

BEHAVIORAL SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT – 4

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- 1. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION**
- 2. SOCIAL NETWORKING**
- 3. CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**
- 4. CROSS FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION**

UNIT – 4: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

1. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

1.0 WHAT IS DIGITAL COMMUNICATION?

Simply said, digital communication involves an organization's online communication efforts. Most organizations today use a wide range of online channels—from their website to mobile chat to blogs—to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. They need digital marketing professionals who have a keen understanding of how to leverage this convergence of technology and messaging to their advantage. Digital communications professionals are responsible for everything from creating online brand assets to building an engaged social media audience.

"Today, the options for getting a message out are much broader and quicker than they were just a few decades ago," explains Dr. Edward Powers, professor in Northeastern University. "Digital communication professionals have to be mindful about how to put forward these new tools in the right way."

Dr. Powers shares a salient example. The Danish branch of the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) developed a campaign leveraging the short-lived nature of Snap chat posts to help protect endangered species. Snap chat users were accustomed to their selfies disappearing within seconds of posting. To convey their message, the organization alerted Snap chat users to how quickly endangered species could also disappear. They shared dramatic, close-up photos of animals on the verge of extinction with the message: "Don't let this be my last selfie."



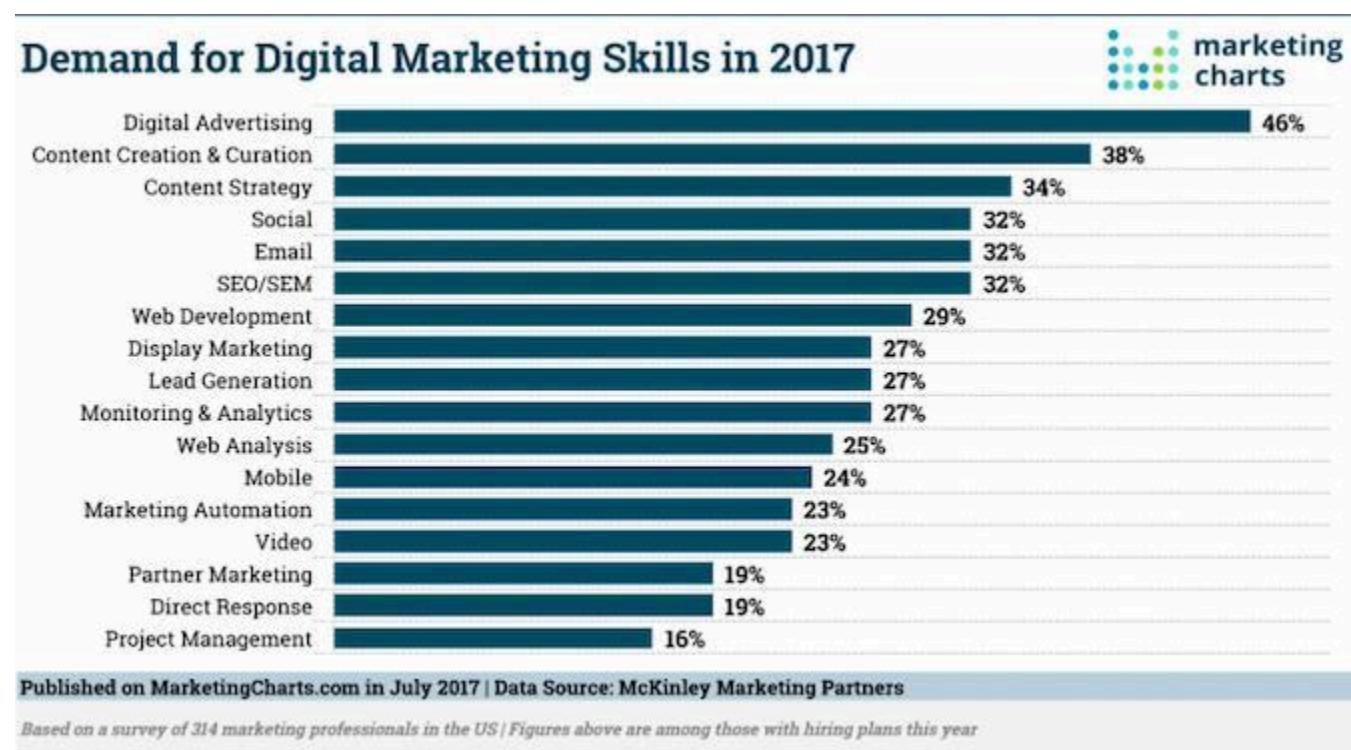
The WWF asked users to take two simple actions: Make a donation and share the post. The campaign was so simple, but it was a tremendous success. Within hours of the Snap chat posts, 5,000 people had shared the posts on Twitter. By the end of the week, more than 120 million Twitter users had seen WWF's message. In just three days, the charity reached its fundraising goal for the entire month.

The WWF didn't simply choose to post to Snap chat because of the medium's popularity. They took a highly strategic approach that brought the message and the medium together in a compelling manner. Employers in many industries are seeking professionals who can navigate digital communication in this same way.

"If you can marry together the classic training that people in the marketing communications field have relied on for decades with emerging digital technology, you will have highly marketable skills," says Dr. Powers. "The demand for digital marketing professionals is exploding across corporations, nonprofits, government agencies, and academia, and there is no letup in sight. Some of the mechanisms for communication will come and go but digital communication is pretty much ingrained in our world now."

1.2 TOP SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Employers across industries are looking for digital communication professionals with a variety of specific skill sets. The chart below highlights the top skills hiring managers were looking for in 2017.



Along with the above areas of expertise, there are also many "soft skills" that will serve you well in digital communication:

- **Flexibility**— Those who thrive in digital communication tend to be people who are highly adaptable, as priorities in this discipline often shift quickly. "Flexibility is highly valued in these roles," explains Dr. Powers. "Hiring managers want employees who can easily acclimate to changes."

- **A commitment to lifelong learning**— Ongoing education is important for staying marketable and at the forefront of the field, Dr. Powers says. “It’s impossible to predict future changes but the most successful digital communication professionals are committed to lifelong learning to stay ahead of the rapid pace of change.”
- **A passion for storytelling**—Digital communications are often rooted in the art of persuasion, and one of the best ways to persuade your audience is by crafting a strong narrative.
- **Empathy**— Being a strong communicator involves gaining a strong appreciation for your audience and what drives them. Once you’re able to put yourself in the shoes of other people you’re trying to influence, you can establish more meaningful—and more effective—connections with them.
- **Curiosity**—“Being inquisitive will carry you a long way,” says Dr. Powers. “The best digital communication practitioners are those who crave a deeper understanding of the people, processes, and channels of communication.”

1.3 COMMON DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CAREER PATHS

The *association of digital marketing and advertising professional* recently identified key growth opportunities for digital communications professionals in areas such as:

Content Marketing

These roles involve the planning, creating, and sharing of compelling content to engage key audiences. Unlike traditional marketing, content marketing isn’t about promoting a product or service but about being a credible source of information that matters to potential customers.

Digital Advertising

Digital advertising professionals develop and execute strategies to reach highly targeted audiences through an array of online channels, from Google AdWords to Instagram.

Data-driven Marketing

These roles involve testing various marketing approaches, analyzing and interpreting data, and measuring the results of marketing campaigns.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Professionals in these roles implement, analyze, and continuously update website content and technical features to increase an organization’s search engine ranking.

Social Media

Social media professionals are responsible for developing and executing social media marketing campaigns to influence a target audience, which includes the creation and curation of visual and written content. They also may act as community managers, listening and responding to social media users in a way that is in line with the organization’s brand identity.

1.4 BENEFITS OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

There are many benefits to digital communication in the workplace. In fact, today’s workplaces are going digital and remote working has quickly become the new norm. However, employees still expect an engaging, productive, and enjoyable work experience. This might be easy when people sit together in an office, but can the experience be replicated or even improved online?

Providing an engaging experience is crucial in helping companies succeed in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce who is passionate about their customers. In a highly competitive global economy, the way we communicate and the tools we use are key to success.

Recruitment

Recruiting talented employees is not the easiest job. However, when your employees enjoy work they usually tell others, leading to job referrals, employee advocacy, and high levels of productivity. Company-review sites like Glassdoor are easily accessible and job candidates are likely to seek to find out more about the employee experience before they join an organization. This has a significant impact on their ability to attract quality candidates.

Retention

You want to keep your good employees, and talented members of your team are more likely to stay with you if they have a positive experience. According to Gallup, 89% of employers think employees leave for more money but in reality, only 12% do.

Engagement

The key to retaining your best employees is your ability to offer them an engaging and positive work experience where they can easily communicate and collaborate. Engaged employees are more likely to put in extra effort, achieve higher levels of productivity, and look for ways to improve and innovate. Of course, a great employee experience is also likely to positively impact the customer experience as well because when employees win, customers win, and when customers win, the organization succeeds.

Revenue and profits

The Holy Grail for most organizations is their ability to grow revenue and profits. A study by IBM's Smarter Workforce Institute shows that organizations that score in the top 25% on employee experience report nearly three times the return on assets and double the return on sales compared to organizations in the bottom quarter.

1.5 WHY A DIGITAL WORKPLACE?

In order to promote a good employee experience, you need to provide the tools, environment, and culture so employees can do their jobs to the best of their abilities. This starts with great communication so your employees have a clear understanding of the organization's vision and goals, and the role they play in its success.

While digital technology will never completely replace in-person communications, digital workplaces have the ability to create an environment where employees feel informed and engaged. A digital workplace helps employees stay productive and engaged by offering a place to collaborate, communicate and connect with others.

Digital workplaces also offer the ability to share information instantly. This allows decisions that can be made, discussed and implemented at speed, which increases the productivity of the workforce and their ability to serve customers well. Setting your employees up for success is a key ingredient to a good employee experience.

1.6 FIVE benefits of digital communication in the workplace

American adults spent about 3 hours and 30 minutes a day using the mobile internet in 2019, in addition to the time spent on computers and laptops, according to measurement company Zenith. The impact of a global pandemic means that this year this figure is set for a significant increase, and not only for Americans. Being able to connect and transact at the stroke of a key has become

an expectation in society. Due to this, organizations everywhere are turning to technology solutions in order to create a positive employee experience for everyone.

That being said, digital communication can be transformative. Here are our top 5 benefits of digital communication in the workplace.

1. Enhanced employee engagement and empowerment

Communication is the cornerstone of an engaged workforce. Digital tools built in an intelligent workplace provide an easy way for organizations to communicate in real-time. In addition to keeping employees informed, digital communication and technology enable all employees throughout a global organization to have a voice.

As businesses change, platforms like digital workplaces can help further enable a positive and empowered employee experience, allowing them to be more involved and share their expertise and ideas.

2. Employees are able to work better and faster

As strange as it sounds, some organizations have a habit of making it difficult for people to complete their work. Bureaucracy, out of date tools, working in silos, poor communication, and hard-to-find information can lead to employee frustration and poor productivity. A positive employee experience requires removing friction from day-to-day work and digital technology has a big part to play.

Employees want to be able to collaborate with people faster, access accurate information more rapidly, and get their work done more efficiently. By facilitating easy access to information and people, digital communication and platforms like digital workplaces make it much easier for employees to be productive and get their work done.

3. Organizations can create and reinforce a shared purpose and values

The purpose of an organization should be an inspirational driver that drives all organizational activities — policy, structure, innovation, processes, performance, and change. Having a compelling purpose sets a higher standard of excellence for organizations, motivates employees to join you in your cause, and attracts customers who love what you're doing. It's that engagement that ultimately impacts a company's health and bottom line.

Similarly, organizational values influence the way employees interact with each other and work together to achieve results. The collective behavior of all employees adds up to the organizational culture, or "the way we do things around here". This promise lies at the center of a brand.

Providing a digital platform for employees to interact and share with each other reinforces that all ideas are important through a shared sense of purpose and ways of working. Organizations with a clear purpose and who focus on their values are likely to be more resilient, sustainable, and successful. Digital tools should be implemented to take it a step further to truly align your values and enhance the employee experience.

4. Remote working is here to stay

According to an estimate in *Forbes*, 50% of the U.S. workforce was projected to be remote in 2018. In Europe, remote workers increased from 7.7% to 9.8% in the past decade, and this was prior to COVID-19. In 2020, this is likely to increase significantly.

A new era has dawned and the trend is set to rise. Google and Face book have recently announced that their staff can work from home until the end of the year, while Twitter has gone a step further and told their workforce that they can work from home "forever" as the company looks toward the future.

From health and wellbeing improvements to increased productivity and flexible childcare arrangements, remote working has multiple benefits in terms of creating a great employee experience. In 2020, we have witnessed a digital revolution in the workplace powered by the availability of consumer grade digital tools.

5. A collaborative culture to drive success

In a global environment with multiple teams and a dispersed workforce, organizational silos can negatively impact your business success, especially in the absence of digital tools and technologies. It's also easy for departments to hold information, leaving it inaccessible to the rest of the company when they don't have a place to share it. Departments like customer service, sales and supply chain suffer as a result when they are unable to communicate and collaborate effectively.

A digital workplace can change all of that. Enabling employees to interact and share ideas can build a sense of community and trust, encourage innovation, and solve problems in real-time. Digital workplaces are a great way to break down communication barriers in order to transform the employee experience and promote innovation and growth.

1.7 PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Digital workplaces may have a plethora of benefits, but can a company really transform the way it communicates and influence the employee experience?

The use of technology has become increasingly important, but it's not the only solution. In most organizations, there is still a place for in-person discussions, town halls, videos and meetings. However, when used effectively, the impact of technology can be profound.

Many leaders believe that just by implementing a new tool, people will embrace a new way of communicating and working, but it's not that simple. When introducing digital communications, preparation is essential—as the saying goes: fail to plan, plan to fail.

An essential element of good preparation is for leaders to engage with the tools they want their teams to use. When leaders champion a way of doing things, others are likely to follow. Likewise, it's also important to educate employees so they feel confident about how to get the most out of the new tool, especially with today's multi-generational workforce where not everyone considers themselves to be digitally savvy.

Cultural issues also need to be on the radar when planning to implement a digital channel. Digital communications break down silos, opening up conversations across locations, time zones and languages. Embracing a global, collaborative mindset often means relinquishing a level of control and embracing a diversity of thought and opinions.

Finally, when preparing a digital communications strategy it's important to decide how a digital tool will fit into your overall approach. In other words, what do you want people to know, feel and do as a result of this tool, and how does this align with your overall communication channel strategy?

1.8 DIGITAL WORKPLACES PROMOTE A POSITIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

The way we communicate in our daily lives – both professionally and personally – continues to change. In many organizations, digital technology is already embedded in the very fabric of how people work. Providing the right combination of tools, culture and environment creates a unique and positive employee experience that makes people want to work with your organization.

By connecting employees beyond the boundaries of their geographies or departments, the digital workplace empowers employees to direct their efforts from the bottom up. It allows them to

build communities of interest, share ideas, solve problems and collaborate in ways that make sense to them, all while delivering measurable business value.

These benefits of digital communication in the workplace allow your organization to communicate key information so that people feel informed, motivated, and empowered. Digital workplaces can help you achieve that. Enabling a great employee experience leads to brand advocacy, happy customers and a successful business and that's when you'll really win.

1.9 THREE KEY FEATURES OF COMMUNICATION THAT ARE MISSING IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Technology and the Internet have seismically shifted our social landscape- more specifically how we communicate with one another. The changes are ubiquitous. We message instead of calling like to show engagement, share to express what is on our mind, tweet to give our opinions, snap to show our faces and well- you get the picture. Not only this- even when we are rarely together, our eyes remain pinned to our phones.

It is only natural then that with this ease of communication, people feel needless to interact with others on a face-to-face basis. In fact, according to a Cancer Research UK the survey, those aged 18 to 24 are around 20 times more likely to never speak to their neighbors than those aged 55 and over.

But of course, this lack of interaction triggers social isolation amongst most young individuals and eventually also becomes debilitating in many ways. With regards to communication skills, here we look at why our new generation of savvy technology Millennials are missing out on three crucial features.

#1. Interpreting Intentions & the Ability to Influence Others

Stefan Hoffman says “We are evolutionarily programmed to be with somebody in real life. Physical proximity is directly related to connectedness, to how you actually feel with somebody. A person’s smell, eye contact, little facial cues that suggest emotionality, a person’s oddities, all of that. You can never recreate it in an electronic form.” Not only this- inconspicuous elements such as where people’s feet are pointing; where their hands are rested on their body; and even by the direction where their eyes are darting can also signal so many crucial messages. And because 93% of how we communicate with one another is derived through our non-verbal communication, when humans do not interact face-to-face, they inevitably lose out on determining what a person’s true intentions are. In fact, there is a term in the field of body language known as congruence- where you are able to ascertain someone’s intentions by observing how their verbal message matches their body language. The reality is- when you are able to pick up on these non-verbal cues, you are also more able to influence the other person through tapering your own body language and conversational ability.

#2. The Art of Authentic Conversations

Once upon a time- before phones or email existed- we could not edit our conversations in real-time, nor could we sprinkle in a number of emojis despite how we were really feeling. But now, even for the most mundane of conversations, the younger generation has ample time to think things over before a clever reply. This negates any form of an authentic connection taking place as the truth is, a sense of vulnerability is key to any long-term sustainable relationship. This

is because along with vulnerability comes raw and real emotion- which can only really be experienced face-to-face. What is even more compelling is that as more and more transactions take place online, products and services are also slowly losing their sense of character. And at the end of the day, people buy based upon emotion and logic. For this reason, focusing only on product features evades a chance to gain trust. So in terms of business transactions, an investment in getting to know each other's client's business and personal situations helps build better long-term trust and relationships.

#3. Tapping into Crowd Wisdom

Unlike online interactions, face-to-face communication fosters profound learning. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "In my walks, every man I meet is my superior in some way, and in that, I learn from him." (Solid advice from a stellar thinker.) The reality is, everybody has something to teach us despite how much we think we might know. So, in order to truly learn from one another, we must learn how to actively listen to others; engage and ask interesting questions; show curiosity and demonstrate appreciation for others' experiences. Not much of this can be done effectively over messaging, emailing or through scheduling in a voice call. Even better, millennials joining a new organization can benefit in training procedures through learning-by-doing interactive activities, in which they get involved in the process as opposed to just being observers. This fosters a stronger and more dynamic learning process, which is key to retaining this younger and savvy generation of technology-savvy employees.

CONCLUSION:

While digital communication is the way forward in the area of communication it is certainly no replacement for real time and face to face communication. As it is with any aspect of technology overuse and misuse of digital communication might prove to be detrimental in the long run hence moderation is the key.

2. SOCIAL NETWORKING

2.0 WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is the exchange of information and ideas among people with a common profession or special interest, usually in an informal social setting. Networking often begins with a single point of common ground.

- Networking is used by professionals to widen their circles of acquaintances, find out about job opportunities, and to increase their awareness of news and trends in their fields.
- Business owners may network to develop relationships with people and companies they may do business with in the future.
- Professional networking platforms provide an online location for people to engage with other professionals, join groups, post blogs, and share information.



2.1 UNDERSTANDING NETWORKING

Networking is used by professionals to expand their circles of acquaintances, to find out about job opportunities in their fields, and to increase their awareness of news and trends in their fields or in the greater world.

People generally join networking groups based on a single common point of interest that all members share. The most obvious is a professional affiliation, such as stockbrokers, but some people find effective networking opportunities in a college alumni group, a church or synagogue social group, or a private club.

For professionals, the best networking opportunities may occur at trade shows, seminars, and conferences, which are designed to attract a large crowd of like-minded individuals. Networking helps a professional keep up with current events in the field, and develops relationships that may boost future business or employment prospects. Needless to say, it also provides opportunities to help other people find jobs, make connections, and catch up on the news.

Small business owners network to develop relationships with people and companies they may do business with in the future. These connections help them establish rapport and trust among people in their own communities. Successful business networking involves regularly following up with contacts to exchange valuable information that may not be readily available outside the network.

Business owners and entrepreneurs often join their local chamber of commerce in an effort to promote their business interests and to help others in their community do the same. There are many additional benefits to joining a chamber of commerce, such as receiving deals and discounts from other chamber members, having one's business listed in the chamber directory, and the ability to influence policies related to the area's business and economic activity.

2.3 ONLINE NETWORKING

Professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn provide an online location for people to engage with other professionals, join groups, post blogs, and share information. And, of course, they provide a place to post a resume that can be seen by prospective employers, to search for jobs, or to identify job candidates.

These days, a business-to-business (B2B) customer pipeline can be developed almost entirely through the use of a **social networking site**. Online networking forums allow professionals to demonstrate their knowledge and connect with like-minded people.

Given the growing number of networking opportunities available to people looking to start or advance their careers, it's important to take some time to explore various options before committing to a specific networking group. Once we join a networking group, it's important to become a contributing member. Rather than just using the association simply to further their own goals, people who use networking effectively look to offer something of value to other members of the group. Networking can help us identify opportunities for collaboration, strategic joint ventures, partnerships, and new areas to expand our business and create opportunities.

2.4 WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORKING?



Social networking is the use of Internet-based **social media** sites to stay connected with friends, family, colleagues, customers, or clients. Social networking can have a social purpose, a business

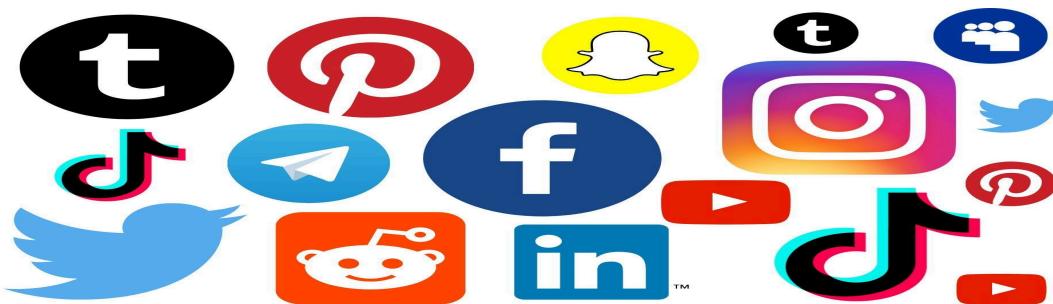
purpose, or both, through sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Social networking has become a significant base for marketers seeking to engage customers.

Based on the [six degrees of separation](#) concept (the idea that any two people on the planet could make contact through a chain of no more than five intermediaries), social networking establishes interconnected online communities (sometimes known as [social graphs](#)) that help people make contacts that would be good for them to know, but that they would be unlikely to have met otherwise.

Depending on the [social media](#) platform, members may be able to contact any other member. In other cases, members can contact anyone they have a connection to, and subsequently anyone that contact has a connection to, and so on. Some services require members to have a preexisting connection to contact other members.

While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Web to facilitate such connections has led to an exponential and ongoing expansion of that phenomenon. In addition to social media platforms, the capacity for social interaction and [collaboration](#) is increasingly built into business applications.

Despite some stiff competition, Facebook remains the largest and most popular social network, with 2.8 billion people using the platform on a monthly basis, as of Dec. 31, 2020. It was followed, in order of popularity, by Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, and Pinterest, according to Statistica.



2.5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Social networking is the use of Internet-based social media platforms to stay connected with friends, family, or peers.
- The most popular social networking sites in the U.S. include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Marketers use social networking for increasing brand recognition and encouraging brand loyalty.
- Social media can help connect people and businesses and help promote brand awareness.

- There are disadvantages related to social media, including the spread of misinformation and the high cost of using and maintaining social network profiles.

2.6 HOW SOCIAL NETWORKING WORKS

Social networking involves the development and maintenance of personal and business relationships using technology. This is done through the use of social networking sites, such as [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). These sites allow people and corporations to connect with one another so they can develop relationships and so they can share information, ideas, and messages.

Family members who are far apart may remain connected through personal social networking sites like [Facebook](#). They can share photos and updates on things that are going on in their lives. People can also connect with others (notably, strangers) who share the same interests. Individuals can find each other through groups, lists, and the use of hash tags.

Social networking is commonly used by marketers so they can increase brand recognition and encouraging brand loyalty. Since it makes a company more accessible to new customers and more recognizable for existing customers, social media marketing helps promote a brand's voice and content.



For example, a frequent Twitter user may hear of a company for the first time through a news feed and decide to buy a product or service. The more exposed people are to a company's brand, the greater the company's chances of finding and retaining new customers.

Marketers use social networking as a way to improve conversion rates. Building a following provides access to and interaction with new, recent, and old customers. Sharing blog posts, images, videos, or comments on social media allows followers to react, visit the company's website, and become customers.

2.7 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking has the ability to affect both individuals and corporations—both positively and negatively. That's why it's important to weigh out both the advantages and disadvantages of using these social media sites.

Advantages

As mentioned above, social networking allows individuals to keep in contact with family and friends they would otherwise not be able to connect with because of distance or because they simply lost touch. People can also connect with other individuals who share the same interests and develop new relationships.

Social networking also allows companies to connect with new and existing clients. They can also use social media to create, promote, and increase brand awareness. They also rely on reviews and comments made by their clientele. The more customers post about a company, the more valuable the brand authority becomes. This leads to more sales and a higher ranking in search engines. Social networking can, therefore, help establish a brand as legitimate, credible, and trustworthy.

A company may use social networking to demonstrate its customer service level and enrich its relationships with consumers. For example, if a customer complains about a product or service on Twitter, the company may address the issue immediately, apologize, and take action to make it right.

Disadvantages

Social networking can have a big impact on the spread of misinformation. And it can spread like wildfire. This became increasingly prevalent after 2012. This information starts as rumors, which spread faster than facts. One study found that misinformation is 70% more likely to be shared than factual information on Twitter.⁵

Networking on social media can have just as much of a detrimental impact on companies. Criticism of a brand can spread very quickly on social media. This can create a virtual headache for a company's public relations department.

Although social networking itself is free, building and maintaining a company profile takes hours each week. Costs for those hours add up quickly. In addition, businesses need many followers before a social media marketing campaign starts generating a positive return on investment (ROI). For example, submitting a post to 15 followers does not have the same effect as submitting the post to 15,000 followers.

Pros

- People can use social media to connect with others, including friends, family, and those with the same interests.
- Companies can use social networks to reach new and existing clients, and to build and improve their brand name.
- Corporations that use social media can connect with their clients and demonstrate the level of their customer service.

Cons

- Social media helps spread misinformation.
- Criticism of companies can spread quickly, causing problems for their public relations departments.
- Advertising and maintaining a corporate profile on social media can be costly.

2.8 EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Almost every product or service you use is backed by a company that has a social media presence. It's virtually impossible to think of any major corporation that doesn't operate, market, and advertise on social networks. Tapping into social media is not only a good business practice, but it's also necessary if you're going to succeed in the corporate world. Here are two examples of companies that are doing it right.

Taco Bell

Popular fast-food chain Taco Bell has more than 1.4 million followers on Instagram and nearly two million followers on Twitter. The company knows how to engage people on social media, posting content about its menu offerings, employees, and restaurants. Taco Bell also posts light-hearted tweets and Instagram posts that garner thousands of replies, retweets, and likes.

Taco Bell lobbied for a taco emoji by creating a petition on Change.org in 2014. The company spread the word on social media. The petition garnered more than 32,000 signatures from Taco Bell enthusiasts. Apple released the taco emoji in November 2015 when it released iOS 9.

Kylie Jenner

You don't have to be a corporation to know how to use social media. This is, after all, the age of the influencer. Kylie Jenner, has more than 217 million followers on Instagram, 1.7 million followers on Snapchat, and almost 37 million followers on Twitter.

The young influencer and reality television star uses her social media platforms to boost her image and brand name. She is also an entrepreneur who uses social networking to promote her business, Kylie Cosmetics. The beauty brand earned her a spot on Forbes' list of self-made women, young billionaires, and the Celebrity 100 of 2020. Want proof of her reach? The company's lip kits sold out within 10 minutes of the star tweeting the link to her followers in February 2016.

2.9 SOME OF THE POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. *What is the purpose of social networking?*

Social networking serves as a way to connect individuals with other people and businesses to share information, ideas, and messages. Companies also use social networks to create and increase brand recognition, promote products and services, and to answer customer queries and concerns.

2. *What are the main types of social networks?*

The main types of social media include big names like Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and Twitter. These are the most popular social networking sites in the United States. Others include Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube. LinkedIn is another popular site, which helps connect professionals with coworkers, business contacts, and employers.

3. *Why are social networks important?*

Social networks are important because they allow people to develop relationships with others with whom they might not otherwise be able to connect. It also helps boost

business productivity when used for public relations, marketing, and advertising purposes.

4. *What are the top 10 social networking sites?*

According to Statista, the top 10 social networking sites are Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Messenger by Google, and Tumblr.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – ONLY FOR REFERENCE

2.10 SOME OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The term “social network” is synonymous with Facebook, although the big-picture concept applies to most major social sites.

The purpose of social networking is pretty straightforward: that is, to provide users a platform to connect with others. Of the various types of social media, networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn represent the bread and butter of modern marketers. After all, these sites put marketers on a level playing field with their clients, customers and leads when it comes to, well, *networking*.

In short, social networking sites encourage users to:

- Post, share and respond to each other’s content. From blog posts to infographics and beyond, just about any form of content is welcome
- Directly connect with others. Whether as friends or fans, an engaged social following signals clout for marketers and brands alike
- Form communities and discuss relevant news within those communities

So, what do social networking sites look like in action?

Facebook

 **Mark Zuckerberg**
June 6 at 10:34am · [See post](#)

I'm heading to Chicago later this month for our first ever Facebook Communities Summit with a few hundred of our top Facebook group admins. For the past decade, Facebook has been focused on making the world more open and connected -- and we're always going to keep doing that. But now it's clear we have to do more. We also need to bring people closer together and build common understanding. One of the best ways to do that is by helping people build community, both in the physi... [See More](#)



Like Comment Share

Michael Arrington, Dave Morin and 126K others Top Comments ▾

4,614 shares Write a comment...

Boasting well over 1.2 billion daily active users, Mark Zuckerberg's brainchild put the concept of social networking on the map. [Facebook's diverse demographics](#) cover just about every location, age group and level of income, making it a prime hub for personal and professional connections alike. As a result, [Facebook ads](#) have become a goldmine for marketers as just about any audience is already built into the platform.

LinkedIn

 **Basecamp**
Internet • 10,098 followers
[See all 110 employees on LinkedIn →](#)

[Follow](#) [See jobs](#)

About us
Basecamp solves the critical problems that every growing business deals with. It's the saner, calmer, organized way to manage projects and communicate company-wide.

We built Basecamp because we need what you need: a system to help stay on top of it all. A way to keep people on the same page, organize and share information, discuss, make and nail down decisions. A system that helps us prioritize meaningful work, cut out wasted time and restore some work-life balance to employees.

Available on [basecamp.com](#), Android, and iOS.

Recent update [See all](#)



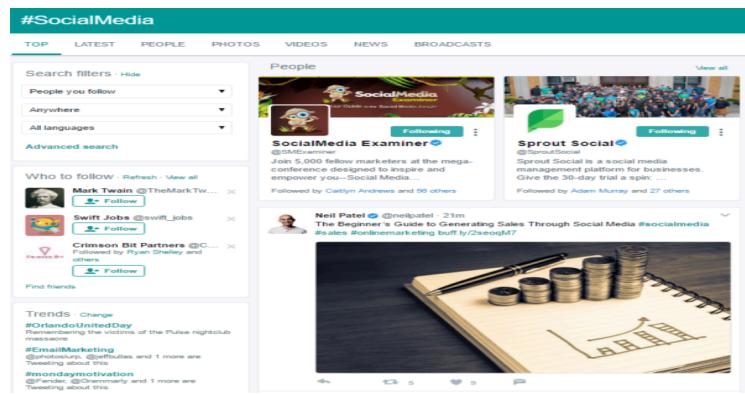
What's that mystery in your inbox costin...
[m.signalvnoise.com](#)

6 Likes 3w

[See more ▾](#)

Offering more of a "suit and tie" vibe for its users, LinkedIn represents the go-to platform for those looking to connect with industry professionals. Unlike other sites where just about "anything goes," LinkedIn is laser-focused on industry-specific content. Allowing users the opportunity to put themselves in front of CEOs and executives, LinkedIn represents social networking in its purest form.

Twitter



Emphasizing bite-sized content and updates, Twitter gives users the ability to connect with just about *anyone* in an instant.

Brands. Celebrities. Customers. You name it.

Don't let the 140-character limit fool you, though: Twitter is a potential powerhouse for mobile marketers. In the right hands, the platform represents an incredibly powerful branding tool.

From responding to customer concerns to getting in touch with influencers, there's a reason why nearly *half* of marketers agree that Twitter is the [best platform for customer engagement](#).

2. Image Sharing & Messaging Sites

We currently live in an era of digital marketing dominated by visual content. HubSpot notes that visual content on social media receives more engagement than written content. Visual assets have also become a top priority for modern brands.

As a result, new types of social media based primarily on images have emerged. Image-sharing platforms like Instagram and visual messaging apps such as Snapchat exploded in popularity in recent years. In fact, Instagram is on a fast-track toward one billion users as Snapchat's recent IPO has dominated the tech world in 2017.

As a quick aside, Instagram and Snapchat *do* have video capabilities. However, most of their marketing power comes through imagery.

But why are image-based social platforms receiving so much love? For starters, such sites:

- Represent prime places to curate and promote user-generated content via branded hashtags
- Allow brands and users alike to show off product photos *without* coming off like a used-car salesman
- Provide users a much-needed break from traditional blogs and lengthy written content

Of the various types of social media, image-based platforms cover a wide range of industries and audiences as noted below.

Instagram



Don't write off Instagram due to its reputation as a place for little more than selfies and celebrity gossip. Given that 65% of the top performing posts on Instagram contain products, there's no need for marketers to be shy when selling via visual content. Meanwhile, there's perhaps no better platform today for encouraging user-generated content and creating a connection with your customers.

Snapchat



Snapchat's "self-destructing" photo messaging platform has proven to be a massive hit with millennials. Although its variety of fun filters are indeed amusing, its marketing power seems to be reserved mostly for bigger brands for the time being. That said, smaller teams are finding creative ways to market via Snapchat to build a sense of hype around their products.

Pinterest

Whole Foods Market

326,131 Followers 792 Following
www.wholefoodsmarket.com
Austin, TX / We started out with 1 store in Austin, TX. Today, we're the world's leading natural & organic foods with more than 450 stores in the U.S., U.K. & Canada!



Summer Recipes
1,252 Pins



Regarded as a “social bookmarking” site, Pinterest is a unique beast. Acting as a digital pinboard for users, Pinterest serves as a platform for inspiration, how-to’s and “hacks” primarily in the B2C space (think: fashion, food and beauty). With the platform boasting 5% of *all* sales referral traffic, it’s clear that visual content is second-to-none when it comes to ecommerce.

3. Video Sharing Sites

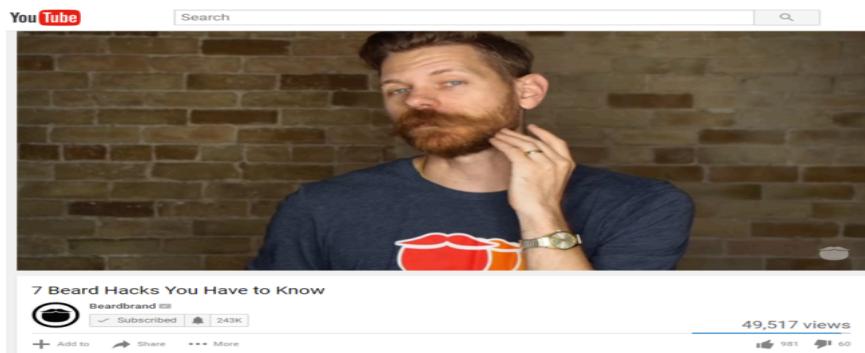
Simply put video boasts more shares and conversions than of any type of marketing content. Much like image-based social sites, video hubs like YouTube and Vimeo are attracting visitors in droves via visual content.

YouTube boasts well over one billion daily users, signaling itself as a major player in the social sphere. While some may doubt YouTube’s status as a social platform, its massive community of creators would beg to differ.

Versus the other types of social media, what do video sharing sites have to offer marketers? For starters:

- Video content requires less effort for viewers to take in. There’s no reading or no scrolling, just watching.
- There’s a lower barrier to entry than ever for video creation thanks to modern smartphones and laptops.
- Videos are optimal for educating your audience. How-to’s and tutorials are the cornerstones of social video content.

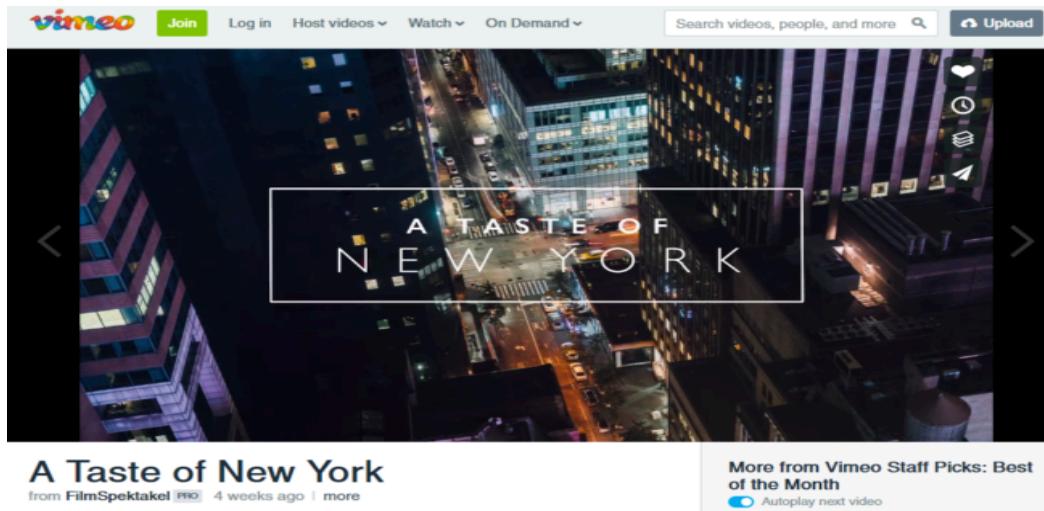
YouTube



Marketing via YouTube does *not* mean creating an endless stream of commercials.

From education to entertainment, brands are promoting YouTube channels for just about any niche. For marketers, YouTube provides yet another avenue to show off products “in the wild.” Through tutorials and unboxings, brands are simultaneously teaching and selling to audiences en masse via video.

Vimeo



Vimeo has the distinction of being the first video site to support HD video uploads. As such, Vimeo's community is made up primarily of professional filmmakers, editors and marketers looking to show off their latest work. A far cry from the world of car vlogs and off-the-cuff videos, Vimeo's content is typically elegant and eye-popping.

4. Social Blogging

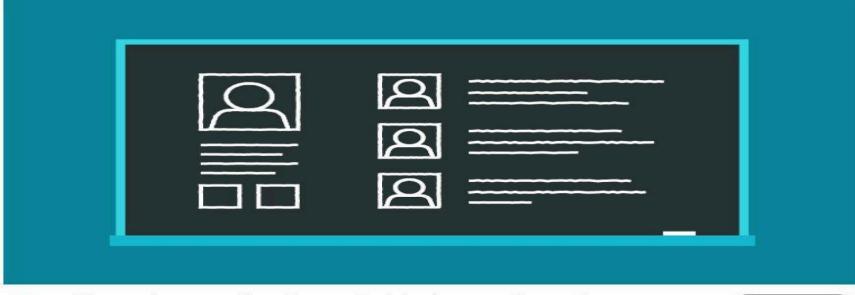
In the wake of social networking, many critics may claim that traditional blogging has gone the way of the dinosaur. That said, brands who blog receive more leads and SEO juice than those who don't. Despite the numerous types of social media platforms out there, there's still plenty of power in blogging.

As a result, social blogging sites like Medium and Tumblr have emerged to provide marketers fresh ways to engage their audiences via written content. The benefits of such platforms for marketers include:

- Squeezing the most out of your blog content in terms of SEO performance.
- Reaching a broader audience beyond your own readership.

Positioning power, as those who frequently publish on Medium may build themselves up as an authority in their space.

Medium



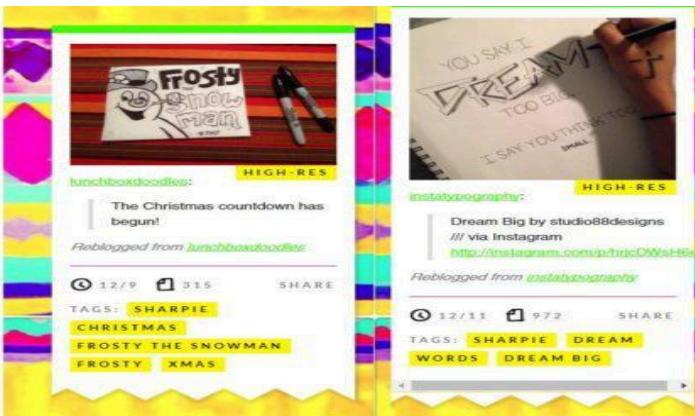
Sprout Social [Follow](#)
Sprout Social is a social media management platform for businesses. Give the 30-day trial a spin: <http://bit.ly/...>
Nov 7, 2016 · 5-min read

7 Social Media Marketing Lessons Brands Can Learn From Teens

Never miss a story from **Sprout Social**, when you sign up for Medium. Learn more [GET UPDATES](#)

Medium represents a publishing platform that covers just about every corner of the web. Part of the beauty of the platform is that it's open to anyone from aspiring bloggers to industry rockstars. Between building authority to reaching new readers, Medium is a modern must-do for brands looking to expand the reach of their written content.

Tumblr



Sharpie
Uncap what's inside.
sharpie.com

ABOUT THIS SITE
The official tumblr of Sharpie.
Uncapped and unplugged. Bold and behind-the-scenes.
What are you gonna' start?!
[ASK ME ANYTHING](#) [SUBMIT A POST](#) [RSS ARCHIVE](#) [RANDOM](#)

#SHARPIEHELLO

lunchboxdoodles: [HIGH-RES](#)
The Christmas countdown has begun!
Reblogged from [lunchboxdoodles](#)
12/9 315 SHARE
TAGS: SHARPIE, CHRISTMAS, FROSTY THE SNOWMAN, FROSTY, XMAS

instatypography: [HIGH-RES](#)
Dream Big by studio88designs
/// via Instagram
<http://instagram.com/p/hrcDWsHRE/>
Reblogged from [instatypography](#)
12/11 972 SHARE
TAGS: SHARPIE, DREAM, WORDS, DREAM BIG

Tumblr represents a sort of throwback to the old days of Livejournal. Supporting text, image *and* video-based content, Tumblr blogs give users a little bit of everything.

Quora

Answer · Software Engineering C... · 2015

What is the best career advice for a software developer to earn a higher salary?

 John L. Miller, 25 years at: Microsoft, CMU, Amazon, Google, Oracle, JPRC, etc.: PhD in C.S.
Answered Dec 28, 2015 · Upvoted by Sumit Jha, SDE-II at Amazon (2017-present) and Niko Gamulin, senior software engineer, PhD in Machine Learning

For my purposes, I'll assume your question is "What is the best career advice for a software developer to earn higher total compensation?" Here's a few things I think are important.

1. Switch companies...

(more)

Upvote Downvote Comment

Answer · Social Psychology · 19h

What small thing can tell you a lot about a person?

 Sean Kerman, Son of Quora
Answered 19h ago

How bothered they get by small problems. Example: Yelling at a store employee for not having the right shoe size available. When there are 3 more shoe stores right next door. I'm impressed by a perso... (more)

Upvote Downvote Comment

Quora is a community quite literally centered around answering questions. Users can customize their question streams and profiles based on their interests, allowing them to essentially upvote and downvote answers accordingly. Ideally, the cream rises to the top in terms of the quality of answers, leading to major clout for those able to provide worthwhile responses to users.

[Yahoo! Answers](#)

Discover Answer

-  [What does the "Congratulations!" Notification with a crown on the side on musical.ly mean?](#)

💡 Best answer: It got send to everyone because the app recently hit 100M users, using the app so they're congratulating you for being part of it! (:

44 answers · Other - Internet · 3 days ago
-  [Have errors on your Windows computer ever annoyed you enough to reformat the HDD, and reload Windows all over again?](#)

💡 Best answer: Yes, especially since I'm using Windows 7

8 answers · Software · 17 hours ago
-  [If free will cannot exist in biological form can it exist in AI form potentially?](#)

16 answers · Programming & Design · 2 days ago

Yahoo! Answers is a somewhat less formal version of Quora, allowing those asking questions to rate answers alongside users. Focusing more on immediacy rather than community, Yahoo! Answers is a sort of “one and done” for those looking for simple answers in a snap.

3. CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CROSS FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

3.0 CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

“Cultural ignorance leads to lost opportunities and increased level of tension between people.”
-Gamble and Gamble (2013)

Cross-cultural communication is the process of recognizing both differences and similarities among cultural groups in order to effectively engage within a given context. In other words, cross-cultural communication refers to the ways in which people from different cultural backgrounds adjust to improve communication with one another.

In today's rapidly changing professional world, it's critical to gain an understanding of how cultural elements influence communication between individuals and groups in the workplace. Developing strong cross-cultural communication skills is the first step in creating a successful work environment that brings out the best in all of an organization's team members.

Cross cultural communication is an understanding of how people from different cultures speak, communicate and perceive the world around them. In organizations it deals with different business customs, beliefs and communication strategies. Cross-cultural communication is imperative for companies that have a diverse workforce and participate in the global economy. It is important for employees to understand the factors that are part of an effective, diverse workforce.

Cross-cultural communication has become strategically important to companies due to the growth of global business, technology, and the Internet. Understanding cross-cultural communication is important for any company that has a diverse workforce or plans on conducting global business. This type of communication involves an understanding of how people from different cultures speak, communicate, and perceive the world around them. Language differences, high-context vs. low-context cultures, nonverbal differences, and power distance are major factors that can affect cross-cultural communication.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Today's workplace is rapidly becoming vast, as the business environment expands to include various geographic locations and span numerous cultures and it is pertinent to understand how to communicate effectively with individuals who speak another language, or who rely on different means to reach a common goal. Given different cultural contexts, this brings new communication challenges to the workplace. Even when employees located in different locations or offices speak the same language (for instance, correspondences between English-speakers in the U.S. and English-speakers in the UK), there are some cultural differences that should be considered in an effort to optimize communications between the two parties.

In such cases, an effective communication strategy begins with the understanding that the sender of the message and the receiver of the message are from different cultures and backgrounds. Of course, this introduces a certain amount of uncertainty, making communications even more complex.

Without getting into cultures and sub-cultures, it is perhaps most important for people to realize that a basic understanding of cultural diversity is the key to effective cross-cultural communications. Without necessarily studying individual cultures and languages in detail, we must all learn how to better communicate with individuals and groups whose first language, or language of choice, does not match our own.

While many companies now offer training in the different cultures where the company conducts business, it is important that employees communicating across cultures practice patience and work to increase their knowledge and understanding of these cultures. This requires the ability to see that a person's own behaviors and reactions are often culturally driven and that while they may not match our own, they are culturally appropriate. Generally speaking, patience, courtesy and a bit of curiosity go a long way.

3.2 SIX KEY BARRIERS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

1- ETHNOCENTRISM

We all have a natural tendency to look at other cultures through our own lenses. Ethnocentrism happens when we implicitly believe our way of doing things and seeing things is the right and only way. As a result, we negatively judge behaviours that don't conform to our world vision. We perceive other's behaviours as odd and improper. Ethnocentrism also creates an "us versus them" mentality that can be detrimental.

2- STEREOTYPING

It's also common to rely on oversimplified clichés about people from different cultures. In fact, there are quite a few cross-cultural trainings in the market that are focused on memorizing cultural differences and can reinforce stereotyping. Learning about differences can be useful as a starting point. But individuals are unique; you can never predict a person's behaviour based on his or her nationality. For example the French people believe, *The British never invite you for dinner*, which is a common social activity in France. But that is not true and cannot be generalized.

3- PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

To manage cross-cultural teams successfully, you need to flex your own style. It's not easy to go against your natural preferences. People can feel unauthentic and incompetent. A French manager who went to the United States. He found out that his typical French style of giving feedback, focused on what was "wrong" rather than on what was working well, was undermining his team's confidence. He realised what the problem was, but he felt artificial acting the "American" way. He went back to France as soon as he could.

4- LANGUAGE BARRIERS

All teams have a common language, but when some people are more fluent than others, it creates social distance between members. In global teams, people who are less fluent in English tend to withdraw from communication, which means the team may not get all the input it needs. Understanding what's said can be challenging if people speak too fast or use too much slang. This also might have an influence on how people's competence and performance are perceived. In organisations non-English native speakers may feel that their career progression opportunities may not be the same as for English native speakers.

5- SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Non-verbal communication involves signs, symbols and even unconscious movements such as body language. Cultural and ethical values of a social group play a pivotal role in a person's non-verbal communication such as hand gestures, winking and physical distance and their meaning. Each gesture and symbol has differing meanings in different cultures. For example, in certain cultures, eye contact is the most critical aspect of a conversation as improper eye contact may signal lack of self-confidence such as Spain. On the contrary, other cultures may find direct eye contact during conversations as rude or disrespectful, such as in China. Further, physical touch with a stranger is strictly prohibited in some cultures such as China or Japan. However,

hug and handshake are normal for western societies while having healthy conversation with others. Consequently, gestures often cause barriers to effective intercultural communication.

6- GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE

In global virtual teams, people don't get the chance to interact and build relationships with each other as in a traditional office environment. And the less you know about people, the less you share information with them. Collaboration within virtual teams is, therefore, more challenging. Groups outside of the head office can also feel excluded. On the other hand, head office group members might think that other colleagues are not contributing. Differences in time zones also can be challenging. Often if you're not in the headquarters, you are expected to cope with meeting timings that are less convenient.

7- CONFLICTING VALUES

Culture is like an iceberg: what you see are the behaviours, and those are influenced by the invisible values under the water line. Cultural clashes happen when other people's behaviour compromises our own values. Often, when you don't understand or don't agree with a behaviour, it means that there are conflicting values under the water line. There is no right or wrong way of doing things; it's just a matter of cultural norms. Below, you'll see a (non-exhaustive) list of common conflicting cultural values:

- **Task oriented vs. relationship oriented**

In some countries like the US, people view conversations as an opportunity to exchange information. People get down to business quickly. In Latin American countries, for instance, conversations are primarily an opportunity to enhance the relationship. A Latin American employee said "I once worked for an American company where, in meetings, participants barely introduced each other; we got down to work immediately. Being a Latin American, it took me a while to get used to it".

- **Direct vs. indirect communication**

In countries like Germany, it is a sign of professionalism to speak clearly and leave no room for misinterpretation. In countries like Korea, people prefer to communicate indirectly. People approach problems through vague references. The danger here is that a person from a direct culture may come across as insensitive, while the person from the indirect culture may appear imprecise.

- **Open subtle disagreement**

Cultures that place a high value on "face" and group harmony may be averse to confrontation, like in China. In other cultures, having a "good fight" is a sign of trust, like in the Netherlands. People from different parts of the world also vary in the amount of emotion they show during professional conversations. For example, Italians raise their voices, while the British are more composed.

- **Informality vs. formality**

In some countries, such as Australia, people are generally casual; in others, like Japan, people tend to be more formal. To informal people, formality might be interpreted as the sign of stiffness, while informality to formal people might be perceived as a lack of professionalism.

- **Structured vs. flexible scheduling**

All businesses follow timetables, but in some cultures, people strictly adhere to the schedule, whereas in others, they treat it as a suggestion. For some, “five minutes” could mean half an hour, and “tomorrow” could mean the next few days. In Brazil, meetings start after waiting for a while for everyone to join. It feels disrespectful not to wait a bit for the late comers. In the UK, not starting the meeting on time might be considered disrespectful towards those who made it to the meeting on time.

3.3 TEN TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Here are some simple tips to help you improve your cross-cultural communication:

1. Maintain etiquette

Many cultures have specific etiquette around the way they communicate. Before you meet, research the target culture, or if time allows, do some cross cultural training. For example, many cultures expect a degree of formality at the beginning of communication between individuals. Every culture has its own specific way of indicating this formality: ‘Herr’ and ‘Frau’ in Germany, reversing family and given names in China and the use of ‘san’ in Japan for men and women etc. Be aware of these familiarity tokens and don’t jump straight to first name terms until you receive a cue from the other person to do so.

2. Avoid slang

Not even the most educated non-native English speaker will have a comprehensive understanding of English slang, idioms and sayings. They may understand the individual words you have said, but not the context or the meaning. As a result you could end up confusing them or at worst, offending them.

3. Speak slowly

Even if English is the common language in a cross cultural situation it’s not a good idea to speak at your normal conversational speed. Modulating your pace will help, as will speaking clearly and pronouncing your words properly. Break your sentences into short, definable sections and give your listener time to translate and digest your words as you go. But don’t slow down too much as it might seem patronising. If the person you’re speaking to is talking too quickly or their accent is making it difficult for you to understand them, don’t be afraid to politely ask them to slow down too.

4. Keep it simple

In a cross cultural conversation there’s no need to make it harder for both of you by using big words. Just keep it simple. Two syllable words are much easier to understand than three syllable words, and one syllable words are better than two syllable words. Say “Please do this quickly” rather than “Please do this in an efficacious manner.”

5. Practice active listening

Active listening is a very effective strategy for improving cross cultural communication. Restate or summarise what the other person has said, to ensure that you have understood them correctly, and ask frequent questions. This helps build rapport and ensures that important information doesn’t get missed or misunderstood.

6. Take turns to talk

Make the conversation flow more freely by taking it in turns to speak. Make a point and then listen to the other person respond. Particularly when people are speaking English as their second

language it's better to talk to them in short exchanges rather than delivering a long monologue that might be difficult for them to follow.

7. Write things down

If you're not sure whether the other person has understood you properly, write it down to make sure. This can be particularly helpful when discussing large figures. For example, in the UK we write a billion as 1,000,000,000 but in the USA, it's written as 1,000,000,000,000.

8. Avoid closed questions

Don't phrase a question that needs a 'yes' or 'no' answer. In many cultures it is difficult or embarrassing to answer in the negative, so you will always get a 'yes' even if the real answer is 'no'. Ask open-ended questions that require information as a response instead.

9. Be careful with humour

Many cultures take business very seriously and believe in behaving professionally and following protocol at all times. Consequently, they don't appreciate the use of humour and jokes in a business context. If you do decide to use humour make sure it will be understood and appreciated in the other culture and not cause offence. Be aware that British sarcasm usually has a negative effect abroad.

10. Be supportive

Effective cross cultural communication is about all parties feeling comfortable. In any conversation with a non-native English speaker, treat them with respect, do your best to communicate clearly and give them encouragement when they respond. This will help build their confidence and trust in you.

3.4 CULTURAL BARRIERS IN THE WORKPLACE

American workplaces in the 21st century must deal with several personnel challenges, including increased cultural diversity and a range of ages in their work forces. These factors often produce cultural barriers between coworkers that can have an adverse effect on productivity and morale. Demonstrating awareness of these cultural barriers often reduces their detrimental impact.

□ Verbal and Language Barriers

With the increased influence of globalization, many workplaces feature individuals who have moved from other areas of the country, or who are from other countries entirely. Regional differences in informal language and communication style can produce misunderstandings that are often amusing, but sometimes result in serious consequences. Workers who speak with a strong regional or national accent may find their colleagues have difficulty understanding them. Minimizing the use of slang and including visual aids with oral presentations can reduce the impact of language barriers.

□ Nonverbal Communication and Personal Space

Nonverbal communication often has a significant impact on interpersonal interactions, and presents another area where misunderstandings can occur. For example, many women from non-Western cultures find it difficult to act assertively with men, even when they hold equal or supervisory positions. People from Latin cultures maintain less personal space than many American, German or Japanese individuals find comfortable to maintain. Many Americans take an informal approach to their colleagues, referring to nearly everyone by their first names, a practice that people from more formal cultures may find disrespectful or even offensive.

□ Generational Barriers

Many offices and factories in the 21st century include workers from four different generational groups: mature workers near or past traditional retirement age, baby boomers in their late 40s to early 60s, Generation X workers in their late 30s and 40s and Generation Y workers in their 20s and 30s. Each age group has a different general approach to work, which often leads to conflicts with older workers describing younger workers as "slackers," and younger workers criticizing older workers as being "out of touch."

□ Status and Resistance

Workers who are accustomed to workplaces where seniority and status are emphasized may find it difficult to adapt to more fluid environments, where job titles are de-emphasized and production methods do not always follow a predetermined set of guidelines. Other workers may also resist the development of a more diverse workforce. These workers often persist in holding stereotyped opinions about particular cultural groups or workers who are otherwise "different" from themselves.

3.5 HANDLING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN A GLOBAL BUSINESS

By having a job in a global business can give you the opportunity to travel the world. It can also mean having the chance of embarrassing yourself if you're not familiar with the rules of a foreign culture. When you work with people in different countries, follow their lead and ask for their help. You might also consider hiring a knowledgeable local guide who can give you tips on how to blend in.

◆ Culture and Law

Freedom of speech and assembly are not the norm in every country and that can affect business decisions abroad. While in the U.S. you might lobby customers to contact their representatives about legislation affecting your business, that might not be a good idea elsewhere. In fact, it may be illegal. Keep in mind that local culture affects not only the law itself but the way it's enforced. Read up on local regulations and how to comply with them. Your embassy or consulate can recommend local attorneys and professionals who can provide legal guidance. Your branch office may also have a list of guidelines.

◆ Values and Attitudes

While we tend to treat our own values and attitudes as the norm, they're often the result of cultural identity. In some societies a customer's duties to her family are her most sacred calling. Consequently, asking about her family life or sending presents to her children may be appropriate, even expected. Some people prefer a strict separation between personal and business activities, so asking a client about his wife or family could be considered impolite or intrusive. Consider hiring a guide or tutor to educate you about local values, consulting with co-workers before your visit, or both. Over-educated yourself is probably better than the alternative.

◆ Communication Preferences

You'll probably have to adapt your communication style according to the culture of the place you're visiting. Providing plenty of personal space might be better in one place, while in another people may stand close to you or touch you when speaking as a matter of course. Observe those around you to see how they communicate and take note of how much personal information they

convey. Notice whether they're up-close and personal or distant and businesslike. Ask if you're not certain. It's better than making a costly mistake.

◆ Professionalism and Attire

The way you dress can affect how people perceive you in any situation. However, different cultures have different opinions on what constitutes professional attire. In some countries, women are expected to cover their heads and most of their bodies. Some societies consider wearing bold colors disrespectful. Take note of how your clients and partners dress and model your clothing after theirs. You can also ask your guide if your attire is appropriate. Make sure you're not co-opting attire that has religious symbolism to avoid giving offense accidentally.

◆ Timing and Appointments

Every culture has its own concept of time. Appointments happen right on schedule in some places. A set meeting time is a mere suggestion elsewhere. If you get frustrated when a business partner is late, he may consider you unprofessional or rude. Similarly, the way business professionals use their time can change across cultures. Short, succinct meetings may be the norm as opposed to leisurely lunches that extend into the evening.

The Most Important Criteria for Solving Ethical Dilemmas in Business

Periodic public scandals in which tremendously wealthy people are accused of bilking the poor are a particularly dramatic example of the ethical problems that can emerge in business. When business people are corrupted by the idea that anything is justified in the pursuit of greater profit, they sometimes engage in unsavory behavior.

◆ Values

Those who investigate and attempt to resolve ethical dilemmas within the business world must be very clear about their own values and motivations. Just as individuals who are overcome by greed can act immorally and break the law, people who oppose them can act in the service of vengeance rather than justice. The resolution of ethical business dilemmas needs to be guided by a strong set of mutually agreed upon values. For example, the idea that workers should be paid a fair wage for their work is widely agreed upon although the interpretation of "fair" may vary. This is a starting point on which to build a dialog that results in ethical clarity for everyone involved.

◆ Leadership

The hierarchical structure of a large business can begin to totter when it lacks strong and decisive leadership. Business leaders are in an ideal position to act as ethical exemplars for their companies and to enforce ethical standards among their employees. Although there will always be people who are willing to bend or break rules in the pursuit of illicit gain, this is much more difficult to do in a business that puts a premium on ethical behavior and takes steps to propagate and defend its standards.

◆ Effectiveness

On a practical level, the means taken to solve an ethical dilemma need to be effective -- or there isn't much point in pursuing them. Excessively idealistic standards and beliefs may sound impressive, but they won't help to create an honest company if they aren't made accessible to all employees. Adopting a hands-on set of company-wide standards, complete with rewards for

upholding them and penalties for defying them, will go further toward improving ethics than a beautifully written but inapplicable treatise on the value of ethical behavior.

◆ Context

For justice to have any meaning, situations need to be considered within their individual contexts. Ethics in the abstract are universal, but in the real world there are always mitigating circumstances. For example, a person who breaks into a building and steals food because he is lost in the woods and starving is in a different ethical category than someone who makes his living as a burglar. In a similar way, ethical infractions within the world of business differ in severity and in the conditions that brought them on.

3.6 CROSS FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION/COLLABORATION/TEAM

3.6.0 INTRODUCTION

Cross-functional communication/collaboration is not exactly a new idea—businesses have leveraged it to break silos, spark innovation, and boost productivity for ages. However, as companies the world over shift to remote and flexible working arrangements, it has become both more important and more difficult to ensure effective communication and collaboration between departments.

In a nutshell, cross-functional communication/collaboration is when people from different departments or teams within a company join forces to work on a common goal or project. Whether it's product, sales, and marketing teaming up for a product launch, support and product teams working together to develop a customer-requested feature, or marketing and support teams responding to social media comments—cross-functional communication/collaboration happens every day within companies. Like with other projects, cross-functional collaboration is best when the teams communicate, understand each other's roles, and contribute to the project plan.

3.6.1 WHY CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION/COLLABORATION MATTERS

This is a no-brainer—how else would you run a business? Building a service or product, finding customers, and selling it to them all require cross-functional communication/collaboration. Like we just mentioned, even supporting your customers may involve marketing and support teams working together to address comments/mentions/messages on social media.

Cross-functional communication breaks departmental silos, spurring innovative ideas and better insights. It keeps employee engagement levels high and creates opportunities for learning, mentoring, and growth across roles and hierarchies. Best of all, effective cross-functional communication lets leaders benefit from the diversity of their workforce, build a strong team culture, and boost overall productivity.

3.6.2 BEST PRACTICES TO IMPROVE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM COLLABORATION

Establish centralized communications

Clear and timely communication is key to making cross-functional collaboration work. When conversations are spread across email, comments in Google Docs, and notes in Asana, it's easier for things to fall through the cracks. Centralizing your team's communication makes it easier for everyone to stay focused on common goals and up to date on progress.

If you haven't already, adopt a team collaboration tool like Flock to simplify cross-functional workflows and bring all stakeholders, conversations, files, meetings, and tasks together on one centralized platform. Plus, integrations for third-party tools like North, Asana, and Jira makes ensuring everyone stays connected, informed, and aligned to organizational goals a considerably less painful experience.

Centralize your team's communication and take teamwork to the next level. Try Flock.

#Assign a SPOC for each function

Cross-functional projects often involve employees with varied levels of expertise across departments. This diversity is a strength, but can also lead to conflict and miscommunication. Assigning a single point of contact (SPOC) for each function in such projects makes it easier to manage expectations, keep an eye on progress, and eliminate task overlap.

Particularly in large cross-functional projects, assigning SPOCs can help cut down on communication breakdowns because everyone knows who to go to when they have a question. SPOCs can also help consolidate communication from their respective functions and share timely updates with leadership.

#Set OKRs for cross-functional projects

Like with any project, setting **objectives and key results (OKRs)** for cross-functional projects is integral to their success. This means getting buy-in from all stakeholders on common goals, initiatives, deliverables, metrics, and timelines. Setting OKRs increases transparency within cross-functional projects, so employees can see what co-workers are working on, share progress against measurable goals, and stay aligned to common goals. Pair this with assigning SPOCs for each function, and everyone in your cross-functional project/team knows who is responsible for what and who to go to when they have questions or need specific knowledge.

#Speak a shared language to keep everyone engaged

While clear OKRs and regular check-ins help, nothing derails cross-functional collaboration like the lack of a shared language. We've all experienced our fair share of "heard everything, understood nothing" moments when co-workers from other departments use acronyms specific to their work. String a few such moments together and engagement levels drop, making miscommunication inevitable. Using a common organizational language that everyone understands (brief everyone on jargon, if any) cuts down on time spent seeking clarifications and enhances knowledge sharing within your cross-functional team.

#Focus on the positive when resolving conflicts

Conflict is unavoidable in the workplace, and even more so in cross-functional teams, but it can also be a **catalyst for creativity**. Each department in your organization has its own way of doing things, and bringing them together means dealing with a clash of working styles, diverse backgrounds, differing levels of knowledge, and strong opinions. Resolving cross-functional conflicts is easier when leaders focus on the positives—lessons learned and/or actionable steps the team can take—rather than worry about the cons of the situation. As Robert Townsend said, "a good manager doesn't try to eliminate conflict; he tries to keep it from wasting the energies of his people."

Encourage open feedback from all stakeholders

Open feedback is essential in any cross-functional environment. It's not just about optimizing workflows and business processes either. Encouraging clear and candid peer-to-peer feedback in

cross-functional teams also helps employees build trust and forge strong working relationships. This, in turn, drives innovation when employees feel safe trying new things because they trust co-workers to have their back and provide honest feedback.

Major projects often demand all hands on deck from various teams. Business leaders and project managers must be adept at coordinating cross-functional collaboration within their organizations to gain fresh perspectives, drive ambitious plans, and keep departments aligned towards a common goal.

3.6.3 CHALLENGES IN CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION

Cross-team collaboration brings diverse talent together, then why should this be any harder to manage than a typical team? However, cross-team communication can be challenging to manage. Communications across multiple functions often fail to stay within budget or on schedule, fulfill the needs of customers, or align with the company's overall goals. It takes strong project management skills, quality tools, and thoughtful strategy to get past these possible pitfalls.

For cross-functional communication to succeed, teams must align on the group's goals, tasks, and expectations. Project managers should communicate timelines and clear milestones that show progress towards the completion of the project goal.

The most common challenge of cross-functional collaboration is a difference in priorities or key performance metrics between the teams. For example, an engineer may be more interested in optimizing the efficiency of the applications running a new product. Whereas, a sales manager may be interested in the cool benefits the product has.

When teams that do not typically work together are grouped to work in a cross-organizational collaboration, it is vital to kick off the project by aligning values and identifying the most critical metrics for success as a group.

Below are a few more challenges in cross-functional collaboration.

1. Working in remote teams

With the coronavirus pandemic and various shelter-in-place mandates in effect, cross-functional collaboration has a big, new challenge. Many project managers now have to rely on digital means of communication to monitor group progress, hold team building exercises for remote teams, and share updates.

However, project management and collaboration tools like Wrike make it easy for cross-functional groups to maintain visibility into the project, collaborate, communicate, and even distribute relevant files on one portal.

2. The issue of social loafing

Remember back in college when your assigned team had to deliver a project, but there was one team member who never contributed much? That's called social loafing, and it occurs in cross-organizational collaboration as well. To eliminate this behavior, a project manager should create metrics that affect the group, and also teams within it.

3. Misunderstanding other teams' responsibilities

This often happens because different teams are so deep in their work they may not appreciate other teams' tasks and responsibilities. Different teams speak their peculiar jargon, which can complicate things in a cross-organizational audience. The awareness of differences between the teams in the cross-functional collaboration can be turned into an organizational strength if well managed.

3.6.4 Benefits of cross-team collaboration

Now, we move on to the benefits of cross-team collaboration.

- Spurring innovative ideas***

It is said that cross-functional team is a calculated investment for teams to sip in productivity and work together. This is because a collaborative team brings new insights with which comes innovation. It is a great way to boost creative minds to pool ideas together that separates businesses from their competitors. When different minds playing different roles are brought together, they think outside of the box to substantially bring better results. When people think in new ways, it helps them make smart mistakes, take better risks and spur innovation and creativity.

- Engaged employees***

One of the best ways to get workers to engage is to improve teamwork. Ensure each team's opinion is heard and carry team leaders along with each new decision. Widespread organizational collaboration leads to fully engaged workers eager to take on new projects and embrace change — not as another burden but as a challenge that will take them to the next level.

- Accelerated business velocity***

With a cross-functional collaboration culture, you gain the ability to bring products to the market faster. Teamwork and communication speed up the entire process and make it easier and more efficient. The organization's ability to create value accelerates as a result.

- Improved flexibility of the organization***

When cross-organizational collaboration improves, so does the organization's ability to handle more significant projects. Teamwork and collaboration are the foundations of work methodologies such as Agile and Scrum, which allow teams to be more flexible and responsive.

- Better alignment with stakeholders***

When you talk about organizational collaboration, it's a good idea to especially focus on external collaboration with your customers, partners, and vendors — the stakeholders whom your project and your product directly affect. If you can leverage their feedback into your product development process, there will be better alignment between the customer's actual needs and your product's features. Win-win.

- More attractive to top talent***

Cross-functional collaboration gives your organization a competitive advantage when attracting professional talent. Highly motivated job prospects want to work under people they respect and whom they feel they can learn from. Thus if you have a collaborative culture already baked into your company, you have the foundation for attracting top talent, especially from the younger generation.

- Gain a better insight**

To bring a gulp of creative ideas, cross-functional collaboration is a great choice. Creativity is a group process. When the project managers, put together people who are experts in different subjects, each with unique skills sets, it will bring out some new perspectives. This method of collaboration will bring new insights to the team to bring up creative solutions and enhance development. With each team member bringing their skills and knowledge to the table, the work will progress and thrive bringing solutions quicker.

- Engaged employees**

In the past few years, employee engagement seems to be declining. According to a 2013 Gallup Poll, 63% of employees are “not engaged” by their current work. This makes a big difference to the overall productivity of the organization. Therefore, shifting to team-oriented structures can boost team bonding, improving workplace dynamics. With a strong leader handling a cross-functional team will help in combating silo mentality and bridge the gap between team members.

- Exercising communication skills**

Effective communication is the cornerstone of any team for successful projects. It is an art that can make or break your team. Clear and concise communication encourages sharing of ideas between cross-functional teams. Having a cross-functional team means bringing in a diverse group of people who can develop their struggles and strengths of communicating by discussing constructive feedback and understanding diversity issues.

- Developing management skills**

Cross-functionality has another great value in honing management skills. Of course, managing a team doesn’t come naturally to everyone, it should be polished by learning through experiences. When the teams are put together, your management skills will really be put to the test. You will need to develop special skill sets to work with diverse backgrounds and work styles and effectively lead a cross-functional team going through unique challenges.

- You get to be in leadership roles**

Well, when you are working together with teams from different departments, you get the chance of being the boss or maybe leading the way for your team. The manager can give chance to other folks in the team to lead the project so they learn to be in the leadership role and can pump new life into the project.

- Break stereotype and benefit from diversity**

As it involves people from different areas, a team will know the strengths of other teams. When a tech team meets non-tech team, they understand each other’s efforts and take advantage of their knowledge. You start sharing common goals and foster a bit of understanding. This type of understanding that breaks the stereotype, is a boon for the business. Also, the diverse group of people of different age, background and thoughts can bring new innovation to the table.

- Further, build team spirit**

The process of cross-functional teamwork will give you an opportunity to make a team of high performers so they can bring out something huge, grow more reliant and take big challenges. Together they can create a sense of unity and learn a more about patience.

Many teams in big organizations find it a challenge to create a cross-functional collaboration to go an extra mile. So, you need to capitalize on times so you cross-functional teams deliver its best to a complete advantage. As you decide that your project needs a cross-functional, adopt the cross-functional collaboration best practices to help you make a collaborative team.

- Identify who has the best skill sets along
- Make sure the right people are selected
- Build ongoing relationships with stakeholders
- Invest in a collaboration software
- Encourage cooperation between different units
- Goals should be mutually supportive

CONCLUSION

A big contributing factor that decides the success of a project is to determine how well the teams work together. Definitely, there are going to barriers, but there will always be a solution to each. Cross-functional communication is the key for building effective collaboration among the diverse teams and have been promised to be the workplace's secret weapon for all creative problem-solving methods.