

COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEAGUES

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Communicating with colleagues is a vital part of our professional work. When a person decides to communicate with another person, we do so to fulfil a specific need. The person wants something, feels discomfort, and/or has feelings or thoughts about something. In deciding to communicate, the person selects the method or code in which he/she is comfortable and believes that the method will effectively deliver the message to the other person. The message can be either verbal or nonverbal.

In addition to communicating face to face today electronic means has made communication with a wider network of colleagues and professionals very simple. Using the computer for many of these tasks can make your life easier. When the other person receives a message, they go through the process of decoding or interpreting the meaning into understanding. Remember effective communication exists between two people when the receiver interprets and understands the sender's message in the same way the sender intended it. This will happen only if you keep your message short, sweet and simple.

If you are the communicator:

- The voice volume should not be too low to be heard or get lost in the milieu.
- The message should not be too complex, with unnecessary details and issues.
- The message should be clear without missing the point or purpose of the interaction.
- Body language and other nonverbal elements should not contradict or interfere with the verbal message. You can't afford to smile when you want to express anger or hurt or just being sorry.
- Do not use a unique or an unconventional method to deliver the message. If you do so then the receiver will fail to understand what you want to say.
- Do not pay too much attention as to how the other person is taking the message, or how the person might react. At the same time do not be absolutely oblivious to the receiver's reaction.

As a receiver:

- Listening is the greatest gift we can give another person.
- To communicate completely, listen actively.
- Do not be preoccupied only with yourself but also listen to what is being said.
- Do not rebut to what the speaker is saying.
- Do not start evaluating and making judgments about the speaker or the message.
- Ask for clarification when you do not understand.
- Sharpen concentration and hear more of what is said.
- Relate ideas and suggestions in ways that can be heard.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTERS THE MOST

The relationship between colleagues is of paramount importance as this allows a clear uninhibited communication, a supportive working environment and an enjoyable working experience. Strive to achieve a good working relationship among colleagues. Competence and humility must go hand in hand. The traditional belief that seniors are at the top of the ladder chain is no longer applicable in today's free world. Always smile and be courteous to everyone. Ideally, colleagues should respect each other, but know that we need to earn that respect.

Update your knowledge daily and learn the skill of recognising your limits. Never lose your temper. Control your tongue. It is all muscle and no bones. Be grateful to other people and usually most people will be grateful to you. Be considerate. That includes in cleaning yourself. Be a team player. When you ask for help, be respectful and personal. If communication is taken seriously, we will be frowned upon less often, and, more importantly, your relationship will improve.

COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEAGUES & CO-WORKERS

Junior colleagues are the backbone of any organization and especially so if you are service provider. If you are considered as part of your team, your team mates will treat you as their own, just as you have treated them. Remember, even if the decision you have made is only to call your seniors, if you have done so decisively and appropriately, your subordinates will fully respect and be grateful for the decision. Your nights will be easier, and days will be happier and on certain occasions you might even get served a free cup of tea.

To be successful in any organization effective communication is essential and plays an important part. Improved communication raises morale, promotes creativity and increase productivity. Discover how to be more flexible with others. People will be more likely to hear you; you'll be more likely to get the results you want. People often see things differently than we do? Each of us communicates in our own way – our style, “*Mera wala style*”. There is no right or wrong in this. As Popeye, the famous cartoon character says, "I 'yam what I 'yam!"

Communicate from Strength. The most effective people combine strength with sensitivity. Communicate assertively. Assertiveness is the most effective communication style and, perhaps, the most misunderstood one. Assertive people ask for what they want while respecting the rights of others and themselves. Coming on strong or aggressively will get short-term cooperation, but long-term resistance. Similarly, being too nice, goody, goody or passive is also ineffective and it only diminishes the respect you get from others.

GET SPECIFIC

All of us have projects and deadlines at work. We all have been frustrated by procrastinating peers and colleague's one time or the other in our career. Some people just don't get important work done on time. Very often they are nice, pleasant and you wouldn't mind hanging out with them after work, but they are frustrating when it comes to business matters. With this in mind, consider some tips and tools to helping those less than stellar work mates to get the job done in a timely fashion:

- Negotiate a very specific deadline for a particular project. It's better to actually get the other person to come up with a time and a date.
- It's one thing to have them come up with a date, but if that date is unacceptable or simply unreasonable, make it clear the reason why. "I appreciate the date you have agreed to, but as you know, there are many other projects that will be adversely impacted if we wait that long. So given that reality, let's come up with a compromise."
- Once you both agree to the date that works for you and the organization, it is absolutely essential to verbally repeat what has been agreed to; "Great, I am looking forward to receiving the project on June 15. It will be a big help." Then, follow up in writing with an e-mail reconfirming the date.
- Put a little added pressure, by marking copies of the communication to other key players within the organization. Make it clear to that you have informed others who matter that it an agreement is reached to a specific date and time regarding a specific project. Your objective is to move this from a situation that involves just the two of you and to ultimately avoid a "he said," "she said" type of situation.
- In certain instances, even if a procrastinating colleague has every intention of meeting a certain deadline, he or she may not have the necessary skills or tools to get the job done. Therefore, ask a few questions such as, "Tell me some of the keys to getting the project completed." Then, listen. If it sounds like he/she is off course, say, "This sounds great, but you might be better off speaking to so and so". It can save us all a lot of time.
- One of the worst mistakes we make in these types of situations is to give a lazy direction using very weak and confusing language. "Be sure you make the project a priority and work on it on any chance you get." When you hear yourself using such language, realize the potential for miscommunication. Start getting specific.

- Finally, when your colleague meets the agreed upon deadline, make sure you acknowledge the efforts. Tell him/her face to face and follow-up with an e-mail telling that he/she did a great job and once again copy other key players in the organization. This is about closing the loop and creating what is commonly referred to as a "best practices" situation. It sets the tone for others and teaches one a powerful lesson not only about getting projects done on time but about how people are expected to communicate in the workplace.

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK EFFECTIVELY

The ability to give effective feedback is essential for working together as a team, yet how we deliver feedback can determine whether or not it is even heard. When we receive feedback, it's important that we be able to clarify what we don't understand and offer our point of view without getting defensive.

DEFUSE THE DIFFICULT SITUATION

If your colleague feels you are responsive to a problem, they will do business with you again. The moment we're faced with a difficult situation, we must take a breath and make a quick attitude adjustment. If we think about how the situation looks and feels from your colleague's perspective, it's easier to avoid taking it personally and move to a satisfying resolution.

STAY COOL WHEN THINGS HEAT UP!

We can't change other people, we can only change ourselves. Altering our actions and reactions, we can definitely influence the response we get from others. Try to become less of a target for negative behaviours. Learn how to minimize defensiveness yours and theirs. Be ready to understand and bring out the best in others.

Reduce your stress level by learning to coexist with life's difficult people. Stress leads to missed work, missed deadlines and missing out on life! We also see increased conflict on the job and dissatisfaction among customers. Better time management is one way to reduce stress. Stress also goes down when you, understand the stress cycle and ways to step out of it. Establish goals and set priorities to assure they're achieved. Protect goals and priorities. Communicate assertively. Prevail over procrastination and **get organized.**

Lastly follow the philosophy of work as explained by Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita.

“Your right (is) only to work, never in its fruit; Let not (you) be involved in the cause of the fruits of action; Let not be your attachment to inaction.”

(Shloka 47 – Chapter 2)

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥४७॥

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