

Professional Practices in ICT

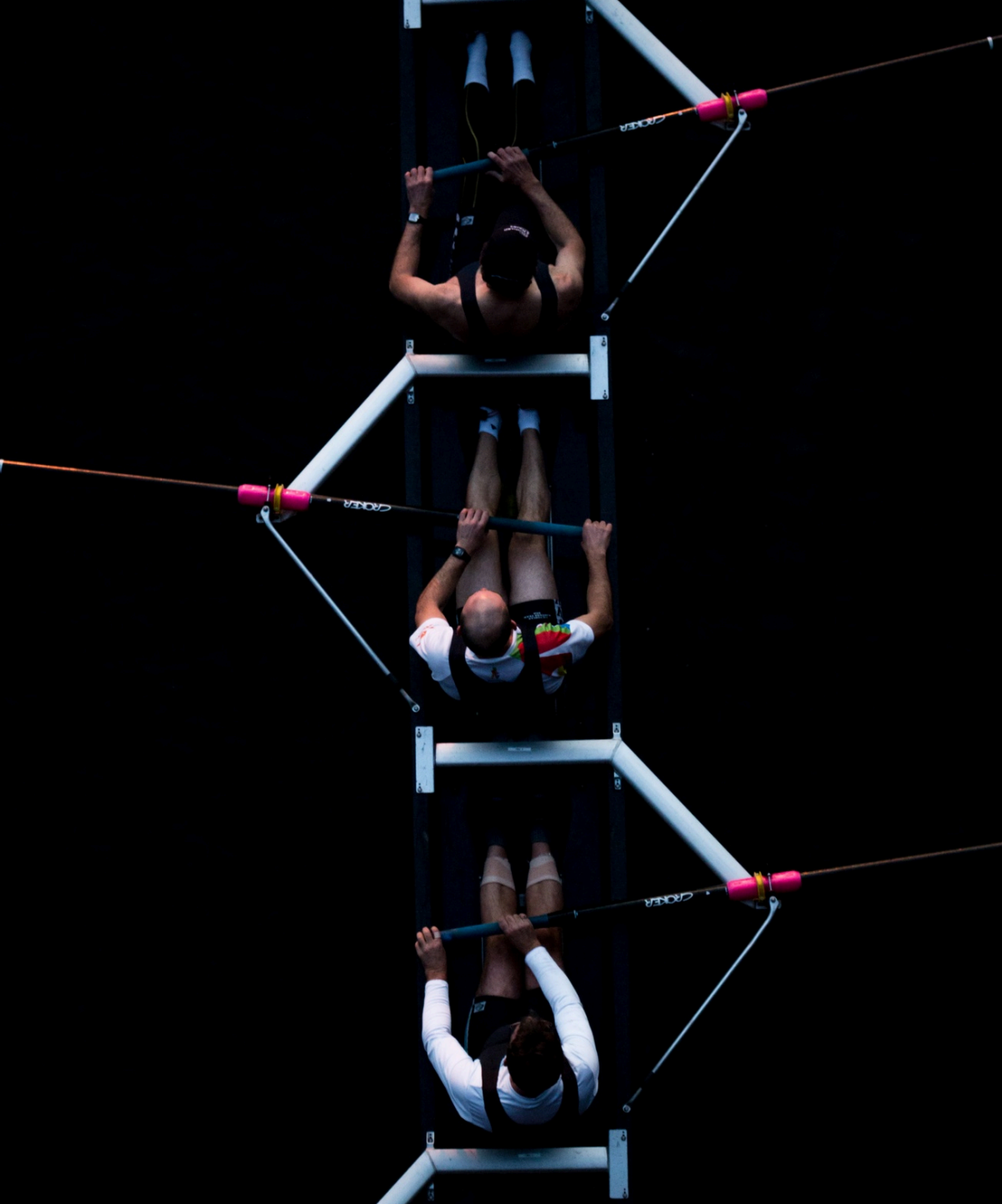
ITC4182

Lecture 3

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Professional Communication and Team Dynamics

An exploration of best practices for professional interactions and successful team dynamics in the workplace.

Professional Communication



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- It goes beyond casual communication by emphasizing clarity, precision, and appropriateness for the context and audience.

The Importance of Professional Communication

- Builds Relationships

Strong communication fosters trust and rapport among colleagues, clients, and stakeholders.

- Drives Collaboration

Effective communication ensures team members understand their roles, responsibilities, and goals.

- Enhances Productivity

Clear communication reduces misunderstandings and errors, leading to efficient task execution and problem-solving.

Elements of Communication



Verbal Communication

Communication through words and language, including spoken and written language.



Non-verbal Communication

Communication through body language, facial expressions, gestures, and other non-verbal cues.



Written Communication

Communication through written documents, such as reports, emails, and memos.

Effective communication involves a combination of verbal, non-verbal, and written elements to convey information, ideas, and emotions.

Verbal Communication

Crafting Clear and Impactful Messages

- Clarity

Messages should be simple and easy to understand. Avoid jargon or overly complex language unless your audience is familiar with it.

- Tone

Tone of voice conveys emotions and attitudes. For example, a friendly tone encourages openness, while a firm tone conveys authority.

- Purpose

Always tailor verbal communication to the audience and the specific purpose, whether instructing, persuading, or informing.

Importance of Verbal Communication in the IT Industry



Explanation of Technical Concepts

Verbal communication is used to explain complex technical ideas and processes to both technical and non-technical audiences, ensuring everyone understands the information.



Collaboration with Team Members

Verbal communication is essential for collaborating with team members, such as developers, project managers, and stakeholders, to discuss goals, updates, and challenges.



Conveying Project Requirements

Verbal communication is used to clearly convey project requirements and expectations, ensuring everyone is on the same page and understands their tasks.

Effective verbal communication is crucial in the IT industry, enabling technical experts to explain complex concepts, collaborate with team members, and clearly convey project requirements.

Non-verbal Communication



Body Language

Posture, gestures, and movements can convey confidence, interest, or discomfort.



Facial Expressions

Smiling can show warmth, while a furrowed brow can indicate concern or confusion.



Eye Contact

Indicates attentiveness and builds trust. Avoiding eye contact might suggest disinterest or discomfort.



Physical Space

How close you stand to someone can reflect your comfort level or the nature of your relationship (e.g., formal or informal).

Non-verbal communication is a powerful tool for conveying emotions, attitudes, and building rapport, often more effectively than verbal communication.

Non-Verbal Communication in IT

on-verbal cues often complement verbal communication, especially in team settings, interviews, and client interactions.

- **Video Calls** - Eye contact and attentive posture during virtual meetings with stakeholders indicate engagement and professionalism.
- **Team Interactions** - Confident body language during a code review signals competence, while nervous gestures might raise doubts.
- **Client Relations** - Smiling and nodding while listening to a client's needs builds rapport and trust.

Written Communication

- Any communication that is recorded in writing, such as emails, reports, proposals, memos, or presentations.
- **Clarity**
Avoid ambiguity or overly complex sentences. Write with the audience in mind.
- **Structure**
Organize content logically, using headings, bullet points, and paragraphs for readability.
- **Grammar and Spelling**
Errors in written communication can detract from professionalism and clarity.
- **Tone**
The tone in writing should align with the context, such as formal for business reports and conversational for emails.

The Importance of Written Communication in IT



Technical Documentation

Detailed manuals, APIs, and software specifications must be clear and precise to help other developers or users understand.



Bug Reporting

Writing concise and actionable bug descriptions in tools like Jira or GitHub is essential for efficient problem-solving.



Email Communication

Effective written communication is used to provide updates, request approvals, or clarify issues.



Knowledge Sharing

Writing blog posts, tutorials, or FAQs to explain technologies or solutions internally and externally.

Effective written communication is crucial in the IT field, enabling clear documentation, efficient email correspondence, accurate bug reporting, and valuable knowledge sharing.

Barriers to Effective Communication

Cultural Differences

Differences in cultural norms, values, and communication styles can create misunderstandings and miscommunication.

Emotional Distractions

Strong emotions like anger, stress, or anxiety can interfere with our ability to listen and communicate effectively.

Jargon or Unclear Language

Using technical jargon or ambiguous language can make it difficult for the receiver to understand the message.

Poor Listening Skills

Failing to actively listen and understand the speaker's message can lead to misunderstandings and missed opportunities for effective communication.

Navigating IT Communication Challenges

Complex Terminology

Technical language may confuse non-technical stakeholders, requiring IT professionals to use **plain terms** and **avoid jargon** when communicating with clients.

Cultural Differences

IT teams are often global, requiring **awareness of cultural nuances** and **adjusting communication styles** accordingly to enhance understanding and collaboration.

Remote Collaboration

Virtual meetings can obscure non-verbal cues, making it essential to adopt **collaboration tools** like Slack, Trello, or Jira to streamline written and non-verbal communication.

Navigating IT Communication Challenges

Leveraging Visual Aids

Using visual aids, such as **diagrams** and **charts**, can enhance understanding and make complex topics more accessible to non-technical stakeholders.

Tailoring Language to the Audience

IT professionals should **adapt their language**, using technical jargon with peers and plain terms with clients, to ensure effective communication and understanding.

What Are Group Dynamics?

The interactions and forces among group members in a team setting.

Impact on Teamwork

Influences collaboration, affects decision-making and outcomes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Defines individual and collective responsibilities within the group.

Communication Patterns

Establishes how information is shared and exchanged among group members.

Conflict Resolution

Addresses interpersonal issues and disagreements within the group.

Group Cohesion

Fosters a sense of unity, trust, and commitment among group members.

Stages of Team Development

- **Forming**

This initial stage is when the team members get acquainted, set goals, and establish basic rules and procedures.

- **Storming**

During this stage, conflicts and disagreements may arise as team members clarify their roles and responsibilities.

- **Norming**

In this stage, the team establishes norms, develops cohesion, and works towards a common purpose.

- **Performing**

This stage is characterized by effective collaboration, task completion, and high productivity.

Roles in a Team

- **Leader**

Guides the group by setting the direction, delegating tasks, and ensuring the team stays on track to achieve their goals.

- **Coordinator**

Ensures that tasks and responsibilities are aligned with the team's overall objectives, facilitating efficient collaboration and communication.

- **Implementer**

Executes the work by taking on specific tasks, following through on commitments, and contributing to the team's progress.

- **Innovator**

Brings new ideas, creative solutions, and a fresh perspective to the team, driving innovation and progress.

- **Evaluator**

Assesses the team's performance, provides feedback, and helps identify areas for improvement, ensuring the team stays on track and achieves its goals.

- **Supporter**

Provides encouragement, emotional support, and a positive attitude to the team, fostering a collaborative and nurturing environment.

Personality Styles and Communication

DISC Model

The **DISC Model** is a behavioral assessment framework that categorizes individuals' personality traits into four primary behavioral types

Dominant - Task-oriented and assertive; prefers direct communication.

Influencing - Enthusiastic and people-focused; prefers engaging interactions.

Steady - Calm and supportive; values harmony and patience.

Conscientious - Detail-oriented and analytical; values structure and logic.

Personality Styles and Communication

The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** is a personality assessment tool designed to help individuals understand their preferences in how they perceive the world and make decisions.

Categorizes personality types based on,

- **Extraversion (E) vs. Introversion**

(I) Extraversion energized by interacting with people, external environments, and active engagement. **Introversion** energized by solitude, reflection, and focusing on internal thoughts and ideas.

- **Sensing (S) vs. Intuition**

(N) Sensing prefers concrete information, details, and practical experiences. **Intuition** focuses on patterns, possibilities, and abstract ideas.

- **Thinking (T) vs. Feeling**

(F) Thinking makes decisions based on logic, objectivity, and consistency. **Feeling** bases decisions on personal values, empathy, and considering the impact on others.

- **Judging (J) vs. Perceiving**

(P) Judging prefers structure, planning, and organization. **Perceiving** enjoys flexibility, spontaneity, and keeping options open.

Adapting to Personality Styles



For analytical personalities

Be logical and precise when communicating with analytical personalities who prefer facts and data-driven information.



For expressive personalities

Be engaging and open when communicating with expressive personalities who enjoy animated discussions and creative ideas.



For amiable personalities

Be warm and supportive when communicating with amiable personalities who value interpersonal relationships and a collaborative approach.

By adapting your communication style to different personality types, you can more effectively engage and connect with your audience.

Summary



Communication is critical to professional success

Effective communication skills are essential for building relationships, collaborating with colleagues, and achieving professional goals.



Group dynamics shape how teams collaborate and perform

Understanding group dynamics, such as leadership, decision-making, and conflict resolution, can help teams work more effectively together.



Understanding personality styles enhances interpersonal communication

Being aware of different personality styles and adapting your communication approach accordingly can improve interpersonal interactions and foster better relationships.

“The strength of the team
is each individual member.
The strength of each
member is the team.”

PHIL JACKSON