

Best ways of Handling the Conflicts



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Effective Communication

IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
VERBAL? VOCAL? VISUAL?



Effective Communication

- Words 7%
- Voice 40%
- Body Language 53%



Developing good communications skills helps us promote effective relationships and saves time!

Barriers to Effective Listening

- Mind reading
- Day-dreaming
- Checking text messages
- Worrying about home
- Arguing/disagreeing
- Jumping to conclusions
- Rehearsing your next question
- Switching off mentally when you disagree
- Bias and prejudice
- The 'Halo Effect'

Effective listening and questioning allows you to move beyond facts and data to uncover a person's feelings, values and beliefs

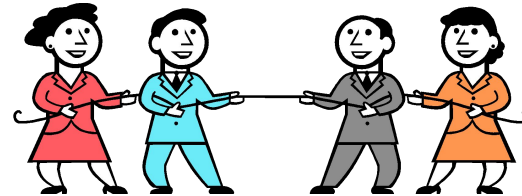
Handout: Measuring your Communication Skills

- Listening
- Ability to get your message across
- Ability to “read” others
- Emotional management
- Assertive communication
- Good communication habits

In pairs, discuss and rate your communication skills

Understanding Conflict

- Intra-personal
- Inter-personal
- Inter-role
- Inter-organisational/group
- Inter-community
- International



Common Sources of Conflict

A range of factors can determine whether conflicts will arise or whether our working relationships with others will be harmonious

- Unclear definition of responsibilities:
- Occasions where conflict arises because of decisions or actions taken in disputed territories outside of their remit
- Limited resources: Competition for resources of time, money, space etc. may lead to interpersonal conflict
- Conflict of interest: Individual prioritise their own personal goals ahead of the company objectives

CONFLICT WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

- Conflict is not uncommon. Minor disagreements or heated discussion are inevitable aspects in most organisations.
- Conflict may well be a sign of a healthy organisation. There should be clashes of ideas about tasks and projects and disagreements should not be suppressed but be brought out into the open and be discussed and all issues explored and conflicts resolved.



CONFLICT WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

- Conflict becomes counter productive when it is based on personality clashes or when it is treated as an unseemly mess that needs to be hurriedly cleared away rather than resolving the main issues
- Often conflict resolution strategies fail because the individuals involved are unable or unwilling to resolve the conflict. If a conflict cannot be resolved, other options should be investigated such as a formal complaint or grievance procedure, external mediation etc.

Problems in Conflict Management

1. **Parties will avoid conflict.** Act as if there is nothing wrong leading to even greater problems in the future and drives the conflict “underground” where it’s harder to fix.
2. **The blame game.** People engage in finger pointing and personalise the criticism e.g. he’s such a Wally (or worse!!)
3. **Adopting a win/lose mentality.** Individuals seek victory in the conflict and are not easily prepared to compromise.

Avoid a Defensive Climate

- **Evaluation:** Judging or criticising others
- **Control:** Imposing the will of one on another person or group
- **Strategy:** Hidden agendas
- **Neutrality:** Showing indifference or lack of interest
- **Superiority:** Expressing dominance due to rank or status
- **Certainty:** Being rigid in one's willingness to listen and pre-judging the outcome

Promote a Supportive Climate

- **Descriptive:** Presenting ideas or opinions.
- **Problem orientation:** Focusing attention on the task.
- **Spontaneity:** Communicating openly and honestly.
- **Empathy:** Understanding the other person's thoughts. Standing in their shoes
- **Equality:** Asking for opinions and/or advice.
- **Provisionally:** Expressing a willingness to listen to the ideas and thoughts of another.
- **Conflict can be constructive:** Recognised that if properly managed it can have a positive impact on the team.
- **Be prepared:** Plan how you will communicate about conflict in order to create a supportive climate in the work place.
- **Be involved:** Do not withdraw or avoid conflict but rather constructively search for solutions.

Framework for Discussing Problems

If solutions are to be developed by problem solving, they have to be generated by those who share the responsibility for seeing the solutions work.

1. Firstly, those concerned work to define the problem and agree on the objectives to be attained in reaching a solution.
2. alternative solutions are generated and their merits are debated.
3. agreement is reached on the preferred course of action and how it can be implemented.

Framework for Discussing Problems

The following sequence of five questions will allow the issues to be fully teased out:

1. Can you describe the problem or the situation to me?
2. How is this currently impacting on you?
3. If nothing changes, what are the implications?
4. What's the ideal outcome for you?
5. What are the next steps and when should I follow up with you?

Having given people the opportunity to make their views known you may well be surprised at the simplicity of the solutions offered

Resolving Conflicts

Don't avoid conflict altogether by pretending it does not exist.

- **Resolving should be characterised by co-operation, mutual respect and teamwork.**
- **Disputes can sometimes become emotional.**
- **Don't lose track of the main issue.**
- **Keep people focused on the real issue.**
- **Don't let a dispute become personal and do not tolerate bullying, harassment or humiliation**

Resolving Conflicts

There are three possible solutions:

- **1. Accommodation-** can work but make sure you are not losing sight of team or organisational goals.
- **2. Find a win/win solution-** where every one is a winner.
- **3. Compromise-** where each party recognises the need to make concessions.

- “The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug”

Mark Twain



Managing problem behaviour at meetings – Pair work: discuss possible solutions:

- Nobody says anything
- People have side conversations
- One person dominates
- A row breaks out!
- Discussion goes round in circles
- Cool or hostile atmosphere

Handling Complaints

Be Nice!



**Use your EARS and your EYES and not
your MOUTH!**

Aggressive Complainers

Aggressive Complainers need:

- Someone to take notice
- Permission to let off steam
- Explanations not excuses
- To get back in control
- A solution

They don't want:

- To be patronised
- To be denied their feelings
- Shouting back
- An argument
- Denial and justification
- Authoritative behaviour

Aggressive Complainers

What should you do?

1. **Understand the feelings behind it**
 - Calm the person down- talk quietly
 - Don't become hostile or offensive
 - Stay focused on the problem
 - Show the person you are taking it seriously

Aggressive Complainers

2. Find a solution

- Establish the facts of the problem
- Involve the client – what do they want of you
- Discuss alternatives if necessary
- Take action and follow - up



Handling an Angry Phone Call

- Listen actively – give feedback
- Keep your voice calm and even
- Don't be tempted to attack or patronise
- Don't roll your eyes or drum your fingers!
- Don't put the phone down in temper

Handling an Angry E-mail or Letter

- Put it to one side for a while – let your temper cool
- Stick to the facts in the reply
- Don't reply with inflammatory language
- Be very polite and considered
- Ask someone to check your reply before it is sent

Passive Complainers

- Type A: Don't say anything: Create the chance to ask open questions and show you welcome complaints
- Type B: Use mind games to make their point and poisonous (unexpected) little barbs: Don't be intimidated. Don't despair, and don't react. Bring them back to the facts!

Constructive Complainers

- Don't dismiss their ideas
- Thank them for their suggestions
- Put right what you can



Groupwork

- Develop 6 ways to deal effectively with conflict...



Thank you all

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