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Soft Skills

Manmohan Joshi

MANMOHAN JOSHI

SOFT SKILLS

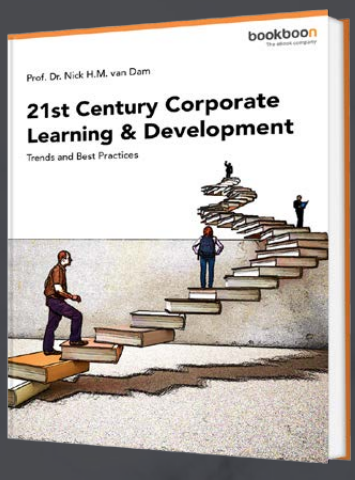
Soft Skills
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Peer review by Vanita J., M.A. B.E.d., CELTA
Senior Trainer Acharya Institute of English & Foreign Languages, Bangalore

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1 SOFT SKILLS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Most organisations require that those who work in them have certain abilities that allow them to do their jobs effectively. For example, photographers must understand how different camera settings and lighting affect the picture they are taking, and computer programmers need to know how to use Programming languages. These abilities are known as hard or technical skills and to learn them one usually enrolls in some sort of educational programme i.e. where they receive classroom instruction and often practical training as well.

However, to work in any occupation you also need what are referred to as 'soft skills' (often referred to as 'life skills'). Soft skills as opposed to hard skills (such as technical skills) greatly impact the personality development of employees. Organisations today recognize that the professional development of their employees plays an important part in maintaining relationships with their customers, clients, suppliers, co-workers and developing a successful business. However, soft skills are not a replacement for hard or technical skills. In fact, they are complementary to them and serve to unlock the potential of people equipped with hard skills.

The sooner the relevant soft skills are learned and developed the better. The learning stage of these skills must start at least at the graduate school level – if not earlier. Today, companies, while interviewing job seekers, are not really worried about the candidates' technical or domain depths. They know that they can teach them the most exotic technology effortlessly, but they also know that the soft skills are the hardest to drive in. Hence the right time to learn these is the time when you are preparing for your graduate/post-graduate programmes.

1.2 WHAT ARE SOFT SKILLS?

Soft skills are the personal character traits or qualities each of us has. They make us who we are, generally encompassing our attitudes, habits and how we interact with other people. They refer to abilities that make people better employees and open doors for many opportunities that are not directly related to the subject matter of their jobs. In other words, soft skills refer to a person's ability to relate to others, to get him/her and others organised, to communicate in written, spoken or other forms.

SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills have been defined by the World Health Organisation as follows:

> ***"These are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life."***

UNICEF defines these skills (called life skills) as:

> ***"A behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills."***

Soft skills include psycho-social abilities and interpersonal skills that help people take decisions, solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, demonstrate qualities of leadership and team building, manage time effectively, and cope with the stress and strain of life in a healthy and productive manner.

Essentially, there are two kinds of skills – those related to thinking called 'thinking skills' and skills related to dealing with others called 'social skills.' While thinking skills relate to the personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving behaviour change and negotiating effectively.

1.3 NEED FOR SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills allow us to effectively and efficiently use our technical skills and knowledge. They improve the way we interact with our bosses, co-workers and customers/clients. They permit us to get our work done on time. They influence how we feel about our jobs and how others perceive us.

Consequently, the demand for and reliance on soft skills is on the increase due to constant change in the work environment, customer-driven market, information-based technology and globalization.

The development of soft skills in this market is important as there is intense competition for many available positions. The ability to develop and use soft skills can make the difference between the achiever and the non-achiever.

SOFT SKILLS

Earlier the focus of management was on 'hard' skills. The emphasis was on the technical skills necessary to perform effectively. These skills tended to be more closely related to the actual task being performed. But now every single occupation you can think of demands that you have specific character traits. Moreover, an important thing to note is that soft skills are *transferable* between occupations. While you may have to go back to school to learn new technical skills if you change careers, you can always take your soft skills with you since they are valued in a variety of fields.

Today, employers want people with efficient soft skills. These are key skills to effective performance across all job categories. As the world has changed, and the nature of work has changed, the skill set required of managers and other executives has changed.

Today's business is all about people. It is about communication, relationships and about presenting yourself, your company and your ideas in the most positive and impactful way. Many business people like to think that success is based on logical, rational thoughts and acts, but it is also to be remembered that the human element is as important as the skills mentioned above. That is why a strong soft skills set is considered to be very important.

2 PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

2.1 WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Personality is the way we look, feel and behave. It is the totality of a person's being – not merely the external appearance but also various other traits.

Personality includes the following:

❖ **Character traits:**
- **Integrity:** a person's honesty in dealing with others, loyalty to one's beliefs, value systems etc.
- **Acceptance:** by others who come into contact with a person, and recognizing and accepting them as a whole.
- **Discipline:** refers to a person's disciplined approach to life and work.
- **Dedication:** refers to the commitment a person shows towards the achievement of individual as well as group goals.

❖ **Behavioural traits:**
- **Interpersonal skills:** the way a person develops and sustains interpersonal relations with all those he/she has dealings with – bosses, co-workers, fellow students, customers/clients, suppliers, private and government organisations.
- **Communication skills:** refer to the effective way a person communicates with others through various channels – writing, speaking, listening, and using positive body language.
- **Leadership qualities:** refer to the qualities which help a person behave in a leadership position – getting work done willingly, exercising participative leadership style, and be a role model by setting example.
- **Team management:** refers to the effectiveness with which a person demonstrates ability to build and manage team in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives.
- **Stress management:** the quality of keeping cool in stressful circumstances, identifying the factors causing stress, and finding solutions to reduce – if not eliminate altogether – the stressors.

❖ **Attitudes:**
- **Positive attitude:** be able to have a positive attitude even in the face of difficulties and impossible situations, and be willing to try out ideas in the face of obstacles and hardships.
- **Win/Win situation:** be able to negotiate and bring around the other person to an acceptable solution to a problem – thus creating a win/win situation for both the parties.

- **Keep the end in mind:** be able to focus on the ultimate end (goal) in mind bypassing the various problems that may crop up on the way.
- **Synergize:** be able to combine or work together in order to be more effective, or to make things or people do this.

2.2 TYPES OF PERSONALITY

There are several types of personality people have. Some of these are:

- **Perfectionists:** They are never satisfied till they achieve perfection. Sometimes people forget that there is nothing which can be absolutely 'perfect'; it may be rather very close to the idea of being perfect. Such people are usually a source of stress for themselves as well as for others working with them. However, such people cannot be categorically criticized for aiming at total perfection as they tend to achieve excellent results.
- **Helpers:** They are always willing to help others in times of need – with guidance, advice, resources etc.



- **Romantics:** They are sometimes called dreamers and think of innovative ideas which sometimes people think are impractical. But sometimes the craziest idea can lead to a wonderful new design, product or service. Quite often the world moves on the shoulders of dreamers! If we can't dream, we can't think, we can't imagine, we may not be able to act on some new idea.
- **Achievers:** These are the people who are determined to achieve what they have planned for. They put all their efforts in performing to their utmost capacity, show dedication to the task in hand, and ultimately reach their goal. It is the expected sense of achievement that propels such people.
- **Asserters:** These people neither remain passive nor aggressive in any situation. They rather assert their rights, respect the rights of others, and have the innate ability to convince others and thus elicit cooperation from all.
- **Questioners:** They are 'Doubting Toms.' They question everybody's opinion, behaviour, ideas, way of working etc., and quite often are dissatisfied with the outcome. Others quite often misunderstand such people and consider them to be obstacles to progress.
- **Adventurers:** They are ever ready to take risks in order to reach their goal. No risk is too big for them, and so they believe in experimentation with an adventurous spirit.
- **Observers:** There are some who are great observers of people and things around them. They visibly – or surreptitiously sometimes – observe people, events, things, environment etc., and are often a source of important information which others might not have noticed. Quite often such people are good at analysing things, events, people etc.
- **Peacemakers:** They avoid confrontational situations, and always take initiative in making peace with different parties who may be at loggerheads with each other.

We cannot say that every individual can be categorized into only one of these. More often than not, we have several characteristics common to the above-mentioned types. However, one particular characteristic may be dominant in one person, and another in the other person. So which one are you? Think about it!

2.3 PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Personality development means enhancing and grooming one's outer and inner self in order to bring about a positive change to their life. Each individual has a distinct personality that can be polished, refined and developed.

2.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Personality development is gaining more and more importance because it enables people to create a good impression about themselves on others. It helps them to build and develop relationships, helps in their career growth. Some people have particularly charismatic persona, while others are strong listeners and advice-givers. It is important to have the ability to build on and develop strengths, while at the same time acknowledging and working to improve on the weak points in your personality. After all, personality development is a tool that helps you realise your capabilities and your strengths making you a stronger, a happier and a successful person.

2.4 ELEMENTS OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The following elements are crucial to the development of personality:

- Self-awareness;
- Goal setting;
- Creativity;
- Innovation;
- Human Values.

2.4.1 SELF-AWARENESS

It includes recognition of 'self' – your character, your strengths and weaknesses, desires, likes and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help you recognize when you are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often a pre-requisite to effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy with others. You need to think of these aspects:

- **Self-concept:**
  - **Attitude:** to life, people, and work.
  - **Beliefs:** political, moral.
  - **Values:** moral, social, political, economic, community.
- **Self-image:** It is important to realise how you look at yourself. You need to know how others would view your image, and that is why you need to nurture it. In order to nurture your self-image you need to know how many 'selves' you have, and how you look after each.

They are:

- **Material self:**
  - **Your body:** You have only one body so take care of it.
  - **Your possessions:** You need to be concerned for keeping all the things in immaculate condition, e.g. car, bike, music system, air-conditioner, books, and any other things you own.
  - **Your home:** This is where you and members of your family live and interact with each other. So you need to ensure a supportive and congenial environment.
- **Social self:**
  - **Interaction with others:** Interaction with other people – family, friends, bosses, co-workers, neighbours – needs to be unbroken and effective.
  - **Relationships with people:** A clear demarcation needs to be made with regard to your relationships at the social as well as the professional level. These relationships need to be nurtured over a period of time and sustained.
- **Spiritual self:** You need to be clear in your spiritual beliefs and your relationship with forces in the universe. You need to have the courage of conviction to stand by your beliefs and values.



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In order to be clear in your perceptions you need to ask yourself:

- **Who am I?** What are my strengths and weaknesses? What are my priorities? How do I see myself? How do others see me?
- **Who do I want to be?** What are my short-term goals? What are my long-term goals? (In personal as well as professional life)
- **How do I go about it?** What steps do I need to take in order to achieve my goals? What resources are available to me? What more resources can I avail?

To understand all this, it would be beneficial if you do your SWOT Analysis.

2.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT is the acronym for 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.' It is in effect a distillation of all the steps and considerations that should be taken to know about your own self and take appropriate measures.

2.5.1 STRENGTHS

Answer these questions about yourself:

- What are the professional qualifications I have that make me stand out from others?
- What are my outstanding skills?
- What do others think about my strengths?

2.5.2 WEAKNESSES

List your weaknesses. (You may consult a close friend or a family member about them.):

- Do I have some undesirable habits?
- What do others think of my weaknesses?

2.5.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Think of the opportunities that are available and you can make use of:

- What technology and/or new knowledge can I use for improvement in my skills?
- What new skills can give me a competitive advantage over others?

2.5.4 THREATS

There are likely to be a number of threats that may pose obstacles to your progress. List them:

- Is someone doing better than me?
- Are new technologies threatening my progress?
- Are my personal traits preventing me from achieving my targets?
- What are the obstacles I am facing?

So do a SWOT analysis of yourself and know your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This exercise will help you to analyse yourself and prepare the ground to take corrective measures.

SWOT analysis



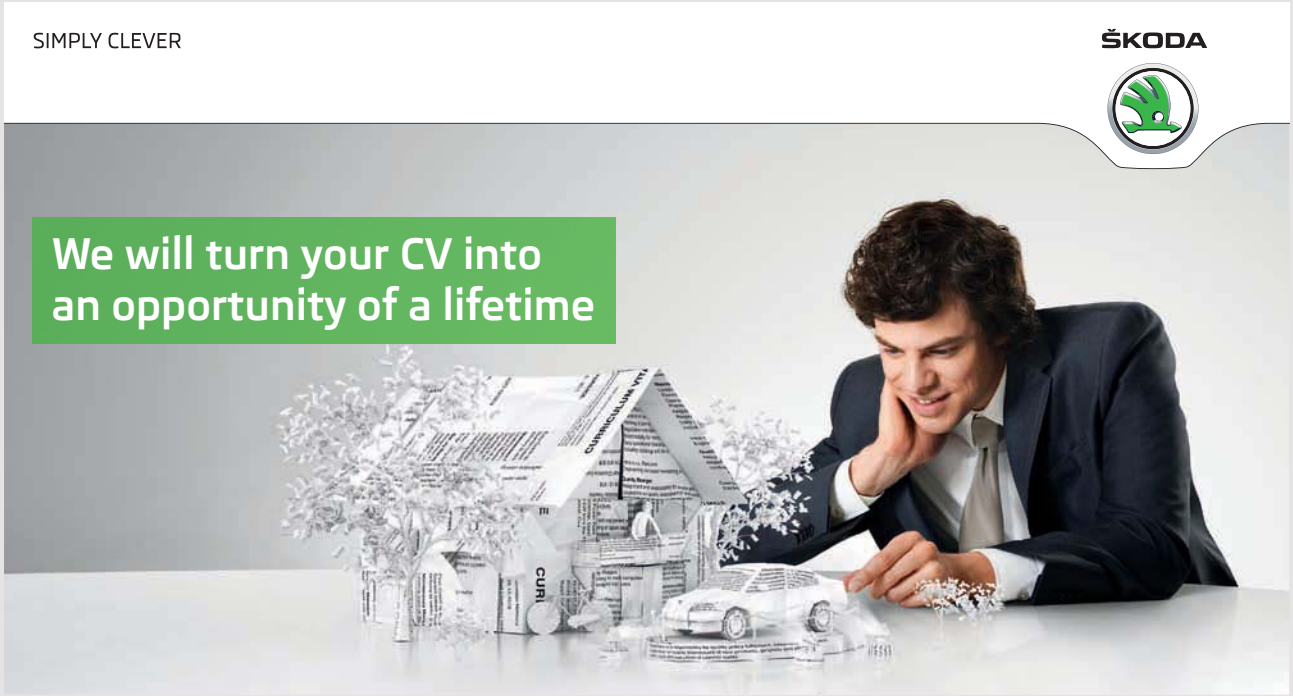
How can you use the results of your SWOT analysis?

- **Focus on your strengths when:**
  - Writing your CV;
  - Facing an interview;
  - Aiming for promotion;
  - Interacting with others.
- **Be prepared for multi-tasking:**
  - In modern times doing just one task at a time is not enough. Learn to do multi-tasking at a time.
  - Quite often several of them may be related to each other.
  - Multi-tasking prepares you for a more responsible position in future.

- **Pay attention to, and take suitable steps to:**
  - Work on your weaknesses and reduce them (if not eliminate them altogether).
  - Work on changing your threats to opportunities you can explore and use to your advantage.

2.6 GOAL SETTING

Many strong personalities are shaped and moulded by big visions and goals that they have. Determine what it is you want to accomplish most – whether it is to become a successful architect, a scientist, or a management professional. Setting goals is a major step on the road to developing an engaging and fascinating personality.

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2.6.1 WHAT IS A GOAL?

We can say that:

- A goal is a roadmap to future. You need to decide what your ultimate goal is (in personal and professional life). After you have decided on your goal, you need to plan how you are going to achieve it. Failing to plan is actually the same as planning to fail. While making a plan you need to think of all the aspects and resources – physical, mental and financial – you would need. Abraham Lincoln once remarked: *"If I had 8 hours to chop down a tree, I'd need 6 sharpening my axe*."
- Goals need to be specific. You can't achieve anything if you are vague and not focused on a specific target to achieve.
- Think about the following:
  - Do you believe you can achieve?
  - You need to dream.
  - Keep the dream alive, reach your goal.
  - If you don't decide what you want out of life, you have no goal.
- Remember:
  - Goals need to be realistic: *"I want to lose 20 kg in 1 month!"*
  - Is it realistic?
  - Prioritize your goals and decide the order of their importance.
  - Assess your resources: money, information, health, skills etc.

2.6.2 TYPES OF GOALS

There are two types of goals and you need to concentrate on both (though with different perspectives and approaches):

- **Short-term goals:** Be clear about them and work towards achieving them.
- **Long-term goals:** While taking care of short-term goals, do not lose sight of your long-term goals because they are the ones that you ultimately want to achieve. Quite often some short-term goals pave the way for long-term goals too.

2.6.3 SMART GOALS

Pick each one of the following and analyse critically:

S = Specific
M = Measurable
A = Attainable
R = Relevant
T = Time-bound

2.7 CREATIVITY

It means to:

- Perceive the world in new ways;
- Find hidden pattern in things, situations and behaviours;
- Make connections with unrelated phenomena; and
- Generate solutions and act on them.

2.7.1 PROCESS OF CREATIVITY

There are two steps to creativity:

- **Thinking:** Think of an idea, an approach which is either different from others or altogether new.
- **Producing:** Convert your idea into action.

If you have ideas but do not act on them, you are imaginative but not creative.

2.7.2 INNOVATION

It is an extension of one's creativity, and means implementation of a new or improved:

- Product;
- Service; or
- Process.

Moreover, any innovation should be able to create value in order to be acceptable.

2.7.3 BARRIERS TO CREATIVITY

Creativity can take a back seat if one faces the following barriers:

- **Making assumptions:** You are prepared to look at all aspects and make your own assumptions, and do not care for others' feedback or ideas.
- **Over-reliance on logic:** If you are over-reliant on your logical thinking, you create obstacles to new thought or approach. Everything cannot be achieved only by logic. Whereas logic opposes, a hunch, a dream can become reality through experimentation.
- **Cultural barriers:** Sometimes some people are unable to involve themselves in tasks that require a creative approach on account of cultural barriers – fear of castigation from the community or orthodox religious beliefs.

- **Emotional barriers:** A lot of people have strong emotional approach to changing the existing pattern of things and remain attached to the old order without realizing that change is the only constant factor in life. This feeling of emotional attachment to the existing order creates obstacles to creativity.
- **Perceptual barriers:** Our perceptions play a crucial role in our approach to creativity. If we have a mental block with respect to the ways things could improve by using creative and innovative methods, we just cannot be creative.
- **Resource barriers:** In order to create something several resources may be needed, and if we have a resource crunch, we won't be able to proceed further.
- **Stress:** Any creative work can be done only with a relaxed mind and body. If we are passing through a stressful phase, it is just not humanly possible to generate creative ideas.



2.7.4 STEPS TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY

You can stimulate your creativity by going through the following steps:

- **Associating:** looking at different ideas, analysing and grouping problems.
- **Questioning:** posing questions to yourself and others, and questioning the validity and practicality of ideas and approaches.
- **Observing:** surveying the environment, and observing people, events, situations.
- **Networking:** You may need the cooperation and support of those who are willing to help you in your creative ventures.
- **Experimenting:** The validity of any idea or approach cannot be ascertained unless there is a process of experimentation. A lot of ideas emerge to be viable propositions with trial and error process. This is the way to learn something new.

2.7.5 TYPES OF PEOPLE

Creativity and innovation are greatly dependent on the type of person one is. There are basically three types of people:

- Those that make things happen.
- Those that let it happen.
- Those that don't know what happened.

Which one are you? You can be creative only if you belong to the first category.

2.8 HUMAN VALUES

Values play a crucial role in our life. They are the driving force to develop the personality of an individual. Values determine what we should do and how we should do. The choice between two things (ideas, beliefs, actions) depends upon the relative value of things. This choice keeps changing according to one's interest and contemporary circumstances.

According to Dorothy Lee (1959),

"We can speak about human values, but we cannot know it directly. We infer value through its expression in behaviour."

This phenomenon depends upon one's expression out of which may emerge certain general guides to behaviour. These guides tend to give direction to life and may be called values which in turn play a pivotal role in shaping up our overall personality.

2.8.1 CATEGORIES OF VALUES

Values may be broadly classified into three categories:

- **Personal values:** such as honesty, courage, self-reliance, hygiene, maturity of thought, dignity of labour, courtesy, loyalty etc.
- **Community values:** such as service, justice, sharing, team-spirit, non-violence etc.
- **Social values:** such as cooperation, concern for others, sense of social responsibility, secularism etc.

In order to identify and develop the concept and practice of values, it will be worthwhile to answer these questions:

- Is this something that you really wanted?
- Are you glad about that?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- Did you consider any alternative?
- What is that something that you yourself chose?
- Did you have to choose that?
- Did you do anything about that behaviour pattern?
- Can you give some examples of that behaviour?
- Would you really do that or are you just talking?
- Have you thought much about that behaviour?
- What are the other possibilities?
- Is there a purpose behind this activity?
- Is that very important to you?
- Would you do the same thing again?
- How do you know it is right?
- Do you value that?

Introspection on the above questions will guide you to the development of values so necessary for the development of your personality.

2.8.2 VALUES AND ETHICS

As people develop the ability and inclination to articulate their doubts and concerns, of which there are clear indications in every corner of the globe, matters of 'ethics' – behaviour, good conduct – in relation to one's activities as well as others assumes greater importance.

We can say that:

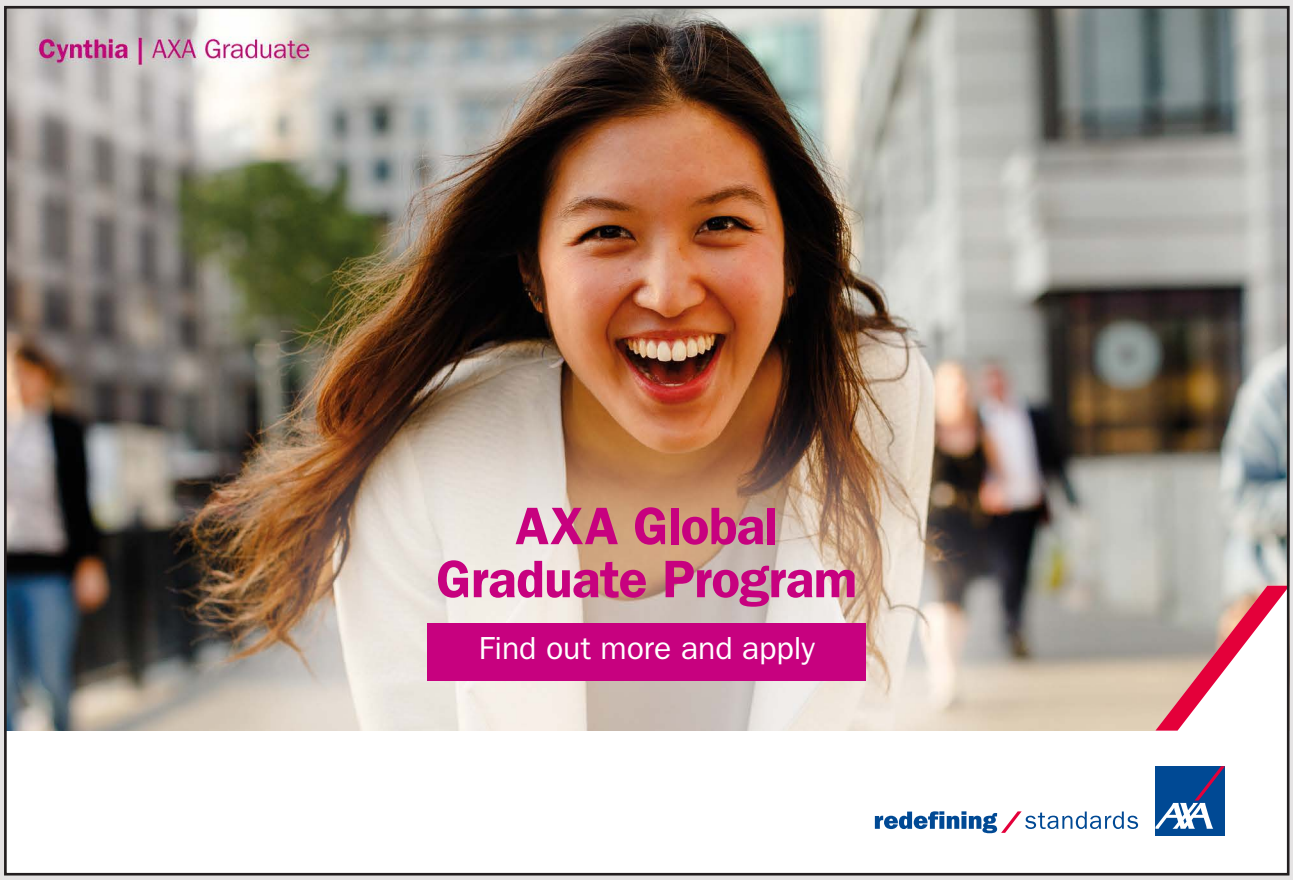
- Values determine what is right and what is wrong; and
- Doing what is right or wrong is ethics.

In order to develop the overall personality it is essential to adhere to the values of life and be involved in putting them into practice through ethical behaviour.

2.8.3 BECOMING A ROLE MODEL

You can be a role model to a large number of people in whose contact you come – directly as well as indirectly. You can do so by following these:

- Demonstrate confidence;
- Demonstrate leadership;
- Do not be afraid to be unique;
- Show respect to and concern for others;
- Be knowledgeable;
- Have humility; and
- Have courage to admit mistakes.



3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

All of us use communication skills when we use them at home with our family members, at school or college with our classmates and teachers, in the workplace with our bosses and colleagues, on our computers when we answer emails, and on the telephone when we order pizza. In fact, communication is the lifeblood of social as well business world.

3.2 MEANING

Communication is the process by which we give, receive or exchange information with others. Communication means interacting with others:

- To promote understanding;
- To achieve a result of some kind;
- To pass information to another person so that they can take action.

It can involve speaking, listening or writing. This information does not necessarily need to be hard facts. Sometimes just a shrug of the shoulder can act as our means of communication.

3.3 PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

One might think we would all live quite happily without communicating at all, but no – we all need to communicate throughout our life. Communication is a fundamental part of human life. Since we spend a lot of our daily life communicating in one way or another, we should be very good at it, but unfortunately, this is not the case. Life would be a lot easier if we always knew exactly what others were trying to say. Quite often people fail to communicate in a way that you could understand.

Ann Dobson (2000) has said:

"Nowhere is effective communication more important than at work. Vital information needs to be given, received, exchanged and understood hundreds of times in every working day. Many business transactions go wrong simply because of poor communication between people concerned."

3.4 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The communication process involves the sender who transmits a message through a selected channel to the receiver.

3.4.1 THE CHANNEL

Information is transmitted over a 'channel' that links the sender with the receiver. The channel may be a computer, a telephone, a television, or face-to-face conversation. At times, two or more channels are used. The proper selection of channel is vital for effective communication.

Not only must information or instructions or ideas be passed from one party to another, but the 'receiving' party must also understand exactly what the 'sending' or 'transmitting' party had in mind. If one party does not clearly understand the meaning of a message – or misunderstands or misinterprets its meaning – errors and mistakes, disagreements and disputes, and even accidents, can occur.

Figure 3/1 below depicts this concept.

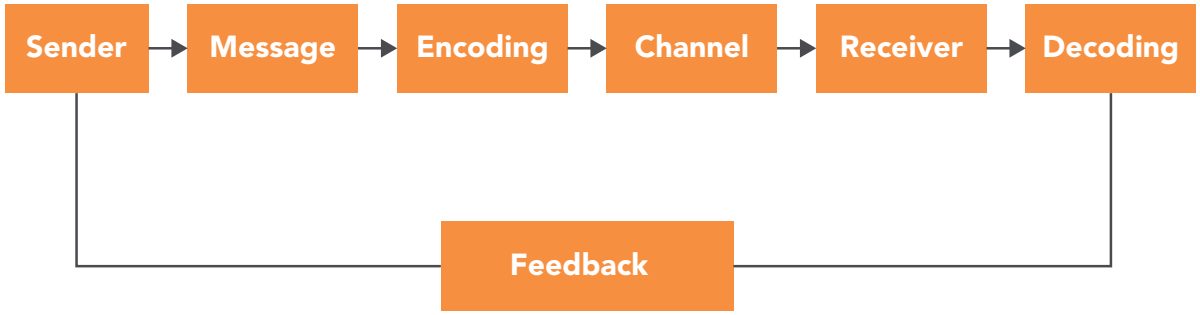


Fig. 3/1 Communication process model

3.5 KEY ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

There are three key elements in the communication process. They are the following:

- **You:** You bring professional experience, education and training to the communication process. How you communicate shows you.
- **Your audience:** In order to be an effective communicator, you need to know who your audience is. You need different means, content and language with different categories of people.
- **Your message:** The message element is equally important. What do you want to say? What is the best way to communicate your message? All messages should contain who, what, when, where, why and how (as appropriate to the message).

3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective messages have the following characteristics:

- **Clear:** Communication should be clear and self-explanatory about why it has been transmitted.
- **Complete:** The information given should be complete and should not have any scope for questions.
- **Correct:** The information provided should be correct and based on facts. Facts should be given rather than impressions.
- **Save reader's time:** Written communication should be such that the reader saves time in understanding the message.
- **Create goodwill:** The pleasant, correct and clear message will result in creating goodwill for the sender of the message.
- **Clarify and condense information:** Business messages should frequently use tables, photos or diagrams to clarify or condense information, to explain a process, or to emphasize important information.



- **State precise responsibilities:** Business messages are directed to specific audience. Therefore, you must clearly state what is expected of, or what you can do for, that particular audience.
- **Persuade and recommend:** Business messages are frequently given to customers, clients, management or subordinates to accept the suggestions and recommendations given.

Fig. 3/2 below shows the characteristics of effective communication.

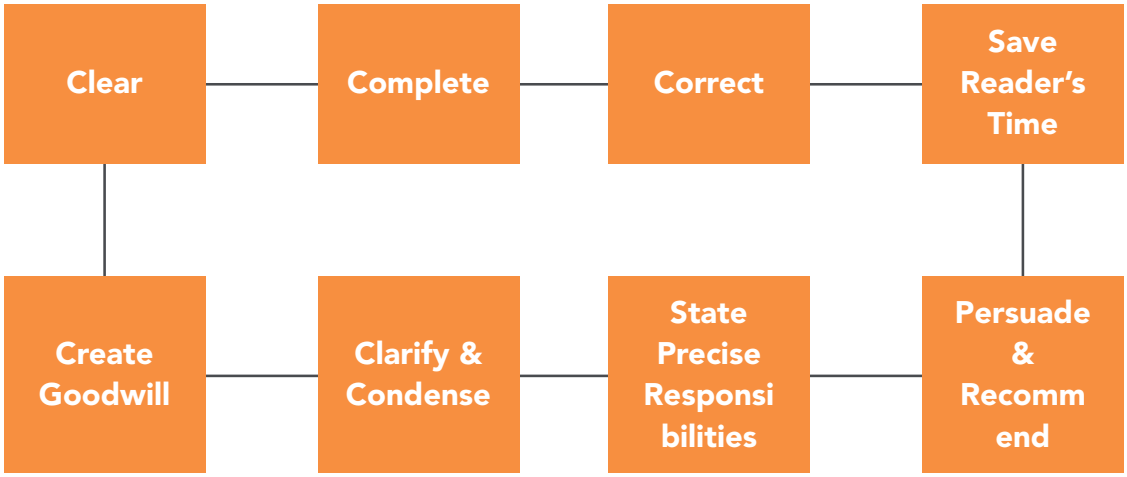


Fig. 3/2 Characteristics of effective communication

3.7 TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION

There are four basic tools of communication:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

All four of these skills can be learned and improved. First, you must want to improve your communication skills. Next, you must understand them, and recognize their importance in the communication process. Then, you need to learn some new skills. Finally, you must practise good skills to become a better, more effective communicator.

At an early age we begin to learn to speak, early enough that it is difficult to remember the process. However, most of us can recall learning to read and write. These are skills we learn from parents and teachers. We spend most of our communication time listening. Yet, listening is a skill we are not taught, unlike writing, reading and speaking. Probably listening is the most important communication skill we can develop.

3.8 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication can be classified into the following:

3.8.1 FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

It is the easiest. You can explain what you mean. If a person does not understand, ask yourself:

- Are you using the language they understand – not difficult but simple words?
- Are your ideas going over their heads?
  - ❖ **There are three areas that matter in communication:**
    - **Words:** what we say.
    - **Tone:** how we say.
    - **Body language:** how we look when we are saying it.
  - ❖ **Advantages of face-to-face communication:**
    - People can see what you mean.
    - Eye contact helps you establish if the other person is listening and understanding.
    - Your body language can help them believe what you are saying.
  - ❖ **Disadvantages of face-to-face communication:**
    - You can give away your true feelings.
    - The other person may not understand the words you say.
    - They may not like the way you are saying words.

3.8.2 USING TELEPHONE

While on telephone:

- Talk as if you were face-to-face with the other person.
- Talk pleasantly.
- Sound alert and interested.
- Talk normally. Avoid speaking too softly or loudly.
- Speak words clearly and properly.
- Listen carefully and concentrate on what is being said.
- Do not allow distractions in the room to interfere with your listening abilities.

3.9 LISTENING SKILLS

Most people are born with good hearing, but not good listening skills. Listening is a mental process requiring effort, and we can learn how to be good listeners. There are some simple steps to becoming a better listener, but they take practice to achieve results.

Here are some ways to listen better whether in a large group or one-to-one:

- Give your full attention.
- Do not assume what the other person is going to say.
- Do not waste listening time formulating what your reply is going to be.
- Show by eye contact and an interested expression that you are paying attention.
- Make notes if appropriate.
- Be patient for the entire message.
- Be aware of speech cues (who, what, where, when, why, how).
- Listen for ideas, not just facts. (Stories, reasons, goals help us remember facts.)
- Verify: *"So you're saying that…"*
- Question: *"What do you mean when you say…?"*
- Acknowledge: Look at the speaker and nod.



- Silence: This allows you to give your undivided attention to the other person. This method is especially useful when people come to you with strong feelings – either positive or negative. Their first need is simply to share the feelings and to have someone listen.
- Encourage: *"Tell me more." "Would you like to talk about it?"*

3.10 SPEAKING SKILLS

Before speaking it is necessary for the speaker to know what to say and how to say it. Both the content and manner are important. A wrong word here and there and/or an unpleasant tone could cause irreparable damage.

You should also know your audience – their level of knowledge, age-group, interest level, goals, hierarchy etc. This will enable you to reach out to them irrespective of the fact whether you are speaking to a single individual, a small group of people, or even a large audience.

Another approach is to ask questions in order to be able to respond in an effective manner. These could be posed in the following manner:

- **Close-ended questions:** They are designed to clarify and can be answered with a 'Yes' or 'No' response.
  - *"Did you complete the assignment?"*
  - *"Do you require a little more time to do it?"*
- **Open-ended questions:** They are designed to get more information, and cannot be answered with a simple 'Yes' or 'No'.
  - *"How will you explain the law of Demand and Supply?"*
  - *"How can we assure you of our commitment to the project?"*
- **One-point solution:** This technique:
  - Identifies an urgent concern;
  - Focuses on one issue at a time;
  - Forces a choice; and
  - Leads to a specific solution:
    - ✓ *"What is the **one** thing that will make you agree to this proposal?"*
    - ✓ *"What is the **best** strategy to increase sales?"*
- **'Loaded question':** You must avoid asking a 'loaded' question – which means that the person asking the question 'loads' the expected answer into the question (or forces the other person to accept what they had no intention of doing).
  - *"When did you stop quarreling with your wife?"*
    (It assumes that you quarrel with your wife!)

- *"Don't you agree we should consult the General Manager before we decide on this matter?"*
  (Obviously the other person cannot disagree!)

3.11 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Approximately 75 per cent of our day-to-day communication is non-verbal. We communicate a lot without saying a word. The success of verbal communication also depends to a large extent on our non-verbal communication, as 'actions' speak louder than words.

3.11.1 ATTITUDE

You have the choice of how to approach an issue. You might come across situations that may discourage or disrupt you.

You can have either positive or negative attitude to a problem:

- You can choose to face obstacles with **positive** thinking:
  - Cheerfulness
  - Orderliness
  - Optimism
    - ✓ *"How can we do it? Let's think about it."*
    - ✓ *"Why don't we try it?"*
- Or with **negative** thinking:
  - Stubbornness
  - Hopelessness
  - Nastiness
  - *"We won't."* (implies a decision)
  - *"We can't."* (lack of power, sense of defeat)

3.11.2 BEHAVIOUR

Our attitudes lead us to certain behaviour. Behaviour and attitude operate together for most people. If we have positive attitude we tend to act positively, look for options, and seek solutions to problems. On the other hand, negative attitude leads to a feeling of defeat, and consequently to negative behaviour.

3.11.3 BODY LANGUAGE

We almost always express ourselves using what is known as body language.

Body language can be:

- A frown on your face;
- A smile;
- Crossing your arms;
- Tapping your feet;
- Gestures;
- Facial expressions etc.

Some show hostility, others show friendliness.



3.11.4 SPACE

In order to communicate effectively with people, we need to understand acceptable boundaries of space. Given below is an indication of how we generally use space in the communication process:

- **Public space:** It ranges from 10 to 20 feet between the audience and the speaker, such as at a press conference or an election meeting.
- **Social space:** It ranges from 4 to 10 feet, for example, communication among business associates, meeting strangers in public places.
- **Personal space:** It ranges from 2 to 4 feet, for example, among friends and family members, waiting in a queue at an ATM.
- **Intimate space:** There is no minimum range for contact with parents, spouses, children and close friends.

3.12 DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Every human being experiences conflict. It is a factor of human interaction. Whenever two or more people are involved in communication, there is potential for misunderstanding, and hence, conflict. How we handle conflict is the key to our own well-being and to developing and maintaining good relationships.

There are three basic ways to deal effectively with conflict situations:

- Listen carefully to determine the nature of the conflict;
- Identify areas of agreement; and
- Allow the other person a way out.

3.12.1 NEGOTIATION, PERSUASION, MEDIATION

The starting point for negotiating in conflict situations is to realise who the distressed, unhappy or concerned individual is. Human nature often causes us to assume it is *"the other person*." We say to ourselves, *"It's their problem*." In reality, we actually are the distressed party in the conflict.

Once we realise we have control over only our own behaviour, we have taken the first step in resolving conflict. Remember, your behaviour is in your control. You cannot control the other person's behaviour, except by changing your own actions toward that individual.

There are at least three tools to use to effect behaviour change:

- **Negotiation:** Arranging or managing through discussion or compromise;
- **Persuasion:** Moving your argument to a new position or belief;
- **Mediation:** Intervening in conflict with intent to resolve through discussion.

All three tools require you to present information in the form of facts. Information involves identifying who, what, where, when, why, and how. Agreement or at least presentation of information can lead to discovering ways to persuade individuals involved in conflict. Persuasion involves using information to convince others that there is more than one way to look at an issue. Mediation usually introduces a third party to the conflict in an attempt to resolve problems.

There are a variety of negotiation solutions to conflict. One that is easy to learn and use is the *'one-point'* solution. This technique involves getting feedback in the communication process, and involves open-ended questions.

The one-point solution is the difference between asking for:

- General feedback like, *"What is it you really want?"* or
- Specific response like, *"What is the **one** thing that will make you change your mind?"*

If you get only one response, it is usually something specific to use as the basis for negotiating a solution.

To use the one-point solution just keep the number '*one*' in mind when asking questions.

Here are some examples:

- *"What is one thing I could change in my behaviour?"*
- *"What one training programme could I attend to help me the most?"*
- *"What is one question I should ask that I haven't yet?"*
- *"What is one new service we could offer to put us ahead of competitors?"*
- *"What is one thing you think we need to do to work together better?"*

In order to resolve conflict, we must:

- Seek agreement on common ground;
- Refuse to argue;
- Seek commitment and action to change;
- Plot the follow-up; and
- Deliver on promise.

3.12.2 CRITICISM

When we hear the word 'criticism' we usually think of an unfavourable judgment. It is easy to understand how the word generates a negative meaning. If we set out to analyse the worth of one person compared to another, by definition one must look better and one worse than the other.

- **How do you deal with criticism?**
  - Try to take responsibility if it is yours to have.
  - Ask yourself if there is anything that you have done to deserve the criticism.



- **When and how to criticize?**
  - Avoid criticizing publicly. Do so privately.
  - Avoid using others as good examples because this compares one person to another and can embarrass people.
  - Choose the teachable moment and offer a one-point solution.
  - Use phrases that foster team work.
  - Offer suggestions for improvement, not merely blame.
- **How to criticize effectively?**
  - Direct your criticism at behaviour, not the person.
  - Say something positive.
  - Identify behaviour that can be fixed or changed.
  - Avoid use of the word 'You.'
  - Avoid negative words like 'No', 'Not', 'Never', 'Shouldn't'.
  - Offer specific ways to make changes in behaviour (doable action).

3.12.3 CONTROLLING ANGER

From time to time we all become angry. It is a human characteristic. But we are not born angry, we learn anger. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that we can learn to control it. Although we are not always successful in controlling our anger, the more we practise ways to control it, the more we will succeed.

Once we understand how to deal with our own anger, we can use that understanding to help us deal with anger in others.

❖ **How to deal with angry people:**

- Practise good listening skills (remain silent if necessary).
- Avoid interruptions.
- Acknowledge anger (do not tell an angry person, *"Now, don't be angry".*)
- Do not yell at or lecture angry people (it disrespects their point of view).
- Be responsive by verifying the person's message.
- Be specific about what you are going to do to help.
- Allow angry people a way out regardless of what they say.

3.13 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

There are many barriers to effective communication.

3.13.1 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Here are some barriers to effective listening. You will probably recognize that most of them apply to you all at one time or another:

- We can think faster than a speaker can talk, and jump to conclusions.
- We are distracted and allow our minds to wander.
- We lose patience, and decide we are not interested.
- We overreact to what is said and respond emotionally.
- We interrupt.

Other barriers include use of 'absolutes' and 'limits':

- Thinking or speaking of absolutes: *"It will never work." "We always do it that way."*
- Setting limits: *"We tried it that way once!"*

3.13.2 BARRIERS TO RESOLVING CONFLICT

Sometimes we create barriers to resolving conflict. If we do not confront the problem soon after identifying conflict, the issues may become more difficult to resolve. Other obstacles to resolution may include the following:

- Judging a problem too quickly;
- Searching for a single answer, and believing ours is the best;
- Assumption of either/or (either it's my way or not at all);
- Deciding that *"the problem is theirs, not mine".*

3.13.3 HOW TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO RESOLVING CONFLICT

Often we create obstacles to resolving conflict when the solutions are simple. If we determine that the conflict could be negotiated, and we are willing to do so, then it will be useful to list some options toward resolution. List them all, even the ones you really do not want. Be creative and invent options that seem unusual. This 'brainstorming' technique provides the basis for negotiating. Often 'crazy' ideas lead to acceptable ones.

From this point you decide what you can give up, and you find out what the other person can concede. Negotiating a resolution to conflict need not be an 'either/or' situation. Both parties in the conflict can win something if there is real effort to resolve the problem. Ask yourself these questions, as you move towards resolution:

- Is it worth fighting for?
- Can it be negotiated?
- Do I want to win the argument more than win a relationship?

3.14 OVERCOMING BARRIERS

In order to overcome barriers to effective communication and understand the true meaning of the message that comes through a particular communication, we need to filter the messages.



3.14.1 IDENTIFYING COMMUNICATION FILTERS

When you filter the coffee, grounds are left on the filter paper and only the liquid goes into the jug. A similar thing happens with communication. There are three types of filters which only allow a portion of the message to get through. As a result, we only receive part of the message and, often, only the part that we want to hear.

- ❖ **Attention filters:** Physical distractions such as the following:
  - **Noise:** other people talking, telephones ringing, traffic, music.
  - **Environment:** too hot/cold, poor lighting.
  - **Interruptions:** people, telephones.
  - **Timing:** trying to talk to someone when they are about to go somewhere or are in the middle of a job.
- ❖ **Emotional filters:** These are inherent in the speaker and probably unknown to the other person:
  - **Prejudice:** dislike of the other person (pre-conceived notion), the way they are dressed, the message itself.
  - **Status:** the other person is higher or lower in the organisation hierarchy, which can affect the way in which you speak and listen to them.
  - **Experience:** If previous communication with a person has resulted in an unpleasant experience, you will be wary when approaching them next time, not willing to repeat the experience.
  - **Assumptions:** assuming what the message will be and thus not listening properly.
  - **Values and beliefs:** We all have our own codes regarding morals, religion, and politics and so on. If the message transgresses these standards, we are likely to switch off.
- ❖ **Word filters:** Certain words and phrases can cause us to stop listening to the person who utters them:
  - **Criticism:** Few of us like to be criticized: *"That was the wrong way to tackle the problem!"*
  - **Moralizing:** *"You shouldn't have done that!"*
  - **Ordering:** *"I want the report on my desk by Thursday afternoon without fail".*
  - **Threatening:** *"If you don't do what I say, you will be in serious trouble".*
  - **Advising:** *"I suggest that you…."* (People will only accept the advice that agrees with their solution. They will respond to advice with the phrase *"Yes, but…."*

- **Logical argument:** It is too difficult to argue with logic.
- **Reassuring:** *"Never mind, everything will turn out all right in the end".*
- **Diverting:** *"Yes all right, but as I was saying…."*
- **Jargon:** Unless the listener understands the jargon (unfamiliar words and phrases), they will wonder what it means and will not be listening to the rest of the message.

3.14.2 REDUCING THE FILTERS

Even one filter can reduce the effect of or distort communication but in most instances, two or more are operating at the same time. Being aware that they exist is half the battle won in reducing the effect of filters.

It is not always possible to eliminate attention filters, but they can be reduced. If the proposed conversation will take more than a few minutes, find somewhere quiet to hold it and let it be known that you want no interruptions. It is simple enough to get your timing right. If someone approaches you at an inconvenient time, politely tell them so and arrange to meet later.

You can do little about other people's emotions, but try to put your own on hold when talking and listening to others. If you sense emotional filters becoming barriers, keep your conversation brief and to the point.

Take care over the words and phrases that you use. How would you respond as the listener? If you are on the receiving end, question the speaker, and ask him/her to justify their comments.

4 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationship skills are the soft skills or life skills we use every day to interact with other people, both individually and in groups. Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages. It is face-to-face communication, and is not just what is actually said but how it is said and the non-verbal messages sent through tone or voice, facial expressions, gestures and other body language.

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

These skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and sustain friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental, social and professional well-being.

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4.3 TYPES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Interpersonal relationship needs to be maintained with a wide variety of people, for example:

- Parents
- Spouse
- Children
- Family members
- Students
- Teachers
- Neighbours
- Co-workers
- Bosses

While dealing with different sets of people, different skills are used as per the situation.

4.4 USES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

We engage in some form of interpersonal communication on a regular basis. How well we communicate with others is a measure of our interpersonal skills.

We use these skills to:

- Exchange information;
- Establish contacts and maintain relationships;
- Express personal needs and understand the needs of others;
- Give and receive emotional support;
- Make decisions and solve problems;
- Anticipate and predict behaviour; and
- Influence the attitudes and behaviour of others.

4.5 FACTORS AFFECTING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mainly there are three factors that affect interpersonal relationships:

- Attitude
- Prejudice
- Stereotype

4.5.1 ATTITUDE

The following elements of attitude play a vital role in interpersonal relationships:

- **Object-based:** We form our attitudes directed towards a person, a group, an event, religion etc. We form specific opinions and behave accordingly.
- **Direction:** We could have a positive or a negative approach.
- **Stability:** We could be highly stable in our perception or be flexible as per the demands of a particular situation.
- **Motivational properties:** In certain circumstances we could be ready to act in a particular way, and act differently in another situation. What motivates us to act in a certain way differs from person to person, and from situation to situation.
- **Learnt behaviour:** We are not born with specific attitudes. We learn to have a certain attitude through our experiences with people and environment.
- **Manifestation as behaviour:** Our attitudes are manifested in our behaviour. They lead us to behave in a particular fashion as attitude and behaviour are closely linked with each other.
- **Components of attitude:** Attitude has three important components:
  - **Cognitive:** beliefs, value systems.
  - **Affective:** pleasant or unpleasant feelings, attraction or aversion.
  - **Behavioural:** actual behaviour in relation to a person or an object – positive or negative.

These three components have to be in harmony with each other. Any inconsistency causes tension and anxiety in all concerned.

4.5.2 PREJUDICE

Our prejudices (unfair or unreasonable opinions) are crucial in the formation of attitudes:

- **Biased attitude:** We prejudge people based on unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling in respect of religion, race, colour, nationality etc. We do so without having sufficient knowledge and it is based on limited experience.
- **Sources of prejudice:**
  - **Socialization practices:** based on imitation of elders.
  - **Personality characteristics:** categorizing people as black and white, or being for/against people.
  - **Inter-group conflicts:** majority vs minority in terms of numbers, hostility or friendliness.

4.5.3 STEREOTYPE

We stereotype people, and are unwilling to change our opinion. We do so as follows:

- **Over-generalized beliefs:** categorizing individuals and groups on account of pre-conceived notions, e.g. Asians, Jews, politicians.
- **Resistance to change:** being adamant and refusing to change.

4.6 HOW TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT STYLES

We deal with different types of people and different styles they adopt in their relationships. In order to accommodate these differing styles we generally need to do the following:

- Arrive promptly for any meeting or programme;
- Pay very close attention to deadlines;
- Do not procrastinate or make excuses;
- Be organised;
- Be open-minded to others' ideas;
- Be attentive;
- Show interest;
- Smile and be friendly; and
- Share personal experiences.



Given below are the methods we can use to deal with different styles:

4.6.1 "HANDS-ON" STYLE

- Accept structure;
- Try to do things in an exact and precise way;
- Minimize discussion – get to the task;
- Do things in sequential and orderly steps;
- Discuss and show practical applications;
- Demonstrate to illustrate an idea or point; and
- Allow for "hands-on" project-type tasks.

4.6.2 "THINKER" STYLE

- Use outlines, charts, graphs, and spatial mapping to show information and the relationship of ideas;
- Provide idea;
- Provide documentation;
- Be open to the use of abstract explanations and terms;
- Support information with facts;
- Support views and opinions with logic and evidence;
- Focus on main ideas, related details, and logical conclusions;
- Be open to topics that allow for debate;
- Be patient with quick and sudden moves from idea to idea; and
- Allow for research-type ideas.

4.6.3 "EXPLORER" STYLE

- Allow room for creativity and innovation;
- Relate ideas to the real world;
- Focus on processes and applications rather than facts;
- Be willing to take a risk or to investigate;
- Be patient when they jump from one idea to another; and
- Be willing to discuss ideas.

4.6.4 "FREE THINKER" STYLE

- Use gestures and positive body language;
- Use humour;
- Be sincere;
- Use images, pictures, and colour;

- Apply personal meaning to ideas;
- Show how ideas and details apply to life;
- Show interest and concern for people;
- Avoid questioning or challenging the person's insight or logic;
- Be patient with interruptions;
- Be open to metaphoric language and expression;
- Don't force structure – allow room for flexibility; and
- Allow for interactive-type tasks.

4.7 CONSEQUENCES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The way we develop our interpersonal relationship skills affects our attitude and behaviour. If we are able to enhance these skills we become aware of the following:

- **Liking:** We make an effort to like people, things and ideas even though we were initially reluctant to do so.
- **Understanding:** We start understanding that all the people are not the same. They have widely differing ideas, attitudes and patterns of behaviour, and we learn to deal with them in a positive frame of mind.
- **Trust:** Understanding takes us closer to building trust – in people, in ideas, in approaches. Trust is the backbone of any relationship – personal, social, professional.
- **Direct and indirect contact:** Sometimes we have direct contact with people and at other times we have indirect contact. It means we hear about people and their attitudes through others, and form opinions based on hearsay. What we need to do is verify ourselves before taking up a position either way.
- **Awareness of our biases:** We introspect and think logically – not emotionally. This makes it possible for us to be aware of our own biases, and we need to take steps in order to overcome them.

5 TEAM BUILDING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Building a team and working with it effectively and harmoniously is quite a daunting task.

It is said that:

> ***"It is easy to get the players, getting them to play together, that's the hardest part."***

Anyone can get the requisite number of team members (for a football team, for example) but it is another matter to develop it into a cohesive group wherein all the members perform in sync with each other. It requires a lot of effort and skills to transform individual members of a group into a team the members of which act in the interest of the whole team rather than focusing on individual glory or satisfaction.



5.2 IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONS

A team functions successfully if all the members keep their personal egos aside and maintain actionable human relations. In this context, it is advisable to remember the following:

The 6 most important words:

"I admit I made a mistake."

The 5 most important words:

"You did a good job."

The 4 most important words:

"What is your opinion?

The 3 most important words:

"Will you please?"

The 2 most important words:

"Thank you."

The 1 most important word:

"We"

The least important word:

"I"

No group can be banded together in an effective team unless the individuals forego their individual aspirations and work for achieving team goals and objectives.

5.3 WHAT IS A TEAM?

It is a group of people who come together in order to:

- Solve a problem;
- Meet an objective; or
- Tackle an issue.

The interests of individuals merge into the interests of the team wherein there is supremacy of team goals over individual goals. The different members bring in various ideas, discuss together all the pros and cons, and take a collective decision.

5.3.1 WHY DO TEAMS WORK BETTER?

It is a fact that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Individuals, who are the parts of the team, bring with them a range of various elements.

They are:

- Talents
- Knowledge
- Contacts
- Attitudes

When all these elements are put together, they ensure the effective working of a team as a well-knit unit.

5.3.2 HOW TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE TEAM?

An effective team can be built by following these guidelines:

- **Get to know one another:** likes, dislikes attitudes, aptitudes, beliefs, aspirations, individual goals.
- **Establish consensus:** efforts have to be made to ensure that everybody's viewpoint is discussed but ultimately decisions are taken by consensus.
- **Identify available resources:** not only the resources which are readily available but also the ones that can be easily arranged.
- **Establish rules of behaviour:** members to demonstrate behaviour that encourages team spirit and respect for each other's viewpoint.
- **Cooperate:** when the team has reached a decision in spite of any individual's objections, they need to consider it as a team decision and cooperate in performing all those tasks which are required in achieving the team's objectives.

5.3.3 INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR IN TEAM

Certain behavioural patterns could be helpful in a team while others may cause damage:

❖ **Harmful behaviour:**
- Constantly critical
- Dominating
- Manipulating
- Judgmental
- Acting uninterested
- Having sub-conversations
- Simply agreeing for everything
- Avoiding decision
- Name calling
- Avoiding taking responsibility
- Making fun of others' ideas

❖ **Helpful behaviour:**
- Be optimistic
- Be punctual
- Support each other



- Be courteous
- Be open-minded
- Participate
- Listen
- Share the work
- Present ideas clearly
- Be prepared
- Respect others' views
- Don't use labels
- Don't exaggerate

5.3.4 WAYS TO INVOLVE TEAM MEMBERS

Team members can be involved by:

- Asking open-ended questions;
- Assigning specific tasks;
- Asking for opinions; and
- Rotating team roles.

5.3.5 TEAM DECISIONS

In order to reach team decisions the following process needs to be adopted:

- Gathering information;
- Analysing information;
- Generating and discussing ideas;
- Analysing various alternative solutions; and
- Deciding with consensus.

5.4 UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

The outcome of any situation is dependent on the way you choose to behave. Whether you are initiating some action or responding to someone else's behaviour, you will have three options to choose from:

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Assertive

5.4.1 PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR

❖ **You are passive when you:**
- Want to maintain status quo;
- Allow others to make decisions for you;
- Verbally agree with others despite your real feelings; and
- Procrastinate to avoid problem-solving.

❖ **What would you look like?**
- Standing back (sit back of groups);
- Little or no eye contact;
- Smiling even when upset; and
- Fidgeting.

❖ **What would you sound like?**
- Apologetic;
- Vague;
- Self-hating;
- Hesitant; and
- Moaning.

❖ **How would you feel?**
- Taken advantage of;
- Hurt;
- Anxious;
- Frustrated; and
- Powerless.

❖ **How would others feel?**
- Frustrated;
- Resentful;
- Exasperated; and
- Guilty.

Passive behaviour doesn't help you achieve your goals, therefore you:

- Feel a victim;
- Blame others for what happens to you;
- Allow others to choose for you; and
- Choose passive behaviour because it is low risk.

5.4.2 AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

❖ **You are aggressive when you try to:**

- Impose your position on others;
- Accuse, blame others and find fault with others despite their feelings;
- Act with belligerence and humiliate others; and
- Behave in an unpredictable and explosive manner.

❖ **What would you look like?**

- Leaning forward;
- Pointing fingers;
- Piercing or glaring eye contact; and
- Jabbing.

❖ **What would you sound like?**

- Loud;
- Sarcastic;
- Emphatic;
- Defensive; and
- Arrogant.



❖ **How would you feel?**
- In control of others;
- Guilty;
- Isolated; and
- Power over them.

❖ **How would others feel?**
- Defensive;
- Humiliated;
- Afraid; and
- Resentful.

Aggressive behaviour:

- Helps you to achieve your goals only to a limited extent;
- Is gained at the expense of others; and
- Is 'risk' as it sets you up in a very visible way.

5.4.3 ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Assertiveness is:

- About self-esteem and respect for others, not about winning;
- About modifying behaviour, not changing personalities;
- The key to good, clear, honest and professional communication;
- About providing people with skills that enable them to communicate successfully at work as well as in social situations.

❖ **What do you say and feel if:**
- Someone makes an unreasonable request of you?
- You want to disagree with the point of view of a member of your team?
- You get an angry caller on the telephone (or in person) who is shouting abuse?

❖ **Develop an assertive approach, and you will be able to:**
- Avoid conflict situations;
- Save time;
- Get more of what you want;
- Handle your appraisal;
- Work more effectively with your superiors and colleagues;
- Put forward your ideas; and
- Feel good about yourself and your behaviour.

You can recognize the signs of assertive behaviour by analysing the following situations:

❖ **You are assertive when you:**
- Are honest with yourself and others;
- Protect your rights;
- Respect the rights of others;
- Are able to express yourself socially and emotionally;
- Have confidence in yourself; and
- Are able to behave in an adult and rational way.

❖ **What would you look like?**
- Eye contact direct but not staring;
- Relaxed, moving easily;
- Open hand movements; and
- Head held up.

❖ **How would you sound?**
- Steady and firm;
- Spontaneous;
- Sincere; and
- Clear.

❖ **How would you feel?**
- Good about self;
- Confident;
- Responsible for your actions; and
- Power within.

❖ **Assertive behaviour:**
- Helps to achieve goals without hurting others;
- Is about choosing for ourselves;
- Is about taking responsibility for your own actions; and
- Can provide you with a gentle forward strength and inner confidence.

In order to practise assertive behaviour one must ensure **positive** and **assertive**:

- Beliefs;
- Feelings; and
- Attitudes.

5.5 COMFORT ZONES

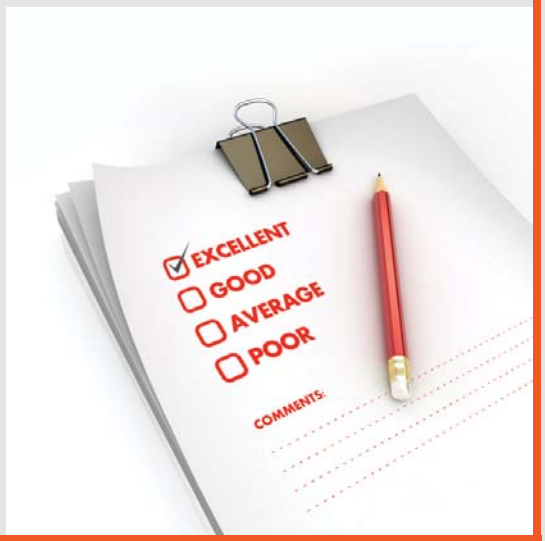
In general, people have their own comfort zones within the limits of which they prefer to work. This happens because they are wary of the risks involved if they step out of their comfort zones. However, in order to achieve goals and objectives and move ahead in life, it is necessary to come out of the comfort zone, initially take small risks, and thus move towards their planned goal.

Fig. 5/1 below demonstrates the concept of comfort zone.

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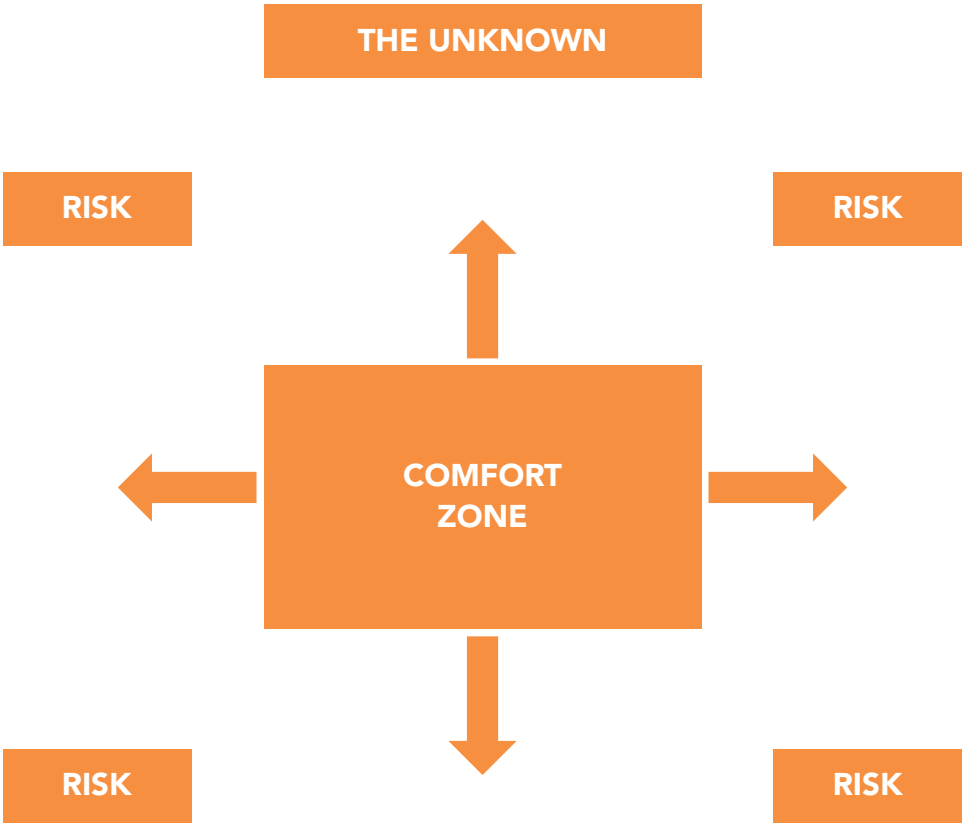


Fig. 5/1 Comfort Zone

- ❖ Comfort Zone = Situations you enjoy, things you feel comfortable doing.
- ❖ Unknown = Situations you find unpleasant and difficult – you avoid them and remain static.
- ❖ Inside Box = Your potential
- ❖ Come outside Comfort Zone + Take small risk = Increase the size of your Comfort Zone. (By regularly taking risks you will always grow.)
- ❖ Areas outside Comfort Zone = Threat
- ❖ Look for middle ground of reasoned control (as in Fig. 5/2 below).

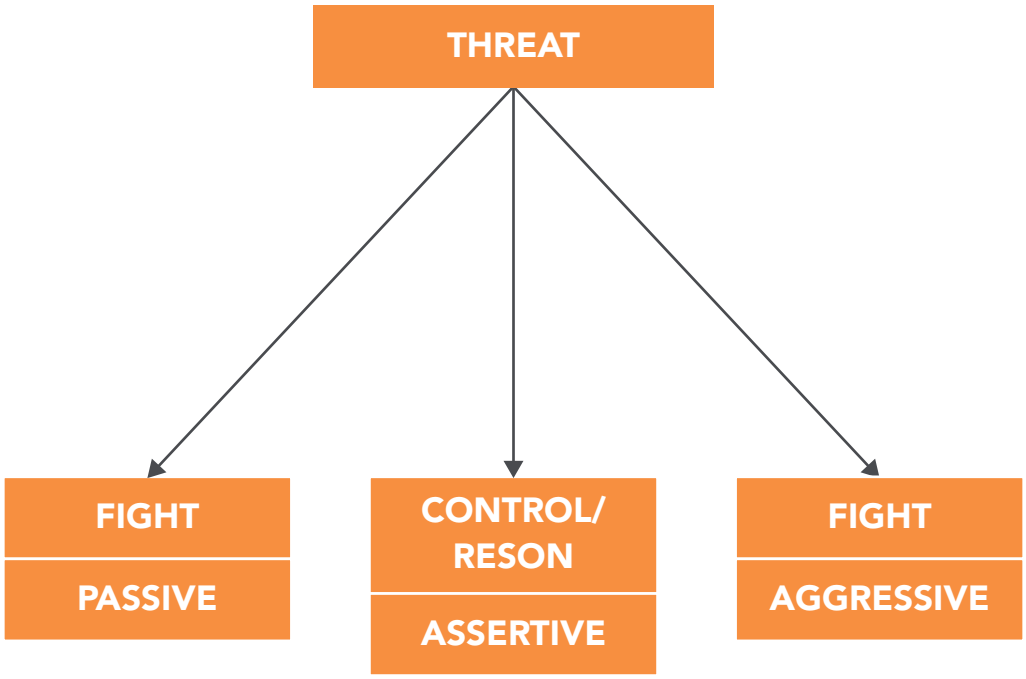


Fig. 5/2 Reasoned control

5.6 STEPPING STONES TO ASSERTIVENESS

- **Step-1:** Listen to the other person, show you understand.
- **Step-2:** Say what you think or what you feel.
- **Step-3:** Say what you want to happen.

(Often you will carry out Steps 1 and 2 and then fail to say what it is you want. It is only by following through with Step 3 that you are giving yourself the chance of getting what you want.)

5.7 GETTING TO WIN/WIN

You must ensure that both parties come away from the situation in a positive position. So:

- Look for a Win/Win solution;
- Negotiate a joint solution – a workable compromise;
- YOUR solution + MY solution = OUR solution (as shown in Fig. 5/3 below).

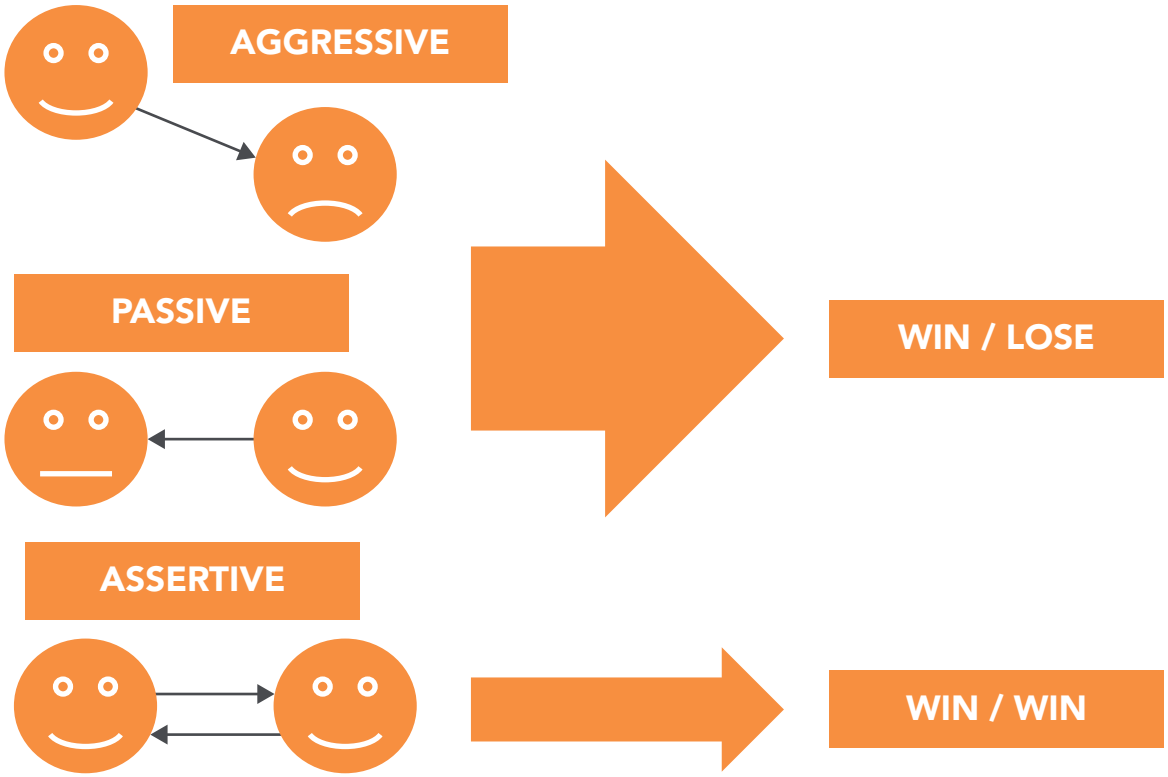


Fig. 5/3 Win/Win solution



5.8 ASSERTIVENESS BUILDING BLOCKS



5.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

The teams that are able to demonstrate high levels of performance are the ones that have been carefully nurtured.

They:

- Set high output, high quality targets and achieve them;
- Gain a high degree of job satisfaction;
- Have a high degree of cooperation among members;
- Have leaders who are well-respected for the example they set;
- Are well-balanced with respect to the roles people play in relation to their skills;
- Have high degree of autonomy;
- Learn quickly from their mistakes;
- Are client-oriented;
- Have high problem-solving skills and regularly review performance; and
- Are highly motivated.

5.9.1 ATTRIBUTES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

High performance teams are easily recognizable by the following attributes they have:

These are:

- Participative leadership;
- Shared responsibility;
- Aligned on purpose;
- High communication;
- Future-focused;
- Focused on task;
- Creative talents;
- Rapid response.

5.10 SELF-QUESTIONNAIRE

Below you will find some important verbal skills necessary for successful conversation, particularly in team meetings.

Self-questionnaire on
Verbal skills needed for success in team meetings

Read each question carefully, and rate yourself on these skills using a scale of 1 to 5.

Rating Scale	Your Response
1	"I possess skills to **a very little extent**".
2	"I possess skills to **somewhat extent**".
3	"I possess skills to **fairly well extent**".
4	"I possess skills to **a good extent**".
5	"I **fully** possess this skill".

Score	Sl. No.	Question
	1	Do you usually listen actively i.e. asking questions?
	2	Do you usually negotiate with others when the need arises?
	3	Are you capable of saying 'NO' when necessary?
	4	Can you accept criticisms without immediately getting defensive?
	5	Can you really present proposals and get others to accept your ideas?
	6	Do you normally disagree without being aggressive or rude?
	7	Do you praise others when they really deserve it?
	8	Are you capable of criticizing constructively?
	9	Do you normally contribute to meetings?
	10	Can you make a decent formal speech in front of strangers?
	11	Are you capable of arguing logically without being emotional?
	12	Can you speak in such a way that you sound committed?

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Score	Sl. No.	Question
	13	Can you accurately summarize what others have said in a conversation?
	14	Do you normally avoid interrupting others?
	15	Do you normally define problems as opportunities?
	16	Are you capable of asking questions without sounding inquisitorial (i.e. as if cross-questioning)?
	17	Are you capable of saying complicated things in simple language?
	18	Are you capable of handling differences of opinion without becoming confrontational?
	19	When there is a conflict situation, do you normally make "I" statements (example: "I think you may not be correct") instead of "You" statements ("You are wrong")?
	20	Do you normally use moderate language? Example: "Not quite correct", "Somewhat damaging", etc.in place of strong language like "Absolutely wrong", "Quite false", "Highly damaging"?
	< TOTAL	

My Score | | **100** |

Now look at your score, and analyse which areas need your attention. You can improve in those areas with determination and practice.

6 LEADERSHIP

6.1 INTRODUCTION

An organisation is made up of groups of people. An essential part of management is coordinating the activities of groups and directing the efforts of their members towards the goals and objectives of the organisation. This involves the process of leadership and the choice of an appropriate form of behaviour.

6.2 MEANING OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership might be interpreted in simple terms, such as:

- 'getting others to follow;'
- 'getting people to do things willingly;' or
- Interpreted more specifically as the 'use of authority in decision making.'

We can also say that:

"It is interpersonal influence which is exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process towards the attainment of a specified goal".

Tead (1935) says:

"Leadership is that combination of qualities by the possession of which one is able to get something done by others, chiefly because through his influence they become willing to do it."

6.3 IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Since leadership is an inspirational process, a leader influences long-term changes in attitude. It does not necessarily take place within the hierarchical structure, and many people operate without role definition. Leadership is related to motivation and the process of communication through which one person influences the behaviour of other people. The process of leadership is not separable from the activities of the group. Effective leadership is a two-way process.

Lord Sieff (1991) explains that:

> ***"Leadership is vitally important at all levels within the company, from main board to the shop floor. Leadership is the moral and intellectual ability to visualize and work for what is best for the company and its employees... The most vital thing the leader does is to create team spirit around him and near him, not in a schoolboy sense, but in realistic terms of mature adults... To be effective leadership has to be seen, and it is best seen in action."***

6.4 LEADERSHIP RELATIONSHIP

❖ **A leader may:**

- Be imposed;
- Be formally appointed;
- Be chosen informally; or
- Emerge naturally.



❖ **Leadership may be:**
- **Attempted leadership:** when an individual in the group attempts to exert influence over other members of the group;
- **Successful leadership:** when the influence brings about the behaviour and results that were intended by the leader;
- **Effective leadership:** when successful leadership results in desirable functional behaviour and the achievement of group goals.

❖ **Leadership may also involve:**
- Exercise through greater knowledge, expertise or reputation;
- Personal qualities or charisma;
- Manner of exercising authority;
- Adoption of a particular style of leadership.

❖ **Dynamic form:** Leadership is a dynamic form of behaviour and there are a number of variables that affect it. According to McGregor (1987), "leadership is not the property of individual, but a complex relationship among these variables." He has specified the following variables:
- Characteristics of the leader;
- Attitudes, needs and other personal characteristics of group members;
- Nature of the organisation, such as its purpose, its structure, the tasks to be performed;
- Social, economic and political environment.

6.5 APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

There may be several ways of analysing leadership. It is helpful, therefore, to have some framework in which to consider different approaches. Several theoretical frameworks have dominated at different points in time. These include the trait approach, the behavioural approach, the situational approach, and the functional approach.

6.5.1 TRAIT APPROACH

The scientific study of leadership began with focus on the traits of effective leaders. The basic premise behind trait theory was that effective leaders are born, not made. Leader trait research examined the physical, mental and social characteristics of individuals. In general, these studies simply looked for significant associations between individual traits and measures of leadership effectiveness.

This approach:

- Focuses attention on person in the job and not on job itself; and
- Gives subjective judgment in determining 'good' or 'successful' leader.

However, the list of possible traits is too long and there is not always agreement on the most important. Moreover, the trait theory offered no explanation for the proposed relationship between individual characteristics and leadership. It also did not consider the situational variables that might moderate the relationship between leader traits and measures of leader effectiveness.

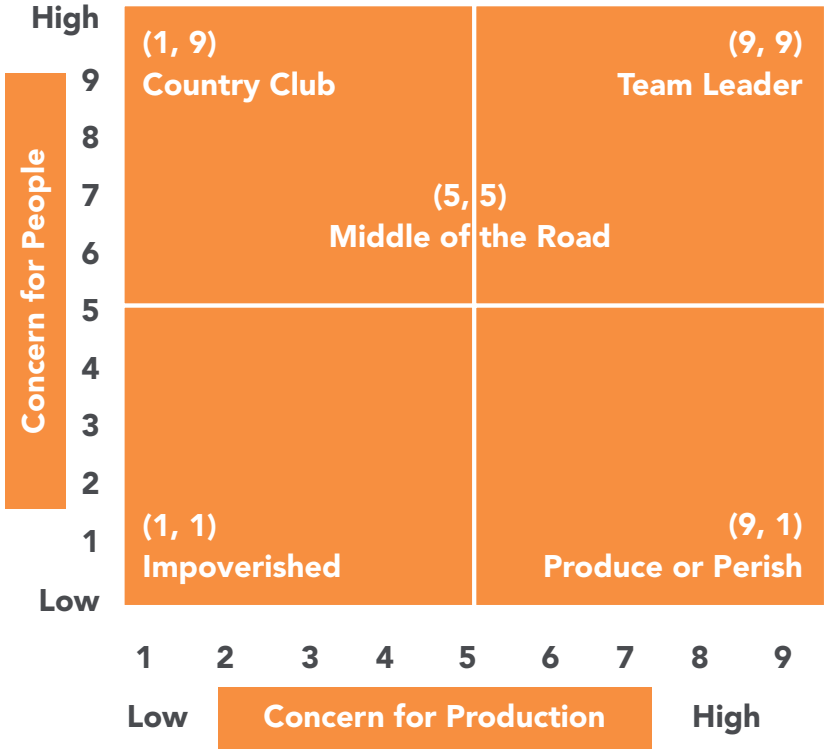
6.5.2 LEADER BEHAVIOUR APPROACH

Partially as a result of disenchantment with the trait approach to leadership that occurred by the beginning of the 1950s, the focus of leadership research shifted away from leader traits to leader behaviours. The premise of this stream of research was that the behaviours exhibited by leaders are more important than their physical, mental, or emotional traits.

One concept based largely on the behavioural approach to leadership effectiveness was the Managerial (or Leadership) Grid developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1964). The Grid combines 'concern for production' with 'concern for people,' and presents five alternative behaviour styles of leadership.

Using the axis to plot leadership 'concern for production' versus 'concern for people', Blake and Mouton defined the following leadership styles:

Blake and Mouton Managerial (Leadership) Grid



- **Country Club Leadership – Low Production/High People (1, 9):** This style is most concerned about the needs and feelings of members of the leader's team. These people operate under the assumption that as long as team members are happy and secure then they will work hard. What tends to result is a work environment that is very relaxed and fun but where production suffers due to lack of direction and control.
- **Produce or Perish Leadership – High Production/Low People (9, 1):** Also known as Authoritarian or Compliance leaders, people in this category believe that employees are simply means to an end. Employee needs are always secondary to the need for efficient and productive work place. This type of leader is very autocratic, has strict work rules, policies, and procedures, and views punishment as the most effective means to motivate employees.
- **Impoverished Leadership – Low Production/Low People (1, 1):** The leader is mostly ineffective. He/she has neither high regard for creating systems for getting the job done, nor for creating a work environment that is satisfying and motivating. The result is a place of disorganisation, dissatisfaction and disharmony.



- **Middle-of-the-Road Leadership – Medium Production/Medium people (5, 5):** This style seems to be a balance of the two competing concerns. It may first appear to be an ideal compromise. There is the problem in this, though. When you compromise, you necessarily give away a bit of each concern so that neither production nor people needs are fully met. Leaders who use this style settle for average performance and often believe that this is the most anyone can expect.
- **Team Leadership – High Production/High People (9, 9):** According to Blake and Mouton model, this is the pinnacle of leadership style. These leaders stress production needs and the needs of the people equally highly. The premise is that employees are involved in understanding organisational purpose and determining production needs. When employees are committed to, and have a stake in the organisation's success, their needs and production levels coincide. This creates a team environment based on trust and respect, which leads to high satisfaction and motivation and, as a result, high production.

6.5.3 CONTINGENCY OR SITUATIONAL APPROACH

Situational theory of leadership proposes that the organisational or work group context affects the extent to which given leader traits and behaviours will be effective. According to Mullins (2004), the situation is the most important factor which determines the behaviour and nature of the leader's action.

The theory classifies leader behaviours into two broad classes of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours. Situational leadership is also closely linked to the empowerment of followers. The followers' empowerment centres around the situation in which the leader finds himself/herself and leadership will be determined by the situation.

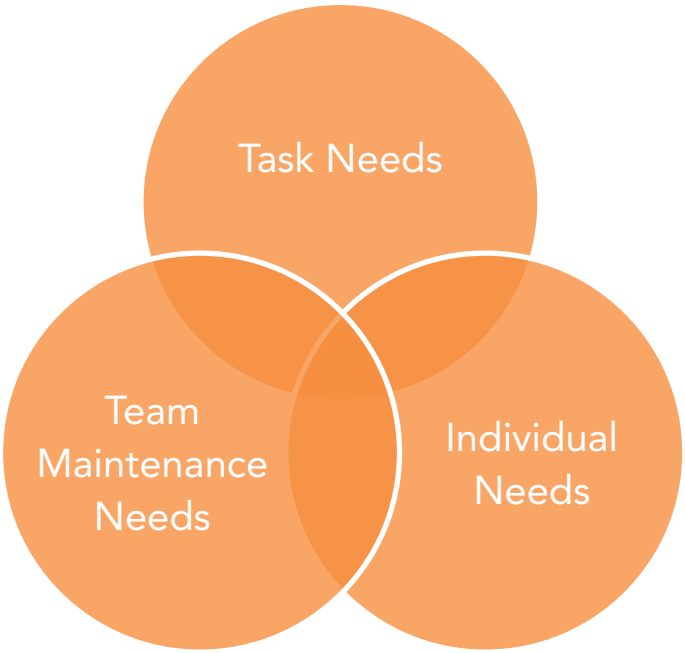
This approach:

- Puts emphasis on the importance of professional knowledge or technical expertise; and
- Focuses on what the leader actually does rather than on his/her personality characteristics.

6.5.4 FUNCTIONAL (OR GROUP) APPROACH

This approach to leadership focuses on functions and content of leadership. John Adair (1979) asserted that "the effectiveness of the leader is dependent upon three areas of need within the group: the need to achieve common task, the need for team maintenance, and the individual needs of group members".

Fig. 6/1 below shows the interaction needs within the group.



Source: Adair, J., 'Action-centred Leadership,' as cited in Sue Harding & Trevor Long, Gower, 2008.

- **Task needs:** They involve defining group tasks, planning the work, controlling quality.
- **Team maintenance needs:** They involve inculcating team spirit, setting standards, effective communication.
- **Individual needs:** They involve looking after personal needs, rewards, conflict resolution.

6.6 TASK, TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL FUNCTIONS

6.6.1 TASK FUNCTIONS

They involve:

- Achieving the objectives of the work group;
- Defining group tasks;
- Planning the work;
- Allocation of resources;
- Organisation of duties and responsibilities;
- Controlling quality and checking performance;
- Reviewing progress.

6.6.2 TEAM FUNCTIONS

They involve:

- Maintaining morale and building team spirit;
- The cohesiveness of the group as a working unit;
- Setting standards and maintaining discipline;
- Systems of communication within the group;
- Training the group;
- Appointment of sub-leaders.

6.6.3 INDIVIDUAL FUNCTIONS

They involve:

- Meeting the needs of the individual members of the group;
- Attending to personal problems;
- Giving praise and status;
- Reconciling conflicts between group needs and needs of the individual;
- Training the individual.

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The action by the leader in any one area of need will affect one or both of the other areas of need. The ideal position is where complete integration of the three areas on need is achieved. In any work group the most effective leader is the person who sees that the task needs, the needs of the group and those of the individual are all adequately met. The effective leader elicits the contribution of members of the group and draws out other leadership from the group to satisfy the three inter-related areas of need.

6.7 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP

In order to meet the three areas of needs – task, group and individual – certain leadership functions have to be performed. Not all of these functions are required all of the time.

❖ **The leader needs:**
- **Awareness** of what is going on in groups, the group process or underlying behaviour, and the actual content of discussion;
- **Understanding,** that is knowing that a particular function is required;
- **Skill** to do it effectively, which can be usually judged by whether the group responds or changes course.

❖ **Range of functions of a leader:**
- **As executive:** top coordinator of the group activities and overseer of the execution of policies.
- **As planner:** deciding the ways and means by which the group achieves its ends. This may involve both short-term and long-term planning.
- **As policy maker:** responsible for the establishment of group goals and policies.
- **As expert:** a source of readily available information and skills, although there will be some reliance on technical expertise and advice from other members of the group.
- **As external group representative:** the official spokesperson for the group, the representative of the group and the channel for both outgoing and incoming communications.
- **As controller of internal relations:** determines specific aspects of group structure.
- **As purveyor of rewards and punishment:** exercises control over group members by the power to provide rewards and apply punishments.
- **As arbitrator and mediator:** controls interpersonal conflicts within the group.
- **As exemplar:** a model of behaviour for members of the group, setting an example of what is expected.
- **As symbol of the group:** enhancing group unity by providing some kind of cognitive focus and establishing the group as a distinct identity.

- **As substitute for individual responsibility:** relieves the individual members from the necessity of, and responsibility for, personal decision.
- **As ideologist:** serving as the source of beliefs, values and standards of behaviour for individual members of the group.
- **As father figure:** serving as a focus for the positive emotional feelings of individual members of the group.
- **As scapegoat:** serving as a target for aggression and hostility of the group, accepting blame in case of failure.

It is important to understand that leadership resides in the functions and not a particular person. The various functions of leadership can be shared among members of the group. If a member provides a particular function which is relevant to the activities of the group, and accepted by the group members, then in those circumstances this could become a leadership function.

6.8 STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership style is the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out, the way in which the leader typically behaves towards members of the group.

6.8.1 THE DICTATORSHIP LEADERSHIP STYLE

This leadership style can be defined as coercive style forcing people to act as they are told. According to Allais (1995), dictatorship is seen as a style in which a leader retains as much power and decision making authority as possible. It is leader-centred and cares less about the followers.

Where dictatorship reigns, if the members of staff react, their reactions are taken personally and emotionally. The dictatorship leadership style, therefore, can be equated to authoritarian leadership style or autocratic leadership style. This leader uses punishment rather than reward to discipline the staff and he/she calls for more things done their own way. They do not care about other people's feelings.

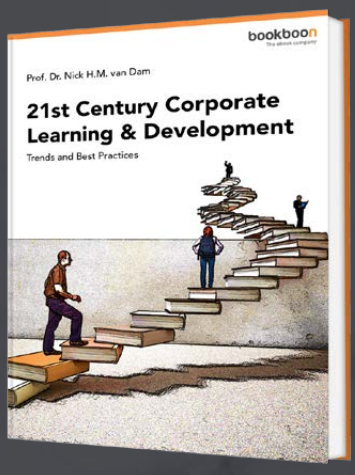
To summarize, the dictatorship leadership style generally does not allow workers to think for themselves. This style is also an easy alternative for those leaders who do not want to spend their time working through people. If a dictator decides to work through people, he/she directs, coerces and controls closely.

6.8.2 THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP STYLE

The laissez-faire leadership style is sometimes called the free-reign or individual-centred leadership style. This style makes the presence of the leader felt but gives workers freedom to make individual or group decisions. It looks like it is democratic but most of the time the leader appeals to personal integrity, which results in some individuals being totally trusted. This is because they are given little or no direction. Robbins and DeCenzo (2001) concur that the laissez-faire leader generally allows employees complete freedom to decide and complete work in whatever way they see fit, while the leader provides material for use and answers questions.

Laissez-faire leader has no authority. He/she just watches what is going on in the organisation. In such an organisation there may be chaos if the leader stays apart from the rest of the workers. However, if the workforce is responsible and conscientious about their duties, they are motivated to work freely and they determine their own goals.

Some employees cannot work under this style of leadership as they need more direction. They may even feel that the leader does not care for them and what they do, as there is no control. On the other hand, some workers cannot work under this style of leadership because they conclude that nobody cares.

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To sum up, laissez-faire leadership style connotes leading by abdicating the leadership role. The leader has trust in the workers to the extent that if they are not conscientious about their work, the organisation will suffer.

6.8.3 THE DEMOCRATIC OR PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE

The democratic leadership style, which is also participative by nature, is popular among the leaders because it is people-oriented. If there is a decision to make, all matters are discussed by the entire group. The leader only facilitates input. He/she uses the decisions of the members to enrich his/her own. This style is involved in most, if not all, activities. However, the leader makes it clear that if staff cannot come to a decision, he/she retains the right to do so.

Under this style of leadership, members of staff are always well informed about what is taking place at the workplace. Both delegation and genuine teamwork are practised in order to achieve results together. Mullins (2004) explains a democratic leadership style as implying that the job will be done automatically if interpersonal relationships are on a sound footing.

This is a team leadership style in which a leader integrates concern for production with concern for people at a high level. Teamwork is emphasised and it is goal-oriented.

To sum up, the democratic leadership style emphasises the group and leader participation in the achievement of goals and objectives of the organisation. The democratic leader derives power and authority from his/her followers. He/she, on the other hand, operates by tapping skills and ideas from the organisation members, remembering to delegate responsibility to them. But this leader has the authority to make the final decision even if all members do the ground work leading to that decision.

6.8.4 THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

The situational approach to leadership depends on various factors that have impact on leadership effectiveness. These factors include the history of the organisation, the community surrounding the organisation, the physical circumstances within which the organisation exists, the communication pattern in the organisation, the structure of interpersonal relationships, the expectations of staff, the personalities of group members etc. The behaviour of the leader and the staff may be affected by the situation, the type of the organisation, group effectiveness, the problem and its complexity, the time pressure which may result in staff not being involved in decision making.

Hersey and Blanchard (1976) said:

> ***"Leadership is a constant pattern of behaviour which the leader exhibits, as perceived by others, when he/she is attempting to influence the activities of the group."***

They believed that there is not a particular leadership style that is more effective than the other. Rather the effective style of leadership is contingent upon the situation.

In using the situational style of leadership, it is indicated that often one leadership style will not work in another situation. Different situations call for leaders to identify styles that can best help to achieve goals and objectives in particular circumstances, situations and times. This means that the situational leader needs to use an appropriate style in any required situation.

Leadership behaviour is based, therefore, on both the willingness of the leader to help subordinates and the needs of subordinates for help. Leadership behaviour will be motivated to the extent that it provides necessary direction, guidance and support, help clarify path-goal relationships and removes any obstacles which hinder attainment of goals. By using one of the four styles of leadership behaviour the leader attempts to influence subordinates' perceptions and motivation, and smooth the path to their goals.

7 TIME MANAGEMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Effective time management is simply about self-discipline. There is no magic formula, no piece of paper to fill in which will suddenly make you good at managing your time.

Everyone has a lot of work to do and not enough time to do it. However, we can all think of people who seem very organised and others who have the same amount of work to do, but the first kind manage to do it in time, and better too.

The first lesson to learn about time management is that in the real world of work, things go wrong. Computers break down, files go missing, and problems crop up and so on. These things will always happen and there is really no way of avoiding them. This means developing and using a simple set of time management systems that work for you.



Before you start to plan on what and when you spend your time you need to know how much time you have available to you. The way you manage and budget your time is very similar to the way you manage and budget your money. Imagine your salary. At the end of each month you are paid a sum which you know about in advance. You therefore know how much you can afford to spend on things like mortgages, bills, food, clothes etc. If in any given month you receive a particularly large bill you adjust your expenditure accordingly. You may choose not to go for dinner for instance, or not to put money away to save. You can do this because you know exactly what your income and expenditure is.

You also know how much time you have available to you, which is, 60 minutes in an hour, and 24 hours in a day and so on. The amount of time available is static. You also usually know how long you have to take to complete any particular task because most tasks have deadlines.

So once you know this you can start budgeting your time, just as you would budget your money.

7.2 HOW DO YOU MANAGE TIME?

You can manage your time by adhering to the following:

7.2.1 IDENTIFYING YOUR PRIORITIES

Ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of your job?
- What are you expected to do?
- What is the time scale for doing it?
- What do you need to do (which tasks do you need to carry out) in order to achieve that purpose?

7.2.2 MANAGE YOUR PRIORITIES

Work falls in two categories:

- **Reactive tasks:** There are certain tasks for which you have to provide immediate response. There is no time to plan for them.
- **Proactive tasks:** These are the tasks about which you know in advance, and so can plan accordingly.

In order to manage your time as per the situation created by reactive or proactive tasks you need to follow the following course of action:

- You need to know (approximately) what percentage of your working day and week you spend on either proactive or reactive tasks.
- Plan for the proactive tasks.
- Leave time for reactive tasks.
- Never leave things until the last minute. Plan in the time that you intend to spend on a certain job and stick to it.

One of the most common mistakes people make in managing their priorities is that they leave the 'big' and important tasks until last while they clear up the 'little' jobs. Of course, what normally happens is that they get to the end of the day and realize they have spent the whole day in doing relatively unimportant tasks and facing interruptions, and then feel stressed because they still have to attend to the important jobs.

8 PRESENTATION SKILLS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Presentation is a method of communicating your ideas and thoughts on a given topic. Doing an academic or business presentation can be a difficult task – particularly when you are doing it for the first time – but once you practise, it will come easily to you. Presentations can be very effective in making your point clear. It may be just an internal presentation – perhaps to your colleagues/classmates, or to your boss or it may be a marketing or technical presentation. Perhaps it may be to a large group.

8.2 PROCESS

You must organise yourself well before you can even think of making a presentation.



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8.2.1 STEP-1: PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

When you decide to make a presentation, take care of the following:

- **Subject:** You must be thoroughly conversant with the subject of your presentation.
- **Collect information:** Collect all the information required – from your knowledge and experience, colleagues/classmates, books and journals, Internet etc.
- **Size and type of audience:** You must know in advance who your audience is going to be. You should analyse audience needs beforehand. Answers to these questions will enable you to plan accordingly:
  - Are they your co-workers/classmates?
  - Or people you don't know?
  - What is their level of knowledge of the subject?
  - How many people will be present?
- **Aids to be used:** Decide what aids you will use:
  - PowerPoint?
  - White board and marker?
  - Flipchart?
  - Just speak?

  However, these days almost all presentations are made with the aid of PowerPoint.

8.2.2 STEP-2: PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Write the script in points:
  - Introduction
  - Main body – points you want to discuss
- Prepare notes on small index card for you to use when making a presentation (if you are not using PowerPoint).
- Prepare PowerPoint presentation. Do not write paragraphs. Write points only, and click point by point instead of the whole slide. This will help the audience to concentrate on the point you are talking about.

8.2.3 STEP-3: PRACTISE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Practise either by yourself or in front of a small audience. You can do so in front of a mirror also if nobody is available.
- Check your timing. Quite often you may have to keep to time limit. Hence it is better to check whether you conform to it – neither less nor more.

8.2.4 STEP-4: MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Get rid of stage fear.
- Be confident.
- Talk normally.
- Preferably start with a simple and appropriate ice-breaker. Maintain proper and regular eye contact with the audience.
- Look at the points only. Then speak from memory.
- Always stand while making a presentation. Sitting presentations lose their effectiveness as the invisible thread of eye contact with the audience is lost.
- Correct body language is important. Use hand movements and gestures to emphasise your points.
- Make your presentation interactive. You may elicit information from the participants instead of giving out all of it yourself.
- You may break the monotony with a small game relevant to the subject of your presentation (depending on the length of your presentation).
- At the end, ask if there are any questions. Answer them with confidence.
- Provide your contact details (someone may want to contact you for clarifications).
- Thank the audience for their patience and participation.

8.3 EXAMPLES OF PRESENTATION LANGUAGE

Function	Language
Greeting the audience	Good morning (afternoon / evening), Ladies and Gentlemen / Friends / Girls and Boys
Introducing the topic	I would like to begin with…
Sequencing	First, Second…
Moving on to the next point	Next
Checking understanding	Am I clear?
Summarizing	In summary / Finally / To conclude / To sum up
Finishing	Thank you very much

9 MANAGING STRESS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Increasingly you are called on to deal with stressful situations related to work or education. You are often judged on how you perform on these occasions. But how often do you discuss stress?

If you are in a demanding job, raising children, planning an event, preparing for an examination or living in a fast-paced environment, this could probably be at least once a week.

9.2 WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is derived from the Latin word 'stringere' meaning 'to tighten.' Through centuries it has meant many different things to different people. In 17th century it was associated with hardship and distress. In 18th and 19th centuries it was associated with Physics and Engineering when people were concerned with metal withstanding stress. Now people talk of stress with reference to mental pressure in performing a certain task or having some kind of situation which is worrying them. However, it has become an inescapable part of modern life, and we can say that:

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- Everyone seems to rush and hurry, with deadlines to meet and targets to achieve 'yesterday';
- It is about pressure and the reaction it produces within you;
- It can be brought about by external or internal factors – internal factors are harder to deal with;
- It creates an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon you and your capability of meeting that demand.

9.3 RECOGNIZING STRESS

You need to recognize what stress is and what causes it. Only then you can learn how to deal with it. You must understand that:

- Stress is normal, and indeed with no stress we would be dead;
- Stress is a very individual thing and everyone has very different stress levels;
- Successful stress management requires you to recognize when you are experiencing stress;
- We are a like a set of scales with scissors being various weights, and we need to recognize optimum levels in order to maintain a balance.

Fig. 9/1 below depicts the levels of stress.

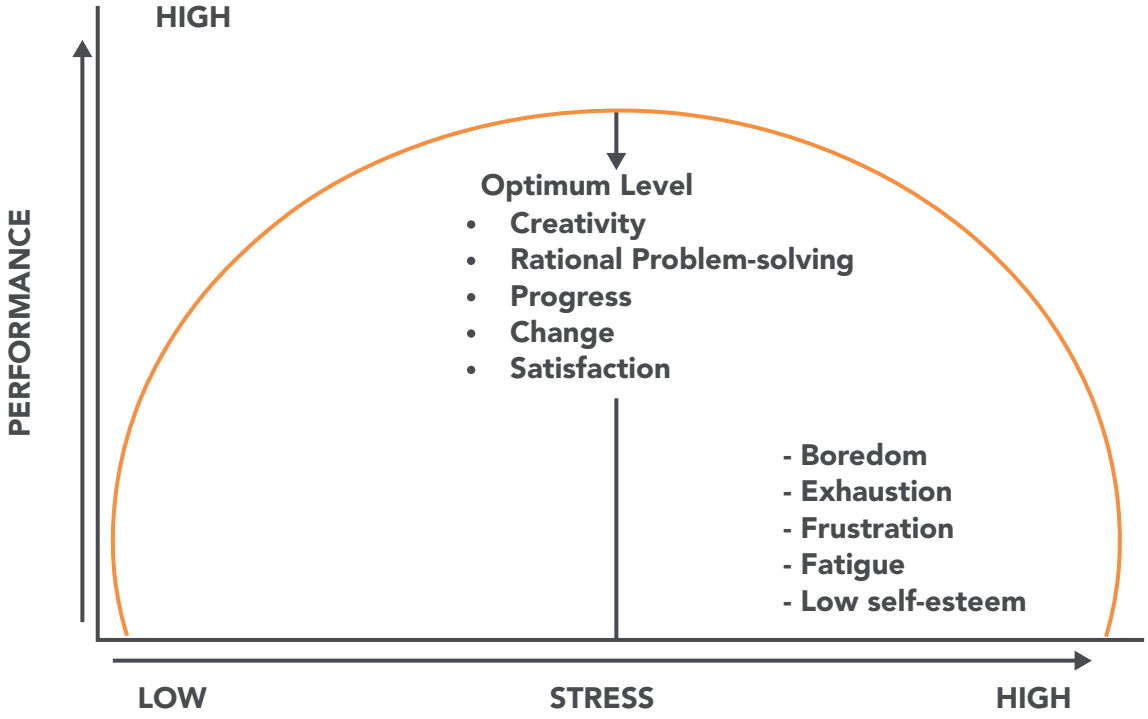


Fig. 9/1 Levels of stress

9.4 ACKNOWLEDGING STRESS

You quite often express your feelings of stress in front of others. However, by articulating that you feel stressed you might be making things worse for yourself. Seth Swirsky (2017), a clinical psychotherapist, says that the word itself can become self-fulfilling. According to him:

> ***"Just saying that you are stressed can set off a cascade of chemicals in the body – epinephrine and cortisol – and neurotransmitters in the brain that make us feel, well, completely stressed out. Our hearts beat faster, our breathing becomes more rapid, our blood pressure goes up, we can't think straight and we are filled with fear and anxiety".***

So in order to reduce the feelings and effects of stress we might just need to amend our language and thinking.

9.5 COMMON SIGNS OF STRESS

The following are the common signs of stress.

9.5.1 PHYSICAL

- Appetite – increase or decrease
- Sleep – increase or decrease
- Breathlessness
- Hot/cold
- Nervous twitches
- Nausea
- Muscular tension
- Headaches
- Trembling
- Dry mouth

9.5.2 EMOTIONAL

- Sense of failure
- Tearful
- Loss of confidence
- Isolated
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem
- Clumsy
- Irrational
- Inability to concentrate
- Loss of interest

9.5.3 FEELINGS WHEN UNDER STRESS

When you are under stress, you can often recognize the following feelings:

- Your self-esteem is low;
- You act in a clumsy manner;
- You feel overwhelmed;
- You feel guilty;
- You are always angry; and
- You feel less competent.

9.6 TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Often you may spend time worrying about a situation but not actually doing anything to address the problem. 90 per cent of that time is wasted in worrying about things that may never happen, and as Winston Churchill said: "There is a lot of trouble in life, most of which has not happened."



9.6.1 TACKLING PROCESS

- Identify the stressor;
- Attempt to change it;
- If unable to change, accept it;
- If unable to accept, move away.
- Understand this prayer:
  "God please grant me the serenity
  To accept things I cannot change,
  The courage to change the things I can,
  And the wisdom to know the difference"!
- Make a list of your stressors and identify those which you can take action on and give yourself realistic deadlines.

Problem	Proposed Action	When

9.6.2 SELF-NURTURING

When under stress you need to pay extra attention to yourself and look after your body and mind. Boost your self-image:

- Accept compliments (don't deny them).
- Acknowledge your value (write a short list of things you are good at).
- Praise yourself when you do well.
- Work at having pleasure without guilt – feel great.
- Treat yourself as you would like others to treat you.
- Treat your body well – it is the only one you have got – take a break.
- Learn to like yourself (after all you want others to like you).
- Write a list of things you like about you (if you find this hard, ask a friend).

9.6.3 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

To be healthy and energetic you need to maintain positive emotions and not let the negative ones take over. Express your feelings.

Take action by:

- Developing a supportive network;
- Having regular two-way communication (particularly with your boss/teacher);
- Accepting that emotions are OK;
- Accepting your own feelings – let them out (don't deny them);
- Sharing your feelings with someone you trust;
- Using the powerful natural tool of laughter;
- To help you smile (and I don't mean a fixed grin!) which will make you relax, you can:
  - Keep a funny picture in your desk that you can take out and look at;
  - Remember an embarrassing moment;
  - Think of a funny story or joke (or person);
  - Take a mini-vacation (shut your eyes for a few moments and take yourself to a place where you would feel peaceful);
  - Remember that you are not the centre of the universe and it really is not the end of the world.

9.6.4 ACTIVE DISTRACTION

You should:

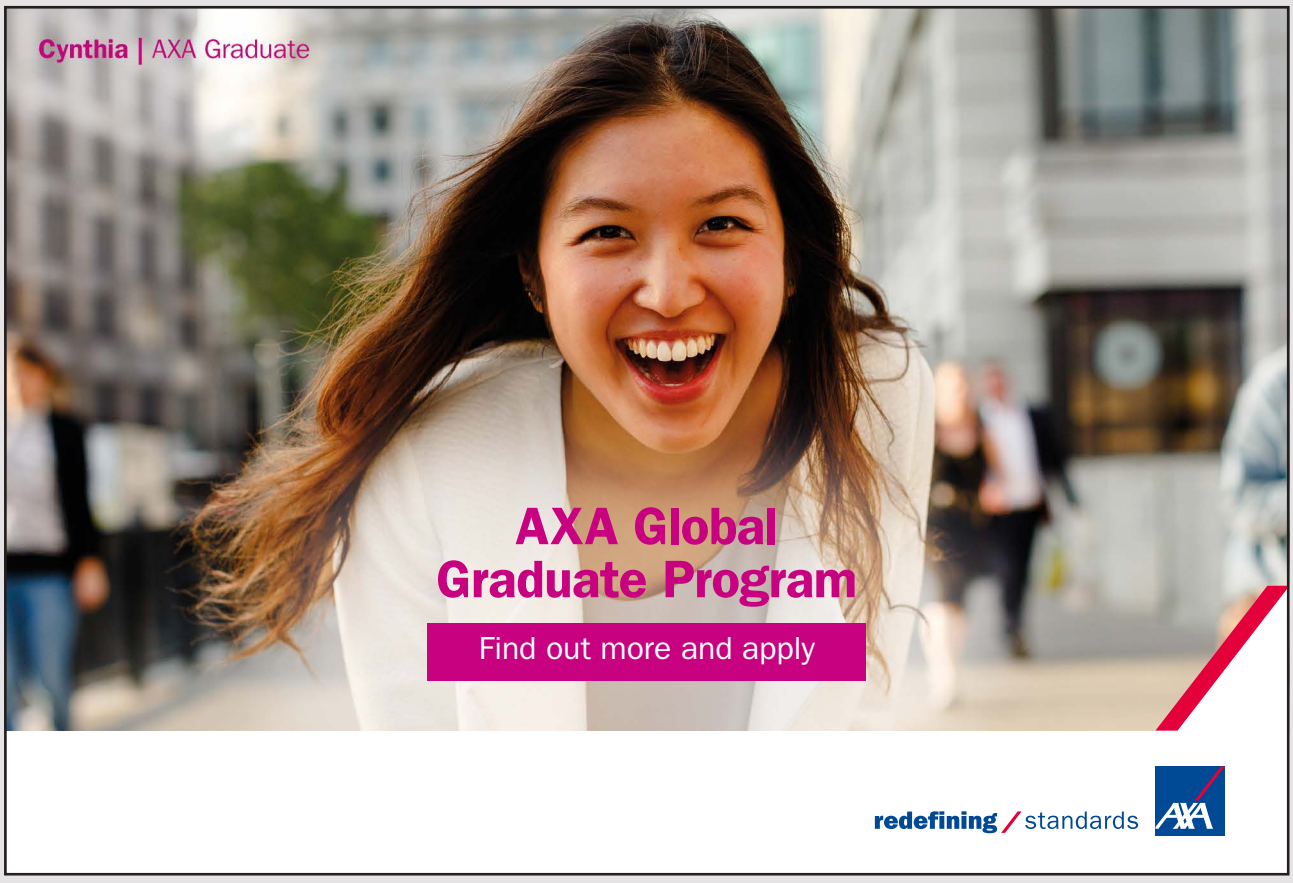
- Be able to switch off and recharge your stressed batteries so that your body is not under constant pressure;
- Take a min-vacation;
- Take tea/coffee break;
- Play with a stress toy;
- Relax your body by tensing and relaxing;
- Scrunch your toes and then relax while imagining all that stress flowing from each toe as you release and relax;
- Relax your mind by thinking of something funny or different;
- Keep a perspective of your problems;
- Be able to:
  - Draw the line;
  - Mark the end of the day by leaving work behind;
  - Take time out: 'ME' time which is for you;
  - Exercise;
  - Relax.

10 THINKING SKILLS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning does not mean only rote learning which is the memorisation of information based on repetition. Examples of rote learning are the alphabet, rhymes and poems, numbers, multiplication tables, statistical and chemical formulae etc. However, its role is limited to learning of basic facts and figures. In order to pursue higher levels of learning or to move up in your chosen profession, it will be helpful if thinking skills are developed. It will ensure that the learning that takes place will not only be based on real understanding of the subject but will also be of a more lasting nature. It is more so because such learning will be borne out of one's own conviction.

You can improve your thinking skills by understanding specific types of thinking, how they work, and practising to improve your thinking abilities. As you become more conscious about these skills, you become a better learner and a more efficient practitioner of your profession.



10.2 CORE THINKING SKILLS

Fig. 10/1 below shows the process of developing core thinking skills.

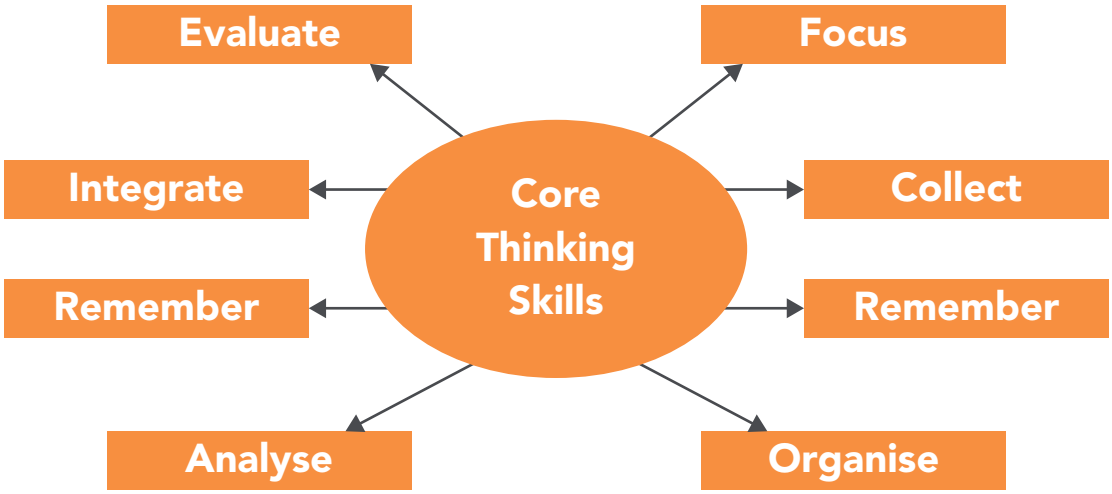


Fig. 10/1 Process of developing core thinking skills

10.2.1 FOCUSING SKILLS

These involve paying attention to selected units of information and discarding others that may not be relevant to the situation. This can be achieved by doing the following:

- Clarify your needs;
- Sort out discrepancies;
- Ignore situations that confuse you;
- Define the problem;
- Decide the purpose;
- Think of the direction; and
- Set goals and objectives.

10.2.2 INFORMATION COLLECTION SKILLS

These involve thinking of the relevant data which is required for further processing. You can do this by following these strategies:

- Observe around you;
- Get information using various resources;
- Spot new information;
- Question its validity; and
- Select what is relevant for your purpose.

10.2.3 REMEMBERING SKILLS

This means storing the information that you have collected. You can do this as follows:

- Store the new information in long-term memory; and
- Retrieve it from long-term memory when you need to use it.

10.2.4 ORGANISING SKILLS

All the information that you collect must be organised systematically so that you may easily retrieve it when needed. This is like filing your documents in separate folders with clear indication of what each folder contains. You can do this in the following manner:

- Sort out information having similar and different attributes;
- Group the information based on their similarities and differences;
- Label them accordingly; and
- Put them in sequential order.

10.2.5 ANALYSING SKILLS

This means examining the different parts of information and their inter-relationship. This can be done as follows:

- Decide the characteristics of various parts;
- Identify the patterns of relationship between different parts;
- Identify the main ideas and sub-ideas; and
- Identify if there are any logical errors, and correct them wherever possible.

10.2.6 GENERATING SKILLS

It means producing new ideas. This is how you can do so:

- Think beyond the available information;
- Anticipate what could happen; and
- Explain by adding details and examples.

10.2.7 INTEGRATING SKILLS

This means that after you have collected information and generated new ideas, you have to connect the information in order to fit the different pieces in a logical manner i.e. you have to integrate all the relevant information. For this, you have to do the following:

- Make a summary of all the information by combining it in a precise and understandable statement; and
- Reorganize the existing information to make way for new information.

10.2.8 EVALUATING SKILLS

This means looking at the quality and logic of the information collected. So you evaluate it in the following manner:

- Set standards which you would like to have;
- Set up criteria that you will apply for judging the relevance and validity of information; and
- Verify the accuracy of information you have collected.



10.3 CATEGORIES OF THINKING

Basically there are two categories of thinking – critical and creative. They not only help you in solving problems but also enable you to be efficient in the process of decision making. However, it is essential that you remain flexible in your thinking. It will ensure effectiveness of your thinking.

10.3.1 CRITICAL THINKING

If you have the ability to think critically, it means that you have the skill to judge whether an idea is feasible.

In modern times, things keep moving very fast. New developments take place even before you have been able to implement the ones that came before them. This is a very fast-paced world. If you do not keep up with it – or rather ahead of it – you will be left behind, and your competitors will surge ahead. So what you do is to think critically, evaluate, and make informed decisions. The information that you already have may have gone out of date, so think – and think critically – and act with confidence.

Once you have developed the ability to think critically, your confidence level will be enhanced enormously. Think what you can do out of the following:

- Be open to assessing and absorbing new ideas;
- Use your intellect independently;
- Be ready to ask relevant questions;
- Look for validity of information;
- Be able to connect various ideas in a cohesive manner;
- Analyse and comprehend new information;
- Be able to separate fact from fiction;
- Have a questioning temperament;
- Use your reasoning capability avoiding common mistakes; and
- You will not allow emotions to overtake logic.

10.3.2 CREATIVE THINKING

It means thinking of unusual ideas which have not been brought forth by anyone so far. If you want to think of new ways of doing things, you have to leave the shelter of your limited horizon and think "out of the box". There are always different approaches to a problem, and many different ways of doing things. So if you choose the uncharted path, you pave the way for yourself to find new meanings, different interpretations, and still be logical.

Creative thinking will help you develop new ideas and concepts. When you try to use creative thinking, remember the following:

- There isn't always one right answer. There may be many such answers.
- In order to be creative, you may have to forego logic sometimes. Only then you will be able to use your creativity.
- Engaging in creative thinking is quite often fun as you try to explore new ways not yet tried.
- You may not always succeed. Keep trying and ultimately you will hit upon an innovative idea.



11 PROBLEM SOLVING

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Every day you will be faced with at least one problem to solve. Problems arise in many shapes and forms. They can be routine everyday problems, or more complex ones. We also solve problems on a daily basis, in academic situations, at work and in our day-to-day lives.

Some of the problems that are typically faced include:

- Which route to take to work?
- What to have for dinner tonight?
- How to fix a project that is running behind schedule?
- How to change from an uninspiring job to a career you are really passionate about?
- How to put together an argument for an article or a research paper?
- How to debug a computer program?
- How to balance your budget?

11.2 NEED FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

No matter what job you are in, or what course of studies you are pursuing, you will be judged on your ability to solve problems. Problem solving is important because we all have decisions to make, and questions to answer in our lives.

Any job or academic situation will also bring problems to be faced. It is important to demonstrate that you have the right skills to resolve these problems, and the capability to handle the challenges and pressures they may bring.

You need to be able to:

- Evaluate information or situations;
- Break them down into their key components;
- Consider various ways of approaching and resolving them;
- Decide on the most appropriate of these ways.

Problem solving is one of the most widely sought after skills. You may have to face an immediate challenge to make reasoned judgments and find solutions independently on a daily basis.

11.3 SKILLS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Basically, the following skills are key to problem solving:

- Analytical ability
- Creative thinking
- Initiative
- Logical reasoning
- Persistence
- Team work
- Communication
- Persuasion and negotiation

11.4 PROCESS OF PROBLEM SOLVING

Whatever you are faced with, some of these steps are fundamental:

- Identify the problem;
- Define the problem;
- Examine the options;
- Act on a plan; and
- Look at the consequences.

11.4.1 DEVELOPING ANALYTICAL AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Most problem solving skills are developed through everyday experience. However, the following activities can help in demonstrating a high level of these skills:

- **Mind games:** crosswords, Sudoku, chess etc.
- **Computer games:** involving assessment of the pros and cons of different courses of action.
- **Practical interests:** programming, DIY (Do It Yourself), vehicle maintenance.
- **Academic study:** evaluating sources of information, designing, lab experiment.

11.5 STAGES OF PROBLEM SOLVING

The process of problem solving passes through the following stages:

- **Evaluating the problem:**
  - Clarifying the nature of a problem;
  - Formulating questions;
  - Collecting information;
  - Summarizing the information; and
  - Defining the objective.
- **Managing the problem:**
  - Making effective use of information;
  - Breaking down a problem into small parts;
  - Analysing options; and
  - Identifying steps to take.
- **Decision making:**
  - Deciding between options; and
  - Deciding on resources available.
- **Resolving the problem:**
  - Transforming decision into action; and
  - Reviewing progress.



Fig. 11/1 below depicts the stages of problem solving.

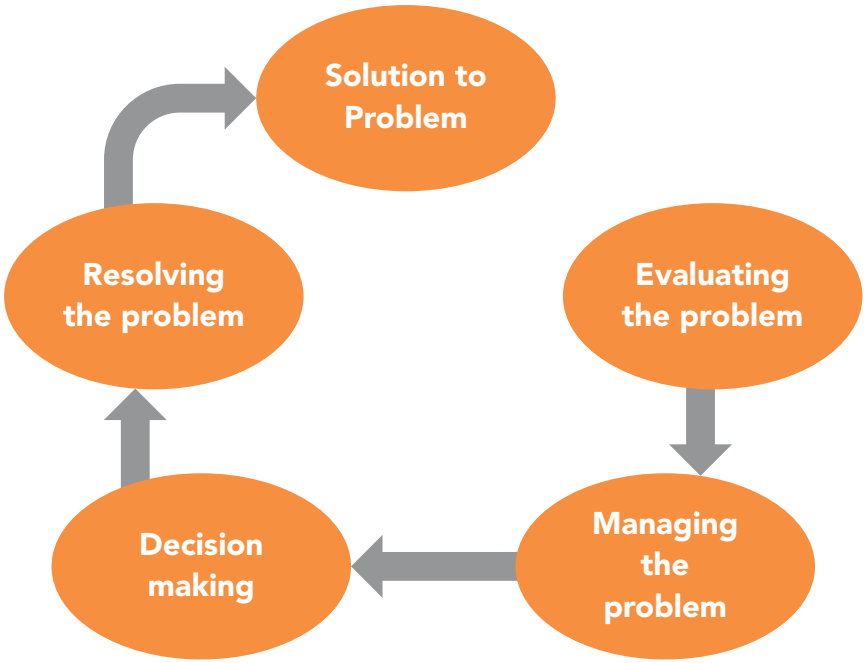


Fig. 11/1 Stages of problem solving

11.6 METHODS OF PROBLEM SOLVING

The following methods could be crucial in solving problems:

- **Focus on the solution – not the problem:** First acknowledge the problem and then move your focus to a solution-oriented mindset where you keep fixed on what the 'answer' could be instead of lingering on *'what went wrong,'* and *'whose fault it is.'*
- **Simplify things:** Try simplifying your problem by generating it. Remove all the details and go back to the basics. Try looking for a really easy, obvious solution. It is often the simple things that are the most productive!
- **Use language that creates possibility:** Avoid closed, negative language such as *'I don't think….'* Or *'This is not right but….'*
- **Do not be judgmental:** Approach problems neutrally – without any judgment. Practise focusing on defining a problem, keep calm and do not make things too complicated.

What sets a good problem solver apart from others is their positive attitude towards tackling challenges and a willingness to take personal responsibility when seeking a way around the problem.

You should try to think that problems are actually opportunities in disguise. This approach will make the task of problem solving an easy one.

12 DECISION MAKING

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Everyone is required to make decisions in various situations. Decision making is the foremost aspect of life – both personal and professional. George Terry (1993) says:

> ***"Decisions are mandatory for planning, actuating and controlling to have significance."***

Decision making may be defined as the solution from among alternatives of a course of action. According to Koontz and Weihrich (1988), a plan cannot be said to exist unless a decision – a commitment of resources, direction, or reputation – has been made. A decision is the outcome of hunch, intuition, reasoning and planning. It is made to achieve goals. Though decision making has its own limitations – particularly for those in managerial positions – it is possible to make a significant contribution to the way activities of an organisation are to proceed further.

12.2 FEATURES

Decision making has a number of important features:

- Decisions are made to achieve identifiable goals.
- They imply the existence of a set of alternatives to choose from.
- The process of decision making is extremely dynamic.
- Decisions are made in relation to the environment.
- It is implied that a decision maker has the freedom to do so.
- When a decision has been made, the matter does not end there. Decision making is an ongoing process.
- Decisions are not made in haste. The process is intellectual or rational.

12.3 SCOPE

The role of the decision maker is concerned with three main classes of decision:

- Decisions regarding the allocation of available resources;
- Decisions regarding the direction to pursue; and
- Decisions relating to monitoring or checking.

12.4 PURPOSE

Everyone makes an effort to respond to challenges and pressures of the environment, and decides to cope with them. This ensures that there is some sort of equilibrium. The function of a decision is to ensure determination of the right course of action at the right time in response to the circumstances. Tannenbaum (1949) suggests that decision making has three main purposes – organisation, direction and control. In the 'organisation' aspect it is determined what 'parts' there shall be in the system and what relationships will exist between them. 'Direction' provides for the purpose of action and the methods and procedures to be followed in achieving them. 'Control' ensures that the purposes of action are attained.

12.5 TYPES

The decision making task of an average person involves the following:

- **Programmed decisions:** These decisions are structured and are applied to routine problems and repetitive work.
- **Non-programmed decisions:** They deal with problems that result from unusual and unstructured situations. They are aimed at the problems that are not well defined.



- **Initiative or forced decisions:** They involve situations when either a person has to be proactive and initiate a decision or he/she does not have a choice but has to make a decision as per the situation.
- **Decision making under certainty, uncertainty and risk conditions:** Either there may be certainty of achieving results, or there may be uncertainty involving an element of risk.
- **Personal decisions:** They have to be made as per the personal goals of a person.
- **Individual or group decisions:** When working with a group, the group loyalties need to precede individual interests.

In addition to the above, a person in managerial/leadership position has to make the following decisions also:

- **Institutional decisions:** They relate to scheduling or policy-making covering various programmes and activities.
- **Strategy decisions:** They involve the implementation of institutional decisions. A manager/leader has to decide who should be involved in what, when and how.

12.6 PROCESS

Decisions do not occur in a vacuum. There is an orderly process to decision making. Griffiths (1959) states, "Decision making is the process which one goes through in order to be able to pass judgment and terminate a controversy".

This process passes through a series of steps:

12.6.1 RECOGNIZING, DEFINING AND LIMITING THE PROBLEM

The first step in decision making is to find the real problem and to define it. One's knowledge about the areas of the problem has a direct bearing on their perception of the problem. One has to determine the conditions for its solutions, and go through the objectives for the solution. The objectives should have a balance between the immediate future and long-range goals.

12.6.2 ANALYSING, DIAGNOSING AND EVALUATING THE PROBLEM

The next step is to analyse the problem by classifying it and finding the facts. A decision maker must ask himself/herself: What does the problem mean to me? What does it mean to my family/organisation? What do I want to do about it? Is this a problem on which a decision needs to be made? Classification of the problem helps in determining who must make the decision, who must be consulted in making it, and who must be informed. This will ensure that decision is not endangered and that it is clear who has to do what in order to convert the decision into effective action.

12.6.3 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA

A decision maker functions in a framework of values – personal values, cultural values and the values of the family/organisation. Hence one has to look for solutions the standards of which will be acceptable as per social norms. Griffiths (1959) rightly states, "In a sense, a decision on criteria and standards must be made prior to the major decision."

12.6.4 DISCOVERING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The process of decision making involves considering several alternative solutions. They are the means of compelling us to look at our basic assumptions, examine them and test their validity. A central problem for a decision maker is to choose between maintaining the system of action 'as is,' or changing them in desirable directions by desirable and feasible amount. In fact, the phase of search for solutions places emphasis upon how creative the individual has to be in looking for solutions. Though alternative solutions may not ensure making the right decision, they prevent us from making the decision what we would have known to be a wrong one if we had given a serious thought to the problem.

12.6.5 COLLECTING DATA

In getting the facts, one has to ask: What information do I need for this particular decision? He/she has to decide about the relevance and validity of data available. They may not be able to get all the facts they should have. A large number of decisions are based on insufficient knowledge. This happens because either the information is not available or to get it one may have to spend a lot of time or money. However, decision making is not hindered by incomplete information if the decision maker knows what information is lacking. This will help in judging how much of a risk the decision involves.

12.6.6 SELECTING THE BEST SOLUTION

Before deciding upon the best solution from among the alternatives available one must consider the following criteria:

- **Risk:** One must examine the risk involved in making a particular decision. In order to minimize the risk factor they must consider the possible consequences of a decision.
- **Economy of effort:** Sustained effort and avoidance of frequent changes in plans go a long way in making a suitable decision.
- **Timing:** Too long procrastination or haste does not contribute to effective decision making. While a delayed action does not bear fruit, a decision made in haste may prove to be damaging. Any decision has to be timed well.



- **Limitations of resources:** One must consider the limitations of resources available. They can use the following three basic approaches while selecting from among various alternatives:
  - **Experience:** Experience plays a large part in decision making. However, reliance on past experience as a guide for future action can sometimes be dangerous. Lessons of experience may not be applicable to new problems. As a matter of fact, good decisions must be evaluated against future events, while experience belongs to the past. On the contrary, if we analyse experience carefully and understand the basic reasons for success or failure, then experience can be a powerful tool for decision analysis.
  - **Experimentation:** An easy way is to try one of the alternatives but it is likely to be expensive. At the same time, there are many decisions that cannot be made unless the best course of action is ascertained by experiment.
  - **Research and analysis:** In this approach, one must first comprehend the problem, search for relationships among the variables and premises. However, this type of analysis and study are likely to be cheaper than experimentation.

12.6.7 CONVERTING THE DECISION INTO EFFECTIVE ACTION

Any decision has to be made effective in action. There is no use if a decision is made but there is no action on it. Moreover, there ought not to be haphazard implementation of a decision. It needs to be done in a well-planned and structured manner.

Fig. 12/1 below represents the process of decision making.

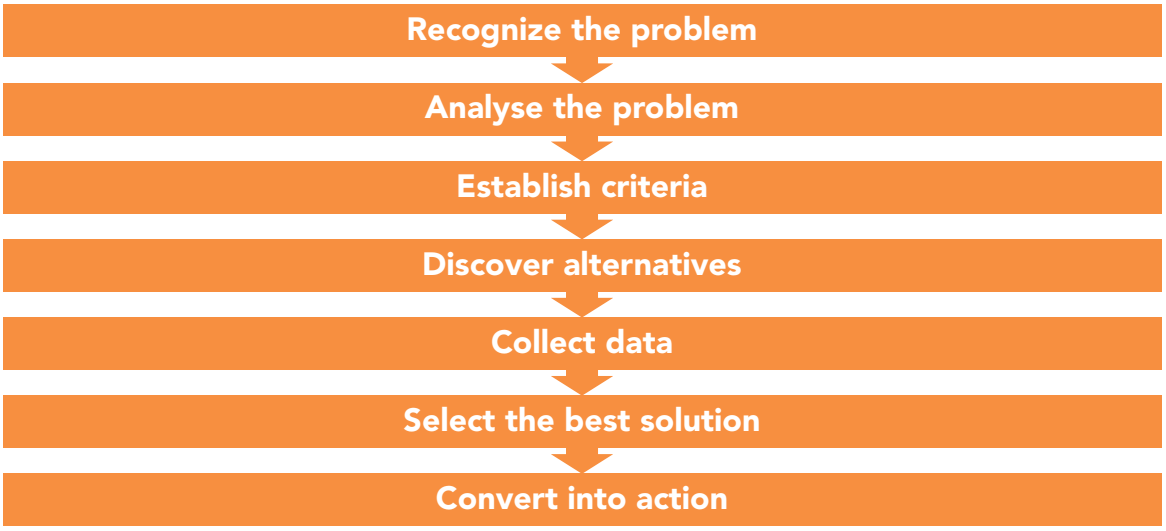


Fig. 12/1 Process of decision making

13 EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication for seeking employment is one of the most important aspects of life. Though it is extremely significant at the start of the career, it is equally relevant at any stage of career change.

13.2 WRTING CV (CURRICULUM VITAE)

Writing an effective CV goes a long way in ensuring that the prospective employer gets to know about you in a positive manner. Your CV is your first introduction, and it shows what you are and what you can do for your employing organisation.

13.2.1 WHAT TO INCLUDE IN CV?

- Name and contact details
- Education
- Skills
- Work experience
- Interests
- References
- Photograph

13.2.2 HOW TO WRITE A GREAT CV?

- **Grammar:** There should be no grammatical mistakes or spelling errors. Complete sentences should be used only where necessary.
- **Layout:** Most attractive skills should be kept on top. Education and experience should be written from the most recent ones to the earliest.
- **Presentation:** It should be typed neatly. Use font size not higher than 12 point. Headings and sub-headings can be made bold. Use an attractive and business like type face, e.g. Times New Roman or Ariel. Use bullet points rather than numbers.
- **Style:** There is no single style, but skill-based (to be put on top after the name) CV is very effective as the recruiters are able to focus on your skills. In today's business world, a potential employer decides to engage your services not for what you did but what your current skills are.
- **Size:** The length should preferably be not more than two pages.

Sample template of CV:

Your name and contact details	**Photo**
Career objective	
(Keep it brief – maximum 200 words)	
Key competencies and skills	
(Here list those professional abilities you think are most relevant to the vacancy you are applying for.)	
Personal skills	
(Here list those personal abilities you think are most relevant to the vacancy you are applying for.)	
Career history	
Your job title, employer's name, employment dates, duties etc. *(Give details of your work duties. Try to keep them as relevant as possible to the job you are applying for.)*	

American online
LIGS University
is currently enrolling in the
Interactive Online BBA, MBA, MSc,
DBA and PhD programs:

- enroll by September 30th, 2014 and
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More info here.



Academic qualifications
(Qualifications gained and grades, dates attended, school/college/university attended.)
Personal data
(Date of Birth, place of residence, driving license, passport etc.)
References
(Name, job title, address, telephone, email)

13.2.3 WRITING A COVERING LETTER

Most organisations require a covering letter (you should include it even if it is not asked for). In this case, you should prepare a brief covering letter which may include:

- Designation of the recruiter.
- Name and address of the organisation.
- Reference to the advertisement.
- Your qualifications, skills and experience. (Use only a few sentences to describe them.)
- Mention that you are enclosing/attaching your CV.

Sample of covering letter in response to an advertisement:

There may be an advertisement like this:

Cottonwoods Computer Systems London, Britain

Wanted a Marketing Executive

- Are you a management graduate?
- Do you like working with people?
- Can you speak two foreign languages?
- Can you use a computer?
- Do you know London well?

Please write to:
Julie Anderson
Human Resource Manager
Cottonwood Computer Systems
20 College Street, London SW2 J4
Or email: julie@cottonwoods.co.uk

Sample of your covering letter:

5 Oxford Street
London
15 July 2017

Ms. Julie Anderson
Human Resource Manager
Cottonwood Computer Systems
20 College Street,
London SW2 J4

Dear Ms. Anderson,

Subject: Marketing Executive

Reference your advertisement for the position of Marketing Executive I'd like to offer my services for the same.

I am 26 years old and live in Oxford. I am working as a Marketing Executive in a small organisation. I like working with people, and can speak two foreign languages – French and Spanish. I can also use a computer well.

I was born in London, so I know it very well.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca David

Encl: CV

13.3 INTERVIEW

13.3.1 PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Before you proceed for the interview you should prepare yourself well for the same:

- **Research on potential employing organisation:** You should do a thorough research on the organisation by talking to friends who know about the organisation and browsing through the Internet. You should look for the following:
  - Size of the organisation;
  - Business of the organisation – manufacturing, distributing, marketing, providing services etc.;
  - Approximate number of employees;
  - Salary and other perks being given (if feasible);
  - Location;
  - Employee turnover;
  - Reputation in the market;
  - Potential for career growth etc.



- **Preparation for interview:** Some organisations have a series of tests as part of the recruitment process such as written test, Aptitude test, group discussion, presentation, face-to-face interview etc. Ensure that you are aware of the whole process and prepare yourself accordingly.

13.3.2 INTERVIEW SKILLS

❖ **Group discussion:** Sometimes you may have to go through the process of group discussion with other applicants. Here are some points to remember:

- Try to take lead by initiating the discussion. It gives a good impression.
- Do not continue talking at length. Stop after you have made a point. You may involve others by asking *"What do you think?"*
- Do not interrupt others while they are talking. Wait for a suitable moment to enter the discussion.
- Do not use phrases like *"According to me…"* or *"In my opinion…"* or: *"In my personal opinion…"* Rather use *"I think…"* Or *"I feel…"*
- Do not be adamant about your opinions and thoughts. Others may think differently. Find a way out or a compromise solution.
- Do not raise your voice. Talk normally.
- Your body language must be positive even if you don't like the other person's view point. Negative body language (raised eyebrows, smirking etc.) shows you in a bad light.
- Create an impression of group discussion. It goes a long way in creating a good image of you as a potential team player.

❖ **Face-to-face interview:** It is the most important part of the recruitment process, as you are just one step away from being hired. You need to be fully prepared for the same. Here are some guidelines:

- Dress formally. Do not wear flashy clothes. Good grooming is very important as it gives the first impression about your personality.
- Look confident even if there are butterflies fluttering in your stomach. (This usually happens at your first interview.)
- Greet the interviewer(s) with appropriate greeting, and sit only when asked to do so. You may be carrying a briefcase or a portfolio or a handbag. Never keep it on the interviewers' table. Rather put it on the floor standing against your chair leg. (You may need to pick it up later when asked to show some documents such as education and experience certificates.)

- Carry a spare copy of your CV and certificates in original as well as photocopies. You may be asked to show the originals and/or to submit the copies. Do carry a couple of passport size photographs also (in case you are asked to submit the same.)
- Show your enthusiasm.
- Communicate well.
- Prove you are a problem solver.
- Use power of persuasion.
- Demonstrate you are management material.
- Show that you are adaptable.
- Demonstrate your values.
- Answer the questions with confidence. Your answers should be of average length (depending on the type of question) – neither too short nor too long.
- Do not fabricate answers. Stick to facts. If you tell lies, or you are vague, you are likely to be caught – later if not at the time of interview.
- Always look positive. Uncomfortable questions can be answered in a diplomatic way.
- Never badmouth your previous boss or organisation. Talking ill of them creates a negative impression about you.
- At the end of the interview, the interviewer(s) may invite questions from you. If not, request them to answer a couple of questions.
- Ask relevant questions but never about salary and/or working hours. Nobody likes to answer them. You may rather try to get clarification regarding the job profile.
- If offered the job immediately after or during the interview, do not accept or reject it outright. Politely say that you need to think about it and will get back to them shortly, say, within 2–3 days or a week at the most.
- Do not forget to thank the interviewer(s) before leaving the interview room.

14 WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

Adhering to the correct etiquette at workplace is very important as it has a bearing on your interaction with your co-workers and visitors, as well as your total personality. Quite often we either waste time or create misunderstanding, or even give an unfavourable impression about ourselves. Behaving in a professional way at workplace goes a long way in ensuring our peace of mind as well as a professional approach to work.

14.1 INTRODUCTIONS

When we meet people for the first time in professional capacity we need to take care of the following:

- **The power of introductions:** We need to introduce ourselves as well as others in a group in a brief but appropriate manner. We need to be absolutely business-like about it.
- **The handshake:** The handshake needs to be firm – neither strong nor limp. It shows your personality.
- **The exchange of business cards:** Business card is to be given by holding it in both hands and extending it towards the other person – not to be given by one hand.



14.1.1 MEETING ETIQUETTE

The following points need to be kept in mind when you are to attend a meeting:

- Be on time.
- Have a note pad and pen/pencil.
- Have documents related to the Agenda.
- Take notes.
- Remain alert.
- Answer questions confidently.
- Ask relevant questions.
- Present your viewpoint but be ready to discuss and accept others' ideas.
- Do not continue talking at length.
- Do not interrupt others.
- Take care of your body language.

14.2 BEHAVIOUR AT WORK

- **Behaviour with senior colleagues:** Be formal but polite.
- **Etiquette with women:** Show courtesy to women in all matters. It is not proper etiquette to extend your hand to a lady for a handshake unless she extends her hand first.
- **Adherence to office rules:** Follow the prescribed office rules with regard to dress, break time, leave procedure etc.
- **Discipline:** Follow the basic rules of discipline, e.g. timings, reporting procedure, communication channels, protocol etc.

14.3 PERSONAL ETIQUETTE

You need to take utmost care with regard to the following:

- Hygiene
- Grooming
- Table manners

14.4 USING OFFICE UTILITIES AND RESOURCES

Follow these suggestions:

- Use office utilities for office work and not for personal work too.
- Do not take away various office items (like stationery) home.
- Do not do personal work on the Internet in the office unless it is extremely urgent (sometimes).

14.5 TRAVEL ETIQUETTE

If you are travelling on organisation business, keep the following in mind:

- Money should be spent only to the extent permissible to you.
- Keep record of all expenditure, and preserve all receipts, documents etc.
- If you are travelling along with your colleague, be very clear and frank about sharing or not sharing accommodation, expenditure etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Manmohan Joshi, M.A., M.Ed., Cert. EA, Dip. HRD, Dip. Mgmt. (UK), MBA, Ph.D. (Mgmt.), has over 45 years' teaching, training and administrative experience. He has worked as Principal of large and reputed educational institutions in India, Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman.

For his work on Innovative Practices in Value Education he was awarded by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, India.

He is also the recipient of the Best Teacher Award from the Govt. of Tamilnadu as well as the Central Board of Secondary Education, India.

He has presented papers at various national and international conferences under the auspices of UNESCO. He has also conducted various workshops for teachers, students, parents and administrators. The topics covered a wide area viz., Leadership and Team Building, Value Education, Administration Skills, Choosing a Career, Effective Decision Making in Administration, Effective Communication Skills, Interpersonal Relationships, Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation, Skills in Dealing with Managers, Secretarial Skills. He has also authored several books on different subjects.

He has also worked as Acting Chief Executive & Consultant for a reputed Training Institute in the Sultanate of Oman.

He is now Head-Content Development at Acharya Education Services, Bangalore, India, and conducts workshops and training programmes for college professors, teachers and teacher educators. He is actively involved in teaching students of MBA, B.Ed. as well as Law.

He can be contacted through e-mail: manmohan.joshi@gmail.com

