Model for Scripting Your Interactions

Scripting is the practice of writing out or planning what you want to say instead of shooting from the hip. There are numerous scripting models or guides that you can use to plan your conversations.

The EASY model looks like:

E—Express how it affects you

The “E” can be very simple verbiage like: I’m confused, I’m surprised, I’m shocked, I’m concerned. These are all statements that specify how you’re affected or how you are feeling.

A—Address the situation

BRIEFLY outline or describe the situation that you are addressing.

S—Specify what you want or need

Outline what it is that you want or need the person to do or change.

Y—Yes or no question

Ask for the person to buy into or agree with your request.

The one question you do NOT want to use is “Do you understand?” This is a question that rarely produces a correct answer because most of the time, the recipient will simply say “yes” regardless of whether they understand or not. The yes or no question should be one that requires agreement to your request or suggestion.

Special Strategies to Use When the Difficult Person Is the Boss

Dealing with a difficult supervisor is never easy, but you can start with the *best practices* before you work out a *plan of action*.

Best practices:

- Don't procrastinate
- Be as supportive and helpful to them as possible
- Be proactive when dealing with them
- Understand the personality as well as the difficult behavior
- Practice empathetic listening
- Deliver FACTS in a noncritical way
- If you must challenge ... do it in private
- Keep your boss fully informed
- Practice coping skills in a low-risk situation
- Acknowledge your fear
- Envision the encounter working well
- Confront, but don't fight, a low-risk difficult person

Coping with your boss:

- Perceived power of the boss causes subordinates to delay coping
- Better to begin coping right away
- Difficult bosses often act without thinking of consequences
- They control your destiny, so to speak, so act with care
- Look for work elsewhere if the boss ...
 - Is corrupt
 - Is overly critical
 - Lacks competence
 - Requires "yes people"
 - Has a serious substance abuse problem
- Go around your boss. Sometimes you MUST.

When you are going to communicate with a difficult boss, prepare a plan of action so you know how to get your message across and how you plan to persuade them.

How to proceed with a *plan of action*:

Understanding your receiver to position your message

1. What is my goal in this communication?
2. What is my ultimate goal in my relationship with this receiver?
3. What are my assumptions about this situation and this receiver?
4. Are those assumptions valid?
5. What is in it for the receiver?
6. What are the potential drawbacks for the receiver?
7. How can I overcome them?

Coping with a negative boss:

There are several negative personality types and for each there are “coping strategies” for you as an employee.

Negative boss personality type	Coping strategies
The Curmudgeon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep your distance whenever possible ■ Keep all interactions brief and to the point ■ Do not attempt to create a new perspective for this person—you'll only make things worse
The Tragi-Dramatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Write a memo afterward outlining the situation and the steps you've taken to correct it ■ Do not try to interrupt, as it only will create more drama ■ Prepare to weather the storm until your boss has calmed down
The Undercutter/ Underminer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be aware and beware of this boss ■ The written word is possibly the most effective tool you can use when dealing with such individuals ■ If possible, also involve a third party in any major communications
The Perfectionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If in doubt about any part of an assignment, ask more questions ■ Explain, “I want to do this right the first time, so I need some additional information.”

Practice Your New Skills in Low-risk Situations

- Practice with family and friends
- Practice simple assertive communications with co-workers on the same level as you
- Give feedback to your boss, but don't practice it with a co-worker
- Practice reading body language and ask about what real feelings were at the time

Use a Fail-safe Strategy for Keeping a Disagreement From Escalating Into an Argument

Keep disagreements from escalating into arguments

- Welcome the disagreement
- Dismiss your first instinctive impression
- Manage your temper
- Listen
- Look for areas of agreement
- Be honest
- Promise to think over the other person's ideas
- Thank the person sincerely for his or her interest
- Postpone action to give both sides time to think the problem through
- When all else fails, agree to disagree

How Your Thinking Style Affects Your Ability to Handle Difficult People

You have the power to control how you handle difficult people. You can decide how you plan to deal with a difficult person by choosing to change how you behave in their presence.

- You can't change how others think
- You *can* change how *you* think about a situation

How you perceive a situation influences how you treat people. When you change your thinking style, you automatically change how you treat people, which in turn causes others to respond to you differently.

Say “No” Without Feeling Guilty or Causing Resentment

Saying “No”:

- Decide whether or not the request is unreasonable
- Ask for more information and clarification
- Practice saying “No” firmly and calmly
- Say “No” without an apology

Dealing With Your Feelings of Anger and Helplessness When Dealing With Difficult People and Unreasonable Behavior

When you become angry:

- “Freeze” your behavior
- Analyze the emotion
- Remove yourself if necessary

Guidelines for using anger as a tool:

- Communicate, don’t escalate
- Don’t assign negative motives
- Use “I” statements
- Vary how you express your feelings

When you feel helpless:

- Practice being assertive
- Be proactive instead of reactive
- Look for solutions
- Talk to the difficult person in private
 - Listen to the content
 - Focus on what they are saying—don’t interrupt or pre-judge
 - Clarify with questions—don’t use the word “but”
 - Notice the other person’s nonverbal communication
- If there is conflict, resolve it
- If you can’t resolve the conflict, learn to co-exist in peace

Almost all “normal” anger can be traced to these three sources:

1. Your personal goals do not match someone else’s
2. You don’t get the respect you think you deserve
3. Someone or something gets in the way of you having what you want

How to Handle Malicious Gossip and Back-stabbing in a Way That Preserves Your Credibility and Dignity

Dealing with gossip and back-stabbing:

- Rise above the gossip and back-stabbing because “two wrongs don’t make a right”
- Actions speak louder than words so practice:
 - Good manners
 - Fair play
- Rebuff someone, if necessary, but avoid statements such as “you’re dead wrong about that”
- Change public challenges to private discussions
- Confront the originator of the damaging rumor
- Let meaningless gossip go unchallenged



Personal Action Plan— Dealing With Difficult People

What are some difficult personality types that you have to deal with at work? How will you handle their difficult behaviors?

What are some steps you can take in your workplace to deal with negative behavior?

What are some strategies you can use with a difficult boss?

How should you handle malicious gossip?



While communication with people in tough situations can be tedious and frustrating, the skills you've learned in this segment will help you successfully communicate your thoughts and understand those of others. You can't always change other people or the situations you're faced with, but you can control how you react to others and your environment.

HOW TO MAKE AN UNFORGETTABLE, POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSION

“Few have strength of reason to overrule the perceptions of sense, and yet fewer have curiosity or benevolence to struggle long against the first impression: He who therefore fails to please in his salutation and address is at once rejected, and never obtains an opportunity of showing his latest excellences or essential qualities.”

—Samuel Johnson



Whether in an interview or a business meeting, a good first impression opens you up to new opportunities. People create impressions quickly and it's difficult to change a negative first impression. So the first impression should be unforgettably positive.



Learning Objectives

- Outline how to use the first four minutes to make a dynamite impression on anyone you meet
- Describe how to correctly “set the stage” for every interaction and avoid the most common blunders that create a negative impression
- Identify the single biggest factor that determines whether or not people take you seriously and three ways you can demonstrate that you're a positive and self-confident professional

Use the First Four Minutes to Make a Dynamite Impression on Anyone You Meet

Set the conversation on the same keynote you want it to end on whether in a business or an informal setting—the “how-to” keys to make a great first impression are:

- **Appearance:** If you don't care how you look, that's exactly what others will think about you
- **Greeting:** How you greet others shows your level of confidence and enthusiasm
- **Smile:** A winning smile is warm and welcome in any setting
- **Keep in mind that being punctual gives you a few moments to become at ease with a new environment and then present yourself appropriately**
- **Be open and confident;** you can “fit in” and still be an individual
- **Be courteous and attentive first,** because how you listen is as important as what you say

First impressions are not fair

Even though the first glance does not give you an accurate portrait of the real, complex person, people often judge by those fleeting impressions. No matter what your physical attributes or wardrobe limitations, make the most of your **I-CANS** and you'll create a stellar first impression.

I

Interesting—Fortify yourself with interesting information.

C

Confident—Even if you feel nervous, you can act confident. Do this by tuning in to your seven most important qualities.

A

Attentive—Paying a little bit of attention to a person goes a long way.

N

Notable—Carry or wear something notable or unique, something that echoes who you are.

S

Smiling—A smile speaks even when you can't figure out what to say.

Correctly “Set the Stage” for Every Interaction

Prepare yourself:

- What do I really want from this?
- How do I want this to go?
- What mood do I want to create?

Avoid the Most Common Blunders That Create a Negative Impression

Negative talk and opinions give a bad impression, so:

- Don't knock the competition; it doesn't make you look good to “talk bad”
- Don't talk too much. Listening to others in order to figure out what is expected from you will help you avoid idle conversation in that first meeting.

Recognizing the Single Biggest Factor That Determines Whether or Not People Take You Seriously

The single biggest factor that determines whether people take you seriously is your opinion of yourself.

People with low self-esteem are often easy to spot by their body language and tone of voice:

- Poor eye contact
- Too soft-spoken
- Fail to ever speak up or to add to the discussion

How Using What Dale Carnegie Called “The Sweetest Sound in Any Language” Makes You Someone People Remember

The sweetest sound in any language is your name. By remembering a person's name, you are providing them with recognition. This is a valuable tool for engaging others and building relationships. The use of a person's name in conversation shows others you value and respect them as individuals.

Speak the language of success ...

- Remember names
- Address people by their preferred names
- Spell names correctly
- Remember some facts about people



Three Ways You Can Demonstrate That You're a Positive and Self-confident Professional

Self-confidence is reflected from the inside out. You have to feel self-confident before you can act self-confident.

You can demonstrate your self-confidence through your body language

- Your walk
- Your handshake
- Your voice image



Personal Action Plan— Outstanding First Impressions

Describe how you can use the first four minutes to make a great first impression.

Describe how you can avoid the most common blunders that create a negative first impression.

What are three ways you can demonstrate you are a positive, self-confident professional?

1.

2.

3.



Although a first meeting can be nerve-wracking, you now understand the importance of a first impression and how it affects all transactions afterward. A strong first impression sets the stage for job opportunities, advancement and leadership roles. Understanding how to set the stage, avoiding common blunders and demonstrating self-confidence in a first meeting are skills that are vital in the business world.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE— PROFESSIONAL POLISH THAT SHOWS

“In cross-border deals, to me etiquette is not an ‘edge’ thing. It is a prerequisite to being effective.”

—Mark Greene



Understanding and using business etiquette provides you with the rules of the game. Etiquette is a means by which to effectively conduct your behavior in a business setting to meet the social norms.



Learning Objectives

- Outline the six basic rules of business etiquette and recognize and eliminate unconscious sexism from your speaking and writing
- Describe the proper way to do business introductions and other important etiquette tips to remember
- Identify one point of protocol that you must know and learn how to handle the many etiquette questions that arise about the sexes working together

Six Basic Rules of Business Etiquette— Ignore These at Your Peril!

Business etiquette is integrated into the social interactions of business. The rules of etiquette give you an advantage that will be acknowledged and noticed.

Six basic business etiquette rules:

1. Be on time
2. Be respectful of confidences
3. Be courteous, pleasant and positive
4. Be concerned with others, not just with yourself
5. Dress appropriately
6. Use proper written and spoken language

Recognizing and Eliminating Unconscious Sexism From Your Speaking and Writing

Recognize and eliminate gender bias:

- De-gendering your vocabulary produces inclusive language—thereby avoiding sexist language

So how do you implement inclusive language? There are a few ways to change your speech and writing:

- Replacing masculine with “non-gendered” terms
 - Example: Instead of using *man*, use *person*
- Pluralize your pronouns
 - Example: “Employees wishing to take vacation time should consult their employee handbook for procedures.”
- The use of certain adjectives to represent gender: (Handsome) man, (pretty) woman—substituting (attractive) neutralizes gender connotations

Business Introductions

- Introduce the person of lesser authority to the person with greater authority
- Say the name of the person with greater authority first
- Speak each person’s name slowly and distinctly
- Give a little information about each person as you introduce them

Important Etiquette Tips to Remember When Interacting With Your Boss

- Look for opportunities to support your boss, especially in public
- Schedule meeting times with your boss
- During meetings, respect your boss’s time; get to the point
- Disagree with your boss respectfully and in private
- Show your appreciation for his or her leadership
- Keep confidential information private
- Take criticism graciously

No Matter Where You Work, There's One Point of Protocol That You Must Know

We have often heard “treat others as you would like to be treated.” However, not everyone shares your values. With growing cultural diversity in the workplace, there are differences in values, beliefs and social norms.

- Rather than treating others as you would like to be treated, treat them as they would like to be treated

How to Handle the Many Etiquette Questions That Arise About the Sexes Working Together

In order to avoid confusion related to traditional social etiquette, it is best to become familiar and informed of business etiquette in social situations.

When out to lunch:

- The rule is, male or female, if you do the inviting, you do the paying
- There are some exceptions:
 - When the CEO is present, always give that person the option
 - When there is an older-generation male present and he insists on picking up the tab

Remember: It's never good etiquette to make a scene over who pays the bill.



When reciprocating a lunch or dinner with a colleague, choose a restaurant similar in price to your colleague's selection.

When opening doors:

- Male or female, if you are the first to get to the door, open it and let the other person pass first
- If you are with an older-generation male, allow him to open the door

When shaking hands:

- Cultural norms affect the etiquette of the handshake. While in Western society handshaking is the cultural norm, the farther east you go, the more the norm differs for men and women. In Middle Eastern and Asian societies, women shaking hands with a man is not usually done. In Far Eastern societies, people bow before a superior or an older person.

The global market and business etiquette should consider these differences. Even within Western societies, there is such cultural diversity that the common handshake is not as common as we assume.

- Who offers their hand first?
 - Females, it's proper to offer your hand first
 - Males, when shaking another male's hand, offer yours first—when meeting a female, let her offer her hand first



Personal Action Plan— Etiquette and Protocol

What are some etiquette rules you can incorporate into your business interactions?

What etiquette tips for interacting with your boss can you adopt for everyday use?

What is the one point of protocol you must know for interactions with others in your workplace?



Protocol and etiquette are a part of daily life, and now that you have a good foundation of information, you can more confidently maneuver through business situations. Understanding what is expected in business etiquette makes you the master of that situation.



PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Take some time to reflect on all of the information that was discussed during this training and complete the following questions.

Stop

What will I stop doing as a result of what I've learned? Why?

Start

What will I start doing as a result of what I've learned? Why?

Continue

What should I continue doing as a result of what I've learned? Why?


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