# **SAQA ID 59201**

# **NATIONAL CERTIFICATE:** GENERIC MANAGEMENT



**Accredited** course information:

Credits **Unit Standard ID NQF** Level

12433

5

8

Use communication techniques effectively

Accredited course information:

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Devise and apply strategies to establish and maintain workplace relationships

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252031

5

Apply the principles and concepts of emotional intelligence to the management of self and others.



GUIDE EARNE



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# **SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1 - 4**

- Discuss and explain a range of written and oral communication techniques used in the workplace
- · Lead discussions and chair meetings
- Generate a variety of workplace reports using various data gathering techniques
- Deliver presentations



# **COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES**

In a typical working day, you probably communicate regularly with one or even all the following groups of people: customers, clients, co-workers (including superiors, subordinates, and colleagues), suppliers, representatives from other companies, even competitors.

Around 80% of all **problems** in the **workplace** can be traced back to **communication breakdown**. Therefore, one of the greatest leadership skills you, as a Manager, can develop, is your ability to communicate effectively.

So, how do we **communicate effectively**, making sure that we are:

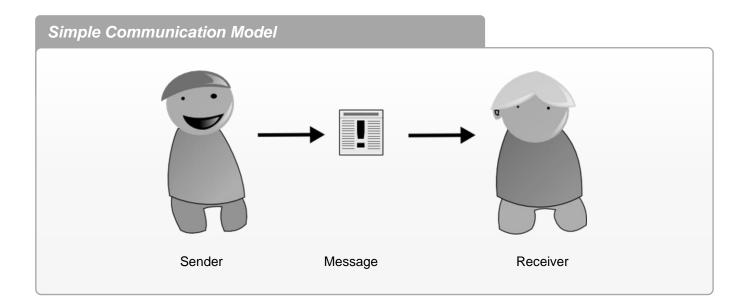
- ✓ Giving instructions that cannot be misunderstood (or ignored)?
- ✓ Speaking one-on-one with a co-worker regarding a problem in a way that motivates and empowers?
- ✓ Eliciting co-worker support for a project by speaking the language of benefits?
- ✓ Handling difficult questions and difficult questioners properly?
- ✓ Developing techniques for delivering a presentation that persuades?

Each **form** of **communication draws** on different skills, each requires different approaches and sometimes even a different vocabulary, and that presents a challenge to the majority of South Africans, as very few of us are mother-tongue speakers of English.

#### COMMUNICATION THEORY

"Communication is the production and exchange of information and meaning by use of signs and symbols. It involves encoding and sending messages, receiving, and decoding them, and synthesising information and meaning. Communication permeates all levels of human experience, and it is central to understanding human behaviour"





Communication can be studied at different levels of interaction. These levels are "intra-personal" (how individuals process information), "inter-personal" (how two individuals interact to influence one another), group (how communication dynamics occur among many individuals), formal and informal "organisations" (how communication occurs and functions in the context of organisations), and "community" and "society".

Many writers emphasise the importance of **communication theory** as a basis for **understanding human behaviour**.

Although many communication Model exist like:

Lasswell' Communication Model (1948) – this sociologist's theory on communication believed that the **formula** for **communication** is a **transmission**. It was concerned with **mass communication** and media – this theory believed that with **every** form of **communication** there must be someone or something that **communications** a **message** using a **channel** to a **receiver** to achieve an **affect**. There was a shortcoming with this model though as it **lacked** a reference to **feedback** to find out what kind of effect the communication has/had on the receiver.

Shannon-Weaver Model – a research scientist at Bell Telephone Company trying to achieve maximum **telephone line** capacity with **minimum distortion** (noise as distraction). This mathematical theory of signal transmission wasn't intended for anything but telephones. When this **concept** of **information** loss to **interpersonal communication** was however applied – one of the most **popular models** of **communication** was created.

According to Shannon and Weaver's model (as seen above), a message begins at an information source, which is relayed through a transmitter, and then sent via a signal towards the receiver. However, before it reaches the receiver, the message must go through noise (sources of interference – anything that causes a message to be misheard or misinterpreted) – a thought, physically noise, mindset, not concentrating, unfocused, etc.

Finally, the receiver must convey the message to its destination.

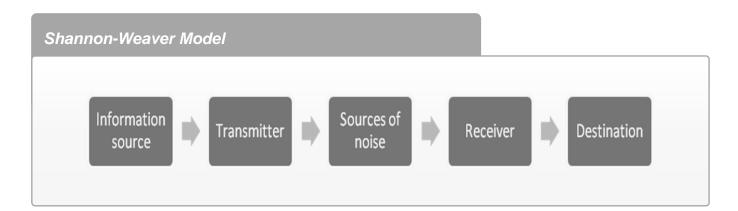
#### Shannon-Weaver Model – an example

Suppose you have an idea in your head (information source) that you want to tell someone about. You must first move the idea from your brain to your mouth (transmitter). Since you cannot share your grey matter, you must select words for your transmitter to use.

Once you speak, your voice (signal) is carried through the air toward the listener's ear (receiver). Along the way, your signal is joined by a myriad of other sounds and distractions (noises). The receiver then takes everything it receives and tries to maximise the message and minimise the noise.

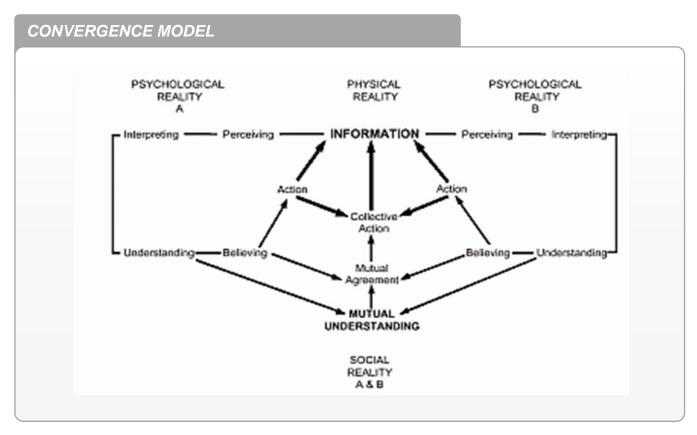
Finally, the receiver conveys its message to the other person's mind (destination).

This **model demonstrates** why even the **simplest communications** can be **misunderstood**. Transmitting a signal across additional media only adds to the complexity of the communication and increases the chance for distortion. It is suddenly easier to understand why other people sometimes just can't grasp what we already know.



Kincaid's Convergence Model – was introduced in 1979 and it included mutual understanding to the process of communication. It is a nonlinear model of communication wherein two

communicators strive to reach "mutual understanding". The element of mutual understanding then provided for feedback from the recipient to create the "mutual understanding" between the communicators.



And so, this model paved the way for an improved more effective communication process. Communication is "An act or means of exchanging information, knowledge, ideas, feelings or thoughts."

The process of communication is simple for both written and oral communication. As seen in the image, the sender provides information as an input, through either speaking and or writing a message, this is called coding, the recipient decodes the message through what they hear and or read, providing an output. The recipient then provides feedback to the Sender to ensure the message is understood as intended. Thus, making it a **two-way process**.

What often happens when a message goes missing in translation, is that there is no acknowledgement or feedback of that which is being received. If there is **no feedback** from the recipient, then it is a **one-way process** – mutual understanding is not obtained. Making true to the convergence model that this feedback is required, however the **noise or interference known as distortion** of Shannon-Weaver model also plays a significantly important role in the process.

# Information/Input What I What I Writing graphics videos, etc The Sender The Sender The Message Behaviour/Output What I Understand Decoding The Channel: Speaking writing graphics videos, etc The Sender Feedback The recipient

Noise is a **distraction** that **reduces** the **effectiveness** of the communication process. This doesn't necessarily refer to physical noise, like the sound of cars, people talking, but to noise distractions in people's heads.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Ever been chatting away to your friend or a family member, only to hear them say "Sorry what did you say"

This is most likely because their mind was elsewhere, they may have been thinking of other things while you were talking and is a human element that happens.

Noise can be anything that causes the message to be misheard or misinterpreted.

**Noise** as **distraction** can also cause one not to listen actively to a message or listen to reply rather than understand.

#### Some **distortions** are:

- ✓ How interested are both parties in the communication?
- ✓ What is the level of willingness on the part of the hearer to receive this message?
- ✓ Language barriers- English is not my mother tongue, therefore I battle to encode it into a message, or decode the message I have received

- ✓ Are there any distractions to impede the sending or receiving of the message?
- ✓ Is this the right time to convey this message?
- ✓ Belief systems, stereotyping, prejudice- so that I do not accept a particular type of message from certain people
- ✓ Sensitivity
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Competition
- ✓ Motivation

# **APPLYING COMMUNICATION**

To ensure effective communication we need to use applicable laws, rules and principles that abide by the Communication Theories that exist. This is often the most difficult of tasks in becoming an effective communicator, is to get the write balance between the goal of the communication, the channel or method to use for the intended audience.

### **Principles of Communication**

Although there are many different explanations of the principles, all of which provide the same basic principles, one which stands out is the 7 C's of communication. It provides a useful checklist for both written and verbal communication to pass off clearly, simply, its goal-orientated and ensures a good structure of the message.

**Completeness** is the first of the 7 C's – It simply means that to achieve completeness the message must be complete and aimed at the receiver's perception – "a messenger shouldn't write or talk to be understood, but rather not to be misunderstood".

The message must be based on facts and additional detail and or explanation given if it is a complex message. Good division and subdivision of the topics/subjects should clarify the message which will result in a complete overview of what is being conveyed.

**Concreteness** – concrete is about being clear, which is supported by factual information and can be proven through data. Words used and sentence construction must be done using language principles, leaving nothing to the imagination.

**Courtesy** – Feelings, emotions and points of view should be considered for the audience, by approaching the audience in a friendly, courteous manner. Use terms and words that show respect and build on engaging the receiver.

**Correctness** – Use correct language always, grammar and spelling errors must be avoided at all costs. Wrong use of verbs in both written and verbal communication should be corrected. This increases trust of the receiver and will ultimately take the message seriously.

**Clarity** – So, often today language is being used incorrectly which loses clarity as it is though that by using big 'vivacious' words – see what I mean you needed to look up 'vivacious' and it didn't even fit in the sentence. Use plain, clear simple words that are used daily to give explicit, short sentences. Keep to the point and the content message will be well received and understood.

**Consideration** – You always need to consider the communication and the intended audience. Take the level of education, knowledge, life experiences to consider what they might know and what they need to know.

**Conciseness** – When a storyline or point of view is consistent it is clear. Consistency, logical order and supporting information are keys to conciseness.

There are other variations of the 7 C's that have been explored over the years that contain, **creativity**, **credibility**, etc.

#### Rules of Effective Communication

Although rules can also mean principles because principles are sets of rules that are applied. In communication though there are some rules that apply to the application of being a good communicator above and beyond the Principles of effectively communicating.

Respect experience and Seniority – Knowledge and experience are two completely different areas. Knowledge is something that you gained from somewhere or someone and experience something that you have lived through. Thus, it is important to listen carefully to what older people have to say, even if they may seem to be wrong. They might just know something through experience that you don't know of in your knowledge base. Ask for the point to be justified, then continue.



**Don't interrupt a Sender/Speaker –** Whether in a one-on-one discussion or in a meeting you should be listening to understand rather than wanting to reply. Interrupting the sender means you are not giving them the opportunity to clearly communicate the message. This is disrespectful and could cause bad feelings.

**Think before you answer –** it is important to think about how to present our message in response to a received message, rather than reply without thought or being able to justify or explain ourselves.

**Focus on the Subject** – Communication is often derailed, and a can be a huge time waster, when the subject at hand is way off course. It is important to remain focused and on point.

**Organise the message** – Make sure that your message is organised to achieve the intended goal, that it is clear and in logical order.

**Accept that you may not know everything** – It is not a crime not to know everything, this is where learning takes place and as we will see under communication techniques, where the Never stop learning techniques becomes effective.

**Don't argue the facts** – Everyone should have a personal opinion, these need to be explained and justified. However, proof is substantially more than an opinion on a matter, so know how to stop debating when presented with the facts.

#### Laws of Effective Communication

The following 9 laws of Effective Communication have been adopted by effective communicators all over the world: These laws show what each law creates versus what its opposite will do.

#### 1. The Law of Trust vs. Distrust

- Trust The organization fosters trust, or the communicator takes steps to build trust or transfer trust.
- Distrust The communicator or organization creates distrust.

#### 2. The Law of Collaboration vs. Monologue

- Collaboration- Communicators find shared values and goals. They collaborate on challenges and outcomes and build bridges to close the gaps in misunderstandings.
- Monologue- What the communicator assumes as obvious is not. All communication is one-directional.

#### 3. The Law of Simplicity vs. Complexity

- Simplicity Clear language sharpens focus and drives action.
- Complexity Complex language obscures ideas and priorities.

#### 4. The Law of Tact vs. Insensitivity

- Tact Persuasive people use precise, powerful, yet tactful phrasing.
- Insensitivity Careless, insensitive "hot" words offend and side-track people from the primary message

#### 5. The Law of Potential vs. Achievement

- Potential People are willing to risk/pay more for potential than past performance.
- Achievement People undervalue performance and are less persuaded by the past than expectations and hope for future possibilities.

#### 6. The Law of Distinction vs. Dilution

- Distinction A focus on the core distinctive advantage, qualifications, or credentials (or penalties) produces high impact. A focus on "the few" adds, rather than subtracts attention.
- Dilution A long list of advantages, qualifications or credentials looks impressive;
   communicators often follow the more-is-better rule, thereby weakening impact.

#### 7. The Law of Specificity vs. Generalization

- Specificity To be meaningful and memorable, information must be specific, relevant, interpreted, and structured to fit the audience, situation, and purpose.
- Generalization Generic information does not make a strong impression and is easily forgotten.

#### 8. The Law of Emotion vs. Logic

- Emotion- An emotional appeal persuades.
- Logic A logical case informs—but rarely motivates.

#### 9. The Law of Perspective vs. Distortion

- Perspective Empathy, silence, understanding different points of view and cultures, and reading between the lines about what is not said often reveals the real message and produces the best outcome for negotiators.
- o Distortion Hearing only what is said leaves many gaps in one's understanding

# **COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES**

#### INTRODUCTION

Communication as we know is done in three (3) ways: - Verbal, Non-verbal and Written each having a range of formal and non-formal ways of communicating, dependent on the audience and the event in which the communication is taking place. The important thing here is that there are a range of techniques that are applicable to each verbal and non-verbal communication, that lead to effective communication in any situation.

As we learnt from the communication models earlier, it will be safe to say that **communication** is **effective** when **mutual understanding** has been **achieved**. Meaning that the communication technique you apply to your communication should be of such a nature that it ensures that **mutual understanding** will be achieved.

Effective communication is all about conveying your messages to other people clearly and unambiguously. It is also about receiving information that others are sending to you, with as little distortion as possible.

Through-out this guide we will discuss a variety of strategies and communications to different situations. In this section we will focus on the techniques and understanding them.

Many have developed a range of techniques, with little differences to the approach, however the concepts of the techniques remain the same.

#### THE SILENT TREATMENT

The 'good old' silent treatment, often used without even realising that it is a communication technique, that "speaks a thousand words" as the saying goes. Believe it or not **remaining silent** can be one of the most effective strategies to communication. Very often used in communication where you are trying to lure or entice someone to share information with you.

When someone has just given us a piece of information and we immediately respond, we create a situation where the information is persuaded out of someone rather than freely being shared.

#### Example

#### Scenario 1

Human 1: I just got a new car!

Human 2: (immediate response) Oh WOW that is great! What car did you get?

The information about the car is being persuaded out of the person before they can freely give it.

#### Scenario 2

Human 1: I just got a new car!

Human 2: (Silent but listening)

Human 1: A brand new out the box Rio Kia, it has leather seats, electric sunroof, a full house!

#### LANGUAGE CHOICES

In both written and verbal communications, the **words** we choose to use to describe and or explain ourselves – has a dramatic effect on how the message is received. When writing in the workplace it is important to use **the 3<sup>rd</sup> person** – The Company, The Department, The Team, The Suppliers, etc. as this implies to collectively include the entire object.

When communicating to an individual or team of individuals, we should make use of **pro-nouns** like "we", "us" – this makes people feel apart of the team and implies that everyone is equal and can contribute to the team.

When using **pronouns** like "**l**" and "me", this sets us apart, implying that "**l**", "me" alone has what it takes to come up with a solution and everyone else, is only expected to implement.

Phrases or statements using the word "you" must be carefully considered – the word "you" – "you must get this to me", "you need to get you work done", etc. has a detrimental effect on how the message is received – because it applies to the person directly, it is received as personal and could or would imply talking down to someone.

"You can't handle this." - most often than not using the word "you", comes across as condescending – having or showing attitude of patronising superiority.

The use of pronouns is very important and should be used in the correct manner when speaking and or writing. Use singular pronouns in the first person (when referring to yourself – I, Me) or second person (when referring to a person when talking to that same person – You, They, Them).

#### **NEVER STOP LEARNING**

There is two (2) ways of approaching the 'never stop learning' technique – one, there is new developments in communication every day, as the world grows and develops so does new information come to light to the way in which we communication. Understanding and being open to new developments and change is key to growing and developing our own skills.

The other approach, if we have the correct mind set when communicating with someone else, a lot of learning can take place – people know things, we know things – when we are open to learning from others it creates respect. Respect is earned and a factor in effective communication.

#### SPEAK EQUALLY

Ever been to an event with a Guest Speaker or Speakers, where you walk out feeling as if the Speaker/s were just talking to you? Communicators that speak equally speak in such a way that its like talking to each individually.

Learning this skill is a sure way of becoming a great communicator, this type of skill is learnt through observation. Attend a class or seminar by a skilled communicate and observe how they work with the audience.

#### **HONESTY**

Honesty is one of the largest barriers in effective communication – think about it if you are not honesty or think the person talking to you is not honest – How much mutual understanding will there be? Every word will most likely be doubted. It is one of the easiest barriers to overcome. Honesty is based largely on trust and trust and respect go hand in hand. You must trust the person/s you are communicating to or who is communicating to you will not lead you or wants to be lead astray.

#### **ENTHUSIASM**

No one really wants to listen, read from, or talk to someone who, sighs, rolls their eyes or seems impatient, bored or even otherwise occupied while they are trying give or get mutual understanding from the communication. Enthusiasm can be as simple as a positive body gesture that shows that you are attentive and interested.

#### STRESS MANAGEMENT

By successfully maintain your stress to ensure that it doesn't interfere with your ability to deliver a coherent message or received a message. When you can't mitigate your stress, it begins to interfere with your communication. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you feel overly stressed, remove yourself from the situation for a moment, taking time to compose yourself. Then approach the situation with a clearer head which will help communication to become easier.

#### **OBSERVATION**

Observation is a good technique if you have poor verbal and or non-verbal communication skills. Put yourself in a place with large crowds around you, they don't need to be people you know, and, in many cases, it may be better if you are unfamiliar with the people and just observe behaviours, gestures, and actively listen.

#### LISTENING

Listening is a skill that allows one to understand the things that are heard and or written in such a way that a coherent and knowledgeable response can be provided. Learning to listen to understand rather than reply is most often learnt in a class or at a seminar, to improve listening and in turn improve communication skills. Listening isn't just about using ears to collect sounds; you need to understand. As a communication technique it assists in gaining mutual understanding, respect and builds trust. If people we communicate with understand and or are being understood, wills always share and communicate freely.

#### **FEEDBACK**

As we learnt earlier in the section on Communication Theories, the Convergence Model shows that without feedback from the receiving party, communication is just a one-way street that doesn't provide for mutual understanding. Only once we have received or given some kind of indication of our understanding of the message to the other person/s in some form to confirm a mutual understanding then effective communication has been achieved.

If you are the sender, you should be able to convey your message in such a way that the recipient/s can offer feedback on your message or vice versa. Direct questions should also be able to be formed if anything is unclear. This skill can be mastered and or better understood when practicing giving and receiving message/s from a partner. Once a message has been conveyed and or received, feedback should be offered on the technique and quality of information. It also helps accepting criticism. We will learn how to provide valuable feedback later in the Guide.

#### **ASKING QUESTIONS**

Asking questions is a sure way of learning more about something, no matter how information is volunteered. How will we ever learn everything that is needed without asking questions? Questioning is a technique that thrives on questions, but the types of questions matter. It is use open and closed ended question techniques to draw more information about a message. Closed ended questions are those that require a simple "yes" or "no" answer and open-ended those that ask for more information – How, When, What, Which, When, why type questions, provide a more comprehensive and boarder answer.

#### **PRESENTING**

Presenting is method of conveying a specific message to an audience. It is a way of reaching a large audience at once. Presenting as a technique, requires the use of many of the techniques discussed above to get the message across. Planning what you want to say, when you want to say it and how you want to say it, is a crucial element. This also requires a good understanding of the audience presenting to, how they would receive the message and what they would like to know.

# WHY VARIOUS COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES?

Business Communication is the kind of communication that happens in business. It is the flow of information back and forth between Managers, Subordinates and Colleagues of which all needs to happen seamlessly. Communication makes it possible to get immediate feedback and avoid misunderstandings.

It is all about goals – it is goal-orientated – plain and simple. When communicating it should be done with a certain goal in mind. So, if a company has sets of rules or principles, regulations, and policies, then these should be communicated to members of a team, so they know what is expected of them.

Business communication or communication for that matter, happens across channels as we learnt earlier. Most if not all of communication used to be Oral communication but has since the invention of writing it has created another channel.

Business communication is important to Leaders because it helps in carrying out basic functions. Thus, various communication techniques need to be used to effectively to achieve mutual understanding of the goal.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Written communication in the workplace is a must, as its greatest purpose is to:

- ✓ Form a written acknowledgement, providing a paper trail of workplace activities and business dealings.
- ✓ It enables us to pass messages to members of a team without people having to leave their place of work.
- ✓ Check on a matter without having to ask again.
- ✓ Communicate confidentially
- ✓ Comply with regulations and legislation within the economy it operates

Written communication is either formal or informal. In business matters it is always formal.

#### ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral Communication is a significant way of transmitting information - a response can be received immediately. Oral communication can be used when:

- ✓ Immediate Communication is required
- √ Immediate Responses are needed
- ✓ Oral explanations are required
- ✓ Developing Direct Relation

It is a vital tool that can act as a tool to bring people together, build relationships and create successful interactions. Oral communication is more effective in special circumstances where other communication methods are ineffective or less effective. It helps to develop direct and strong relationships between the members, all members get an opportunity to develop relationships.

Let's say you needed to ask someone to write a report and they sit right next to you – would you write them an email or just simply tell them from where you are sitting?

#### THE LEADER AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As a Leader, Business Owner and or Supervisor – any type of role that has members reporting to, it is important to be fluent in three (3) types of communication:

- ✓ Verbal Communication
- ✓ Non-Verbal Communication
- ✓ Written Communication

It will be very hard to motivate and or maintain a positive moral within your team if you just stand around with your arms folded and head down. This indicates that you are closed off and not confident in your ability to get a message across.

As a Leader you need to be straight up, open, enthusiastic, pay attention to detail, be attentive and listen actively to what your members are saying.

Good communication in the workplace is important because:

- ✓ It gives purpose
- ✓ It eliminates confusion
- ✓ It creates accountability
- ✓ It builds a positive culture



The relationship between a Leader and Business communication is a simple one. A leader with good communication skills can convey ideas clearly so that members of a team understand what is required from them and can positively contribute to the organisation. Lack of communication will lead to employee frustration, lowered productivity, and increased employee turnover.

Effective Communication by a Leader will encourage teamwork and increase performance, by empowering members to take responsibility and get involved in the overall objectives of the business. It will lead to a better management style – democratic leadership styles allow members to participate in strategic decision making to facilitate business process, processes members are directly responsible for, thereby encouraging organisational responsibility because they feel a part of the process. This in turn leads to commitment and keeps moral high.

Furthermore, establishing good interpersonal and working relationships, operational management is effective which maximises both quality and productivity.

# **DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES**

As a Leader of a team, most your daily functions will be to gathering information from various sources of information, that team members work with.

Effectively being able to gather the correct data is imperative in assuming your role on analysing and reporting on the data gathered for daily operations of business. On the other hand, you will most likely also need to gather information about processes, generate new ideas, collect quantitative information, set quality standards, gain insight into and or elicit information and even examine industry market shares – all part of initiatives to improve business functions and maintain a competitive edge.

## **BRAINSTORMING**

Brainstorming is a **technique** used by **focusing** on the **problem** and the probable **solutions**. During brainstorming ideas should be deliberate and broad as possible, in other words any idea should be jotted down with-out much thought.

Brainstorming has been **designed** to adapt a **creative thinking pattern**. The faster the pace during brainstorming the better the outcomes.

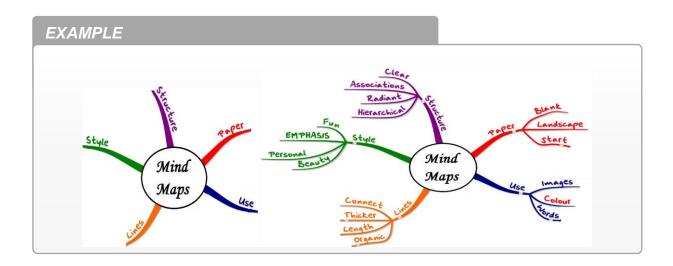
Brainstorming can be an individual and or group session with colleagues.

When **brainstorming** in groups, it is **imperative** to **keep focus** on the main **objective** of the session, no ideas should be analysed and or dismissed immediately, enthusiasm should be encouraged to contribute any ideas. Ideas that may not fall within the objective but may be part of another area of thought can be parked in the "parking lot" – a separate page dedicated to ideas falling outside the objective for the current session.

Once all the **ideas** have been **jotted down**, a more thorough **comprehensive** look at all **ideas** is done. Any ideas that do not suit the **objective** and or would not assist in meeting the outcome can be eliminated. This will leave most of the important relevant ideas, which in turn narrowing down closer to achieving the objective.

#### MIND MAPPING

Mind Maps are a graphical representation of information, with **linking ideas** to **main** and sub-**topic headings**. Once you are ready with your main topic, using branches to broaden and link sub-topics to each other.



The image above shows the first branching of a mind map and the next depicts the additional subbranches related to the main topic branches and so forth.

#### **INTERVIEWING**

Interviewing is as **good** a **research** technique as any other and **encourages learning** in **occupations**. Most of the time we have many **questions** for **colleagues** but either lack a way of **asking** these

questions and or avoid the option. Acquiring a renewed mind in interview will assist in enhancing these skills effectively. In addition, you will need to have good listening skills when using the interview technique to research.

Different types of questioning techniques (have been discussed further in this guide) will guide you through the questioning to process to ensure that you ask questions that get the interviewee to give answers that are relevant to the objective.

#### **BENCHMARKING**

Benchmarking is a technique used in business regularly to compare planned against actual quality standards for processes comparable to the organisations standards to identify best practices, generate ideas for improvement and provide a basis for measuring performance.

#### CHECK LISTS AND SHEETS

Checklists are list of items, actions, or points to be considered when checking for information or data. Check sheets are forms of collecting data to analyse. They collect the raw data and allow for a calculation of the figures to produce a result.

# **ANALYSE AND INTERPRET**

Analysing and interpreting data and information from a variety of communication sources in the organisation is a vital tool in developing strategies and approaches, re-directing of processes even changing methods – all to improve business functions – give feedback and report on business matters.

Data and or information can be in two forms – either Quantitative or Qualitative. Where Quantitative data is based on numbers and figures and qualitative on words, illustrations, pictures, observations and symbols.

Although Quantitative data analysis is a complex task requiring extensive knowledge of data and statistics, it is outside of the scope of this program, but you will most likely be required to do basic data analysis of figures gathered in the workplace monthly. The result of a calculation of these figures will provide an interpretation relative to a benchmark or standard that has been set in the workplace already.



Some of the techniques used in Qualitative could be applied to Quantitative as well. The key factors in data analysis are to:

- ✓ Become familiar with the data write down detailed notes and impressions deciding on which pieces of data possess value.
- ✓ Code into themes group the data with some thematic idea that allows you to examine them together.
- ✓ Patterns and Connections search for information of relative importance and identify the relationships between the data.
- ✓ Interpret the data and draw conclusions.

**Content Analysis** is one of the most widely used qualitative data techniques for interpreting meaning from text data and therefore being able to identify important aspects of the content.

This type of analysis includes the use of processes and procedures to categorise the data for the purpose of classification.

# **MEETINGS**

A meeting can be defined as

"a gathering of two or more people to discuss matters of mutual interest and decide upon them".

In most organisations, meetings are a waste of time. Meetings can, however, be the most productive use of time for groups or teams to make a meaningful contribution and to reach amicable decisions.

A meeting is a **planned assembly** of members to discuss issues of **common interest** amongst themselves. Meetings are the lifeline of any organisation, and they are a means by which general members and other designated structures transact their business. They are a mechanism through which an organisation carries out the many activities that it must do to meet its objectives and achieve sustainability.



They also provide members with the opportunity to share ideas, to get information to help them participate fully in the affairs of the organisation, to talk about their concerns, to elect the board of directors, to appoint auditors, to hire and fire staff, and to decide on any actions to be carried out.

Meetings are not only the recipe for good governance but also good for the general sustainability of the organisation and in our case in this unit, for good customer relations (both internal and external customers).

However, the way an organisation carries out its business is largely influenced by the way it conducts its meetings. Good meetings are underpinned by the adherence to standard procedures of the best practice. They are preceded by an inherent well-defined need and purpose, proper coordination, appropriate guidance and relevant deliberations, well-informed decision-making, proper documentation, and dissemination of the relevant information to appropriate structures.

#### TYPES OF MEETINGS

There are various types of meetings held within organisations. These can range from:

- ✓ Informal meetings between colleagues.
- ✓ **Formal meetings** held within the organisation, such as shareholder meetings, Board meetings, between the authorised manager/supervisor and suppliers to discuss contracts, etc.
- ✓ Once-off meetings that are used to discuss specific issues that arise.
- ✓ Regular meetings, such as safety meetings, departmental meetings, etc.

Although there are different types of meetings some characteristics, principles and procedures remain the same.

As a Leader you will be required to hold meetings with your team to facilitate a serious of business functions within the team. It is important to acquire the skills necessary to lead discussions and have meetings with your team of which the principles are similar.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD MEETINGS

Good and effective meetings:

✓ Are firmly but fairly chaired.



- ✓ Stick to the agenda of the day. Any other business may be considered if there is still time available.
- ✓ Are properly planned for and usually drawn on a calendar.
- ✓ Keep within allocated time limits so that members may be able to meet informally after the
  meeting to discuss some of the issues.
- ✓ Are characterised by members who are adequately informed of issues before deciding.
- ✓ Are well attended, and apologies are sent in advance of the meeting.
- ✓ Are regulated by, e.g., a code of conduct and or standing orders.
- ✓ Are free from distraction, e.g. telephones, people moving in and out of the room.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CHAIRPERSON

To for fill the roles and responsibilities of a Chairperson it is imperative that the person that Leads Discussions and Chairs meetings, develops and or improves the following qualities:

- ✓ Objectivity they are able to see things from a number of perspectives
- ✓ Knowledgeable, but not an expert
- ✓ A coordinator
- ✓ A firm decision-maker
- ✓ A good listener: A chairperson is always "aware" listening; this means he/she is aware of
  those who are not speaking as well as those who are
- ✓ A clarifier of the meeting's objectives
- ✓ Responsive to the needs of the meeting and attendees
- ✓ A questioner
- ✓ A harmoniser

A leader

Chairing is a responsible position, and the chairperson is accountable for the following:



Keeping the meeting focused on the subject at hand while being responsive to the needs of the people at the meeting.

Ensuring the objectives of the meeting is met within the allocated time.

Ensuring that people understand what is being said through paraphrasing and summarising.

Reminding the meeting of its obligations and level of confidentiality.

Managing discussion and encouraging involvement.

The following are useful tools and tips facilitating time during a meeting or discussion:

Ask members of small groups to stand along a wall or beside their chairs when they complete a task. This allows members to move and encourages them to finish the job quickly.

Remind people of the time allocated and how much time is left. One way of doing this is to summarise discussion and suggest that should action be required that this is how the remaining time allocated to the item be spent.

Remember that discussion will thrive or die depending on the communication climate established by the chairperson. Establishing a climate that encourages discussion and involvement is best done through example and by eliminating harshly judgmental language and sharp criticism.

The chairperson plays an important role in balancing participation among group members. This can be done in the following ways:

By focusing on both the content and the process.

In listening to what is said and interpreting the feeling behind the statement. If people feel ignored, they are less likely to participate in the discussion.

By not assuming that people are "free" to participate and will volunteer their opinions. Some people need to be encouraged to share their views.

By checking out your interpretation of silence. Silence does not always mean consent.

#### MEETING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairperson



It is normally the responsibility of the chairperson or any other duly elected or appointed person, to preside over a meeting. His / Her role is to direct the discussion or participation of all present. The success of any meeting depends on the effectiveness of the chairperson. Before continuing to arrange a meeting, the Chairperson is firstly responsible to ensure that a quorum is present. A quorum being the least number of members that are allowed to be present for a meeting to continue. Below are guidelines the chairperson may follow:

#### i) Starting a Meeting

#### The chairperson must:

- ✓ Know the issues before starting the meeting.
- ✓ Be knowledgeable and well briefed about the company's activities, rules and protocols relating to the proceedings of meetings.
- ✓ Keep reference notes and outlines.
- ✓ Announce agenda items and supply background information.
- ✓ Begin the meeting with a summary of content and identify the priorities of the day.

#### ii) Guiding a Meeting

#### The chairperson must:

- ✓ Follow the agenda and keep discussion focused on the topic.
- ✓ Give all speakers a chance to speak and let them speak only for themselves.
- ✓ Remain neutral to ensure acceptance of all ideas and balance speakers for and against a motion.
- ✓ Restate the topic to focus the group on one issue at a time.
- ✓ Steer discussions toward the desired results; manage diversions, digressions, and distractions.
- ✓ Assess when the group is ready to decide.
- ✓ Assess whether the group will be able to decide.
- ✓ Decide what else needs to be done to decide.
- ✓ Make all understand what is voted on.
- ✓ Mediate conflicting viewpoints so that all are heard.
- ✓ Give and invite appreciation.



#### iii) Stopping / Concluding a Meeting or Discussion

The chairperson must:

Acknowledge what people have to say.

Make sure each participant gets to finish and is not interrupted.

Ask for decisions and suggest conclusions.

Summarise what has been accomplished.

Show consensus by noticing and announcing it.

Check that questions receive satisfactory answers.

Be able to devote a significant amount of time to the group's affairs in between the scheduled meetings. This will involve regular liaising with relevant participants and other colleagues.

Possess high levels of personal organisation such as good time and information management.

Always attend meetings of the company.

Be always prepared to promote the company to its public audience.

Be able to impose authority on a meeting in a firm but courteous manner.

Be decisive when necessary without dithering or passing the buck.

Remain strictly impartial during debates irrespective of what their view may be.

Delegate tasks coming out of the meeting.

Summarise the strengths of the meeting.

## The Secretary

Every meeting of the company must have someone to record the proceedings. This responsibility is usually assigned to the secretary of the organisation.

The role of the secretary is to:

Maintain attendance registers and take minutes at meetings.

Update the minute book.

Issue notices, agendas, and previous minutes of meetings in consultation with the chairperson.

Co-ordinate and Arrange the meetings.

#### Other Participants or Members

The role of the rest of the members is to actively participate in the meeting. They must speak their mindfully and, listen intently, and absorb what others have to say. They must seek clarification where necessary and collectively participate in making decisions.

Meetings should include participants who can contribute to, or gain something from, the meeting, who need the information presented, or who are creative and innovative thinkers.

Knowing ahead of time who will attend allows meeting leaders to structure the meeting so they can address the participants' specific needs, anticipate their questions, and reduce their concerns about a subject. The meeting leader should understand several things about the participants before a meeting:

- √ Their attitudes and experience with the subject
- √ Their level of commitment to improving the situation
- √ Their department roles
- √ Their ability to contribute to discussions
- √ Their personal or job-related goals

People invited to the meeting must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ They must have some expertise about the issue or project to be discussed.
- ✓ They must have some involvement or invested interest in the outcome of the discussion.
- ✓ They must be skilled in the group decision-making process and who appreciate the diversity of opinions.
- ✓ They should share the overall values of the organisation. It makes no sense to include people
  in decision-making that affects these goals.

Furthermore, asking the following questions will further assist in ensuring that the right people attend the meeting:

- ✓ What is the purpose of the meeting? Is the meeting to brainstorm ideas for a new marketing campaign, to make decisions concerning the future of the organisation, to provide information and feedback, etc.?
- ✓ Who has the authority to make decisions?
- ✓ Is certain expertise required for the issue or project being discussed? If yes, have I invited these people?
- ✓ In terms of decisions taken, who will this impact on? Have I invited these people?

#### PREPARING FOR A MEETING

Once you have decided that a meeting is the most effective method for accomplishing your objective, you should determine an objective for the meeting. The objective or purpose of the meeting should reflect what you want to accomplish within the meeting, such as:

- ✓ To solve problems Complex issues in organisations may involve some departments and require input from a variety of experts and disciplines. The meeting is a forum for this level of problem-solving.
- ✓ Decision-making These meetings are when an authorised body comes together to summarise options and decide.
- ✓ Post-mortems These are used to analyse success, difficulty, or failure in detail so that future successes can be designed and developed.
- ✓ Creating ideas Meetings are a good forum for creative people to present their views and ideas. They can be examined in a constructively critical light. Usually, these meetings need a minimum of formality and the maximum interaction and will involve brainstorming ideas/suggestions.
- ✓ Giving information/Briefing Some meetings require less interaction and are used for one person to convey information to others. These meetings do not allow for feedback or interaction and may be ineffective and boring for attendees.
- ✓ Progress reports These meetings are usually held to update various teams/team members on the progress of work.

✓ Meetings that comply with legal or company requirements - For example, health and safety meetings, an Annual General Meeting that is open to shareholders, etc.

Meetings are therefore about **communication**. They are also about **learning** and potentially about **team building**.

Creating a clear objective for a meeting establishes its purpose. You can then focus the meeting's discussion toward achieving your desired outcome.

#### Create a Meeting Objective

An effective objective (expected outcome) can be the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful meeting. Useful objectives have three characteristics:

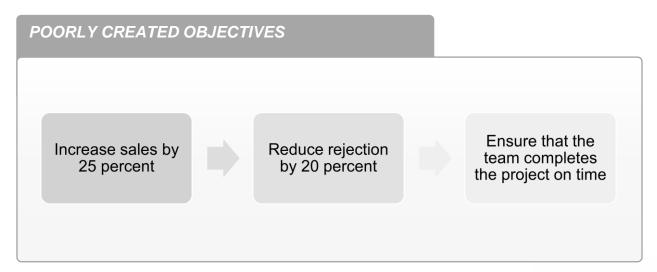
**Specific**. The objective should state what needs to be done and who needs to do it.

**Realistic**. Lofty objectives will only result in frustrated participants. Make sure the objective is achievable.

**Time-based**. If necessary, any time constraints or deadlines involved with the purpose of the meeting should be noted.

For example, a poorly created objective might state, "*To improve the process used to reply to customer complaints*." This objective is vague and does not indicate any details about the situation.

To improve this objective, information needs to be added: "To improve the speed at which Customer Service Representatives reply to customer complaints within the next quarter."



ARRANGING A MEETING



Physical arrangements for meetings include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Decide on a date for the meeting
- ✓ Prepare the Agenda
- ✓ Visual Aids and Supporting documentation
- ✓ Venue
- ✓ Refreshments
- ✓ Notice of meeting
- ✓ Equipment needed
- ✓ Minutes of the previous meeting

### Scheduling

When choosing the time to hold a meeting, you should first consider the availability of those individuals who need to attend. Arranging a meeting around participants' schedules might be complicated, but it helps ensure that most participants will be able to attend.

To determine the most convenient time for everyone expected to attend the meeting, conduct a quick survey, and choose a time that accommodates most of the participants.

As an extra measure, you should offer the participants a way to RSVP, whether it be a telephone call, email message, or face-to-face. If participants can confirm their intention to attend, it will be easier for you to provide adequate accommodations.

## Notice of Meeting and Agenda

A notice of meeting and agenda are in modern times sent out together or the agenda acts as the Notice of meeting in typical business meetings. Although a formal Notice of Meeting will be issued then the Agenda will be prepared for more formal type meetings like AGM's, Shareholder meetings, etc.

An invitation to all required participants is communicated via a calendar application, that can easily track the participants acceptance to the meeting and their approval of the Agenda.

The electronic invitation serves as a Notice of Meeting.



The agenda will reflect the purpose and activities to be covered in the meeting. It is usually sent ahead of a meeting to help people come to the meeting prepared. It is sent together with minutes of the previous meeting and other materials that will be used in the meeting.

The Agenda provides the Focus of subjects for the meeting. It serves as clock to keep to the time allocated for the meeting.

A written agenda must contain the following information:

Time, Date, Duration and Venue

The Discussion Points or Subjects to be discussed

Although there are many templates available for Agenda's, all the elements are similar and consistent. You will need to check your organisational policies and procedures for the standard template used in your organisation and or department.

## **Agenda**

Super Duper Hotels, Inc.

Agenda of the meeting of the Planning Committee. To be held in Nyati Conference Room from 9:30 to 13:30 on Friday, 17 January 20\_\_.

### To be present:

- B. Daring (Chair)
- K. Luma (Secretary)
- I.P. Knightly
- R.U. Reddy
- U.B. Have
- A. Drift (from 12:15 to 12:40)
- C.U. Always (from 11:00 to 11:30)

Apologies for absence	
2. Minutes of the last meeting	10 mins
3. Matters arising	20 mins
4. Report of finance committee (routine)	30 mins
Report of the catering sub-committee (routine)	30 mins
6. Report re Chocks Away, Ltd. Takeover (non-routine) (Descriptive paragraph detailing the purpose of discussion and desired outcome, decision, recommendations, etc. All attendees should be briefed in this paragraph as to what is expected of them.)	110 mins
7. Report re company stationery (non-routine) (Descriptive paragraph detailing the purpose of discussion and desired outcome, decision, recommendations, etc. All attendees should be briefed in this paragraph as to what is expected of them.)	25 mins
8. Any other business (AOB)	10 mins
9. Date, time and place of next meeting	5 mins

If the Agenda wasn't sent with the original invitation, it is advisable to distribute agendas and attachments one week before the meeting, although 48 hours should be sufficient time for attendees. This allows people to read the attached reports, briefing papers and previous meetings before the meeting.

### Booking the Venue

It is important to choose a location that is convenient for the participants since they will be more likely to attend if the meeting is within a reasonable distance.

You also need to choose a location that is available and adequate for the number of participants attending the meeting. Make sure that it has sufficient lighting, seating, and ventilation to make the participants comfortable.

A few minutes before the meeting, you should make sure the room is clean and organised. Being familiar with the meeting location avoids any embarrassing last-minute complications.

### Arrangement of seats

When planning a seating arrangement, keep in mind that individuals are sitting facing each other encourage discussion. If you know, there will be participants who are inclined to argue, avoid seating them facing one another.

Also, keep in mind that seating participants in a classroom-style configuration discourage discussion.

People often take seating arrangements for granted. However, the style of seating has an impact on levels of participation. The primary function and size of the meeting also influence seating arrangements. The following are guidelines:

Style	Room Size	Group Size	
Conference	Small	Small	1
U-Shape	Small/Mediu m	Small	

Style	Room Size	Group Size	
Circle	Small/Mediu m	Small/Medium	
Classroom	Medium	Large	
Theatre	Medium	Large	

### Equipment needed

Decide on the equipment needed for the meeting, if a formal presentation will be done, a projector and the prepared visual aids will be required. Make sure that the venue you are using has working equipment.

## **CONDUCTING A MEETING**

On the day of the meeting the Secretary is responsible to check to the venue and ensure it meets with all the requirements stipulated like the seating arrangement chosen for the venue, that the equipment needed is working, that all refreshments organised is available, etc.

As a Chairperson you should be ready to for fill the responsibilities and step into the role as described under the section of meeting roles and responsibilities.

## Five Elements of Effective Meetings

The following are the five elements identified by Karen Anderson in "Making Meetings Work":

- 1. **Greeting** Welcoming participants when they arrive.
- 2. **Opening** This includes introducing people (if required), stating the objective of the meeting, and introducing the agenda.

- 3. **Delivery** This is how you present the content or concern, or how you organise the task.
- 4. **Closing** This involves summarising decisions, listing recommendations, creating actions, assigning tasks, and setting deadlines.
- 5. **Feedback** This is how the meeting is recorded and an evaluation of the progress of the items identified in the closing.

The following are tips to encourage and increase involvement in meetings:

Invite participants to provide OPTIONS rather than advice. For example, "Have you thought of ..." works better than "I think you should ...".

Build in reflection time or quiet time that allows participants to think.

Recognise emotions and body language. For example, during the discussion, you see Miranda shaking her head say, "Miranda, you are shaking your head. Would you like to share what you are thinking about us?" or "I see that some people are shaking their heads in disagreement, would someone like to share what they are thinking of the group?".

Ask whether the group has any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Ask the group to determine the best action plan, including specific tasks, the people responsible for these tasks and the time frame in which it must be completed.

Focus on mutual gain.

Divide the meeting into smaller groups to discuss.

Ask members of the team to prepare in advance for specific items on the agenda.

Ensure that the agenda is followed and the meeting efficiently minuted.

## **Meeting Minutes**

Minutes are tangible records of a meeting for its participants and is a source of information for those who were unable to attend. They can act as a reference point when the outcomes impact other collaborative activities within the organisation, and they can serve as a notification to individuals of tasks assigned to them.

✓ Date and time of the meeting



- ✓ Names of the meeting participants and those unable to attend (e.g., "regrets")
- ✓ Acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes
- ✓ Decisions made about each agenda item, for example:
  - Actions taken or agreed to be taken
  - Next steps
  - Voting outcomes e.g., (if necessary, details regarding who made motions, who seconded and approved or via show of hands, etc.)
  - Motions taken or rejected
  - Items to be held over
  - New business
  - Next meeting date and time

## **Taking Minutes**

The LAW method in "Making Meetings Work" by John E. Tropman is a useful guide to taking minutes:

- ✓ Listen first
- ✓ Ask questions to get the needed answers recorded accurately
- ✓ Write fast

Note taking during a meeting can be tricky and needs to be accurate. There is no sure way of taking minutes, however some guidelines may assist in being organised and record what is required:

**Create an outline** – an outline based on the Agenda makes things easier for simple jotting down of notes, decisions, etc. under each item on the Agenda. Spacing notes for easy recognition later.

Check-off attendees as they enter the room.

**Record decisions or notes on action items** – record action items as they occur to be sure they are recorded accurately.

**Ask for clarification** – if you are not sure or need to clarify a point of action, decision or motion or even without making decision or draws an obvious conclusion, ask for clarification of the decision and the next step involved if required.



**Don't try to capture everything** – Simply and clearly on write the decision, assignment, or action. This is where a good writing technique and the use of language will be particularly important.

**Record it** – Great technological methods for recording a meeting are available, taking a recording of the meeting to be sure of what transpired during the meeting. The recording can be handy to extract the necessary information because you don't want to transcribe the entire meeting.

### Types of Meeting Minutes

There are various types of minutes, depending on the requirements. Below is a list of the types of minutes and when to use them:

**Verbatim minutes** are a word-for-word recording of everything said in a meeting. These are used in inquiries, such as a taking a statement in an accident inquiry or during a disciplinary hearing.

**Narrative minutes** give a fuller account of the meeting in that they include discussion leading up to a decision.

**Resolution/decision minutes** should record the decisions taken at the meeting.

**Summary minutes** record only the main points that participants made during a meeting. Summary minutes are effective because they remind participants of the topics covered without unnecessary details of the conversation.

**Action minutes** are used to ensure that members of the meeting are reminded of actions that they have volunteered to take or that have been delegated to them. They often include the time frame in which the required task needs to be carried out.

The following practical suggestions should assist you in taking minutes:

For each heading in the agenda have a corresponding heading in the minutes.



The minute taker writes a summary of the agenda item in one to two paragraphs, taking note of discussion, actions, and responsible person.

## Example

Minutes of the meeting of XYZ Company Safety Meeting, he	old in the production office	
On Monday 25 February 20 at 16	:00	
	Action	Date
Present		
~~~~ ~~~~ ~~~ ~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~		
Apologies		
~~~ ~~~~ ~~~		
Minutes of the last meeting		
~~~~~~~		
Monthly safety report	S. Beta	14/3
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~		
Retirement of Safety Officer		
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~	B. Jones	14/3
Safety Inspection	M. Pillay	14/3
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~		
General	J. Nkosi	13/3
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~		
Next meeting ~~~~~ ~~~~		
	S. Beta	25/3

## **Keeping Minutes**

They must be clear.

Must maintain numbering to maximise ease of reference.



Follow agenda items and sequence when drafting minutes.

Stick to one tense while recording minutes.

Resolutions must be clearly marked.

Updated minutes are adopted in the next meeting.

Adopted minutes must be kept in a minute book (or file) and filed indefinitely for future reference.

Resolutions must be extracted and filed in a resolutions file for ease of reference.

## **Decisions-Making Techniques**

There are two common ways of reaching an agreement, namely by majority vote or consensus:

#### Reaching Consensus

This method of decision-making involves the members discussing the issues concerned for as long as it is necessary until all agree on the matter to be decided. It requires members to acknowledge differences of opinion, to encourage debate and to strike a compromise rather than trying to get everyone to agree. If a compromise cannot be achieved, then the proposal is put to the vote or lost. This method is more possible in small groups.

Steps for reaching decisions by consensus:

- 1. Describe and define the problem so that it is clear to everyone
- 2. Brainstorm ideas
- 3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each possibility
- 4. Decide what approach to follow
- 5. Identify what needs to happen next
- 6. Agree on who will do what, where, when and how
- 7. Check how realistic and achievable are the goals

#### Majority Vote

This is the most used method in democratic dispensations. Members are simply asked to vote for options that seem appealing to them. The option with the highest number of votes becomes the decision of the group. Voting may be by the show of hands or secret ballot.

Voting is the best way of making a decision after matters have been deliberated upon by smaller groups. It can be combined with the consensus method.

It is not advisable to rush to put matters to the vote before members have thoroughly considered all alternative solutions. It may be necessary to postpone deciding on a matter until more information has been made available to the group.

#### **Different Personalities**

- ✓ You might have to deal with several types of individuals in a meeting. If you are fortunate, the participants will actively contribute and want to make the meeting a success. However, there are five common difficult personality types that you might encounter:
- ✓ The dominator Dominating individuals attempt to take leadership of the meeting away from you. These individuals are valuable contributors to the meeting, but their strong opinions, constant interruptions, and desire to be the centre of attention can impair the meeting's direction and focus. To keep an individual from dominating a meeting, you should:
  - o Allow adequate discussion of topics to make sure the conversation is not one-sided
  - Avoid confrontations that could sidetrack the flow of discussion
  - Balance the discussion by encouraging other participants to contribute
  - Direct questions from other participants
- ✓ The quiet one Although it is not necessary that participants contribute to a meeting, you should always provide opportunities for them to voice their opinions. Quiet individuals should be encouraged to speak, so you do not overlook important information. Some ways you can encourage quiet individuals to speak up during a meeting include:
  - Stimulating the conversation with open-ended questions
  - Slowing your rate of speech down, so you do not sound abrasive or attacking
  - Avoiding embarrassing them with humorous remarks
  - o Remaining open-minded to what they have to say



- ✓ The arguer Regardless of the reason why a participant is argumentative, you must remain
  calm to effectively deal with them. To keep the individual from completely disrupting the
  meeting, you can:
  - o Directly state that their behaviour is disrupting the meeting
  - Request a break and speak to them alone
  - Redirect the conversation to another, less intense issue
- ✓ The distracter You need to immediately address individuals who speak out of turn, constantly interrupt other participants, or distract the meeting in any way. Distractions are almost inevitable, but leaders can minimise them by:
  - Creating a moment of silence until the individual causing the distraction has stopped talking
  - o Inviting the individual to include the rest of the group in their conversation
  - o Politely asking the individual to focus on the group's discussion
  - o Identifying the individual's concern and addressing it later during the meeting
- ✓ The avoider You might occasionally encounter an individual who avoids answering questions.

  Typically, these individuals will respond to a question with a question of their own. When handling this type of situation, first refer the individual's question to the group and then back to the individual who posed the question.

## Difficulties in Meetings

There are various potential problems that can occur in a meeting, such as:

	<ul> <li>/hen the discussion is not focused on the purpose of the meeting be sure to: <ul> <li>involve participants in creating the agenda in advance, so they will agree that the topics are important; and</li> <li>make sure the agenda topics are not too broad.</li> </ul> </li> <li>/hen participants stray from the topic ensure that you: <ul> <li>set time limits for discussion of each topic.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Deviation from the</b> W	topics are important; and  make sure the agenda topics are not too broad.  Then participants stray from the topic ensure that you:
<b>Deviation from the</b> W	hen participants stray from the topic ensure that you:
<b>Deviation from the</b> W	
	<ul> <li>set time limits for discussion of each topic.</li> </ul>
topic	
	<ul> <li>make sure everyone has a copy of the agenda and make procedural suggestions to follow it.</li> </ul>
	State the purpose of the meeting.
	<ul> <li>record off-the-subject issues for later discussion; and</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>ask the group early in the discussion to remind one another to stay on topic; suggest that members come up with a signal that can be used to suggest the speaker get back to the point.</li> </ul>
	the event of running over the allocated time, consider the following:
limits	Set time limits for discussion of each topic.
	<ul> <li>Remind participants of the time available.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>If it appears that the issue will take more time than scheduled, anticipate this before the allocated time has elapsed. Give the group enough time to summarise what has been covered, identify what still needs to be accomplished, and schedule a time for another meeting to reach a conclusion.</li> </ul>
Very complex W	hen matters and discussion become complex to consider the following:
issues	<ul> <li>Schedule several sessions of manageable length. For example, tell people that you have scheduled an hour just to work on the definition of the problem, a second session will look at decision criteria, and the final session will be to brainstorm solutions and compare them against these criteria.</li> </ul>
	hen participants come late, leave early, come and go, do other work, have side onversations, or joke around too much do the following:
	<ul> <li>Hold the meeting off-site to minimise distractions</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Set and post ground rules for meeting behaviour</li> </ul>
	• Include breaks so participants can make phone calls, get coffee, use the restroom, etc.
	Hold the meeting at a time suitable to everyone.
_	/hen one person dominates the discussion, preventing others from participating in it, respond s follows:
	<ul> <li>Communicate a process for the meeting to follow and ask for everyone's support.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Propose meeting ground rules, such as airtime for everyone, no repeating what has been said, and everyone's opinion should be heard.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>State up front the "non-purposes" of the meeting, or what participants are not there to discuss/decide.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Give feedback to the meeting dominator before the meeting. Here is an example: "I know you are eager to share your opinions, but I am not sure everyone else will be as comfortable, especially when they hear you speak with so much passion. Can you help get others to talk more?"</li> </ul>
Stalled meeting In	this situation it is best to do the following:
-	Re-state the meeting objective
	<ul> <li>Summarise what has been accomplished so far. Do not assume that everybody knows what is going on.</li> </ul>

# • Ask everyone for a new approach so that the group is jointly responsible for getting the meeting moving again.

• Table the discussion until later. Assign people to think about the "roadblock" and what might be done to overcome it.

# Arguments/ disagreement

Sometimes tempers flare, and people are emotional so, as a chairperson, it is expected that in these situations you consider the following:

- Use humour to diffuse the situation
- Find a way to agree even if it is only partially
- Use and instead of; the use of but creates an either/or situation and discounts others' positions/views
- Focus on the behaviour and the issue and not the person
- Use an "I message"
- Focus on the here and now. We cannot change the past, and we can change how we respond to the present and the future
- Use the FOCUS model outlined in "Making Meetings Work" by Karen Anderson, namely:
  - o What are the feelings about the situation?
  - o What are the objections or concerns?
  - o What are the consequences?
  - o What would utopia be?
  - O What satisfaction are you looking for?

When people become emotional, and arguments ensue, a seemingly innocent question – "I can see that you feel passionate/angry/upset. I just want to check that I am getting the correct facts. Could you please list the main facts for me again so I can make sure I am following you?" This question will allow the group to refocus itself.

According to the authors of "The Professional Secretary's Handbook", one of two things will happen:

- The combatants will have to respond to the request and go over the facts, which will immediately cool tempers.
- Peer pressure from the group will allow other people to respond to the question.

## Participating in Formal Meetings

A **formal meeting** is one that follows the accepted conventional procedure with a chairperson and a set of rules. Private meetings and public meetings are classified as formal meetings. The degree of formality required at different meetings varies depending on the formality of the organisation.

At some stage, during your career and in the social sphere you will be expected to participate in a formal meeting. Your participation should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the meeting. For this reason, it is important to know how to communicate at formal meetings according to the basic rules of procedure.

Improve oral communication skills by understanding the basic terminology and procedures of formal meetings, such as:



- If the chairperson asks, "Are there any apologies?" you can raise a hand and state who has sent an apology for their absence. For example, "Ms Nkosi sent her apologies, Madam Chairperson. She is away on business."
- If the chairperson reads the written minutes from the previous meeting and asks for comments and feedback, you can raise your hand to receive permission to speak. You might say, "Mr Chairperson, I think we were asked to report back to the committee by the 15th of the month and not the 25th, as was recorded."

The most important point to heed is that nobody, except the chairperson, may address the meeting unless the chairperson has granted permission for this. How to gain permission to speak:

The attendee must rise or raise a hand. The chairperson then grants permission for that person to speak. If two or more members rise at the same time, the chairperson determines who will talk first.

A member may not interrupt a speaker or directly address the speaker. All remarks must be addressed to the chairperson.

If you wish to comment on what a person has said, you cannot address that person directly. For example, you could not address Mr. Smith directly and say, "Yes, Mr. Smith. I agree with you." Instead, you would **raise your hand**, and once the chairperson had granted you permission to speak, you could say, "Madam Chairperson, I agree with what Mr. S. has said. Last week the toilets were overflowing and obviously hadn't been cleaned for a long time."

The items to be discussed must strictly follow the agenda. If anyone wants to discuss a point, not on the agenda, then permission must first be obtained from the chairperson of the section devoted to General Matters (Any Other Business).

You must raise a hand and once the chairperson has granted permission for you to speak, you can
introduce a new topic. For example, "Mr. Chairperson, I wish to bring to the members' attention
the filthy condition of the toilets."

#### Procedure for a motion to be handled

A motion is a suggestion or proposal that is put to the vote at a meeting.

- ✓ Member A receives permission from the chairperson to speak.
- ✓ Member A states the motion. For example, "I propose that the club purchases a water cooler."

- ✓ Member A supports the motion by giving reasons for the proposal.
- ✓ Member A concludes by saying, "I propose that the club purchases a water cooler." Also acceptable is, "I move that the club purchases a water cooler."
- ✓ The chairperson asks for someone to second the motion. "Does anyone second the proposal to purchase a water cooler?"
- ✓ A member, who agrees with this, raises a hand and will usually say, "I second the motion."
- ✓ The chairperson states, "It has been proposed and seconded that the club purchases a water cooler. Is there any discussion?"
- ✓ If there are any points to discuss, participants must follow the normal procedure and gain permission from the chairperson to speak.
- ✓ The chairperson asks the members to vote on the motion. This can be done by a show of hands, by orally answering "yes" or "no" or by writing yes or no on a piece of paper.
- ✓ Finally, the chairperson states whether the motion is carried (approved) or denied (not approved).
- ✓ If it is approved, the chairperson would say, "The motion for the club to purchase a water cooler is carried by 35 votes to 2."
- ✓ If the motion is not approved, the chairperson would say, "The motion for the club to purchase a water cooler is denied. The votes were 2 in favour and 25 against."

Improve oral communication skills by following general rules of meeting etiquette, such as

Do not interrupt when someone else is talking.

Avoid making side-comments to the person sitting next to you. If you have something to say, raise your hand and obtain permission to speak with the chairperson.

Always be pleasant, tactful, and polite and respect the opinions of others.

If you do have something negative to say, ensure that you criticised the proposal or the idea and not the person. For example, you could say, "I think that is a ridiculous idea!" but you should not say, "You are ridiculous!"

## **Closing Meetings**

Participants need a sense of closure to leave a meeting feeling that it was successful. Having a definite conclusion allows you to clarify and finalise all the major points made during the meeting.

Closing a meeting properly will also ensure that participants understand the information shared and decisions made during the meeting.

Ending a meeting by the scheduled time demonstrates courtesy to the participants. They have taken valuable time from their workday to attend your meeting, and you can show your appreciation for their efforts by adhering to the schedule and ending on time.

However, you can continue a meeting beyond the scheduled time if there is agreement among all participants to continue.

A few minutes before the scheduled time of adjournment, let the participants know that the meeting needs to begin wrapping up. This allows participants to organise their thoughts.

Summarising the main topics discussed enables you to make sure the meeting accomplished its objective and that the participants understand the information presented. In addition, it helps reinforce the tasks the participants are responsible for completing.

If you need to hold another meeting, announce its time, location, and the possible discussion topics. Immediately announcing a future meeting allows participants to begin preparing for it.

You need to express appreciation for the time, effort, and energy participants gave during the meeting. Participants appreciate having their contributions noticed, especially when they have made sacrifices to attend, or made compromises during the meeting.

### **CONCLUDE MEETING COMMUNICATION**

#### Formulate Minutes

Transcribing what has been said into words, can be a difficult task at the best of times. This requires of you to have good knowledge or terminology used in your workplace as well as the transcribed language vocabulary. The more words you know the easy writing becomes.

See the section on language structures later this guide for more information on how to write for an audience.

It's time to pull together the notes you made during the meeting.

As a rule, minutes should be distributed within 24 - 48 hours of a meeting. This rule assists in the 1<sup>st</sup> step of writing minutes.

- ✓ Write the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting while everything is still fresh.
- ✓ Review the outline and add additional notes or points that need clarifying.
- ✓ Check all decisions, actions and motions are clearly noted.
- ✓ Include on sufficient detail remember that writing to communicate has a goal of achieve mutual understanding, so you don't want to communicate to much or to little only straight to the point.

The language structures used in minutes should follow:

- ✓ Being objective
- ✓ Written in the same tense throughout
- ✓ Avoid the use of names other than those needed to record motions and seconds
- ✓ Avoid personal observations facts only
- ✓ If you need to refer to other documents, don't try summarise them in the minutes rather attach them as appendices or indicate where members can find them.

When formatting minutes, the look and feel should draw the audience to subjects, outlines and information that concerns them. Separating each paragraph with one line spacing, using a suitable font – or as prescribed by your organisations document policy. It should be neat, and text aligned suitable for a great reading experience for the audience.

## Minutes Approval

Once the minutes have been formulated, make sure to have the Chairperson review and revise and/or approved before distributing. This needs to take place otherwise it is not an official record of a meeting.

## Distributing Minutes of a Meeting

Distributing minutes should be done using the Standard method of distribution as outlined in the organisations procedural guide for minutes of a meeting.

Minutes should be distributed to all members of the meeting whether they attend the meeting or not.

The following can be appended to minutes:

Reports

Diagrams, statistical charts, photographs, etc.

### Following Up on a Meeting

With general business meetings they most likely took place to address specific business functions that most likely required action/s from members.

It is important that these decisions for action/s are implemented and agreed upon action is taken.

Using the minutes as a guide, follow up with the respective members that needed to action tasks or activities.

## **Evaluating Meeting Effectiveness**

Meetings take valuable time and effort; it is important the efficient of the meeting is evaluated from time to time to ensure that the time and effort spent is worth it. Not to mention that it meets the objective of having the meeting in the first place.

Evaluating a meeting enables you to identify areas and topics that were productive and those that were counterproductive. Understanding these areas helps you make appropriate modifications in how you conduct future meetings. There are two main ways you can evaluate a meeting's effectiveness:

**Use a personal checklist -** You can design and use a personal checklist to evaluate a meeting shortly after it has concluded. This checklist should become part of a Leaders job function and will help you identify areas where you can improve your leadership skills in future meetings.

Checklists can include items regarding various aspects of the meeting:

- √ The thoroughness of preparations
- √ The objective's relevance and practicality
- √ The quality of discussions
- √ The interaction among participants
- √ The decisions reached
- √ The way problems were addressed



✓ The timing of the meeting (adherence to the schedule)

**Ask the participants for input -** It is very helpful to ask the participants for their opinions regarding the effectiveness of a meeting. They will often have suggestions for improvement that you might not have identified on your own.

## **LEADING DISCUSSIONS**

Leading discussions follow the same basic principles that are applied to Chairing a meeting, the only difference in leading a discussion is that it may be for a variety of reasons which include settling team disputes.

To effectively lead a discussion and ensure participation by parties, communication techniques must be applied. In the beginning of this guide a number of communication techniques were discussed that can be used in when facilitating a discussion.

## TECHNIQUES FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS

### Questioning

Ask questions relevant to the discussion objective. This technique is very inclusive, but it can take a long time or get a little boring.

## **Grouping Participants**

Group members can break into pairs for discussion. In a debate format, their opposing 'positions' can be assigned. (If you do this, it is interesting to assign positions that are unlike their personal ones.) Also, in pairs, the facilitator can ask each of the group members to 'interview' each other; they could then later present their partners' comments to the rest of the group.

Using pairs is particularly nice when members of the group do not know each other since this provides an easy and personal way to become acquainted with at least one person. You can also ask people to work in a sequence of pairs (for example, first the person seated to their left, and then the person seated to their right).

The large group can be broken into small groups of up to six or eight people.



### Assigning Roles

To create some structure for participants, facilitators often assign roles, such as 'recorder' (writing down what takes place), the 'organiser' (who makes sure that the group stays on task), or special roles associated with the activity.

### CRACKING THE LEAD

To succesfully lead discussions in achieving the overall objective, the Leader needs to be able to apply a number of skills. Being the Leader you get the opportunity to speak and grab everyone's attention. Have uninterrrupted time to share views and create an engaging environment. To create this environment the following skills are required:

## Leadership Skills

The leadership style you apply should be appropriate for the discussion topic and the participants.

## Listening Skills

Pay attention and focus on what the speaker says, then compare to your own experiences

- ✓ Active listening to a skill and is as important as giving orders in obtaining results.
- ✓ Give your full attention to context.
- ✓ Make sure that you really understand.

### What Makes A Good Listener?

This is a **question** of **feedback**. **Good listeners** use a **variety** of **non-verbal** and **minimal** cues to keep the other person talking. In the case of a telephone conversation, where physical non-verbal communication can't be seen, it will be heard in the tone of your voice. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge through speaking the words and taking note of your tone – tone expresses feeling. These include the use of phrases such as:

"Yes"

"I understand"

"And then what"

"Tell me more"



"If I understand you correctly..."

Do not to overdo such variations as this might have exactly the opposite effect on what you are trying to communicate?

When communicating with someone else you must always strive to do it as naturally and evenly as possible. Be yourself.

#### Listen between the lines:

- ✓ Look for non-verbal clues even over the telephone listen for silence.
- ✓ Mentally summarise and evaluate objectively.
- ✓ Be empathetic.
- ✓ Determine whether guidance, support, motivation, action, or silence is expected.

### Convincing Power

Convincing power is a skill suggests a power to overcome doubt, opposition or reluctance to accept. To convince someone of something, you need to fully believe it yourself.

#### Presentation Skills

In this context presentation skills refers to how you present yourself and the content. Using the right skill at the right time for the right purpose is a representation of self. Although this requires of you to be able to stand up infront of people and talk, in a discussion it is unlike a presentation in that you are not the only one talking in this case.

If you are poorly prepared, this will reflect badly on your presentation as everyone would be looking to you. As the facilitator you should be prepared and be able to get the discussion started. Planning for the discussion including what you will use to engage members will allow for a good presentation.

## Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills encompass a wide range of skills applicable to the human element in discussions. Responsibility, Dependability, Motivation, Flexibility, Patience, Empathy, Active Listening and promoting team work. These are all areas that need to be applied when facilitating discussions, taking care of ensuring that people are respected will promoted trust and build cohesion.

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### PLANNING FOR A DISCUSSION

Once again our first step is planning, planning remains one of the most important processes for any activity/task or function that needs to be performed.

### Purpose of the Discussion

Establish the purpose of the discussion, by asking a number of questions like:

Why are we going to have this discussion?

What should be discussed?

How long should the discussion be?

The questions should be of such a nature that they assist in setting a clear objective and a realistic schedule for the discussion.

### Set Clear Objectives

Prepare a list of clear objectives – using the SMART Technique may assist in setting great objectives.

SMART techniques ensure that goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant and Timeous.

**S**pecific – Generalised or vague goals are not helpful because they don't provide direction. Your goal must be clear and concise.

**M**easurable – Ask yourself – Can I measure my specific? Include dates, times, amounts etc. – anything that can be measured so that you can measure the degree of success.

Achievable – Ask yourself – Is my goal achievable within the measurable bits specified? If not, you are setting yourself up for failure because there is no hope in achieving the goal, this will only demoralise and diminish the purpose.

Realistic/Relevant – Can this goal be achieved? Goals must be aligned to achieving an outcome that can be realistically achieved by all and not necessarily what is realistic for everyone. When you keep goals relevant and realistic, you will develop focus that is needed to meet the objective.



Timeous – Can the goal be achieved within the predetermined time? This will contribute to having a sense of knowing when success can be celebrated.

When you write your goals down it is a physical act that makes it real and tangible. Use determined words like "can", "will", etc. instead of "might", "maybe I could", "would want to", "would like to".

The goal must be set positively without a get out clause.

#### Decide on the Ground Rules

Set the ground rules of what will and will not be tolerated during the discussion, especially in the case of discussions for conflict resolutions. Being careful not to impose unnecessary restrictive rules on the parties. Ground rules can include:

- ✓ Participants need to respect one another
- ✓ No interrupting
- ✓ Be concise
- ✓ Encourage consideration for different view points

#### Set a Realistic Schedule

Discussions come in all shapes and sizes, therefore it is important to set a realistic schedule based on the purpose and objective of the discussion.

Draft a set of discussion points and generate questions that may be asked and or that you would like to ask during the discussion.

As a Leader of discussions, you would want to get people to engage, participate and encouraged to promote, produce and or share information. Part of achieving this is to ensure you have good questioning skills, because the right questions at the right time will promote interaction. Besides having question skills, preparing questions based on the purpose of the discussion will be helpful in Leading the way and getting participants talking.



This will also help in keeping the focus on the purpose and overall objective of the discussion and avoid participants straying from the objective of the discussion by bringing up irrelevant content or discussion points.

What, When, Why, Who, Where and How types of questions to draw information from a recipient.

These questions are then divided into different categories:

#### Open ended Questions

These generally begin 'How ...?' 'What ...?' "Where ...?' "Who ...?' They require a fuller answer than 'Yes' or 'No'.

Gain information: 'What happened as a result?'

Explore thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and opinions: 'What were you hoping to achieve?' "How are you feeling having done that?' "What's your view on that?'

Consider hypothetical situations and explore options: 'What would help?'; 'How might you deal with ...?'; 'What are the possible options for ...?'

'Why?' questions are useful open questions but can sometimes be less helpful if they sound too much as if they are judgmental – seeking justification for action. In such circumstances, they can sound moralising: 'Why did you do that?'

#### Closed questions

These invite a 'Yes' or 'No' answer and as such may unhelpfully close down the options for responding: 'Did you not think of that possibility?'; 'Do you get on well?'

Repeated use of closed questions can take the discussion along a downward spiral of awkward communication with the client saying less and less and you pressured to ask more and more questions.

There are times when closed questions are useful as a questioning summary: 'So, overall, you are saying you were pleased with that session?'

#### Elaboration questions



These may or may not be open questions, and used to encourage the person to elaborate on the spoken: 'Can you give me an example?'; 'Can you say a little more about that?'

### Leading questions

These suggest to the client that a particular answer is expected and that there are beliefs or values: 'Do you really think that ...?' 'Shouldn't you be considering ...?'

#### Multiple questions

Several different questions asked in one sentence leading to potential confusion for both the client and you: 'Is it that you feel ... or that you think it would be better if ... or perhaps that she should ...?'

Usually, you would not use a mixture of the above questions when finding out what the client's needs are.

Being able to draw information from someone will also require of you to have very good listen skills, meaning to listen with intent. Listen skills will be discussed further in this Guide.

### Invite the Participants

Depending on the purpose of the discussion, invites should be extended to relevant participants applicable for the discussion. Just as Notice of Meetings are sent to members only – of which were established to be a part of the meetings based on a number factors relevant to the purpose of the meeting.

Ensure to arrange an appropriate venue, the same procedure as for Venue arrangements for a meeting can be used.

### FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION

Besides all the formalities that may be required at the beginning of a discussion like:

- ✓ Welcoming Everyone
- ✓ Have everyone introduce themselves if the parties are not known to each other.
- ✓ Establishing the ground rules using the planned rules as a guide.
- ✓ Explaining the purpose and the objective that needs to be achieved.



### Starting the Discussion

Not only do you get to have the first say and that also being uninterrupted time to share your view, at the start of a discussion, it is also important that you grab the attention of participants right from start, envoking a sense of curiosity to want to have their say. To do this you need to:

- ✓ Communicate Fluently, making sure you present your views clearly without stammering. You need ot be confident about your point of view.
- ✓ Show Relevance it shouldn't seem as if you just starting a conversation for the sake of starting one. The points should be relevant to the purpose.
- ✓ Questions and Quotes Questions can be used to present your point of view on the subject, drawing additional information and or other points of view from the participants.
- ✓ Time-efficient Don't overelaborate on points of view and or elaborate to such a point where
  information becomes irrelevant to the objective. Only present your points of view precisely
  with out the story.

#### Middle of Discussion

The discussion has started and participants are discussion various points of view and giving their facts and or even opionions. As Leader it is important that you don't do all the talking, but engage and interact where required. For instance when the discussion goes of course or a decision needs to be made or even when a heated debate ensues.

The following is behaviour that should be applied in the middle of discussions:

**Listen Intently**: Listen to what is being said attentively by all participants, this will give you insight on participants points of view and or ideas around the topic. This will help you to prepare additional points for discussion if necessary and or areas that may still need addressing that were otherwise not forseen.

**Target the low points** – When a discussionis at its high point, when contestants have concluded their points, you have target points that are low and glide effortlessly into a discussion.

**Continue** – When participants are done sharing their information and or points, you need to continue the conversation with relevant talk, this will require of you to think on your feet and understand the direction of where the discussion is going to meet the objective.

**Express disagreement** – At some time during the discussion, it is crucial to put forth unpredictable points of the discussion. This should be put clearly and reasons stated for the disagreement and or point of view being presented.

As a Leader of the discussion, it will also be important for you to stay active through-out the discussion. Here are some pointers on staying active:

Bring new ideas

Be perceptive – you may have run out of ideas, but you can still bring varying points of view to support different arguments being made.

Stay on track – bring the discussion back on track if it has lost focus and straying of the topic.

Be convincing – Use non-verbal communication, eye contact, body language and gestures to win favour of participants. In addition verbal acknowledgements or agreements to lead the discussion in the direction you need to meet the objective.

#### Close the discussion

On closing the discussion:

Summarise all the points discussed

Be concise

Give the closure argument – Closure should be around the main topic and conclude the points discussed.

## Evaluating a Discussion

With everything it is important to evaluate the process as well as the content of the process against the objective it was meant to achieve. This provides a means to continuous improvement of quality. Ask questions or create checklist to determine:

What went well in the discussion? How do you know?

What was difficult in the discussion, and why?

How were disagreements or conflicts handled?

Did everyone get a chance to participate? If not, were they invited to participate?

## WORKPLACE REPORTS

As we have learning through-out this guide, communication is key in any business. The communication theory as learnt dictates that any communication should be of such a nature that it achieves a mutual understanding from the recipient.

Workplace reports are written to achieve just that, the reports aim to provide valuable information of analysed data, over a consistent and prescribed period to give guidance to Management to make valuable business decisions.

There are two categories of reports that may find in your workplace:

- ✓ Written Reports
- ✓ Data Reports

Written reports are reports that provide a written account of events that transpired and or data collected over a prescribed time. They use words to describe and explain the circumstances of the Topic being covered in the report.

Data reports on the other hand provide a calculated end output of data received over a period with no explanation or description of the data being read. Only once this data is transcribed through description and explanation does it become a written report.

Although there are many types of reports that you will find in your organisation the main concepts remain the same. You will need to be able to interpret information and or write explanations in a report format for Management to account on business dealings.

Giving a written account of events and in general written communication follows general language structures and rules, let's look at some general concepts of the written word.

## WRITING FOR PURPOSE

One of the first things to do when being tasked with writing for a purpose, in this case a written report but it can be applied in all written communication contexts – is to establish the purpose

TYPES OF WRITING METHODS



#### Narrative

Narrative writing is used when you want to entertain or to instruct the reader. Narratives are written in many different forms, like science fiction, romance, horror, etc. A narrative story deals with complications or problematic events which lead to a crisis and in turn find resolutions.

Language features used in narrative text focuses on characters: individuals. Action is mainly used with verbal and or mental process, and is usually writing in past tense, using direct and indirect speeches, and can be written in the first person.

#### **Discursive**

Discursive writing is the art of writing about many different things in a way that is not highly organised.

#### Reflective

Reflective writing is written from a more objective point of view as it encourages you to reflect upon your own thoughts, actions and experiences that relate to the content you are learning.

#### Argumentative

An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating a writer's position, belief, or conclusion. A writer makes a claim and then defends that claim with information from credible sources.

#### Descriptive

Descriptive writing describes a person, place or thing, in such a way that a picture is formed in your mind as the reader. When writing a descriptive piece, you first select the subject, then decide on the details that would dominate the piece, organise the details, making sure to use descriptive words and then draw a logical conclusion on all the details.

Figurative speech will liven the writing, some figures of speech may include the following types of figures of speech:

Figures of speech	Description
Simile	Words such as 'like' or 'as' – when comparing
Metaphor	Imply a comparison between 2 things that are different
Personification	Give human characteristics to inanimate objects

Overstatement/hyperbole	Exaggeration use for emphasis or effect
Understatement	Something opposite to what is expected or says something
	less than expected
Symbol	Person, place or thing that represents an abstract idea or
	concept

#### **Expository**

Expository writing is the type of writing that is used to explain, describe, give information or inform the reader. Text is generally organised around one topic and developed according to a pattern or combination of patterns. Content of expository writing is factual. Expository writing is formal in style.

#### Transactional

Transactional writing is writing that is part of a chain of written communication intended to communicate, persuade, or inform.

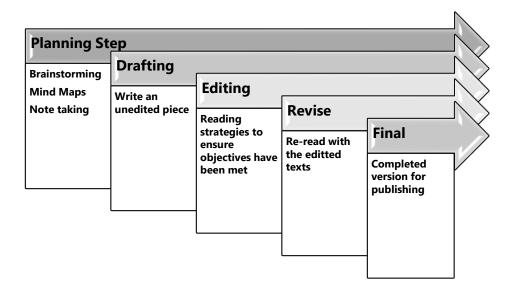
Each of the above types represent different types of business communication methods used in an organisation. For instance: **Transactional is an example of email communication.** 

### THE PURPOSE OF A WRITTEN PIECE

Writing text for a specific audience is not merely placing words on paper and submitting the product, instead effective writing is a procedure with several process steps to follow before submitting a final product.

Be sure to complete the objectives of each step carefully and successfully in this process. During each step various tools and techniques learnt during this module can be used to formulate a structured piece of writing.

For any written piece - The audience, purpose, structure, style, and register of writing should be established.



The written piece once complete should show that you have considered:

- ✓ Different viewpoints
- √ Sound Reasoning
- √ Facts to support the arguments

Sources of the information through research – remember that research should clearly define, organise, categorised, irrelevant information removed, the validity and reliability must be checked.

The entire piece must form an overall structure, using paragraphs, sentences, linking between the information and most importantly the meaning must be expressed clearly.

### THE AUDIENCE

For all writers, the most important people are their readers. If you keep your readers in mind when you write, it will help you use the right tone, appropriate language and include the right amount of detail.

What do readers want from writing? They want relevant information, presented in a clear, easy-to-understand style. They do not want muddled thinking, background information they already know, business-speak and jargon or waffle.

Getting a clear picture of your readers before you start to write helps to focus your writing and get your message across. The better the picture you have of your readers, the better you can direct your writing.

Before you start writing, identify the intended audience:



Do you know his/her level of expertise, what his/her requirements and interests are, his/her educational level and home language?

- √ What is his/her position in the organisation?
- √ What does s/he already know about the subject?
- ✓ What does s/he need to know?
- √ Will s/he understand technical terms?
- ✓ What information does s/he want?
- √ What do I want him/her to do?
- √ What interests or motivates him/her?
- √ What prejudices does s/he have?
- √ What worries or reassures him/her?
- ✓ What will bring him/her round to my view?
- √ What other arguments do I need to present?
- √ How is s/he likely to react to what I say?

Your audience may be internal, and your document intended for use within the organisation, in which case you can use jargon and language specific to the organisation and position.

However, your audience could be external, and your document may be written for wider publication, for example for customers, the press, readers of company brochures, etc.

In the latter instance, your language must be simplified to reach as wide an audience as possible and must contain little or no jargon or company-specific abbreviations.

## APPLYING LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

Ideal English text is easy to read and understand. A couple of rules to keep in mind when writing in English:

- ✓ Use simple language
- √ Keep subordinate clauses short
- ✓ Use verbs rather than nouns
- ✓ Avoid slang and jargon



✓ Pay attention to text-type, style, register and socio-cultural sensitivities

Furthermore, to determine the **level** of **style** we are going to use, we can ask the following questions:

Who is the audience?

What can I assume that the reader already knows?

How many definitions are needed?

Making **texts interesting** can be achieved by varying the lengths of your sentences. An **important statement** is best **emphasised** in a **short sentence**, especially if that sentence is between two longer sentences. Also vary the lengths of your paragraphs and avoid one sentence paragraphs.

Various possibilities on how to structure your text:

- ✓ General statement followed by details and examples.
- ✓ Details and examples followed by a generalisation.
- ✓ Provide new information based on what readers already know.
- ✓ Catch and keep readers attention.
- ✓ Organise chronologically.

Sentences are nice little packages that come together to express a thought. Without sentence structures, a paragraph can be meaningless and communicate nothing to the reader.

There are four sentence structures namely: Simple, Compound, Complex, Compound-complex. For a sentence to be complete, a group of words needs to contain a subject and a verb, and it needs to express a complete thought.

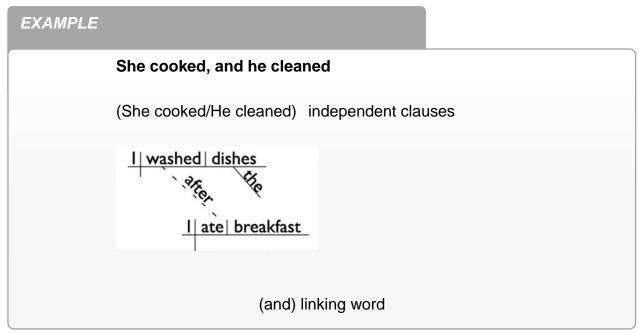
## Simple Sentences

A simple sentence only contains 1 independent clause.



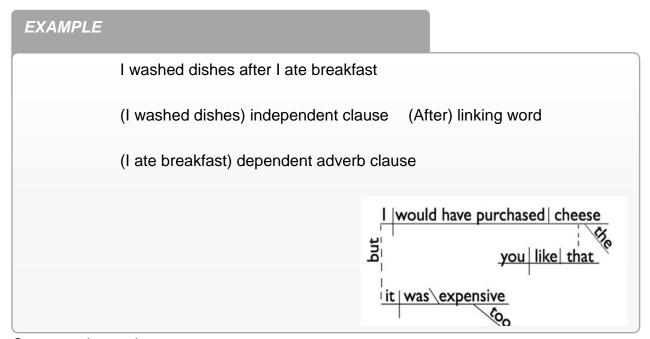
## **Compound Sentences**

A **compound** sentence contains at least **2 independent clauses**.



## **Complex Sentences**

This type of sentence **contains** a **subordinate clause** and an **independent** clause.



Compound-complex sentences:

Compound-**complex** sentences **contain** at least **2 independent clauses** and at least one **subordinate** clause.

Example: I would have purchased cheese, but it was too expensive.



When we creating complex sentences it is necessary to use linking words:

Classification	Link word
To add information	And, also, in addition, besides, not only, but also
To show contrast	But, however, although, on the other hand, in contrast
To show similarity	Similarly, like, in a similar way, equally, likewise
To give examples	For example, such as, for instance
To express reason	Because, since, due to, that is why
To express result	So, then, consequently, therefore, as a result, thus
To clarify/explain	In other words, that is to say, i.e., to put it in another way
To conclude	In short, briefly, to sum up, to summaries, in conclusion
To express sequence	First, to start with, then, after this, afterwards, finally, lastly
Sequence	Firstly, secondly, then, later, when, before, after, next
Emphasis	In fact, indeed, to be sure

## **Paragraphs**

The **sentences** in a **paragraph** should **form** a **unit**. The reader can easily see how a sentence follows on the one preceding it. A paragraph starts with a topic sentence, that introduces the topic of the paragraph to the reader.

The topic sentence acts as a base and holds the paragraph together. **Sentences** that **follow** in the **same paragraph** should **enlarge** on the **topic** or theme introduced in the first sentence. We call them supporting sentences. Supporting sentences should provide specific details about the topic to clarify the topic sentence and make the paragraph interesting.

If the sentence does not contribute to the theme of the paragraph, it should not be included. You should also avoid adding data that is not relevant to the topic.

Hints for writing good paragraphs:

- ✓ Each paragraph should have only one theme.
- ✓ Do not write paragraphs that are longer than 10 or 12 lines, as longer paragraphs become boring and confusing.
- ✓ Mix long and short paragraphs in a document to create interest and attention with the reader.

# **CRITICAL THINKING**

We hear the term **Critical Thinking** a lot, but few people stop to think what it means or even how to use it. When you think critically it means that you make reasoned judgements that are well thought out and logical.

Critical thinking is a way of thinking where you don't just accept the arguments and conclusions but embrace an attitude of curiosity by questioning the arguments and conclusions to find evidence to support the arguments and conclusions.

Critical thinkers will always ask questions that will probe additional information. Critical thinking is divided into the following:

#### Core Skills

- ✓ Curiosity
- √ Scepticism
- √ Humility

Most people make changes to their daily life based on an interesting story about real incidents without thinking about how or where the story comes from and or how something works.

Let's say that your colleague told you about their smoothie that they drink every day, and claim that its ingredients has increased their energy, on hearing this you make the decision to also have the same smoothie every day to increase your energy.

After a few day's - you find no difference and or change in your energy levels. Leaving you feeling disappointed and reluctant to believe anything or anyone.

This would be an unreasoned decision without any substantiating evidence, no thought was taken into the likely hood of the statement being true and or no curiosity to make an informed decision based on additional evidence.

By using critical thinking applying the **core skills** would've given rise to additional information and evidence to make an informed decision rather than one based on someone else's opinion.

Using this core skills when putting together a written piece, no matter how long the piece is, even a quick message to colleagues is very valuable in ensuring the message is well received and understood.

For long written pieces a lengthy planning process needs to be done to cover all the aspects. Use critical thinking to think things through. Techniques like brainstorming, mind mapping, spider diagrams, etc. can be used to plan.

# TYPES OF BUSINESS REPORTS

There are many different types of reports, each with their own intended information that needs to be communicated. The types of reports you work with will depend on your working environment.

# Informational Reports

These are reports that present facts about certain activities in detail without any note or suggestions.

# Analytical Reports

Analytical reports contain facts with analytical explanations by the writer. They contain narration of facts, collected data and information that is classified and tabulated with explanatory notes followed by conclusions arrived at from the interpretations.

# Research Reports

They are based on research work conducted on a given problem. They detail the findings from the factual information collected.

# Routine Reports

Are reports that are compiled periodically and are required to be prepared, on dealings of the organisation to provide management with valuable information to make valuable business decisions.

# Statutory Reports

Statutory reports are reports that are a legal requirement for a business to comply with legislation. They contain information relevant to content prescribed by the governing legislation and comply with a law and or regulation of State. Annual financial reports and incidents reports are examples of these types of reports where financial reports are applicable to the laws prescribed in the Company's Act and Incident reports required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act – that report on any applicable incidents as stipulated by the act that needs to be reported.

## NATURE OF REPORTS

The nature of all reports is to convey a message of some kind to the intended audience. They provide suitable information for the task; therefore, they are objective and based on fact.

Although reports have various content and formats, the common characteristics, attributes, and properties can be summarised to the following:

- √ Completeness
- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Use of simple language
- ✓ Correct use of language

All of which are points we have been discussing through-out this guide.

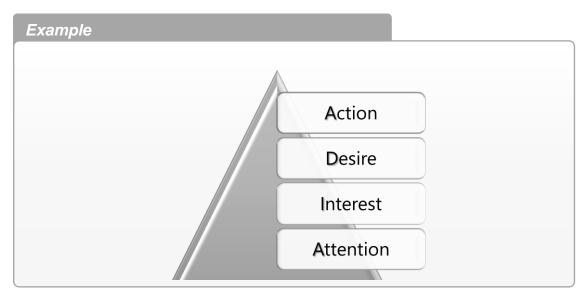
# **ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

# PLAN FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS

Before addressing an audience, you need to plan what you are going to communicate to the audience. It is **essential** that you **prepare** a **detailed** and complete **plan** of your address in writing, outlining the introduction, body, and conclusion.

When planning to do an oral presentation, planning is crucial, most speakers use the AIDA principles to plan.

This principle often used in Marketing identifies the stages an individual goes through during a process of purchasing, however so when presenting there is something you want to sell to your audience and great way to understand how your audience will perceive the entire experience.



# Preparing for a talk

A good oral presentation results from careful preparation, using the following procedures will assist you in your preparations:

## 1. Decide on your purposes, for example:

To inform

To persuade

To entertain

Once you have a good idea of the purpose of the presentation, you need to analyse the audience.

# 2. Analyse the needs of your audience

Decide what your audience needs to know or to do at the end of your presentation. This decision will help give you focus. You could use a simple audience image analyse as shown in the example to determine, what the audience knows and what they will need to know about the topic.

Example						
Very unfavourabl	Somewho e unfavour	Somew		Very favourd	ıble	Favourable
Never heard of	Heard of only	ow a e bit	fai	ow a r nount	Kno ver	y well

#### 3. Prepare a mind-map for your ideas

Map out the ideas using a mind-map, once you have a good idea of all the ideas and satisfied that you have covered everything that is required.

## 4. Decide on a logical approach

Start planning what you want to say based on the ideas that you prepared on the mind map, this already have given you a guideline to the sequence in which you want to say it.

Write out the **words** you will use and the **keywords** that apply to the full sentences. It is important to write out the words to ensure that you plan and can prepare for **what** you **want** to **say**.

Formulate an **Introduction**, being reminded of the techniques you should use to get your audience's attention. Take into consideration the audience analysis, they may be a fun bunch and like quirky phrases, use creative thinking on how you can say something visually or with the correct choice of words.

Use your **logical sequence** from your **mind map**, to **decide** how you want to get your **point across**, what **images**, **graphs**, **icons**, **words**, **and keywords** you need to use and when will they be appropriate.

Considering that this all done on paper and using the thinking process by applying factors and features of language learnt in this Guide.

Remember that with the content you want to **create awareness** of the topic or subject that is being discussed to get your audience engaged and **interested**.

Once the **audience** is interested, now we need to get the audience to **desire** what we are saying by moving a mind set to – I like to I want.

Lastly formulate the **conclusion**, remember that according to the AIDA principle the conclusion should show action, in this context get them to buy in or agree to what you are saying or said.

Continue until you have the entire presentation mapped out. Then prepare it by using either cue cards or a presentation application software.

#### 5. Prepare visual aids



Audio-visual aids are essential if you wish for the audience to remember the points you make, you need to create visual aids to add to your message and enhance it. Visual aids do the following:

- ✓ They create immediate impact.
- ✓ They make ideas more concrete.
- ✓ The reinforce key points.
- ✓ They assist with the conveying of ideas.
- ✓ They guide the speaker and the audience.
- ✓ They help to retain the attention of the audience.
- ✓ Audio-visual aids should support the talk or report. They must never serve as a replacement.

Keep the following points in mind when using audio-visual aids:

- ✓ They must not be overused; they can destroy the balance of the talk or report.
- ✓ They should be audible, visible, simple, and immediately understandable.
- ✓ They must be well planned.
- ✓ They must be kept on long enough for the audience to listen, look and absorb the material.
- ✓ They must work effectively.

#### The flip chart:

Most venues are equipped with flipchart stands and paper, however if you have a well thought through idea that you want to convey to the audience using a flip chart, it will be best to buy flipchart paper and prepare this beforehand. Otherwise, you can use it strategically throughout your presentation, remembering to work this into your plan.

The main advantages of the flipchart are that:

It is very portable.

It does not need power, so it can be used without being concerned about power failures.

The speaker can prepare in advance or write as the presentation evolves.

The main disadvantage is that it is not suitable for a large audience. When writing on a flip chart, make sure that you write large enough for the entire audience to read. Keep the sheet simple so that the audience can understand it. Keep in mind that you can make small notes with pencil on each page which can guide you through the presentation.

#### Video:



The advantage of a video is that it illustrates vividly the spoken and visual together. It may be shown with the lights up so that the speaker can maintain contact with the audience.

The main disadvantages are that expensive equipment has to be used. It is subject to more frequent breakdowns than simpler equipment. It may also draw attention away from the speaker if it is not controlled properly. When using video, make sure that you test the equipment at the venue before you intend using them and that you have everything ready for immediate playing.

#### 6. Prepare for the Presentation

Well **prepared presentations create confidence** and **help dull** the nervous. Any presentation or event where you are in a vulnerable position is nerve racking, no matter how much you do it. It just becomes easier, but the nerves are still there.

That is why excellent presentation is key. Using your aids whether it is cue-cards or an electronic media, **practice** the **presentation as if** you were in front of the audience.

Start by **reading** the **words** to get more **familiar** and **comfortable** with what you want to say, then take care of the tone, pace, volume, and pitch of your voice. Remember to **practice varying** these on **words** you want **emphasise**, ensure that these have also been emphasised on your media.

Practice suitable body language and the gestures you will use during the presentation.

#### 7. Time

While you are preparing for the actual talk take into consideration the time you have been given, you can edit out some information where needed while practising. Ensure to always be on time, never talk over time – this shows that you respect your time and those of others.

# Conducting the Talk

When you present your talk, pay special attention to your:

- ✓ Non-verbal communication, particularly your voice, eye-contact, your hand movements, and the way you stand:
- ✓ Your dress and general appearance
- ✓ Your level of enthusiasm
- ✓ Your style



✓ The quality of your audio-visual aids, and the way in which you use them.

Show genuine concern for your audience, make immediate eye contact with your audience and try not to read too much from your cards. Make sure that you dress appropriately. When you start, stand evenly on both feet. Do not cross your arms or legs or twist your back. Use gestures to emphasize your points and keep contact with the audience. Make sure that you:

- ✓ Speak with a lively voice
- ✓ Speak clearly
- ✓ Speak at a speed that allows your audience to tune in to your voice
- √ Vary your speed
- √ Use your voice to emphasize your key points
- √ Use pauses for impact

## The speakers' credibility:

A speaker's credibility is vitally important. The audience must believe in the speaker if the message is going to have any impact. **Credibility** may be **defined** as "an attitude towards a sender held at any given time by a receiver".

This definition stresses that credibility is conferred on a sender by a receiver. A sender has no credibility. It also stresses that credibility is dynamic. It changes all the time and may change from the beginning of a talk to the end. In presentations, three kinds of credibility are recognised:

**Initial credibility** is conferred on the speaker before they start. This is based on what the audience believes about the speaker.

**Derived credibility** is conferred on a speaker during the presentation. It is based on:

The way the speaker puts across the message

The impact of the message

The quality of the speakers' delivery

**Terminal credibility** is conferred on the speaker at the end of the presentation. Speakers should, therefore, pay attention to every stage of the presentation. Credibility may be defined as a combination of the audience's assessment of the speakers':

✓ Level of authority



- ✓ Trustworthiness
- ✓ Intentions towards the audience
- ✓ Achieving credibility
- ✓ Speakers can also make themselves credible by:
- ✓ Paying very careful attention to the beginning of the message:
- ✓ Ensuring that they are introduced by someone respected by the audience
- ✓ Paying close attention to their appearance
- ✓ Selecting their ideas carefully and support what the audience likes
- ✓ Using facts to back up general statements
- ✓ Making sure that their delivery is excellent
- ✓ Establishing common ground with the audience
- ✓ Appearing open minded and sincere
- ✓ Ending on a powerful note

# STRATEGIES TO INTEREST AN AUDIENCE

We have discussed numerous strategies to attract a written audience through-out this Guide, in this section we will concentrate on strategies to maintain and interest a live audience.

The way that you speak can reinforce your message and influence your audience. When you speak in the same tone, pitch, volume, and pace all the time, it becomes boring for the audience, and they can fall asleep. If you listen to public speakers, TV, and radio commentators, you will notice that they vary the tone, pitch, volume, and pace when they speak, to capture and maintain the interest of the audience.

# **VOCAL FACTORS**

To enhance your skill of getting a message across orally it will be important for you to practice your tone, pitch, volume, pace, and rhythm as well as gestures while talking.

The **tone** is **not** the **sound** of your **voice**, but the way in which you **express** something that comes out of your **mouth** for instance bright, or deep, it **expresses** your **feeling** or **mood**.



A **bright tone** will indicate **feelings** of **excitement**, joy, etc. while a deep tone will indicate feelings of placidity or sorrow. So, when you are addressing a serious subject, you will use a deeper tone of voice, while a lighter tone of voice is appropriate for a more lighthearted subject.

The **pitch** is **determined** by the **tension** on your **vocal cords**, i.e., how high, or low your voice sounds. Generally, you will speak at a high pitch when excited and at a lower pitch when relaxed.

The **pace** or **speed** at which you speak can also **influence** your audience. When you are telling someone that you have won the Lotto, you will talk much faster than when you are telling him that you cannot attend a major sporting event.

The **volume** of your **voice** can also **indicate** whether you are **excited** or **relaxed**, **angry**, or friendly. When you are saying something important, you will increase the volume of your voice to stress the importance of the point you are making.

**Pause** is a useful technique to **stress important points** in your presentation. When you pause for a couple of seconds just after making an important point, the audience knows that what you have said is important.

Using **keywords** is another **technique** to **stress important** points. In every presentation, not everything you say will be equally important. Some points will be the main points, and others will be extra information to explain what you are saying.

You will use the main points to identify keywords in your presentation. When you get to the keywords, you will stress them by adjusting the tone, pitch, volume, and pace of your voice. This will give the audience the cue that the keywords and the point you made are important.

# NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

A **nonverbal message** reinforces the **verbal message** by adding to its meaning. Banging your hand on the table while reprimanding someone conveys a stronger message than words alone, adds emphasis to your statement and captures the listener's attention.

The nonverbal message can complement a verbal message when it conveys the same meaning.

A greeting in a friendly tone of voice, accompanied by a warm smile will complement your verbal message.

A nonverbal message may **substitute** the **verbal** message. When you arrive home and are irritable and impatient, it is not necessary to tell anyone that, you had a terrible day at work.

Likewise, a passionate hug and kiss will tell your spouse that you love him/her without you having to say it.

Nonverbal **behaviour** functions to **regulate** the **flow** of **verbal interaction**. Slight hand movements, eye contact, the tone of voice, nodding of the head and other nonverbal behaviour tells the recipient to talk, repeat a statement, hurry up or finish the conversation.

For example, the chairperson at a meeting uses eye contact or hand gestures instead of words to indicate whose turn it is to speak.

Non-verbal message may even contradict a verbal message. This happens when a speaker says one thing but does another. Contradictory cues often tell us when someone is being sarcastic or merely teasing.

Now that you know what it means to vary the tone, pitch, volume, and pace of the way you speak, you can use these methods to:

Enhance the meaning of what you are saying to the audience

Respond appropriately to the audience, even in differing circumstances

# CONTINUITY AND AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

By applying all the techniques addressed above will not only lead to credibility which already is great, but also lead to continuity of the audience – unbroken consistent existence of your audience.

This will in most cases create interaction with and between the audience, discussions may ensue.

Although this may not always be the case because not all audiences are the same.

You need to apply various techniques learnt to engage and create interaction with the audience.

Repeat information, ask questions (using technique learnt), refer to your media where needed

It is easy to determine whether you have the attention of the audience by taking note of verbal and nonverbal feedback from the audience. Verbal and nonverbal clues to communication have been covered has already been covered in a previous section.

During presentations, it is of utmost importance to get feedback from the audience. If they are not asking questions or participating in the presentation, you can ask those questions.

Don't embarrass them, however. It is generally good practice to ask a question and then let someone from the audience answer the question. If no one answers, you can answer the question and then ask someone who agrees. This is only one example of many, watch what other people are doing and, if you like the technique, adopt it.

# CAUSE AND EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION

Since the beginning of this Learning Unit, we have been discussing communication and how to get a message across in an effective and efficient way to ensure Mutual Understanding from the audience to which it is being communicated.

From everything that we have learnt about writing a message to saying a message, the ultimate implication of a message not being understood, is that Mutual Understanding will not be obtained. This meaning that according to the theory effective communication will not have been achieved.

In business the implication of not reaching mutual understanding of a message could have dire effects to both employee's and business dealings alike:

# CAUSE AND EFFECTS OF POOR COMMUNICATION

The effects of poor communication on the employee:

Higher Stress levels: These are usually a huge sign that communication is not effective. It creates a feeling that everything is urgent, causing everyone to hurry, feel tense and overworked. The main cause of this is mere lack of attention to understanding the communication theory to get our message across effectively.

Unmet needs and expectations: Teams mis deadlines, clients miss appointments, it is often a case of deadlines being missed because people are constantly trying to figure out what their priorities should be.

Conflicts and Arguments: This is often caused by accusatory messages from Colleagues or Supervisors, which causes a sense of frustration, anger, hurt and even helplessness that come with unhealthy workplace communication.

Low Moral and High Turnover: When people are dealing with intense emotions, productivity is decreased and moral is replaced with fear and grief, workplace survival kicks in and often leads to employee's resigning.

Dissatisfied Clients: When clients need and expectations are not met – you may have missed calling a client, or a service to them was not honored or payments were not made on time. This causes clients to become agitated and frustrated that could lead to a loss of business.

The implication of the causes and the effects of the poor communication is ultimately a business can suffer loss or closing, people can suffer emotionally, which is unhealthy both to humans and the economy.

It is necessary to constantly seek ways and increase understanding of own knowledge of best communication techniques to communicate with your team. By embracing and committing to improving your own communication through the techniques we have discussed becomes a continuous process of improvement.



# LEARNING UNIT TWO

Devise and apply strategies to establish and maintain workplace relationships 252027

# **SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1 - 4**

- Liaise and network with internal and external stakeholders.
- Devise and apply a strategy to establish constructive relationships with manager(s).
- Identify and minimise personal conflict in a unit.
- Devise and apply a strategy to establish constructive relationships with team members in a unit.



# LIAISE AND NETWORK

Establishing and maintaining good workplace relationships is the key to a positive workplace.

Effective businesses encourage the development of positive relationships between managers and employees as well as amongst co-workers and all other stakeholders.

According to experts, "it is the most powerful way to build professional relationships, actively foster contacts and disseminate information".

Professional networks are not developed overnight nor do they come easily, but their value cannot be underestimated, and they should never be neglected because they not only ensure repeat business; they bring in new clients as well.

Networking is building professional, mutually serving relationships to help both parties obtain goals.

The term originates in a dictionary definition: "a system of elements (as lines or channels) that cross in the manner of the threads in a net."

In its simplest form, networking simply means making connections to make exchanges easier. This can be social, personal, professional, or even technical.

People have always built professional networks informally, but in recent years, attention has focused on systematically building relationships with professional friends and friends of friends.

# IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING

Although networking is a term referred to building relations outside of the organisation, it is important that we build networks within the organisation, connecting the outside.

Networking opportunities are mostly created around socialising events that include business like people. Getting into the habit of attending breakfasts, seminars, lectures and even lunches that are held by various groups.

Networking events offer an opportunity to introduce yourself and your business to a select, targeted group of people. These people are potential clients as well as potential sources

of referral. How you introduce yourself will make an impact on them and will determine whether they remember you and your product or service.

Attending these events alone would not be enough to identify an opportunity, Forbes offers the following to identify the actual opportunity within the event:

#### Research attendees on social media

Looking into past events and the people that attended, get a sense of there likes dislikes, what their profiles say about them, what they say about themselves. Take note of the content they share.

#### Consider Business Acumen

What do you look for in a person, what is their business ethic, how do they present themselves? Decide what it is you will be looking for in a fellow networker – like a good vibe, positive attitude, good ethics, etc. As people we make quick decisions if we like someone or dislike them. If they have what you are looking for, then it is a match and an opportunity for you to begin.

#### Mutual Contacts and Causes

Social media platforms like LinkedIn are good places to investigate who you and the potential fellow networker have in common. Look for causes, organisations and publications that may be similar of the same, gaining a sense of who the person is involved with will give a sense of their credibility and you can then determine what you have in common.

Other ways to identify networking opportunities, is to observe the person while at the event. Evaluate the questions they ask; do they challenge you. It is important also to realise that not all networking opportunities are worthwhile or worth your while. There must be purpose for the interaction and building the relationship.

# CREATING THE OPPORTUNITY

Now you have researched and found a number of events and people that attend the events, that may have what you need to grow your business and or get advice from. Creating the opportunity at the event may not be as easy as some may say.

Extending your hand to a group of strangers is daunting at the best of times or you may even that person that loves the experience of meeting new people and plunge right into it.

Nevertheless, whichever way, communication skills is key in creating that opportunity you so dearly want and need.

# **Networking Strategies**

So, you are at the right place, with the right people, now to create the right moment. Networking Strategies are often overlooked because it is thought that they are for extroverts only. On the contrary they are for everyone who wants to help people grow in their careers and business.

Another misconception about networking strategies is that people feel like imposters while doing it. When they just don't know how to do it!

#### Give, don't receive

Your outlook when starting or creating a networking opportunity is to have the mindset – how may I serve you? not What is in it for me? This will mean that you don't talk to people because you need something from them, you connect because you want to help them.

#### Be present

Give the person your full attention. Don't get distracted or use your phone or be sidetracked by other conversations around you. It really is humiliating when you are talking, and someone is not listening to you.

#### Listen to understand, not reply

It is not necessary to want to tell the person your entire life and business history, from the onset. You don't need to blurt out everything and its creepy for the other

person. The idea should be to focus on other people or the person and what they have to say.

#### Think long term

You don't network to get something from someone immediately, trying to grab as much as you can in a short time, and don't realise that this comes across as being pushy. These are people to and not things to be used. Think about how you can help that person grow and better whatever they are trying to achieve.

#### Don't over commit

When networking you will meet a lot of people and it is impossible to keep track of everyone. You don't need to feel guilty or commit yourself to everyone's needs all at once. Talk to those that interest you and or have the same business ideals, etc.

#### Be honest

Being honest doesn't mean you need to go to everyone and say everything about your life. Being honest means that if someone asks you something be honest. Be authentic and express your real self.

#### Take action

If you have committed to do something for some, do it. If you don't take action immediately, connecting with people wont help. In short, do what you say you are going to do.

# **BUILD CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

As a manager, you will find that you need to liaise and network with both internal and external role-players to your organisation, including:

- √ Colleagues
- √ Team members
- ✓ Management

- ✓ Customers
- √ Suppliers
- ✓ Associations
- √ Professional bodies

Anytime you run into someone you could help out with a referral that you also feel would do a good job for your associates. Remember, there are three sides to every referral. Your side, as the person who is being trusted by both to arrange a good match, the customer's side, since s/he is trusting you to get him/her someone to handle a problem "the right way the first time", and of course the other businessperson's side, since s/he is expecting that this customer will pay on time and not create more problems than the job is worth.

Whenever you can make a good referral, find out about another person's business and ways you can help them, *appropriately* let another person know about your business, or simply make a new contract that could be a business acquaintance and friend, that is when you network.

Networking can be done anywhere that two or more people get together. It is important to be aware of what is appropriate in the setting. Sometimes a direct approach is appropriate, others it is more acceptable to simply ask a person what they do and ask them for a business card "in case I run into anyone who could use your services."

## KEEPING STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED

Keeping stakeholders informed is a simple process of setting up a prescribed date, time, and communication vehicle of how information will be provided. This will most likely already be prescribed within your organisation and or with outside stakeholders. For instance: Professional Bodies will most likely have a monthly or annual reporting system in place, that prescribes what information should be communicated, how and to whom. The same within the organisation. This will all be a formal process of communication that has been dictated through policies and procedures.

In a case of informal communication between a networking party where there no formal communication required, and you seek just to inform the person about

something you may have found out or something they had asked you for. A simple communication method – telephone call, quick email, etc. conforming to each communication methods rules and laws as learnt in the previous Cluster will apply.

# SEEKING AND EXCHANGING INFORMATION

Norman's influential model of general task performance (Norman, 1988), gives a cognitive (conscious intellectual activity) account of the standard model of electronic information seeking, represents a broad perspective of how people operate in the world.

According to the model, a person must first have a basic idea of what they want – the goal to be achieved. They then use that mental model of the situation to decide on action in world that affects themselves, other people or object is with the aim to achieve the goal.

The persons mental model is a dynamic, internal representation, of a problem situation or a system which can take inputs from the external world and return predictions of effects for those inputs.

Norman divides actions into the **doing** (execution) and the **checking** (evaluation) of the result. After acting, a person must assess what kind of change occurred, if any, and whether the action achieved the intended goal. He further describes the gap between what was intended and what was achieved as the **gulf of execution**. Then the challenge of determining whether the goal has been met as the **gulf of evaluation**.

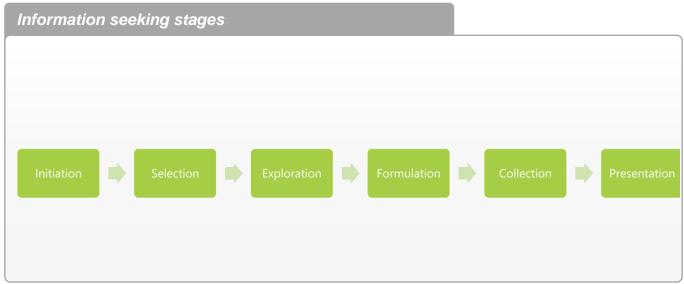
This further suggests that the less knowledge a person has about their task, the less they will be able to successfully formulate goals and assess results.

This meaning that recognising a need for information is akin to formulate and becoming conscious of a goal.

This all translates to the communication process – the additional element here is that the Sender – 1<sup>st</sup> needs to know what it is he/she wants from the sender. What is the reason for the communication?

The process for **seeking and exchanging** information in this context is then workplace related. You need to report on performance of your team; thus, Management **seeks** information from you, you then need to **exchange** this information. This is done through formal communication channels and vehicles

stipulated in the organisations policies and procedures. In the form of weekly, monthly, annual report. Knowing how to **display** this information in whatever form in the report will determine whether the message has been mutually understood by the recipient.



The process of information seeking and exchanging information can thus be described as follows:

People will proceed with their tasks at varying paces, they will then move to exploring the task, while executing the task they will further explore the task and try formulating a problem. At the end they will be able to construct focus and collect the necessary information and present it.

The stages are representative of searches over time and can be categorised into deep and complex information needs and not necessarily representative of the lighter tasks.

#### Examples

#### **First Scenario**

The CEO, Mr Richardson, pages Mr Smith, the work supervisor, to come to his office. When Mr Smith walks in a minute or two later, the CEO is busy with what appears to be an unexpected but very important telephone conversation. In due course, he replaces the receiver, but his mind is still very much on what he had just heard.

"Hi, Mr Smith. Please sit down. This is why I called you: at the moment, we have an official lunch break lasting one hour. As from the first of next month, I want to reduce this lunch break to 30 minutes only and bring the afternoon quitting time forward by a half-hour. No doubt, the staff will appreciate the opportunity to get home earlier. Will you please inform everyone concerned? Thanks for your time."

Mr Richardson begins to examine some papers on his desk and waves with his hand to indicate that he has nothing further to tell the supervisor.

The supervisor, in turn, opens his mouth as if starting to say something, but thinks better of it and all he utters is a weak "OK, Mr Richardson."

Mr Smith exits.

#### Examples

#### **Second Scenario**

The CEO calls his supervisor into his office. He is on the telephone when Mr Smith arrives.

"Good morning Mr Smith" he whispers courteously, after excusing himself momentarily to the person on the line. "Take a seat, won't you? I should not be long."

"Thanks for your patience," the CEO adds after putting down the phone a couple of minutes later. "That was our landlord. He dropped quite a bombshell. They have sold this building, which means we will have to be out of here in a few months. Oh, well. Maybe it is a blessing in disguise; we are rather cramped on these premises, aren't we?"

"Yes, Mr Richardson - but I hope we find another place in time."

"Hopefully, everything will work out. How are things with you? I hope no one is aggravating you too much. Now, this is why I called you: two or three people have come to me with the suggestion that we shorten the lunch break so that everyone can knock off earlier. What do you think?"

"Well, personally I would welcome the change, and I know that some of the office people would think the same way. On the other hand, many of our workers do much shopping during the lunch hour at the big mall over the road. They might need a full hour for this, and after work might not be so convenient. Maybe I should canvass everybody and come back to you with a consensus We are pretty busy right now. Can I attend to it next week and come back to you?"

"Excellent. I know there's a lot of pressure now. Keep me in touch and let me know how I can ease matters...Oh, I almost forgot - Kate told me yesterday that your daughter has decided to tie the marital bond. Hearty congratulations! Who's the lucky guy?"

"Thanks. His name is Jeff Black. I think you play golf with his father."

"Sure do. A lovely family. My warmest wishes to them both..."

You would probably agree that the Mr Richardson of the First Scenario has quite a lot to learn:

- Firstly, he has declined to give his full attention to the task at hand dangerous.
- Secondly, he is probably still under the subconscious influence of an old-fashioned teacher-student perception, where the teacher speaks, and the students are expected only to listen and take notes. Now that he is in a management position, he has instinctively assumed the role of a teacher who knows just about everything and expects others to passively take in his knowledge.

## THE FOUR A'S OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Azriel Winnet gives us the vital four steps in effective communication, which might well help people like Mr Richardson to correct this distorted view of the communication process

#### Attention

Winning the attention of the person with whom we wish to communicate is an obvious first step. In order to achieve this goal, we must first try to eliminate what experts in this field call "noise". This includes everything that distracts, be it noise in the literal sense, physical or emotional discomfort, personal problems, negative attitudes, or distracting mannerisms or dress.

Respect for the other person is an important prerequisite for attention-getting. The human greeting or inquiry about the other person's health or personal circumstances is an effective catalyst in this process. If such introductions are false or stereotyped, they might serve little purpose. Real empathy, especially in downward communication from superior to subordinate, leads quickly to the second step in the process.

#### **Apprehension**

Although this word usually carries the connotation of "fear", its primary meaning is "understanding". We have preferred the term "apprehension" here primarily to retain the mnemonic of "four As" The task of the communicator is to change the aspect of "fear" into that of "understanding".

Achieving apprehension is a critical part of the communication process, but it is a very subtle one also. Managers sometimes defend their inability to communicate by asking, "Do you understand?" This is usually an unfair question and even the somewhat improved "What do you understand?" is often perceived as a threat.

On the other hand, if there is a trusting relationship between the sender and the receiver of a message, indirect ways of establishing the degree of understanding will present themselves. As the second scenario above illustrates, encouraging a free flow of input from the receiver is the best way of ensuring that understanding has been achieved.

#### Assimilation

As crucial as the function of apprehension (above) is, it is not enough. Often, a person has understood a message perfectly, but he or she has not accepted it. Alternatively, it is accepted in a half-hearted manner, without any conviction. Communication is still incomplete if he/she has not assimilated the information into his/her being.

The sender has achieved an ideal result if the receiver has assimilated the message to the extent that he/she becomes one with the sender, as it were. Assimilation of a concept presented by management, or by another worker, goes a long way towards ensuring active participation and harmonious cooperation, in the workplace.

#### Action

This is the final step in our communication strategy and process. It is the ingredient which propels abstract or theoretical knowledge into the world of reality. So often a good idea in business meets with facile (superficial) acceptance or agreement but is not translated into action.

If assimilation has indeed taken place, action on the part of the receiver should follow inevitably. The sender of the message must play his/her part in ensuring action, with abundant support and encouragement.

# Tips for Better Communication at the Office

- ✓ Don't fuel the rumour mill. It exists in every organisation and goes into overdrive when managers limit top-down communication. If your staff do not hear the news from you, they will likely get it from another source.
- ✓ Hold all employees to the same performance standards. Be consistent in communicating and maintaining your expectations for quality. Letting certain employees or situations fall under the radar can fuel speculation of favouritism.
- ✓ Observe and listen during meetings. How do others speak to and about your staff?
  If people are being questioned unfairly or criticised, speak up in their defence.
- ✓ Be accessible. Don't let emails and voicemails stack up without acknowledging them. If you cannot address questions immediately, tell your staff when you can.
- ✓ Ask questions. One-on-one, impromptu discussions with team members can give you an indication of any political issues brewing before they escalate.

As part of the standard review/appraisal (formal/informal) process in your organisation, you could focus on the interaction and communication criteria that can be reviewed to promote constructive relationships and interaction. You could review key aspects such as:

## Communication Relationships

#### Communication, Relationships and Self-Management

For this review period, did the employee:

- Use oral and written communication skills appropriate for the demands of the role?
- Use effective listening skills to understand the needs and views of others?
- Develop and maintain productive and collegial work relationships?
- Respond constructively to work challenges and setbacks?
- Contribute to a respectful work environment?

#### **Contribution to Unit or Team Effectiveness**

For this review period, did the employee:

- Effectively design and organise own work (and others' work, as applicable) to meet operational needs and goals?
- Make good use of resources while achieving his/her outcomes (e.g., own time, talents of self and others, technology, supplies, finances)?
- Contribute constructively to meetings and shared work?
- Effectively contribute to the hiring and orientation of new colleagues, co-workers, or team members?

#### Leadership (formal and informal)

For this review period, did the employee:

- Discuss the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and expected outcomes with colleagues, co-workers, and team members?
- Ensure others (e.g., colleagues, co-workers, or team members) had the information and resources they needed from the employee to do their work?
- Provide others (e.g., colleagues, co-workers, or team members) with appreciation, constructive feedback and coaching?
- Encourage and support colleagues, co-workers, and team members to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities?

From: http://pre.docdat.com/docs/index-128855.html?page=2

The following rubric is a tool that you can use when reviewing the above-listed criteria:

# **Communication, Relationships, and Self-Management:** For this review period, did the employee:

Unacceptable	Fair	Good	High-Quality	Exceptional	N/A			
Use oral and written communication skills appropriate for the demands of the role?								
Rarely. Spoken and written messages were frequently unclear, incomplete, or inaccurate.	Sometimes. Spoken and written messages were occasionally unclear, incomplete, or inaccurate.	Usually. On the whole, oral and written messages were clear, complete, and accurate.	Consistently. Shows particular strength in communicating clear, complete, and accurate oral and written messages.	Demonstrated great expertise in these dimensions of communication that could serve as a model to others.				
Use effective listening skills to understand the needs and views of others?								
Rarely. Did not seek to understand others. Often interrupted to give own advice or analysis, and missed key information.	Sometimes. Used listening skills, on occasion, to gain clarity about needs and issues. Sometimes sought to understand opinions and feelings of others.	Usually. Used listening regularly to gain clarity about needs and underlying issues. Usually sought to understand opinions and feelings of others.	Consistently. Listened effectively to gain clarity about needs, opinions and feelings. Focused on others with unusual tact and sensitivity and built their trust.	Listened with empathy, acceptance and genuineness to improve work relationships and build trust. Modelled exceptional skills in understanding needs and attending to others.				
Develop and maintain productive	and collegial work relationships?							
Rarely. Did not consider the needs or work of others when completing own work. Own choices had a negative impact on others' productivity.	Sometimes. As necessary, consulted with others to complete his/her work. Made some effort to understand impact when own choices affected others'.	Usually. Was aware of the work of others. Regularly communicated and collaborated to keep others informed and the work is progressing. Made good efforts to understand others and clarify own views to resolve differences.	Consistently. Was very mindful of the work of others and how his/her work affected others' success. Consulted with others at an early stage when own work affected theirs; demonstrated an interest in different points of view to facilitate problem resolution.	Modelled exceptional skills in pro-active relationship building and collaboration; considered the system-wide implications of changes in own work. Engaged others in exploring shared issues and opportunities. Approached differences as an opportunity for creativity and improved work relationships.				
Respond constructively to work c	Respond constructively to work challenges and setbacks?							
Rarely. Reacted with prolonged negativity; blamed challenges on external factors; did not take the initiative to resolve difficulties.	Sometimes. Occasionally, own stress disrupted his/her own work and that of others. Often waited for others to take action.	Usually. Made an effort to control own stress and focus productively on solutions.	Consistently. Maintained optimism in the face of difficulties and challenges; took the initiative to find productive ways to deal with them.	Modelled great resilience and optimism. Viewed challenges and difficulties as a normal part of work and an opportunity to reflect, learn and improve.				
Contribute to a respectful work environment?								
Rarely. Behaviours significantly compromised others' right to a respectful work environment.	Sometimes. At times, was not considerate of needs or feelings of others.	Usually. Was considerate and respectful of others in daily interactions. Took steps to improve the work environment if issues of respect arose as appropriate for his/her role.	Consistently. Demonstrated commitment to diversity, accessibility, and respect in daily interactions and when planning initiatives or making decisions about work. Intervened quickly if issues of respect arose as appropriate for his/her role.	Proactively engaged others to ensure a respectful and inclusive work environment. Modelled and promoted standards of behaviour for diversity, accessibility, and the respectful treatment of others to prevent issues from arising.				

**Remember**: The leader/manager should have specific examples to support his/her ratings.



#### **Contribution to Unit or Team Effectiveness:**

For this review period, did the employee:

Unacceptable	Fair	Good	High-Quality	Exceptional	N/A		
Effectively design and organise own work (and others' work, as applicable) to meet operational needs and goals?							
Rarely. Work processes involved many redundant steps and required a lot of rework; schedules were uncoordinated.	Sometimes. Processes were occasionally inefficient, and required rework; schedules were often uncoordinated.	Usually. Used efficient processes; usually coordinated schedules effectively. Good organisational skills.	Consistently. Used very efficient processes, consistently seeking better ways to deliver service and manage work; coordinated schedules very effectively to manage demands.	Showed great ability to creatively design and redesign local and system-wide work processes to meet emerging needs and improve service.			
Make good use of resources while	achieving his/her outcomes (e.g. o	wn time, talents of others, technology	, supplies, finances)?				
Rarely. Often used own and others' time and abilities inappropriately. Misused technology/supplies/ financial resources.	Sometimes. Work choices occasionally resulted in the loss of time, misuse of technology or a waste of supplies or financial resources.	Usually. Made productive use of own and other's time and talents and made responsible use of technology, supplies, and financial resources.	Consistently. Made very productive use of own and others' time and talents; often found ways to make better use of technology, supplies, and financial resources to achieve more efficient, effective outcomes.	Modelled wise and innovative use of resources to achieve important gains in effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, others often learned new methods by observing his/her approach.			
Contribute constructively to meetings and shared work?							
Rarely. Often derailed meetings with irrelevant comments or disrupted progress on shared work, or did not complete own action items.	Sometimes. On occasion made contributions that added value to discussions and projects; sometimes followed up on own action items for shared work.	Usually. Brought good information/ideas to discussions and shared work. Usually followed up on own actions items for shared work.	Consistently. Brought well- researched information and very thoughtful ideas to discussions and shared projects. Proposed effective follow-up steps; always completed own actions items for shared work.	Raised the level of discussion by bringing and inspiring creative, challenging thinking. Proposed innovative action plans to advance projects or shared work; followed up quickly on own action items.			
Effectively contribute to the hiring and orientation of new colleagues, co-workers or team members?							
Rarely. Hiring decisions or suggestions showed a poor understanding of the role. New hires did not have the information and support required to make a good start in their work.	Sometimes. Hiring decisions or suggestions showed some understanding of the role. New hires sometimes had the support/information required for a good start in their work.	Usually. Hiring decisions or suggestions showed a good understanding of the role. New hires usually had the information and support required for a good start in their work.	Consistently. Made or contributed to astute and effective hiring decisions; consistently made very good and helpful contributions to new hire orientation; new hires felt prepared and welcome.	Made or contributed to wise and strategic hiring decisions that enabled the unit to achieve new outcomes; contributed creatively to the orientation of new hires who felt prepared, welcome, and inspired.			

**Remember**: The leader/manager should have specific examples to support his/her ratings.



**Leadership (formal and informal):**For this review period, did the employee:

	or this review period, did the employee:						
Unacceptable	Fair	Good	High-Quality	Exceptional	N/A		
Discuss the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and expected outcomes with colleagues, co-workers and team members?							
Rarely. Others were often unaware or confused about work, the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and the expected outcomes, quality, and timing.	Sometimes. Others were occasionally confused or unclear about the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and the expected outcomes, quality, and timing.	Usually. Made efforts to ensure others were clear about the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and the expected outcomes, quality, and timing.	Consistently. Engaged others in defining the purpose of shared work, the work plan, and expected outcomes; encouraged questions and stated his/her needs. Others understood the desired outcomes in terms of quality, quantity and timing.	Created an exemplary climate of open dialogue and partnership to identify the purpose of shared work and create a work plan. Achieved shared ownership and understanding of expected outcomes, quality, and timing.			
Ensure others (e.g. colleagues, c	o-workers or team members) had the	information and resources they ne	eded from the employee to do their we	ork?			
Rarely. Lack of information and resources impeded others' productivity.	Sometimes. Inconsistency in providing information and resources occasionally impeded others' progress.	Usually. Others usually had the information and resources to proceed productively with their work.	Consistently. Often anticipated others' needs and provided information and resources so that work proceeded in a productive way.	Almost always anticipated others' needs; the flow of appropriate information was proactive, swift, clear; needed resources were always in place.			
Provide others (e.g. colleagues, o	co-workers or team members) with ap	preciation, constructive feedback,	and coaching?				
Rarely. Harsh feedback resulted in the loss of productivity and damaged relationships.	Sometimes. Gave some appreciation and recognition to others on occasion. Productivity and relationships suffered from lack of honest, constructive feedback.	Usually. Contributed appreciative comments and recognised others' work. Others often benefitted from specific feedback and helpful suggestions or coaching.	Consistently. Improved and sustained individual and team morale with sincere and specific appreciation. Offered wise suggestions or coaching that resulted in increased productivity and commitment.	Helped build an environment of open dialogue, recognition, and support. Offered expert feedback, suggestions, and coaching that inspired excellent work and helped others develop greater ability to manage new challenges.			
Encourage and support colleagues, co-workers and team members to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities?							
Rarely. Did not promote the development of others.	Sometimes. On occasion, helped others find resources to advance their knowledge and skills.	Usually. Encouraged development and helped others learn about opportunities and access appropriate resources.	Consistently. Kept others' development goals in mind; identified formal and informal learning opportunities and helped others gain access to the necessary resources.	Identified formal and informal growth experiences to develop others' skills and careers and advance unit's strategic priorities. Found creative ways to access the necessary resources.			

**Remember**: The leader/manager should have specific examples to support his/her ratings.



## ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGERS

Managers have many operational functions to deal with daily. They also must deal with their own set of very challenging pressures and priorities - conflicting organisational objectives, peer relations, functional challenges, their managers, etc.

So, it is no wonder they often get distracted from:

- ✓ Assisting you in prioritising your work.
- ✓ Validating your assumptions.
- ✓ Providing you with missing information.
- ✓ Offering meaningful (and timely) feedback.
- ✓ Connecting you with the rest of the organisation.
- ✓ Making sure you are on the right track before it is too late; and
- ✓ Helping you align the necessary organisational resources.

It is all this potential, then, that makes managing your relationship with your manager perhaps the single most important ingredient in determining your ultimate success.

#### Your manager:

- ✓ Is privy to the company's goals and knows what the company is looking for in future executives.
- ✓ Can inform you of company direction that may affect your future aspirations.
- ✓ Can put in a good word for you in the "right ears"; and
- ✓ Is also your ally when you need back up, support, or cooperation from other departments.

Your manager also needs you, performing at your best, in order to accomplish the department's objectives. He/she needs your feedback in order to provide realistic and useful reports to upper management. You can influence the perception others to have of your manager's abilities (looking good or bad).

How does this help you establish a meaningful working relationship with your manager?

The key to establishing a meaningful working relationship is communication and includes:

- ✓ Learn and understand his/her goals and priorities. What is required of him/her and how can you help him/her achieve that? Observe and understand your manager's work style. If he/she has not been clear about his/her expectations, ask!
- ✓ Ask for feedback and accept criticism gracefully. If he/she understands you do not view your job as just something to fill the hours between 9 and 5; he/she may be more inclined to help you.
- ✓ Anticipate your manager's needs. Know your manager's priorities and try to anticipate his/her needs before he/she asks. Don't think narrowly in terms of your own immediate position...try to understand that what you do ties in with the bigger picture.
- ✓ Respect your manager's individuality. Is he/she conservative or informal? Does he/she prefer to be greeted as Mr, Ms, Miss or Mrs, or prefer first names?
- ✓ Respect your manager's time. Is his/hers an "open door" policy or does he/she prefer you set appointments with him/her? Never barge into his/her office expecting or demanding a hearing immediately.
- ✓ Provide information appropriately. Does he/she prefer to be kept informed of progress reports, or prefer you show initiative and get on with the job?
- ✓ Try not to annoy. Discover and eliminate behaviours that would annoy your manager and never bad-mouth him/her to others. It always gets back via office grapevines.
- ✓ **Don't offer false flattery in the hope of getting somewhere**. Don't be a "yes man" and don't offer false flattery in the hope of getting somewhere. It will not work!
- ✓ **Don't become irreplaceable**. Don't aim for "closeness" in the working relationship because this can also backfire. If your manager depends on you too much, he/she will not recommend you for promotions because you are needed too much where you are.
- ✓ Do what you can to stay in his/her good books. Don't take sick leave unless you ARE sick! Be an effective, cooperative, responsible and courteous employee and a team player.

It is possible that you are already these things and you are working for somebody whose management style disagrees with your needs or expectations. Maybe friction cannot be avoided.

So, you need to decide just how important your career path in that company is, because if you cannot adjust and work with it, you may be better off looking for a new job in a new department or company.

# Raise Concerns about the Quality of Work

Most complaints are caused by broken commitments, stated or otherwise.

Therefore, when making a complaint or raising a concern, it is essential that you are able to do the following:

- ✓ Clearly and crisply state your complaint and its impact without getting defensive or aggressive. ("We are running into problems and looking bad in the organisation because I am not getting the information, I need to do the job.")
- ✓ Specify the real or implied commitment that was broken. ("We have not met in almost a week now, even though we agreed on daily updates.")
- ✓ Articulate how the responsible person can resolve your concern, being as specific as possible. ("We need to meet today to debrief - even for just 15 minutes - so this project can run more smoothly.")
- ✓ Ask for their commitment to follow through as agreed. ("So, you agree to meet with me at 4 pm today and based on our conversation determine how frequently it is appropriate for us to debrief? I find it very helpful to understand how you are thinking about this matter - I can make far better decisions that way.")

If your complaint is properly addressed, be sure to say, "Thank you". If it is not, say, "Thank you for trying. Now, what else can we do about this problem?". Plus, remember, by basing your complaints on broken commitments, you are maximising your impact and minimising everyone's discomfort.

# PERSONAL CONFLICT

"An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties, who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, interference from the other party in achieving their goals. They are in a position of opposition in conjunction with cooperation."

J. H. Frost and W. W. Wilmot

Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur (Deutsch, 1973). An activity that is incompatible with another is one that prevents, blocks, or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of the second activity. A conflict can be as small as a disagreement or as large as a war. It can originate in one person, between two or more people, or between two or more groups.

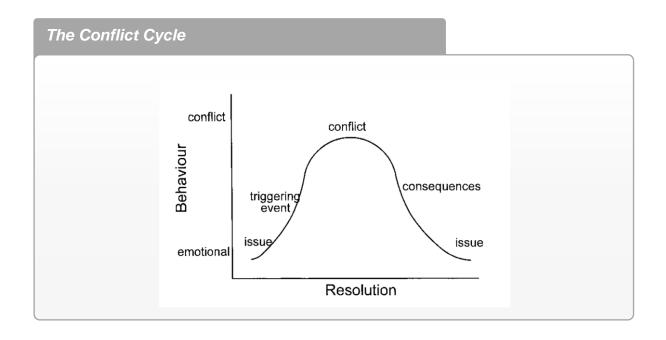
# Conflict is inevitable!

Conflict develops because we are dealing with people's lives, jobs, children, pride, self-concept, ego and sense of mission or purpose.

Early indicators of conflict can be recognised

There are strategies for resolution that are available and DO work:

Although inevitable, conflict can be minimised, diverted, and resolved



# POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL CONFLICT

Potential conflict situations occur when we are placed in a position where there is a great possibility of actual conflict arising. How we react to the specific situation and people involved will determine whether the conflict occurs.

✓ We know that different people have different priorities and different styles in dealing
with situations that may occur, but in general, human beings have certain

characteristics that are very similar - even across gender, racial, and socio-economic lines:

- ✓ People love to be agreed with
- ✓ People hate to be disagreed with
- ✓ People like other people who agree with them
- ✓ People dislike other people who disagree with them
- ✓ People who are good at resolving conflicts look for some point of agreement and use good people skills to get others to see a different point of view

# **MODES OF CONFLICT**

By evaluating a conflict according to the five categories below - relationship, data, interest, structural and value - we can begin to determine the causes of a conflict and design resolution strategies that will have a higher probability of success:

# Relationship Conflicts

Relationship conflicts occur because of the presence of strong negative emotions, misperceptions or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, or repetitive negative behaviours. Relationship problems often fuel disputes and lead to an unnecessary escalating spiral of destructive conflict.

Supporting the safe and balanced expression of perspectives and emotions for acknowledgement (not agreement) is one effective approach to managing relational conflict.

#### **Data Conflicts**

Data conflicts occur when people lack the information necessary to make wise decisions, are misinformed, disagree on which data is relevant, interpret information differently, or have competing assessment procedures.

Some data conflicts may be unnecessary since they are caused by poor communication between the people in conflict. Other data conflicts may be genuine incompatibilities associated with data collection, interpretation or communication. Most data conflicts will have "data solutions".

#### Interest Conflicts

Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceived incompatible needs. Conflicts of interest result when one or more of the parties believe that in order to satisfy his or her needs, the needs and interests of an opponent must be sacrificed. Interest-based conflict will commonly be expressed in positional terms. A variety of interests and intentions underlie and motivate positions in negotiation and must be addressed for maximised resolution.

Interest-based conflicts may occur over:

- o substantive issues (such as money, physical resources, time, etc.)
- o procedural issues (the way the dispute is to be resolved)
- o psychological issues (perceptions of trust, fairness, desire for participation, respect, etc.)

For an interest-based dispute to be resolved, parties must be assisted to define and express their individual interests so that all of these interests may be jointly addressed. Interest-based conflict is best resolved through the maximising integration of the parties' respective interests, positive intentions, and desired experiential outcomes.

# Structural Conflicts

Structural conflicts are caused by forces external to the people in dispute. Limited physical resources or authority, geographic constraints (distance or proximity), time (too little or too much), organisational changes, and so forth can make structural conflict seem like a crisis. It can be helpful to assist parties in conflict in appreciating the external forces and constraints bearing upon them.

Structural conflicts will often have structural solutions. Parties' appreciation that a conflict has an external source can have the effect of them coming to jointly address the imposed difficulties.

#### Value Conflicts

Value conflicts are caused by perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Values are beliefs that people use to give meaning to their lives. Values explain what is "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," "just" or "unjust". Differing values need not cause conflict. People can live together in harmony with different value systems. Value disputes arise only when people attempt to force

one set of values on others or lay claim to exclusive value systems that do not allow for divergent beliefs.

It is of no use to try to change value and belief systems during relatively short and strategic mediation interventions. It can, however, be helpful to support each participant's expression of their values and beliefs for acknowledgement by the other party.

# PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING CONFLICT

You should always try to follow these three principles when handling conflict:

# Respect

When teams are in conflict, respect is the most important guideline members can follow. To show respect for team members, you should always consider their views and concerns legitimately. This respect should apply even during heated arguments when you disagree with their opinions.

Treating your fellow team members with respect makes them less likely to become defensive. Respect also preserves a healthy team attitude and does not drain the team's energy through lengthy, emotional battles.

#### Present/future orientation

Committing to maintain a present and future orientation helps teams stay focused on the issues at hand. Team members need to concentrate on how the conflicts they are experiencing can be resolved for the future benefit of the team.

To achieve this commitment, team members have to be willing to leave all past conflicts out of the discussion. Any events not relevant to accomplishing team goals that have occurred outside the team setting should be disregarded.

# Empathic listening

While trying to reach an agreement, it is essential that team members listen empathetically to each other. Listening empathetically requires that you try to understand the speaker's emotional state and his or her perspective.

To gather all the information needed to understand another person's point of view, you should be neutral while listening. Be open to the full meaning of the message; look for meaning beyond the words, such as non-verbal cues.

## ORDERLY RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

How you approach resolving conflict will help determine whether the conflict is ultimately beneficial to you and the other person. There are specific steps you can take to resolve the conflict.

The following eight-step process provides a proven method by which to resolve conflict:

## Acknowledge the conflict

The first step is to acknowledge that a conflict exists. Doing so as soon as the conflict arises prevents frustration from accumulating and keeps emotional reactions to a minimum. Acknowledgement of a conflict usually brings a sense of relief for all involved. You and the other person should commit to the immediate acknowledgement of conflict and open communication.

## Clarify the conflict source

It can be difficult, but it is important to clarify the source of a conflict. If you do not identify the correct source, it will waste time-solving the wrong problem. Often, the cause is deeper than the obvious or is not the initial reason suggested. There is always the possibility that underlying issues are present and need to be resolved.

When conflict stems from underlying interpersonal or emotional issues, the conflict can be intense. Feelings of jealousy or poor self-esteem are examples of underlying issues that could cause animosity in the interaction. Often, these underlying sources of conflict are caused by differences in background, perception, and expectations.

## Focus on team goals

The next step is to return the focus to the goal of the interaction. By evaluating how the conflict will affect your goals, you can decide if the conflict is worth addressing as an issue. If the conflict can damage relationships or impair decision-making, it should be important enough to address.

Commitment to your goals motivates you to discover a solution to the conflict. Focusing on the goals also helps remind you and the other person that you are working towards the same goal, which builds a sense of unity.

#### Focus on the issues

While working through a conflict, you should keep your focus on the issues, not the personality of the other person. Focusing on personalities creates defensiveness and hinders the conflict resolution process. Focusing on the issues can keep the discussion from becoming personal and is more productive.

You should try to find a resolution that progresses towards the goal of the interaction, but that does not disregard any person's values. Keeping the focus on the issue requires that you subscribe to the fundamental belief that the other person is a valuable partner in the interaction.

#### Listen to all views

Every person in the interaction should listen and encourage each other to share views openly and honestly. Remember that the opinions shared cannot be considered right or wrong and that conflict resolution is not about winning or losing.

The team should discuss views in terms of facts and observations, not feelings and personalities. There should be no blame. Each person needs to try and understand the views of other person. However, it is important to differentiate between understanding and agreeing. Understanding another person's view does not mean that you have to agree with the other person's view.

## Look for agreement

After all the views have been heard, it is helpful to identify any issues on which you and the other person to agree. Finding common ground provides a starting point for resolving the conflict. The agreement might be found by looking at the differences from a new perspective or by reusing a conflict resolution plan that has worked for you in similar situations in the past.

#### Discuss alternatives

At this point, you should discuss all possible alternatives for resolving the conflict. When you and the other person have expressed the ideas and suggestions, you should both give them full consideration. Sharing conflict resolution options provided allows you to make an informed decision. This open communication also fosters trust between you and the other person.

Conflicts based only on the content of an interaction or discussion can sometimes be resolved at this step. If you reach a conclusion about which possible resolution is best, the resolution can be agreed upon, and you can proceed with accomplishing the goals. All other conflict will need to be resolved by creating a plan.

## Create a plan

After the best solution has been chosen, you need to create a plan. If you have a plan that has worked in the past, then you can use it as a starting point for the new plan.

If there is no plan in place, everyone needs to be involved in creating the plan, and everyone should be comfortable with it. The responsibilities of each person need to be assigned, and you should hold each other accountable for your assigned duties.

Creating a plan is especially effective for resolving conflicts that have arisen from interpersonal issues. The plan can then be used to prevent or manage any future conflicts that emerge from the same issues.

The plan would include:



## **CONFLICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

In terms of their role in preventing and resolving conflict, the company policies and procedures are aligned with the relevant Labour Legislation.

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Your company policies and procedures would provide you with information about:

- the procedures you need to follow when conflict arises.
- who the appropriate person would be to whom you can escalate the conflict in order to have it resolved.
- what to do when the conflict is not resolved.

The company policies and procedures are there to ensure that:

- the nature of the problem is identified.
- the appropriate strategy for resolving the conflict is selected; and
- fairness to all concerned during a conflict situation is maintained.

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

## Determine the nature of the problem

It is important to note that the presence of some conflict indicators may simply be signs that there is a need to manage the performance and conduct of employees, or that there are grievances that need addressing. For this reason, it is important that the manager ask him or herself a number of questions:

Is the problem related to the employee's work performance - i.e. is there a problem with the quality of the work, the quantity of output, the time taken to do the job, or the costs related to the performance of the job?

- Is the problem related to how the employee behaves at work, i.e. his or her conduct?
- Is the problem related to the fact that the employee has an unresolved grievance?
- Is the problem related to the quality of the relationship between the people involved?

## Strategies to resolve Conflict

Work Performance Issue	Misconduct Issue	Grievance Issue	Relationship Issue
<ul><li>Counselling</li><li>Maintaining improved performance</li></ul>	Handling     unacceptable work     habits	<ul><li>Handling employee complaints</li><li>Grievance hearing</li></ul>	One-on-one interaction

•	Taking follow-up action	•	Maintaining improved work	
•	Work performance		habits	
	hearing	•	Disciplinary hearing	

#### Ensure fairness

Having considered the various structures and procedures that are in place to regulate the management-employee relationship, we come back to the point that taking corrective action when a conflict exists is about relationships. Below you will find a set of fairness principles which are applicable to handling conflict in an employment relationship where the cause of the problem falls outside work performance, misconduct, and grievances.

- ✓ Be objective
- ✓ Let the employee state his/her case
- ✓ Be procedurally and substantively fair
- ✓ Determine a fair and reasonable resolution

#### Actions to Resolve Conflict

We often need to work as members of a team, or even as the team leader. During a team situation, we need to ensure that people work together in order to achieve the team's goals. In the team environment, there is a need for shared goals and a clear understanding of the expected standards of work and performance by each team member.

#### Shared Goals

The foundation of cooperation in an organisational setting is the pursuit of shared goals. Therefore a shared Vision, Mission, Purpose, Goal or Values are so vital to creating an effective team. At a personal level, relationships between people who have different and, at worst, conflicting goals and values are bound to be strained or non-existent.

#### **Expected Standards of Work and Performance**



Every team member must be informed of exactly what their role and responsibility in a team environment is. The team member must understand the following:

- ✓ What needs to be done
- ✓ How it needs to be done
- ✓ To what standard/measurement criteria it needs to be done

The performances of the individual team members are vital to the success of the team. Synergy in the group only exists when each team member contributes their expected standards of work and performance. When one team member feels that he/she is doing too much, then resentment sets in and the relationships between the individual members start to strain, and conflict becomes inevitable.

## **Referring Conflict Situations**

Communication between team members and managers can prevent conflict from occurring. Managers need to inform team members of their responsibilities and daily expectations. If the lines of communication are open, conflict can be handled before it fully develops. While eliminating conflict can be impossible, managers must be able to handle the situations quickly and efficiently.

Consistency is important when dealing with team members because we cannot be biased with our decision. What is right for one team member is right for another. Only the situations change, generally, the conflicts remain the same. Allowing team members to argue and disagree with each other can be harmful to our business.

Once management identifies the conflict, it must be handled quickly to avoid further disruptions. When conflict escalates or cannot be resolved by the manager, the hierarchical referral approach is used. The parties involved are referred to the executive who supervises the manager. Allowing the team members to meet with the executive privately allows free-flowing communication without the threat of reprimand.

Once the reason for the conflict is established, the executive and the team members will discuss the problem and reach a resolution. This approach works well because both parties can agree to a solution and prevent future conflict.

# LEARNING UNIT THREE

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA



Apply the principles and concepts of emotional intelligence to the management of self and others 252031

## **SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1 - 4**

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts of emotional intelligence in respect of life and work relations.
- Analyse the role of emotional intelligence in interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships in life and work situations.
- Analyse the impact of emotional intelligence on life and work interactions.
- Evaluate own level of emotional intelligence in order to determine development areas.

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realise how your emotions affect people around you.

It is a common myth that emotional intelligence is about not showing emotion at all especially in the workplace, it is exactly the opposite. Showing emotion is imperative to build relationships.

It is however the way in which we show these emotions, that makes the difference. If you are angry, be angry accept, acknowledge, and analyse why you are angry. Most often we will translate the emotion to someone or something that someone else said and or did rather than acknowledging and analysing rather we feel the way we do.

Factors in being emotionally intelligent are:

- 1. Being able to reason
- 2. Understanding your own and another person's emotions
- 3. Being able to manage emotions
- 4. Control emotions and respond appropriately to others

The Bar on EQ Dimensions identifies 5 dimensions that affect emotions:

#### INTRAPERSONAL RELATIONS

Which is relationship we have with ourselves. How do we see ourselves, what do we know about ourselves, what are our strengths weaknesses, interests, abilities, and skills? What makes me different from everyone else?

Our past experiences, there is no getting away from the fact that most of our sense of self is determined by our past.

Our identity is determined by 2 dynamics complementary and competing self. To differentiate we will look at the **vectors** that **influence** this **identity**. One vector is the

interplay between our past and future. The other the tension between the image others have of us and our self-image.

Each quadrant in the vector has one of 4 sources of our identity:

## The Remembered Identity

How do you know who you are? This is the memory of events in life that helped form your sense of self. For good or bad they have left an impact, however successful people tend to mind their past for the gold at the end of the rainbow.

Nothing wrong with your past, but it important to review to get to know your strengths and weaknesses. Don't cling to tightly though, just remember how it made you feel.

## Reflected Identity

This is where other people remember events in your past and then **remind you** of them. This **reminding** is how we **shape** our **reflected** identity. Remember though that not all reminders are in good faith or in a forgiving nature. Although it is important to pay attention to reflection, reminders given in good faith should not be self-limiting, don't become what people say you are.

## **Programmed Identity**

This identity is a result of other people's messages that are sent to us about who we are or will become. Parents would be the first in this case. They shaped us, programmed us to think, feel and do in specific ways. This can shape the opinion you have of yourself. However, we can't lay all the blame on our programming we need to stop turning to the past and others and rather to ourselves.

## Created identity

This is where self and future meet. This is the identity we create for ourselves. This identity is not controlled by our past or others. Successful people have become the person they choose to be. We can change to fit differing times, to achieve higher goals.

#### **ADAPTABILITY**

How adaptable are you? Do you routinely do everything and never change? It is important for your emotional state to change occasionally, not being adaptable brings upon cosmic habits, that provide no room for growth.

Being adaptable allows for changing times and allows us to cope with challenges that may arise out of the norm. If we continue to do what we do in the way we do it, growth and development becomes stagnated. Consideration and adapting to other people's ways of doing things gives room for learning, growth, and development, especially in the workplace.

#### STRESS MANAGEMENT

How do you manage stress? Pretty much that is a constant thought for everyone today.

These challenging times call for stress management more than ever. You've probably heard people say stress is managed through health eating and exercise, although these may be true, we also need to look to ourselves. What makes us stress, what do we stress about? Why do we stress about it?

#### Let's use a typical example:

Let's say you stress when you don't get to work on time: Assess the control you have over the situation – are you not getting up early enough? Is the transport and or traffic delayed? – If it's the transport and or traffic pretty much nothing we can about that, however we need to ensure that we are leaving early enough to get in the traffic and or transport timeously. Do you stress about money? Sure, you do we all do – Is stressing and or worrying going to help though? Is there something you can do about it? Sure, there is – apply gratitude.

Always assess the stress factor and make an informed decision of whether it is in your control if it is not – make peace and move on.

## **GENERAL MOOD**

What is your general mood? Are you sombre, optimist always look on the bright side or cheerful? It is necessary to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity. I

HAVE CHOICE!! I can choose to let it define me, control me, outline me, manage me or I could just let it be.

It's all about the choice!!

#### INTERPERSONAL DIMENSION

Interpersonal relations as we have learnt over the previous topics is the relationships we have with others, now if we don't even have one with ourselves, how do we have one with someone else?

Knowing ourselves and our emotions, impacts on the way we communicate. It is important to be able to express the feeling rather than react to them. To express feelings, we need to have vocabulary to do so.

Every morning you walk into work you are most likely asked How are you? You reply I'm fine, when actually you've just had the most horrid morning ever.

Why not reply, I am frustrated, so angry, irritated, annoyed, happy, sad, lovely, awesome, great, embarrassed, loved, overwhelmed, underappreciated. There are so many ways in which to express your feelings but fail to have the vocabulary to do so, thus limiting us in our interactions and conversations.

## PRINCIPLES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Researchers have found the following 5 principles of Emotional Intelligence:

#### Self-Awareness

Defined as "the ability to decode one's emotion". If a person can regulate their emotion, they are usually better at handling constructive criticism. Knowing one's emotions, is fundamental to emotional intelligence: people who know their feelings are better pilots of their lives.

## Self-Regulation

Defined as "the ability to regulate one's emotion". If a person manages their emotion and expresses it properly and tactfully then they are less likely for an emotional outburst. This is also relative to one's **self-confidence** if we are not confident this may affect how we react meaning that we lack self-regulation. **Locus of control** is another aspect that may affect one's self-regulation – it refers to how strongly you believe you have control over a situation and experiences that affect you directly.

Managing emotions: people who are effective in managing their emotions can cope better with life's adversities and can bounce back faster than those who are poor in managing their feelings.

#### Motivation

Defined as "an inner force that drives to work towards satisfaction and accomplishment". Emotionally Intelligent people are self-motivated, and they are usually optimistic and resilient. Motivating oneself: people without emotional intelligence lack self-restraint and would just do whatever their impulses suggest.

In Goleman's words, they "suffer a moral deficiency". Emotional self-control, delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness underlies accomplishment of every sort.

## Empathy

Defined as "the ability to connect with the emotions of other people". This does not mean showing sympathy or any sort of agreement to their behaviour, it is just that you can understand a thing from their perspective on a more professional front. Recognising emotions in others: emotional self-awareness is the first step to empathic sensitivity. In other words, if we are in touch with our own feelings, then we can empathise with others and sense their needs.

#### Social Skill

Defined as "the ability to interact with peer group to fulfil each other needs and demands". This skill is by default present in people with Emotional Intelligence and generally enjoy and respect other's presence. Handling relationships: the art of relating to others includes

the skill of managing emotions in others. For example, the ability to calm distressing emotions in others can help resolve many conflicts.

#### CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The concepts of emotional intelligences, encompasses 3 areas namely:

## Relationships

Most of psychology has focused on the individual for many years, and not on relationships between individuals. This concept aims then to focus on relationships in all areas including that in business. As a customer and or employee's perception is based on how they are treated. Emotional Intelligence at work focuses on emphasising business relationships rather than the individual.

## Leadership

In the world as we know it today, leadership is a way of being in a relationship. It is characterised by making the other person more important than yourself. It is about partnership, interdependence and working together for the greater good.

#### Communication

As we have been discussing since Cluster 1, communication is the concept that closes the gap and expresses leadership – it is used to achieve good in an organisation. Good communication achieves more effectively and more efficiently.

When we collectively use all the above strategies and approaches to situations – we approach someone with the intention to give not receive, make the other person more important, finally send a message in a way - using an applicable method – that achieves mutual understanding.

Mutual Understanding - Everyone is happy!

## IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

#### INTRAPERSONAL VS INTERPERSONAL

You have most likely heard the term interpersonal -skills, -relationships, -communication, -conflict etc. Interpersonal communication is different to **Intrapersonal communication**, they are both communications orientated, but operate very differently. **Intrapersonal** happens within an individual – self talk, introspection, and personal reflection – *talking to yourself doesn't make you mad by the way* - (3)

When we engage in **intrapersonal communication** it helps us better understand ourselves, what we desire, our passions, our values, moral, what we like, disklike.

The reason for this discussion is to understand that with emotional intelligent people they have both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. People with **intrapersonal skills** tend to focus on reflection more than other people. They pay attention to their thoughts, feelings, and emotions so that they can better understand the motivations and goals.

In the previous Cluster we dealt with Personal Conflict between people. Now another form of conflict and could even be the reason for the personal conflict from an **interpersonal** experience – is **intrapersonal conflict** this conflict happens within ourselves, maybe we don't like something about ourselves, be angry with ourselves for doing something a specific way, maybe angry at others for the way they do things, etc.

**Self-Esteem** is the key to unlocking both inter – and intrapersonal skills. One thing that influences our connection with others and ourselves is the level of self-esteem.

If we conclude on the discussion, it would be fair to say that developing one's intrapersonal skill is important in being able to have interpersonal skills. The one can't exist without the other.

Interpersonal skills require – Self Confidence, Work Ethic – which is morals and values, Relationship Management which means you need to be able to have a relationship with yourself before being able to have one with others, receptive feedback – you need to be able to acknowledge what someone is telling you with your own explanation and you need to communicate with someone properly to engage that feedback, Body language,

Listening, Positive Attitude, etc. It remains crucial in developing the above to form, build and establish relationships in the workplace.

## APPLYING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

From an **intrapersonal** perspective when you start applying emotional intelligence the following happens to you as an individual:

## You don't seek approval

If you are emotionally wealthy, you stand by your own values and beliefs and don't express doubts expressed by others. You have the confidence to take your own pathway without asking permission or looking for confirmation.

## You believe experience is more valuable

People high in emotional intelligence give more value to experiences rather than materialistic items. People with poor emotional intelligence seek fulfilment with materialistic items.

#### You are True to self

You present yourself to the world as someone other than what you present to yourself. This doesn't relate to behaviour in situations, for instance it doesn't mean if you party at home with your friends wildly, that you would do that at a work function, just because you are true to yourself.

At the workplace when we apply emotional intelligence":

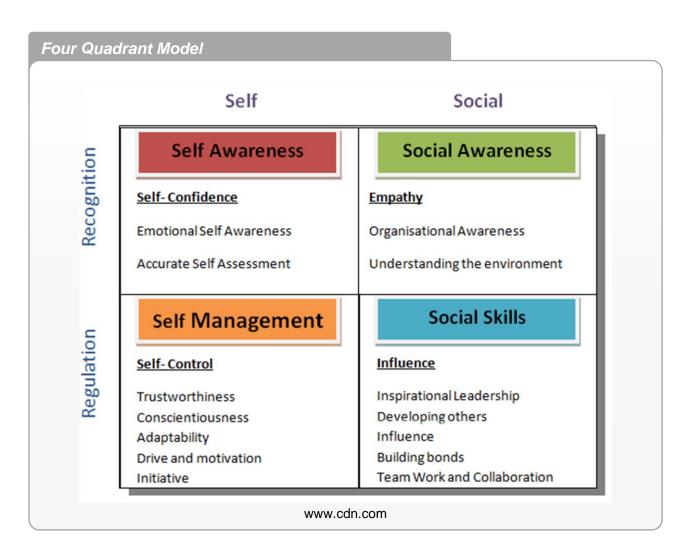
- ✓ We communicate better
- ✓ Share ideas
- ✓ Are open to new ideas
- ✓ We are a great team player
- ✓ Respectful and Thoughtful

#### ✓ Embrace change easier

A team under a leader that is emotionally intelligent, creates a sense of respect between employees. Having very stressed deadlines can cause frustration at the best of times and could even divide management and employee's – but employee's and leaders with emotional intelligence can management their time more efficiently and maximise productivity – because they know how to prioritise tasks and deliver in less time.

## EVALUATE OWN LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Although many types of testing are available, with various complexities and differing areas that are tested. One solid way recommended by many is to question yourself on the bars of the EQ dimensions in relation to the 5 principles of emotional intelligence, discussed earlier in this Learning Unit.



#### Some example questions taken from Positive Psychology.com:

Intrapersonal intelligence	Emotional self- awareness	It's fairly easy for me to express my feelings.
	Assertiveness	It's hard for me to say 'no' when I want to.
	Self-regard	I'm happy with the type of person I am.
	Self-actualization	I try to make my life as meaningful as I can.
	Independence	I'm more of a follower than a leader.
Interpersonal intelligence	Empathy	I'm sensitive to the feelings of others.
	Interpersonal relationship	I'm a fairly cheerful person.
	Social responsibility	Others find it hard to depend on me.

Adaptability	Problem-solving	My approach in overcoming difficulties is to move step by step.
	Reality testing	It's hard for me to understand the way I feel.
	Flexibility	It's difficult for me to change my opinion about things.
Stress management	Stress tolerance	I can handle stress without getting too nervous.
	Impulse control	When I start talking, it is hard to stop.
General mood	Happiness	It's hard for me to enjoy life.
	Optimism	I believe that I can stay on top of tough situations.

Each of the questions are answered on a scale from 1-5 of which each statement accurately describes you as 5 and where 1 is not true to you at all.

One of the disadvantages though of such self-tests is that people tend to not answer truly, it is very important to answer truthfully to improve and develop for the greater good of the cause. Nobody really likes being seen as or knowing that they are hard to understand, but that's the whole point in learning to understand yourself, so that you can better understand others and build solid workplace relationships.

Look up test – and take the test! You might just be surprised of what you think you are not.

## TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## THE JOHARI WINDOW

The Johari Window, named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group.

A four paned "window," as illustrated below, divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: **open, hidden, blind, and unknown.** 

Diagram 1: Johari window

1.	2.
Open/ free area	Blind area
3.	4.
Hidden area	Unknown area

The lines dividing the four panes are like window shades, which can move as an interaction between individuals and groups progresses.

Johari quadrant 1 - 'open self/area' or 'free area' or 'public area', or 'arena'

Johari region 1 is also known as the 'area of free activity'. This is the information about the person - behaviour, attitude, feelings, emotion, knowledge, experience, skills, views, etc. - known by the person ('the self') and known by the group ('others').

Johari quadrant 2 - 'blind self' or 'blind area' or 'blind spot.'

Johari region 2 is what is **known about a person by others in the group but is unknown to the person him/herself.** 

By seeking feedback from others, the aim should be to reduce this area and thereby to increase the open area, i.e., to increase self-awareness.

This blind area could also be referred to as **ignorance about oneself**, **or issues in which** one is deluded. A blind area could also include issues that others are deliberately withholding from a person.

People who are 'thick-skinned' tend to have a large 'blind area'.

Johari quadrant 3 - 'hidden self' or 'hidden area' or 'avoided self' or 'facade.'

Johari region 3 is what is **known to ourselves but kept hidden from, and therefore unknown, to others.** This hidden or avoided self-represents information, feelings, etc. that a person knows about him/herself, but which is not revealed to others or is kept hidden from others.

The hidden area could also include sensitivities, fears, hidden agendas, manipulative intentions, secrets, etc.; anything that a person knows, but does not reveal, for whatever reason.

It's natural for very personal and private information and feelings to remain hidden. In fact, certain information, feelings and experiences have no relevance to work, and so can and should remain hidden.

However, relevant hidden information and feelings should be moved into the open area through the process of 'disclosure'. The aim should be to disclose and expose relevant information and feelings, thereby increasing the open area.

By telling others how we feel and other information about ourselves, we reduce the hidden area and increase the open area, which enables a better understanding, cooperation, trust, team-working effectiveness and productivity. Reducing hidden areas also reduces the potential for confusion, misunderstanding, poor communication, etc., which all distract from and undermine team effectiveness.

Johari quadrant 4 - 'unknown self' or 'area of unknown activity' or 'unknown area.'

Johari region 4 contains information, feelings, latent abilities, aptitudes, experiences, etc., that are unknown to the person him/herself and unknown to others in the group.

These unknown issues take a variety of forms: they can be feelings, behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, aptitudes, which can be quite close to the surface, and which can be positive and useful, or they can be deeper aspects of a person's personality, influencing his/her behaviour to various degrees. Large unknown areas would typically be expected in younger people, and people who lack experience or self-belief.

#### **Examples of unknown factors are as follows:**

- ✓ An ability that is under-estimated or untried through lack of opportunity, encouragement, confidence, or training
- ✓ A natural ability or aptitude that a person doesn't realise s/he possesses
- ✓ Fear or aversion that a person does not know s/he has

- ✓ An unknown illness
- ✓ Repressed or subconscious feelings
- ✓ Conditioned behaviour or attitudes from childhood

The first example is particularly relevant and common, especially in typical organisations and teams.

The processes by which this information and knowledge can be uncovered are numerous and can be prompted through **self-discovery** or **observation by others**, or in certain situations through **collective or mutual discovery**, of the sort of discovery experienced during teambuilding events or other deep or intensive group work. Counselling can also uncover unknown issues, but this would then be known to the person and by one other, rather than by a group.

Uncovering 'hidden talents', unknown aptitudes and skills can be done by providing people with the opportunity to try new things, with no great pressure to succeed.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE JOHARI WINDOW

The aim of any group should always be to develop the 'open area' for every person in the group. The open free area, or 'the arena', be a space where good communication and cooperation occur, free from distractions, mistrust, confusion, conflict and misunderstanding.

It is important for a leader to realise that established team members will normally have larger open areas than new team members.

New team members start with relatively small open areas because relatively little knowledge about the new team member is shared.

The size of the open area can be expanded horizontally into the blind space, by **seeking** and actively listening to feedback from other group members. This process is known as 'feedback solicitation'.

Other group members can also help a team member expand his/her open area by **offering feedback**, in a sensitive manner, of course.

Diagram 2: Johari window with open area expanded horizontally

1.	
Open/ free area	2.
	Blind area
3.	4.
Hidden area	Unknown area

The size of the open area can also be expanded vertically downwards into the hidden or avoided space by the **person's disclosure** of information, feelings, etc. about him/herself to the group and group members.

Also, group members can help a person expand his/her open area into the hidden area by asking the person about him/herself.

Diagram 3: Johari window with open area expanded vertically

1.	2.
Open/ free area	Blind area
	4.
3.	Unknown area
Hidden area	

Managers and team leaders can play an important role in **facilitating** feedback and disclosure among group members, and in**directly giving feedback** to individuals about their own blind areas.

Top performing groups, departments, companies and organisations tend to have a culture of open, positive communication, so encouraging the positive development of the 'open area' or 'open self' for everyone.

Leaders, therefore, have a big responsibility to promote a culture of open, honest, positive, helpful, constructive, sensitive communication, and the sharing of knowledge throughout their organisation.

This can be done by creating an environment that encourages self-discovery and promotes the processes of self-discovery, constructive observation and feedback among team members.

Team members and managers can help an individual to reduce his/her blind area - in turn increasing the open area - by giving sensitive feedback and encouraging disclosure.

The extent to which an individual seeks feedback, and the issues on which feedback is sought, must always be at the individual's own discretion as some people are more sensitive than others; therefore, care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset.

Effort should generally be made by each member of the team to increase his/her open free area, by disclosing information about his/her feelings, experience, views, motivation, etc., which will reduce the size of the hidden area, and increase the open free area.

Seeking feedback about the blind area will reduce the blind area, and will increase the open free area. Discovery through sensitive communications, active listening and experience, will reduce the unknown area, transferring in part to the blind, hidden areas, depending on who knows what, or better still if known by the person and others, to the open free area.

A team which understands itself - that is, each person has a strong mutual understanding with the team - is far more effective than a team in which members do not understand each other- that is, whose members have large hidden, blind, and/or unknown areas.

Team members - and leaders - should always be striving to increase their open free areas, and to reduce their blind, hidden and unknown areas.

Example: a new team member or a member of a new team

Diagram 4: Johari window (new team member)

	2.
1.	Blind area
Open/ free area	
3.	4.
Hidden area	Unknown area

This Johari Window diagram is an example of a member of a new team or a person who is new to an existing team. The open or free region is small because others know little about the new person. Similarly, the blind area is small because others know little about the new person. The hidden or avoided issues and feelings are a relatively large area. In this example, the unknown area is the largest, which might be because the person is young, or lacking in self-knowledge or belief.

Diagram 5: Johari window (established team member)

1.	2.
Open/ free area	Blind area
3. Hidden area	4. Unknown area

This diagram is an example of an established member of a team. The open free region is large because others know a lot about the person that the person also knows. Through the processes of disclosure and receiving feedback the open area has expanded and at the same time reduced the sizes of the hidden, blind, and unknown areas. Whether unknown 'discovered' knowledge moves into the hidden, blind, or open area depends on who discovers it and what they do with the knowledge, notably whether it is then given as feedback, or disclosed.

Organisational culture and working atmosphere have a major influence on group members' preparedness to disclose their hidden selves. Most people fear judgement or vulnerability and therefore hold back hidden information and feelings, etc. that if moved into the open area, i.e., known by the group as well, would enhance mutual understanding, and thereby improve group awareness, enabling better individual performance and group effectiveness.

Therefore, leaders should promote a climate of non-judgemental feedback, and group response to individual disclosure, which reduces fear and therefore encourages both processes to happen freely.

## DETERMINE OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths:

Consider your strengths from your own perspective, and from the point of view of the people around you. Don't be modest; be as objective as you can. If you are having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

In looking at your strengths, think about them in relation to the people around you - for example, if you're a great mathematician and the people around you are great at maths, then this is not likely to be a strength in your current role, it is likely to be a necessity.

#### Weaknesses:

Again, consider this from a personal and external point of view: Do other people perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Do co-workers consistently out-perform you in key areas? It is best to be realistic now and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

## Opportunities and threats

Both opportunities and threats can come from such things as:

- ✓ Changes in technology, markets, and your company on both a broad and narrow scale
- ✓ Changes in government policy related to your field
- ✓ Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.
- ✓ Local Events
- ✓ Changes in your personal circumstances

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is also to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating - both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done and in putting problems into perspective.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
	What could you improve?

- What advantages (for example, skills, education or connections) do you have that others don't have?
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What personal resources do you have access to?
- What do other people (and your manager in particular) see as your strengths?

- What should you avoid?
- What things are the people around you likely to see as weaknesses?

#### Opportunities:

- Where are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

#### Threats:

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are the people around you doing?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten you?

## **OTHER TIPS**

Most specialists in the Psychology field recommend a couple of practical ways to improve our emotional intelligence simply through observing and practicing some of the following:

- ✓ Practice observe how you feel in situations
- ✓ Pay attention to how you behave in specific situations
- ✓ Take responsibilities of your feelings and behaviour
- ✓ Practice responding rather than reacting.
- ✓ Practice empathising with yourself
- ✓ Create a positive environment

Remembering that it becomes a lifestyle and is a life long continuous process of evaluation.