



The Current Context of Business Communication

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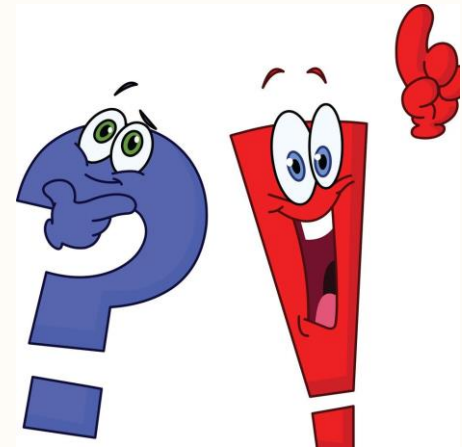
What are soft skills?

“personal qualities that enable you to communicate well with other people”

Oxford Learner’s Dictionary

“patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value”

(Borghans et al., 2008)



Soft Skills

Verbal skills



Presentation skills



Listening skills



Teamwork



Negotiation Skill



Communication Skills



Leadership Skills



Problem Solving Skill



Professionalism



The Importance of Soft Skills in Business Environment

- Soft Skills are essential career attributes that include the ability to communicate, work well with others, solve problems, make ethical decisions, and appreciate diversity.
- Developing soft skills will result in professionalism in behavior and thinking.
- The art of living and working depends on your soft skills.



Exercise 1

Write down more than 10 soft skills that employees should develop in their career life.



Answers

- Self-confidence
- Stress management
- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Presentation skills
- Listening
- Public speaking
- Teamwork
- Decision making
- Strategic planning
- Critical thinking
- Self awareness
- Adaptability
- Competitiveness
- Creativity
- Problem solving
- Time management
- Emotional intelligence
- Courtesy
- Persuasion
- Social skills

Exercise 2

Think of your favourite role model (Scientist/ Actor/Leader) and write down,

- What kind of soft skills that person has?
- How do you identify his/her soft skills?



Emotional Intelligence

“the ability to understand your emotions and those of other people and to behave appropriately in different situations” Oxford Learner’s Dictionary

At a personal level, emotional intelligence helps us:

- Have uncomfortable conversations without hurting feelings
- Manage our emotions when stressed or feeling overwhelmed
- Improve relationships with the people we care about

At work, emotional intelligence can help us:

- Resolve conflicts
- Coach and motivate others
- Create a culture of collaboration
- Build psychological safety within teams

Daniel Goleman divided Emotional Intelligence into ‘Personal’ and ‘Social’ competences, which broadly split between personal and interpersonal skills

Personal Skills or Competences	Social Skills or Competences
<i>How we manage ourselves</i>	<i>How we handle relationships with others</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Self-awareness<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Emotional awareness▸ Accurate self-assessment▸ Self-confidence▸ Self-regulation<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Self-control▸ Trustworthiness▸ Conscientiousness▸ Adaptability▸ Innovation▸ Motivation<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Achievement drive▸ Commitment▸ Initiative▸ Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Empathy<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Understanding others▸ Developing others▸ Service orientation▸ Leveraging diversity▸ Political awareness▸ Social Skills<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Influence▸ Communication▸ Conflict management▸ Leadership▸ Change catalyst▸ Building bonds▸ Collaboration and cooperation▸ Team capabilities

Soft Skills : Accepting and Understanding Cultural Differences

- Today's generation of employees are working with people of different nationalities, colors, and religious beliefs.
- There are many types of potential cultural clashes in the workplace:
 - Religious beliefs
 - Baby Boomers
 - Gap in work culture



Professionalism

- In the working world, your professionalism embraces the way you carry yourself, your attitude and the ways you communicate with others.
- Being professional can ensure a positive first impression, successful interpersonal relationships and a lasting reputation within your organization and industry.
- Tips for proper workplace etiquette:
 - Honour your commitments
 - Be attentive and responsive
 - Get to know the workplace culture
 - Keep personal matters to a minimum level
 - Avoid the negative side of office politics

Exercise 3

Write down professional behaviours that employees should follow in the working environment?



Answer

- Respect others
- High quality work standards
- Honesty
- Clean
- Neat and appropriate dressing
- Communicate effectively and appropriately
- Good interpersonal skills

How Can you Develop and Practice Professionalism

- Be productive
- Develop a professional image
- Maintain effective work habits
- Manage your time efficiently
- Provide excellence
- Be a problem-solver
- Be resilient
- Communicate effectively
- Develop self-awareness
- Build relationships





Elements that Destroy Professionalism

- Gossip
- Negative attitude
- Poor attendance and frequent tardiness
- Unprofessional body language

E.g., yawning without covering your mouth and chewing gum in the presence of others

- Physical attributes like excessive fragrance or not-so-fresh body odors, and unkempt fingernails



Projecting Professionalism

	Unprofessional	Professional
Speech habits	Speaking in high tone, making sentences sound like questions and commands	Recognizing that your credibility can be seriously damaged by sounding uneducated, unrefined, or immature
E-mail	Writing e-mails with incomplete sentences, misspelled words, exclamation points, slang, and senseless chatting Careless messages send a nonverbal message that you don't care, don't know, or aren't smart enough to know what is correct	People like to see subjects, verbs, and punctuation marks They value conciseness and correct spelling

	Unprofessional	Professional
Internet	Using e-mail addresses such as <u>screaming@silentmail.com</u> , <u>nanditha_girlpower@gmail.com</u>	An e-mail address should include your name or a relevant, positive, businesslike expression. It should not sound like a nickname. E.g., <u>nadita_mkt@gmail.com</u>
Voice mail	an outgoing message with noisy background music and weird sounds	an outgoing message that states your name or phone number and provide instructions to leave a message
Telephone	Loud music, or a TV football game playing noisily in the background when you answer the phone	a quiet background when you answer the telephone, especially if you are expecting a call from a prospective employer
Smart phones	Taking or placing calls during business meetings or during conversations with fellow employees; raising your voice or engage in calls	Turning off phone and message notification, both audible and vibrate, during meetings

Culture and Communication

What is culture?

“the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of racial, religious, or social group; and the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization”

Merriam-Webster dictionary

- Globalization is changing the way people do business; and because of this people must understand to effectively communicate with others from a different culture.
- The culture of the organization effects how the organization communicates and conducts business.
- Since organizational communication issues may arise it is better to understand different cultures.
- It is also important to understand what causes those problems to find solutions to effectively and efficiently communicate.

Context of Cultures: High and Low

Context refers to the stimuli, environment, or ambience surrounding an event.

Low-context cultures such as those in North America, Scandinavia, and Germany depend little on the context of a situation.

Messages are objective, professional, and efficient. Words are taken literally.

High-context cultures such as those in China, Japan, and Arab countries do not take words literally.

Posture, voice inflection, gestures, and facial expressions are important.



Difference in Cross-Cultural Communication

High Context	Low Context
Indirect and implicit messages	Direct, simple and clear messages
High use of non-verbal communication	Low use of non-verbal communication
Low reliance on written communication	High reliance on written communication
Use intuitions and feelings to make decisions	Rely on facts and evidence for decisions
Long-term relationships	Short-term relationships
Relationships are more important than schedules	Schedules are more important than relationships
Strong distinction between in-group and out-group	Flexible and open

Understanding Different Cultures

- Individualism
- Collectivism
- Overcome language barriers
- Effective communication
- Food and dining
- Different names and time schedules
- Hand Gestures around the world



How to Overcome Cultural Barriers at Workplace?



- Be open-minded
- Develop an efficient communication system
- Awareness of the cultural difference
- Be a strong team
- Seek feedback
- Be patient
- Seek training

“The people that are successful in organizations – and the reason those organizations are successful – is that everybody uses their technical skills and their soft skills all the time”

Dr Marion Steel