People Skills

PeopleSkills are the ability to understand and communicate with others, as described in the books HowToWinFriendsAndInfluencePeople by DaleCarnegie. and the unfortunately out of press *People Skills* by Robert Bolton

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People Skills 101

- Accept criticism without taking it overly personally. See FoggingTechnique.

- Criticize ideas, not people if possible.
  - Better yet, try to ask questions rather than (directly) criticize. Example: "What would happen if we did Y instead of X?" Rather than "X sucks!"

- Make a point to learn and remember everybody's name, even if you have to write it down or use memory association games.

- Greet everyone in the morning with a pleasant "hello".

- Being liked is sometimes more important than being right. Kissing-up works.
  - *That's true, and sometimes the converse is also true. Trying to win the approval of others doesn't necessarily gain you their respect.*
  - It has to be legitimate compliments, not forced ones. See next:

- Focus on the good in others, not the bad.

- Compliment others sincerely.

- Avoid "tech talk" when talking to managers and customers if possible. They usually don't want to hear details unless they can do something specific with the information.

- Trim your nails, shower, and wear clean clothes.

- Keep your communications short. Use email to give details, not voice.
  - I would say it depends on the person you are talking to. Follow subtle clues.

- Readily share credit

On the PairProgramming page, it says "after training in PeopleSkills...". What training are you referring to? Are there specific training courses in How to Win Friends?

[I'm confused too. What specific 'people skills' are believed to turn PairProgramming into a positive way to spend time? References please - books, articles, anything specific. -- tvancourt]

Relating to hot-shot engineers who lack people skills requires extra skills... -- PhlIp

In my experience, the courses get called "Communication Skills" or "Presentation Skills". My opinion is that it just gets down to plain selling. People who present well and communicate well find selling (themselves, products, their ideas) easy. Conversely, those who have no interest in presenting well or communicating well never go near sales jobs.

If one cannot market oneself, maybe do you consider that one has no value in their own eyes? This has to do with self-confidence. -- PhilippeBack

That conclusion is probably a bit extreme.

"Communication Skills" or "Presentation Skills" are obviously useful to salesmen/saleswomen, but are not the same thing as selling - a good presentation could convince you *not* to buy something. A good PairProgrammer should be able to communicate to his/her partner what he/she is doing and what he/she is aiming at while making it easy not to buy the story. If the partner buys everything, the exercise of PairProgramming pointless. -- BernardMichaelHurley

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I tried to shut up, but wasn't able. My personal experience: PairProgramming is more efficient when the two are working in front of different workstations. The real gain comes from good communication, which is built over time, and depends on the personality, education etc. of the two. No training can (IMHO) accelerate the process which leads to a good teamwork. -- Anonymous

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PeopleSkills are often taught in the context of sales because that's the biggest market for learners of PeopleSkills. But PeopleSkills are not inherently *about* selling. Just getting along with other people is a good counter example of the people-skills-are-sales-techniques myth. So is teamwork. And PeopleSkills are most definitely trainable, speaking from personal experience.

I disagree. They are about selling. But, perhaps there should be a distinction between short-term selling and long-term selling. Office people-skills are more about long-term selling. But, it is still selling because you have to do things like pretend you like being around somebody you cannot stand. Sales people have to fake it all the time.

Skills are skills are skills

mostly

The problem for techies is that we often don't like *using* people skills. Sure, a shoe salesmen can be taught LISP, but he/she probably would not like using it day in and day out. It is hard to be competent in something you don't like. Teaching how to do something and teaching how to like something are two different things.

... and it's hard to like something you're not good at ...

ChickenOrEgg issue.

Back in the seventies (?) there was a rise in the popularity of EgolessProgramming. The idea was to stop being defensive about your code, and to accept outside ideas that would help you improve it. This proved to be amazingly difficult for some programmers.

While one certainly can learn to accept criticism, it is easier for some than others. I would hypothesize that those who are most open to others' ideas have a higher level of PeopleSkills. Whether or not this is true, you need to PlayWellWithOthers if you are going to make extreme techniques work for you. No man is an island. -- *SteveHolden*

When doing PairProgramming, it always helps if the people both believe in the concept of communes and group teamwork. There has to be a certain idealistic basis.

Article on dealing with jerks:

See also IncompetentCommunicator

CategoryEmployment

Last edit February 25, 2014, See github about remodeling.