



A • P • U
ASIA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Workplace Professional Communication Skills (MPU3272-WPCS)

Final Documentation

Table of Contents

1.0 Abstract.....	1
2.0 Introduction.....	2
3.0 Managing Workplace Relationship.....	3
3.1 Peer Interaction.....	4
3.1.1 Evidence & Issues.....	5
3.2 Cultural Awareness.....	6
3.2.1 Why learning culture is important (Evidence and Issue).....	7
3.2.2 Tips for Culture Awareness.....	9
3.2.3 Example of Culture Differences.....	10
3.3 Body Language.....	11
3.3.2 Tips on Improving.....	12
3.4 Social Awareness.....	13
3.4.1 Evidence.....	14
3.4.2 Critical Analysis.....	15
4.0 Conclusion.....	16
References.....	17
Appendix.....	19

1.0 Abstract

The way you interact with others in the workplace is very important. Good interpersonal communication is an important tool for achieving productivity and maintaining a strong working relationship at all levels of the organization. Everyone feels respected and supported in a good working relationship. In addition to establishing a stable working relationship, excellent interpersonal skills greatly influence the performance of the team and stimulate the quantity efficiency of the company's teamwork. Peer-to-peer interactions, cultural awareness, body language and social awareness. These will all influence the interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Next in this article, we will discuss about "how to manage relationships in the workplace."

2.0 Introduction

Humans are social by nature this leads to the importance of workplace relationships in attributing to the success of an organization, notably the relationship between employees and managers are of notable value in increasing the productivity of the organization. As an added benefit, the increase in the quality of these workplace relationships bring about increased employee satisfaction, more time being spent on capitalizing business opportunities and a reduction in time wasted on clearing up conflicts stemming from miscommunications. Workplace relationships often with the increased efficiency within the organization, tend to indirectly improve existing relationships with other stakeholders as more time can be allocated to the diplomatic actions of the organization in interacting with its clients/stakeholders thereby increasing the likelihood of company's success.

3.0 Managing Workplace Relationship



Figure 1 Workplace relationship

A strong workplace relationship able to increase the competitive edge of the company or organization. *“The power of one, if fearless and focused, is formidable, but the power of many working together is better”* Quote by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. In a company, the relationship you have in the workplace are very important part of your working life. When your workplace relationship is going well, you will feel ready to face the work and the world. However, the workplace relationship is not going well, you will feel stress and affect the performance of your work. You will need to face the problem such as conflicts, stress linked to work colleagues, increased workload, feeling undervalued or overlooked and end up you will face the problem of changing your job, team or organization if the workplace relationship is not good. [CITATION chr19 \l 1033]

There are a few characteristics of good working relationship such as Trust, mutual respect, mindfulness, open communication. When you trust your colleague, it helps you to work and communication more effectively. The meaning of mindfulness is when you are talking, you are taking responsibility for your word and actions. “Think before you talk” are important to avoid own negative emotions effect the people around you and not easily offend another. To be

open and honest communication are the key of better and more effectively communicate with people or colleague around you.[CITATION Min191 \l 1033]

3.1 Peer Interaction

Peer interaction is one of the many qualities and skill needed and highly required by companies and in workplace. Effective peer-to-peer communication can go a long way in helping establish mutually respectful relationships, which can improve employee's satisfaction and it can boost productivity too. [CITATION Ric19 \l 1033]

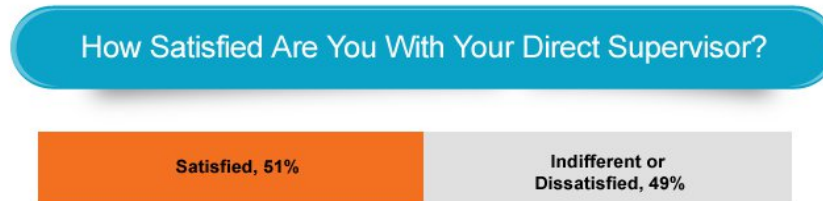
Benefits: [CITATION Cra15 \l 1033]

- Comfortable environment
- Better relationship with peers
- Higher productivity
- Lesser conflicts happening with the right communication
- Increases loyalty to the company
- Employees feel more values at work
- Employees get supported through good and bad times
- Employees wants to be recognized by peers

There are many ways that could have a better peer interaction for example having informal meetings, joining discussions, greet each other and have a positive attitude. This way, conflicts will be lesser and the working experience would be better.

3.1.1 Evidence & Issues

Satisfied with their peers

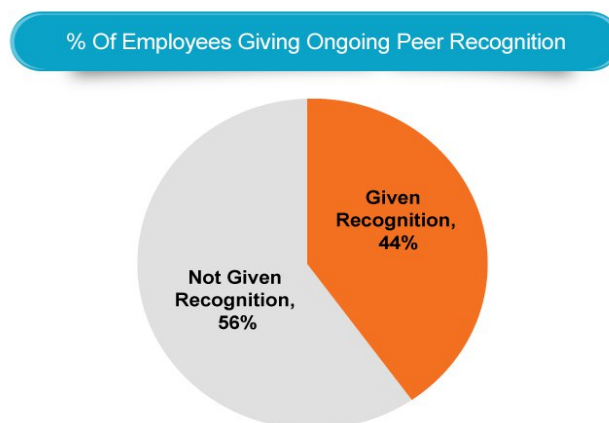


A research done within the TINYpulse employees shown that about 51% of all their employees are satisfied with their supervisors. The few main reasons of dissatisfaction with their direct supervisors are that they are **not present and limited interaction with team, poor communicator and lack of knowledge and experience.**

One of the employees mentioned that his/her manager is a clever person but is generally absent. The manager holds an important leadership role but is always a reluctant leader.

Another employee mentioned that the communication between their supervisor is sporadic and sometimes ineffective. It is difficult for him/her to know what is being asked from the supervisor at times. [CITATION The14 \l 1033]

Employees wants to be recognized by others



The study also shows that when employees are happy, they are even more inclined to offer peer recognition. Only 18% of the least happy employees share praise, 58% of the happiest cohort gives cheers. Professional happiness encourages 3 times more recognition.

3.2 Cultural Awareness

What is culture?



"A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water to a fish. It sustains us. We live and breathe through it." Quote by Trompenaars (1952)

Cultural awareness is the skill to examine the values, beliefs, traditions and perceptions within our own and the others culture as well. It is the basic of communication and it is the skill to aware when we have to interact with people from other cultures. Workplace are changing rapidly, Employees from many other countries are represented in a workplace such as from US, Canada, India, Indonesia, China and so on. Not only that, business generally required to deal with clients and partners from different country. There are many benefits to diversity: Multiculturalism provides businesses with a limitless pool of talent, ideas, viewpoints and opinions.[CITATION Ste19 \l 1033] If we interact in cross cultural situation with a lack of awareness, we might lead to bad or poor situation and cultural conflict. Problem can arise when we use the rules of our own culture to interpret the behavior of another. [CITATION Ana19 \l 2052]

Our cultural background affects everything about us, it influences our behavior, how we communicate and value or belief. We may be familiar with the more visible aspects of other cultures such as their food, dress or music. We are often less aware of the things that are not so obvious such as social values and nonverbal behavior. For example, direct eye contact means different things to different culture. For some, it is seemed as aggressive and intimidating but for some others it's a way of establishing trust.

3.2.1 Why learning culture is important (Evidence and Issue)

Case 1

U.S. and British negotiators found themselves at a standstill when the American company proposed that they "table" particular key points. In the U.S. "Tabling a motion" means to not discuss it, while the same phrase in Great Britain means to "bring it to the table for discussion."

Case 2

Managers at one American company were startled when they discovered that the brand name of the cooking oil, they were marketing in a Latin American country translated into Spanish as "Jackass Oil."

Case 3

One company printed the "OK" finger sign on each page of its catalogue. In many parts of Latin America that is considered an obscene gesture. Six months of work were lost because they had to reprint all the catalogues.

Case 4

When Pepsico advertised Pepsi in Taiwan with the ad "Come Alive With Pepsi" they had no idea that it would be translated into Chinese as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead."

Case 5

A golf ball manufacturing company packaged golf balls in packs of four for convenient purchase in Japan. Unfortunately, pronunciation of the word "four" in Japanese sounds like the word "death" and items packaged in fours are unpopular

[CITATION Ros16 \l 1033]

Issue

- **Misunderstanding, Bad communication, easily considered as offensive or unusual**
- **Company overall performance, Effect company financial loss, Employee retention rate**

For the case one, American company proposed that they “table” particular key points. The same sentence in U.S. and British, has a different meaning. Without learning culture, it might bring out situation of misunderstanding meaning of the word. The non-verbal communication is also important when dealing with international business or colleague from another country. Kissing people on the cheeks, making eye to eye contact, shake hands or hand sign, may be considered as offensive or unusual by your foreign colleague or business partners. A gesture for different culture has different meaning. In Latin America, “OK” finger sign considered as an obscene gesture. In most of the countries, “OK” finger sign used to express agreement or acceptance and “just fine”. So, it is important to learn the cultures, to avoid misunderstanding and argument.

Worst situation of without culture awareness, it might affect the company financial loss and company overall performance. Without this ability to aware of our cultures value, beliefs and perceptions. These culture differences can present challenges in the workplace and the employee retention rate will be decrease. In order to retain employee to work on the company, the company must enhance the satisfaction of working environment. That’s mean the employee must have culture awareness skill to prevent argument and offend another. Different culture will be affecting the people’s communication styles with each other and the way of relating to others. In order to solving these problems must first to understand these the issues in a workplace.

No matter you are in a small company or large company, effective communication is one of the important to business success. Never assume that you will be able to effectively communicate with your foreign partners or colleague by speaking English. Although it is common to hear that English is the language of business. For example, in case 2, the company were targeting the people in Latin American country that use Spanish to communicate. The company discover that the brand of cooking oil translated into Spanish and it’s a rude word. Understand the language of the country you target are very important.

3.2.2 Tips for Culture Awareness

- Observation skills
- Non stop learning or aware other cultures
- Ask and listen

It is very important to understand the rules and cultural when in the workplace working with people who across different cultures. [CITATION Min19 \l 1033] In order to interpret in cross cultural situation without a lack of awareness, there are few tips that could consider when you are interacting with a person who from a different cultural background in workplace.

The first tips are using observation skills to observe how they are behaving, observe how they are interacting with you and observe body language. As far as possible, try mirror and match the body language. For example, for some cultures people like to sit and lean forward when they are interacting, but if you lean back, they will be thought you are not interested which they would consider as an insult. The second tips are often learning or aware the other cultures, some cultures do behave very differently. Never “enough or done” with learning other culture, there are more and more cultures in the world. Must have to constant self-assessment, learning and openness to honest dialogue with colleagues. For example, in India timekeeping is not that important. But if in Switzerland, you are in a minute late in a date or class it considers as a real insult. Second example, Northern Europe people would communicate by giving facts, Italy people would communicate by sharing a lot of emotions, Japan people communicate by building harmony, India people communicate by asking about families. [CITATION Spe09 \l 1033]

However, ask question and listen to the answer also one of the important tips to culture awareness. So, ask question, and listen carefully to the answers, do not judge too quickly. [CITATION New15 \l 1033]

3.2.3 Example of Culture Differences

Country/Situation	How they greet	Hand Gestures (Very good or yummy)	What values were they raised with?
Brazil	Kiss on the cheeks	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite • Family is important
USA	Just Say Hi	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be hard worker • Be kind
Venezuela	Kiss on the cheeks or Hug	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect your family
Turkey	Say “Meribah” and kiss on the cheeks	Say “Çok güzel”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being kind, • nice • do not separate people • Don’t be racist
Australia	Say “Hey, how’s it going”	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect yourself and another’s
Mexico	Hug and	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Honesty
Germany	Say Hi or Shake hands	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time • Don’t be lazy
Lithuania	Kiss on the cheeks or Hug	Just say it without hand Gestures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work hard
Japan	Hello hand sign and say Konichiwa	Thumbs up	—
Belgium	Say “Hello “and kiss on the cheeks	Thumbs up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite • Be friendly

[CITATION WEP16 \l 2052]

3.3 Body Language

3.3.1 What is Body Language

Body language is the nonverbal signals that we use to communicate in the workplace every day. Nonverbal signals has a bigger impact on communication that verbal signs. From things that we don't say, such as facial expression and hand gestures can convey a lot of information.

Many of these body languages are often subconscious, by identifying these sub-conscious habits that don't do you good and picking up habits that increases your self-confidence, you can consciously improve your body language and self-confidence.

3.3.2 Tips on Improving

Body language is an outward representation of our emotions, but it can also work the other way around, by posturing your body to be more confident, you will actually be confident after getting used to it. It is impossible to master body languages, improvements can be made in constantly. Here are some examples on improving them.

Be Aware of How You Cross Your Arms and Legs

Crossing your arms and legs can be comfortable most of the times but aware that this may put you as not interested in the conversation or stubborn, remember to always sit properly to make it seem like you are paying attention in the conversation but don't sit too stiff as this will show that you are stressed and create tension in the conversation[CITATION Nor11 \l 1033].

Relax Your Shoulders

Holding your shoulders by your ears or slouching is a sign of tension and shows lack of confidence. This can cause the audience to lose interest as you will seem timid, this can be improved by remembering to always expand your chest and lowering your shoulder, this will present you as a much more confident person[CITATION Nor11 \l 1033].

Know Where Your Hands Are

Hand gestures are extremely important as they will show the audience what kind of a person you are. During a presentation, showing your palms to the audience will put you as a trustworthy person as this shows that you have nothing to hide. If you are constantly holding a fist or hiding your hand behind your back, it will show that there is something you are hiding from the audience. How the palm is presented to the audience can also have an effect as having your palms face up can make you seem like an open-minded person but having your palm face down will let the audience feel like you are giving them a directive instead of an advice, pointing your finger while presenting is even worse as this is similar to giving an order and telling the audience they don't know what they are doing and only have to listen to you.

3.4 Social Awareness



In the workplace, success and well-being largely depends on how you manage and communicate with people. It comes down to a skill - with a good social awareness.

Broadly speaking, social awareness refers to an in-depth understanding of social and community settings, the environment, issues, struggles, norms and culture.

But from a more practical perspective, social awareness is the ability to understand and feel the people around you and to interact with them in the most effective way.

Having higher levels of social awareness can make you to perceive and solve social and interpersonal problems in a much better way. This, in turn, results in having great relationships, reputation, and professional success. This is why it is equivalent to emotional intelligence.

The good social awareness of employees in the workplace is a resource and the most important competitive advantage of the company.

Modern enterprises are paying more and more attention to the shaping of the intangible assets of enterprises. And the employees are the mobile image of the company, they spread the corporate image more directly and more clearly. Good social awareness can create a shining image.

3.4.1 Evidence

In workplace, have a higher social understanding, you can do the following.

(1) Understanding

Being able to feel and sense what others are feeling. For example, is your customer really interested in what you are saying, or he is impatient to hear you? Is your boss really likes you, will fight for your interests, or he is just confuse you? If you have good social awareness, you can know how to say is the best fit for the situation.

(2) self-management

Can better control your emotions. In the process of working and getting along, problems and contradictions are inevitable, but with a good social awareness, you can be more calm and reduce friction, make the most favorable response. For example, in the face of customer humiliation, you can smile and admit mistakes that not belong to you.

(3) Judgment

You can know Can know what emotions should you express in that scene. For example, when talking to the boss about the promotion and salary increase, should you just wait for the boss, or give some hints, do a little threat, push the boss to help you fight for the benefits?

(4) Organizational Awareness

Being aware of the atmosphere of a group(Daniel Goleman).If you can make workplace participants to communicate in a relatively harmonious atmosphere, It will lay a good foundation for your career development.And It's conducive to improving the efficiency and quality of the team, and better promoting the work process.

(5) Communicate skills

You can better communicate with others. The competitive environment in the workplace is fierce. There are many complicated interpersonal relationships in the workplace. If you have strong workplace communication skills, you can get better development in the workplace. Establish more harmonious relationships and lay a good foundation for your career.

3.4.2 Critical Analysis

To improve social awareness in the workplace, you can try the following points.

(1) Develop self-awareness. Knowing yourself is the first step in understanding others. Through self-reflection, you can know how to deal with various social environments and how to improve yourself. ([Mindvalley](#))

(2) Learn to listen, Smiling and looking at the speaker's eyes. This will make him feel respected. Then give the appropriate response, if you don't understand, ask clearly, this will leave a good impression on others.

(3) Self-encouragement. For example, you can write down your own strengths, no matter how small they are. Tell yourself every day that you are the best person in the world. Positive self-suggestion can make you more confident.

(4) Think before answering and slow down the speed of speaking. You can get a clearer answer and avoid the embarrassing situation.

(5) Learn to relieve work stress, such as taking a deep breath three times a day to ease work mood. Or write anger on paper and tear it.

(6) Don't say negative words: You want to be encouraged by others, and everyone else is the same. Transform your way of speaking and use more positive encouragement instead of criticism.

(7) Don't evade the problem: try your best to solve the problem that can be solved. If you can't solve the problem, seek help from others.

(8) Expand your work stage: Don't be limited to your own department. When you have time, look at the departments you are not familiar with and expand your relationships.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, after having done thorough research and meetings among the group members. We understand how to work as a team and what qualities are highly needed in the workplace environment, which are Peer Interaction, Cultural Awareness, Body Language and Social Awareness. Having these qualities makes it easier for peers to interact with each other and it also lessens conflicts with the wrong communication.

References

- Ahmed, A., 2019. *Culture Awareness in the Workplace*. [Online]
Available at: <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/culture-awareness-workplace-737.html>
[Accessed 31 March 2019].
- Anon., 2014. *The 7 Key Trends Impacting Today's Workplace*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.tinypulse.com/2014-employee-engagement-organizational-culture-report>
[Accessed 28 April 2019].
- Cantatore, S. Q. a. G., n.d. *What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?*. [Online]
Available at: <http://www.culturocity.com/articles/whatisculturalawareness.htm>
[Accessed 31 March 2019].
- Crawford-Marks, R., 2015. *Here's why Peer Relationship are everything in Workplace*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.tlnt.com/hes-why-peer-relationships-are-everything-in-the-workplace/>
[Accessed 26 April 2019].
- Cultural differences - From all over the world... to Italy!*. 2016. [Film] Directed by WEP Italy. Italy: WEP Italy.
- Cultural Diversity - Tips for communicating with cultural awareness*. 2009. [Film] Directed by Speakfirst. s.l.: Speakfirst.
- Dunn, N., 2011. *You Are What You Do: 16 Ways to Improve Your Body Language*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.wisebread.com/you-are-what-you-do-16-ways-to-improve-your-body-language>
[Accessed 18 may 2019].
- Fisher, c., n.d. *The Meaning of Workplace Relations*. [Online]
Available at: <https://woman.thenest.com/meaning-workplace-relations-19431.html>
[Accessed 22 April 2019].
- Greer, R., 2016. *Cross-Cultural Marketing Blunders*. [Online]
Available at: <https://slideplayer.com/slide/6299370/>
[Accessed 21 April 2019].
- How to give negative feedback in the workplace*. 2009. [Film] Directed by Daltwisneyproduction. US: Daltwisneyproduction.
- Mind tools content team, n.d. *Building Great Work Relationships*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/good-relationships.htm>
[Accessed 22 April 2019].
- News Now Staff , 2015. *5 Tips on Cultural Competence*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.apta.org/PTinMotion/News/2015/7/16/CulturalCompetenceTips/>
[Accessed 21 April 2019].
- Richards, L., n.d. *Effective Communication Between Workplace Peers*. [Online]
Available at: <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/effective-communication-between-workplace-peers->

712.html

[Accessed 24 April 2019].

Tools, M., n.d. *Cross-Culture Communication*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/Cross-Cultural-communication.htm>

[Accessed 31 march 2019].

Appendix