

**Name: Paul Samuel S. Lacap**

**Date: November 16, 2022**

## **Reflection Paper: Communications**

I appreciate this course. I am thankful that Village88 not only teaches us technical skills, but soft skills as well. I learned a lot and one of my main takeaways is that the most important factor in business is trust. This is the reason why professionals will work overtime and go the extra mile. It is also the reason why it is very important to meet deadlines. Failure to do said task can result in a loss of trust. Why do people emphasize not breaking the trust of their clients so much? It is because trust is something that takes a long time to form, but only takes seconds to lose. Also, trust is not just a company-client interaction but it is also in office relationships as well. One of the main factors for supervisors in choosing which employees to hire is the level of trust he has gauged from the candidates they interviewed. Also, trust is a factor in employee appraisals. When a supervisor promotes an employee, it is because he now fully trusts that employee to succeed in doing more important tasks. So, on the side of the employee, he/she must do everything in his power to not break the trust of his/her supervisor.

Another takeaway is a core value similar to trust, this core value is called relationships. In a company, usually, you are with a team of coworkers. We also spend most of our day inside the office, so we must have a good relationship with them. This is tricky because, in terms of core values, this is where the black and white sometimes become gray. There are things that our coworkers are doing that we have to turn a blind eye to because it is more trouble than it's worth. Of course, there are also a lot of things wherein we must take action especially when it comes to major offenses. However, regardless of the situation, the team is united by the fact that they must do their best to not break the trust of a client. This can be seen sometimes wherein the whole team is working overtime just to meet an important task. There are times wherein a team member will cover in the absence of another due to an emergency. Also when a team member makes a mistake, there are times the whole team must work together to compensate for the cost.

Before doing this course, I would say my communication skills are about average 8 at best since I already experienced working in a field that requires communication. After taking this course, I would say it increased my score to 8.5. The course was a great reminder of how the business world operates given that I am unemployed for quite some time now. It reminded me of how crucial it is to honor commitments and deadlines. Lastly, 12 months from now I would like to give myself a rating of 9. I chose 9 because I am hoping that after I have been exposed to the industry of software engineering, I can now stand on my own when it comes to dealing with clients. I am also hoping to be a very good team player that can be relied on by both my supervisor and my teammates.

When I was answering the exercises in the course, one of my answers that are different from sir Michael Choi's is answering emails after office hours. It is because the culture of the company I worked at before is that work completely stops after business hours. We were discouraged to do work-related stuff for us to rest our minds in preparation for tomorrow. However, I do get sir Michael's point of view since this is an entirely different field from my previous job. Wherein a bug in a deployed application may cost the company a lot of money.

In choosing core values I want to focus on improving, I chose proactiveness. When I was employed before, I made some mistakes that required my supervisor to repeat instructions. Also, there were a lot of times that I had no tasks to do in the office which I could have used to be a more efficient employee. To make this core value a part of me, I will make sure to always have the drive to be a better version of myself as a software developer. If there is a day wherein no task is given to me, I would study things that will be useful for my job. I can also ask my supervisor if there are any opportunities to improve the finished projects that I have done. As much as possible, I will try to avoid doing nothing during working hours. The simple tips that the course has discussed will greatly help me in being proactive. In my previous company, I was an 8-5 employee (8-6 to be specific, we work 9 hours per day). However, I find the tip of coming to work a bit earlier than everyone else will be tremendously helpful to be proactive. It is not just coming to work but doing work earlier than everyone else. For example, 15 minutes before 8 am I am already checking my emails if there is a task needed to be done, and I am reviewing my codes to remember how my software application works especially on Monday mornings (I tend to forget how my code works when I do not touch it on weekends).

Also, it was not outlined but it was stated by sir Choi in the videos. It is that we need to make an effort to establish good relationships with our team. An example is finding out what they like to establish a middle ground for conversations, joining if they invited you to hang out after work, etc. It is because having a good relationship with your team is something that will greatly help you in the future. For example, an emergency problem arises wherein you need someone to compensate for your absence. Having a good relationship with your team is also a good way to make you more motivated to work because you are surrounded by people whom you are fond of. Another concept that I felt like the course did not list down but indirectly taught is to always put ourselves in the shoes of others. Despite being professionals, we are all still humans. As much as we try to suppress it, our emotions can get the better of us. The reason you felt like the supervisor is neglecting you might be because he is super busy. Your co-worker who makes a lot of mistakes might be experiencing a difficult moment in his life.

All in all, I greatly enjoyed my time in this part of the course. It reminded me of how to conduct oneself in a professional setting. Some of the scenarios given are challenging to answer as it dabbles in gray areas. It shows that the corporate world can be unforgiving sometimes. But it is what it is, and that is why we should not take commitments, trusts, and relationships lightly.

# Appendix

## Village 88 - Power Outage Exercise

You had a sudden power outage for a whole day! You were working on an important project and you were not able to make the progress you needed for the day. You were also not able to put in the hours for the project. The power outage happens on your Friday and only by Saturday morning, you be able to have power back. You had lots of things planned for Saturday and Sunday and you were looking forward to having this weekend off to spend time with your friends and family. Plus, you're feeling a bit sick and were thinking of using your Monday as sick leave anyway.

Please answer the following questions:

- 1.) What communication would you send out to your project manager/supervisor? Would you send this after the power comes back or would you send this communication before the power comes back? How many hours after the power outage would you send this email?

Firstly, I will wait if the power outage will just be a short one. If 15 minutes have passed and the power is not yet coming back, then I will find a way to inform my supervisor of my status. I will apologize that I may not be able to do the tasks due to the power outage but I will assure him/her that I will find a way to meet the deadline. Then, when the power outage is over, I will email my supervisor again that my house now has electricity, and I am now working on the project to compensate for the lost time (yes, even if it's a weekend). I will put my weekend plans on hold since I can always spend time with them on another date. Lastly, as a precautionary measure, since I am feeling a bit sick, I will try to at least make a document and discuss it with a co-worker or my supervisor (if no co-worker is available) on how to present my project so I can file for sick leave and not hinder production.

- 2.) Say you were mentoring someone else in the Village and this person failed to send any type of communication back to the supervisor/team till Monday morning. What advice would you give this person?

First, I would ask him/her how he/she is doing in the training so far. Is he/she handling the given tasks well? Is he/she getting overwhelmed by the projects? This is to find out the reason why there is a lack of communication from the mentee. Then, I would advise him/her to at least email the team once a day or once every two days just to see how he/she is doing and that the team will highly appreciate it.

- 3.) How would you make up for the lack of progress and the lack of hours you've put into the project? How would you communicate this to the supervisor? Or would you just assume that it's okay not to make up for these hours as it's already Saturday your time?

I would communicate to my supervisor that I can still meet the deadline since I have power now in my house. Even if it's already Saturday, I will gladly work to not break my supervisor's trust.

- 4.) If you missed any important deadlines for the project due to this, how would you make up to your supervisor/team for this lack of progress? How would you communicate this?

I would email my team a concise apology message on what happened and that I wasn't resourceful enough. Then I would ask my supervisor if there is any way I can make amends to compensate for my failure.

Sample Email:

Good morning,

I would like to apologize for the delay in my contributions to the project. I know that even if the situation was out of my control, I should have been resourceful enough to find ways to finish the task. If there is any way I can compensate you for the delay please don't hesitate to let me know.

Best regards,

Paul Samuel S. Lacap

## **A New Project**

You are very new to the company and your supervisor has given you a new project. This communication was done over Slack and your supervisor gave you some general instructions for the project but you still had a lot of questions/confusion about the project. Your supervisor was expecting you to finish this project by Wednesday the following week but you haven't made that much progress on the project yet, due to other projects you were working on and because your supervisor is known to be extremely busy and you felt shy asking for some time to go over the project.

Please answer the following questions:

1.) What went wrong with this scenario?

The first is not clarifying the question and confusion for the project. Even if both I and the supervisor are busy, I am given one week, and surely there will be a time wherein both me and the supervisor are free to discuss the project. Another thing that went wrong is that I am not giving daily updates to the supervisor on my project.

2.) What could you have done to improve this situation?

List all my questions/confusions about the project. If it's only a few then I will make a concise email to my supervisor discussing my questions. If there are a lot of questions and clarifications then I would email my supervisor that I have a lot of clarifications for the project and ask when he/she is available for project discussion. Lastly, I will email my supervisor once a day to update him/her on the status of the project.

3.) What would you do to rectify this situation?

The first is to finally email my supervisor on the project status, apologize for what has happened, and discuss with the supervisor the steps necessary to compensate for the lost time.

4.) If you could have gone back in time to a week before (when the supervisor first gave you that project and you had some uncertainties/questions back then), draft what that email communication would have looked like.

Good morning sir,

I have studied the project you have given to me and I would like to discuss some questions/clarifications for it. May I know sir when you are free for us to meet?

Thank you,

Paul Samuel Lacap

## **Project Deadline Passed**

A supervisor has given you a project and asked you when you think you can have the project completed. You answered next Wednesday. You've worked hard during your usual 40 hours/week and next Wednesday has come but you have not quite finished your project yet. Wednesday comes around and your supervisor has seemed to have forgotten about this project and has not followed up with you yet on this project. It's now Friday, and your supervisor still hasn't asked you anything about this project!

Please answer the following questions:

1.) What went wrong with these situations?

I am not sending updates to my supervisor about the project. Meanwhile, it is most likely that my supervisor is very busy and that he/she might have forgotten about my project.

2.) How could you have handled this situation better?

Always provide an update about the project at least once a day, so that the supervisor will know if there will be a problem that will need additional time and/or manpower.

3.) If you were to go back on time, when would you go back to, and what email communication would you send and why?

I would go back to the time the supervisor asked me how long it will take for me to complete the project. I would email my supervisor that I can finish the project at a much later date.

4.) Who was ultimately responsible for this project being completed? Who should have followed up first? The supervisor or you?

The responsibility for completing the project is given to me. I should be the one to follow up first. It could be that both I and the supervisor are very busy but it is most likely that the tasks the supervisor is doing are much more important than my projects. Also, it is a good way for me to display proactiveness by following up first with the supervisor.

- 5.) If you could go back to Friday the previous week (before the project was due), what would you do differently? Draft an email communication to your project manager. At that time, I will provide an update to my supervisor on the status of the project.

Email:

Good afternoon sir,

I would like to provide an update on the project. Based on my projection, I may need to work this weekend to meet the deadline. I will provide an update email on both the afternoon of Saturday and Sunday regarding the project.

Best regards,  
Paul Samuel Lacap

- 6.) If you could go back to Tuesday (the day before the deadline), and assuming you've done your best to finish the project but just weren't able to, what email would you draft to the communication to your project manager? Draft that email now.

Email:

Good morning sir,

I would like to apologize for the project assigned to me. I have done my best but it seems that the project cannot be finished within the deadline. I would like to request if it is possible to extend the deadline. If there is any way I can compensate or make amends to the client please let me know. Again, I am deeply sorry for the inconvenience that I have caused.

Best regards,  
Paul Samuel Lacap

### **Meeting Scheduled**

Your supervisor wanted to meet with you at 3 pm (over Zoom) to go over a few items. It's 3:05 pm now but your supervisor hasn't shown up yet. It's now 3:15 pm and your supervisor still hasn't shown up yet. You log off from Zoom and continue with your work.

Please answer the following questions:

- 1.) What went wrong here?

I failed to be proactive and did not contact my supervisor. The supervisor might have been too busy with more important stuff that he/she might have forgotten the meeting.

- 2.) If you were super proactive in your communication, what would you have done? What message would you send your supervisor and when would you send this?

I would have contacted my supervisor at 3:10 pm regarding the meeting and sent him a message asking if we will still have a meeting this afternoon.

- 3.) Draft the communications you would send to your supervisor and when you would send each of these communications.

3:10 pm message: Good afternoon sir, will we still have our meeting this afternoon?

3:20 pm message: Good afternoon again sir, I need to go back to doing my tasks and projects but feel free sir to contact me any time to start the meeting.



## **A New Consulting Project**

Mark has been assigned a new project for a client named John. Mark is the only person working on the project from your company. Mark reports directly to a client who directly manages the project and who is also acting as the project manager. Mark is supposed to do both the front-end and the back-end work for the client. Mark is new to this project and although Mark has talked to the client a few times, it's not clear what the client expects from Mark, what work Mark should be doing each day, when they would be meeting, etc. As you're new to this project, you want to establish a good working relationship with the client also and show that you're talented and you're proactive. Draft your email to the client where you can communicate your excitement about the project and where you can ask appropriate questions to the client. Also, specify when you would send this communication and why you've picked that time.

Email:

Good morning,

I would like to express my gratitude for trusting me and the team with this project. Rest assured that we will do our best to create the best version of your request. If it is all right may I ask what is your preferred way of communication for us to discuss the project? This will surely help me to tailor the project to what suits your needs the most. Again, thank you for your trust. Feel free to contact me anytime with questions and concerns.

With best regards,  
Paul Samuel Lacap

I will send this email within one hour after the project was assigned to me. I will first study the needs of the project and then send the email so that I can show that I am already knowledgeable about the client's request and quickly answer any questions they might have.

## Major Error

You were responsible for a lot of important features of the project but something happened where you lost all the user data for the last four weeks. This had put a big setback for the project and you have suspicions that your website may have been hacked, causing these errors. You have also forgotten to back up the database but you aren't sure whether you want to communicate this to the client as it may make you look weaker. You admit that you could have done things better on your end to handle these types of scenarios but you were just busy, burned out, and frankly, you were already doing a lot of extra things for the clients anyway! The client is not that technical and doesn't even know that a database could be backed up automatically so bringing this up may only make the situation worse.

The client is furious and you're afraid to speak to the client as you know the client will be upset. Would you wait a few days, until the client cools down, to talk to the client? Would you wait until the client comes and talks to you to arrange a meeting? If you were to draft an email to the client now, what would you say?

I would quickly tell the client that our team is already doing its best to fix the problem. Delaying this would just continue to escalate the frustration of the client. Based on my observations, one of the worst feelings for a client is not hearing from the company if ever a problem arises. No one wants to be left hanging.

Email Draft:

Good morning,

I deeply apologize for the inconvenience this situation has caused you. Rest assured that I and the team are doing our best efforts to resolve this issue. We will update you as soon as possible the moment we fix the problem. Again, we are deeply sorry that this has happened.

Best regards,  
Paul Samuel Lacap

### **Sickness of a Family Member**

Your wife suddenly feels sick. She could not stand up due to a headache and dizziness. She needs to lie down and needs assistance when going to the bathroom or when eating. You have just finished a meeting and a task needs to be completed within the day.

1.) What would be your plan in this situation?

I would ask permission from my supervisor to take the rest of the day off to take care of my wife. However, business is business and if my supervisor refuses then I will not hold it against him and gladly continue working.

2.) What would you do if helping your wife means you won't be able to complete all the tasks for the day?

Hoping that I have a good relationship with my team, I would ask my team if they can cover for my absence and I will return the favor someday. But again, if it's not feasible then I would ask a friend to look after my wife to work on my task. Once the task is finished then I will quickly take the day off and go home.

3.) How should you communicate this with your supervisor and with your teammates?

I would speak to my supervisor in person to request if possible, to take the rest of the day off to take care of my wife. However, if the task is really important to be finished within the day, then I will tell him that I am willing to work to complete the task before going home.

## **Mental Health Concern**

Steve woke up feeling very down. He does not have an appetite to eat breakfast nor he doesn't want to go to work. He feels there's no sense in going to work or even doing anything else. He just wants to sleep the whole day. He has been feeling this for the past 3 days. Steve tried to report for work and do the tasks assigned to him, but he seems to get things wrong. The quality of his work is not the same as it used to be.

1.) What do you think is happening here?

It is most likely Steve is suffering from depression or some sort of mental illness. Based on what I know regarding mental health, sometimes it really can strike a person randomly. For example, a person will just wake up one day with no motivation to do anything. This is quite an alarming case and Steve should seek professional help.

2.) If you were Steve's supervisor and you noticed the change in Steve's output after 3 days, what would you do?

I would talk to Steve one on one to know what is happening. I would ask if he is alright. Is there something bothering him? What does he feel right now? Then most likely I would refer him to a mental health professional and give him some time off for his mental health to recover.

3.) If you were Steve, how are you going to communicate this to your supervisor and teammates?

I would apologize to them for my current behavior and let them know of my situation. If possible, I would ask for some time off for me to fix my mental health given that in my current state, I won't be of much use to the company.

### **Teammate Not Following the Policy**

Mimi is new to the company. She is very excited to be involved in new projects and to learn from her teammates. She reads the company policy provided by HR, but she noticed that Matt, a tenured teammate is not following the policy. Matt always goes out during work hours in the afternoon and would return after 1-3 hours. Her Mimi got confused because she read in the policy that an employee is only allowed at most 30 minutes of break in the afternoon. She asked Matt where he was going and Matt told her he normally meets his friends. Matt also told Mimi that it was okay and he just needs to offset the missed hours in the evening. Their supervisor is working remotely and he is busy managing other employees.

#### **1.) What is wrong with this situation?**

First and foremost, Mimi did nothing wrong. The situation is a bit tricky but if I were to find something wrong. It would be Matt saying to Mimi that what he is doing is not a bad thing which may badly influence Mimi's behavior in the future. On the supervisor's side, yes he may be busy, but an employee not returning to work for at most 3 hours is a big deal. If this happens regularly then the supervisor should have talked to Matt about this by now.

#### **2.) What should Mimi do?**

Mimi is in a tricky situation. There are a lot of factors to consider here and not everything is black and white. As we all know no one likes a tattletale and given the fact that if Matt is indeed compensating for the missed hours in the evening, deadlines are being met, and the quality of the project is not being compromised, I feel like Mimi telling the supervisor on what Matt is doing is more trouble than it's worth. Besides, not only is Mimi, not Matt's supervisor but she is also just a new employee. The best course of action I can recommend is for Mimi to just mind her own business on this one. Just be an observer first to get a grasp on the culture of the company.

#### **3.) To whom and how should Mimi communicate this?**

As I stated before, Mimi should just keep this to herself. It is more trouble than it's worth given the fact that Matt is compensating for the lost hours in the evening. Plus, she is just a new employee so she first needs to establish a good relationship with her team. However, if the situation does call for Mimi to tell someone about Matt's behavior, her best option is HR.

### **Unpredicted Added Task**

Story points are already estimated and you have already talked with your team regarding the tasks you should work on. The deadline is approaching and you think that you will make it in time with the pace you're going (working at least 50hrs/week). But a day before the deadline, you encounter a task that requires RnD and you have no idea how long this RnD will take you.

- 1.) How will you communicate this with your team?

I will first inform the supervisor regarding the task. Most likely a short emergency meeting will be called to discuss the next steps to meet the deadline.

- 2.) After the RnD, you found out it will take at least another day to finish the task. How will you say it to your team and your supervisor?

I need to say this to my supervisor as soon as possible because it is a problem that we cannot avoid. The longer I delay reporting it, the direr the situation will become.

- 3.) If you are a team leader, what would be your response to this kind of situation?

Call an emergency meeting to discuss the steps for tackling the problem. Most likely the team will have to work double time and overtime to meet the deadline. Asking the client to extend the deadline should just be a last resort.

- 4.) What do you think is the possible solution to make it to your deadline?

There is no way around it, the team will have to work overtime to make the deadline.