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Customizable Soft-Skills Courseware

Communication Skills for Emerging Leaders

PREVIEW

Instructor Guide

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PREVIEW

Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- *Brainstorming sessions with target audience*
- *Library research*
- *Online research*
- *Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)*
- *Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)*
- *Interviews with trainers*

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- *Learning objectives provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training*
- *Meaningful connections between the topic and students' past, present, and future*
- *Appropriate organization of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn*
- *Modeling techniques demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills*
- *Active application, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation*
- *Consistent instructions and design help students learn and retain new information*
- *Accelerated learning techniques create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles*

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.

PREVIEW

Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy (cont.)

Customizing Your Program

There are two ways you can customize this program: 1) Customize the content and 2) Customize the format.

Customizing the content is easy. The Instructor Guide and Participant Guide are created in Word, so you can simply modify the content just as you would any Word document. Some common reasons for customizing content include:

- *Changing examples to fit your industry or work environment*
- *Modifying content to match work rules and procedures*
- *Adding, deleting or rearranging content to meet training time constraints*

The other way to customize the program is to change the formatting. Typically, organizations will do this to add their corporate logo and/or colors, or it may just be an issue of personal preference. Again, treat the Instructor Guide and/or Participant Guide as you would any Word document. The styles used in this document are labeled HRDQ in the Quick Styles tab. For additional help using Word, consult the Microsoft website.

Preparing for the Training

As you know, preparation is the key to conducting an effective training. Here are some issues to consider:

Logistics

- *Advertise the training with enough advance notice that participants can block it out on their calendars. Consider contacting potential participants' managers to encourage their attendance.*
- *Send a confirmation notice before the training reminding participants of the date, time and location.*
- *Room setup: Ideally, use round tables to facilitate partner and small group interaction.*

Equipment and Supplies

In order for the training to go smoothly, have these supplies and equipment on hand:

- *Name tags*
- *Flip chart and markers, tape*
- *Laptop with projector (for the PowerPoint)*
- *Blank paper and pens, sticky notes*
- *Flip chart paper*
- *Water for yourself and the participants*
- *Beverages and snacks (optional)*
- *Timer or watch*

PREVIEW

Please note: Only the pages highlighted in yellow below are those featured in this preview.

Contents

Chapter One: Defining Communication 1
Learning objectives 2
Levels of meaning 3
The communication process 6
Levels of communication 7

Chapter Two: Communication Filters 10
Learning objectives 11
Identifying filters 12
Age 13
Race and ethnicity 15
Culture 18
Gender 20

Chapter Three: Personality Types 26
Learning objectives 27
Benefits of using the Personal Style Inventory 28
Interpretation and validation 29
Type distribution 30
Team type 31
The need for opposites 32

Chapter Four: Building Rapport 33
Learning objectives 34
The ways humans connect 35
Paraphrasing statements 37
Encouragement 39
Non-verbal and subtext messages 40

Chapter Five: Who Are Talking To? 41
Learning objectives 42
Communicating with your customers 43
Communicating with your manager 45
Communicating with your team 47
Reinforcing feedback 49
Corrective feedback 50
Chapter Six: Writing Business Documents 51
Learning objectives 52
What should you include? 53
What action do you want readers to take? 54
Putting pen to paper 55
Use the active voice 56
Don't let writer's block bog you down 57

PREVIEW

Chapter Seven: Electronic Communication 58
Learning objectives 59
E-writing 60
Netiquette 62
The shape of e-mail 63
Best uses of voice mail 65

Chapter Eight: Avoiding Unnecessary Conflict 66
Learning objectives 67
Misunderstanding or disagreement? 68
Sources of conflict 69
Preventing conflict 70
Handling conflict 72
Better next time 74

PREVIEW

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

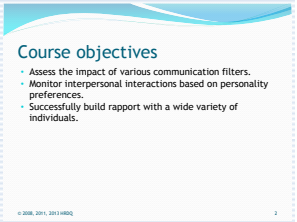
- ◊ *Identify strengths and shortcomings of your communication skills.*
- ◊ *Determine various levels of meaning and identify the subtleties of communication.*
- ◊ *Assess the impact of various communication filters.*
- ◊ *Monitor interpersonal interactions based on personality preferences.*
- ◊ *Successfully build rapport with a wide variety of individuals.*
- ◊ *Communicate effectively with coworkers, customers, teams, and managers.*
- ◊ *Prepare effective and appropriate business documents.*
- ◊ *Establish protocol for electronic communication.*
- ◊ *Prevent unnecessary conflict and rectify conflict that does occur.*

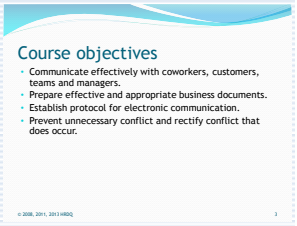
Trainer Notes

5 minutes

Introduce yourself and provide a brief background if participants don't know you. Go over logistics (schedule, breaks, restrooms, etc.) and any ground rules for the day. Typical ground rules include no electronics in use, show respect for every participant, participate fully, no dominating or interrupting, etc.

Review the course objectives with participants.





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Chapter One

Defining Communication

PREVIEW

Levels of meaning

It is not unusual to hear people say, "We have a communication problem here." This chapter provides techniques to analyze and improve your own communication. We communicate in many ways, including with our words, voice inflection, tone, eyes and body language. These are levels of communication called subtext.

If I speak and you do not understand, is it communication?

My definition of communication is:

What are the main components of communication?

What is the purpose of communication?

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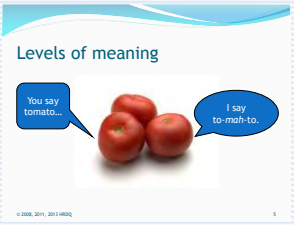
Trainer Notes

Begin a general discussion about why participants are in this class, what they expect, and the successes and challenges of communication for them. Ask them to write their answers to the questions on this page. Then discuss these questions and answers.



There needs to be mutual understanding of the message by both the sender and the receiver for it to be communication.

Definition of communication: A shared understanding of meanings.

The main components of communication are: speaker, receiver, filter, message, feedback, and background noise.

Typical answers for the purpose of communication include: to link, form connections, socialize, hold thoughts in common, generate social exchange, sustain life, develop relationships, facilitate tasks, jobs, families, and knowledge.

Age

Age is a communication filter. The conditions and events of life, particularly in youth, provide a perspective that people assume is "normal" regardless of how history interprets their era. Additionally, as people age, the accumulation of life experience continually affects perspectives.

Issue	Traditionals (born before 1946)	Baby Boomers (1946-64)	Gen X (1964-78)	Gen Y (born after 1978)
Influencers	*WWII*	*Vietnam War, civil rights*	*Iraq War*	*Digital media*
Attitude toward authority	*Automatic deference*	*Mixed feelings*	*Not intimidated*	*Believe respect must be earned*
Loyalty toward employer	*Extremely loyal*	*Value company commitment*	*Loyal to people more than company*	*Loyalty toward an idea, cause or product*
Preferred way to be managed	*Hands off*	*May be insulted by continuous feedback*	*Immediate and continuous feedback*	*Immediate and continuous feedback*
Perceived elements of success in workplace	*Meet deadlines, Learn new things, get along with people*	*Use computers, learn new things, get along with people*	*Use computers, meet deadlines, Learn new things*	*Use computers, meet deadlines, multitasking*
Top developmental areas	*Skills training in my area of expertise, computer training*	*Skills training in my area of expertise, leadership*	*Leadership, skills training in my area of expertise*	*Leadership, problem solving/ decision making*
Work/life balance	*Work to maintain job security*	*Sacrifice personal life for work*	*Value work/life balance*	*Value work/life balance*

Adapted from Generational differences in the workplace. Anick Tolbize, August 16, 2008. Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota.

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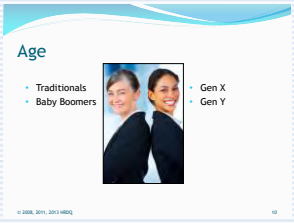
Trainer Notes



Review the differences listed in the chart. In addition, lead a discussion about stereotypical differences. Some examples: Traditionals prefer formal communication, younger workers don't have a strong work ethic, Baby Boomers believe work comes before family, Gen X's just want to have fun, etc. Discuss how these stereotypes may or may not be true.

Gender

Language use

Women frequently use linguistic disclaimers, tag questions, and "I'm sorry." Linguistic disclaimers are not designed to make the person sound like she doesn't know what she is talking about. ("This may not be a good idea, but...") Instead, they are used to maintain the collegial aspect of relationships and keep the speaker from appearing smarter than or superior to someone.

Tag questions such as "We should do this, don't you think?" are used to level the relationship, and are not questions as much as requests. This is also called an indirect style. Male subordinates sometimes misunderstand an indirect style and don't realize that a request has been made.

"I'm sorry" isn't an admission of guilt; it doesn't mean, "It's my fault." It usually means, "It's too bad this happened." It is a way to be supportive.

Because women tend to expect collegial relationships, even though their status or position in the organization is different, they often have difficulties in successfully adopting the male boss model. Because of the expectation of female collegiality, language can be used to soften the hierarchical nature of organizations so that women can be more successful, particularly with each other.

Is this true for you? How does this affect your workplace?

Have you seen this demonstrated in your organization?

Trainer Notes

Talk to the issue of power being redistributed, misunderstood, or not asserted due to these differences. You will want to speak in generalities or be prepared to facilitate a discussion to resolve the issues.

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The ways humans connect

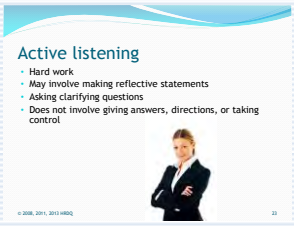
Active listening

Active listening goes beyond passively letting a message register in your ears. It involves eliminating background noise and concentrating on the person talking to determine whether to encourage them to continue or not.

Active listening:

- ◊ *Is hard work*
- ◊ *May or may not involve making reflective statements*
- ◊ *Means asking clarifying questions*
- ◊ *Does not involve giving answers, directions or taking control of a conversation*

Trainer Notes



Activity *— Have participants work in groups of three. One person will listen, one will speak for about two minutes and the third will observe and critique the active listening. The speaker should describe an event or situation and the feelings associated with it. The listener should not interrupt or ask questions. Switch so that the listener becomes the speaker and vice versa.*

Possible discussion topics: first job experience, a work experience that taught you a valuable experience, your favorite vacation spot, a current project you are working on, etc.

Debrief *by asking what participants learned from this in each role they played. Ask the speaker how it felt to be listened to, the listener how it felt to practice active listening, and ask the observer what their thoughts are.*

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Communicating with your customers

Tips and strategies

◊ *Put yourself in the customer's shoes.*

◊ *Try out your language on someone who doesn't understand the technology to see if you explain it clearly.*

◊ *Don't jump to a solution until you've identified the problem the user/customer is facing.*

◊ *Describe changes in terms of outcome rather than process.*

◊ *Always include costs, deadlines, and contingencies.*

◊ *Give and ask for feedback to clarify understanding.*

◊ *Follow up in writing – keep it clear, concise, and in non-technical terms.*

When users change their minds

When it happens:

◊ *Describe all the options and outcomes early on.*

◊ *Have contingency plans ready-to-go.*

◊ *Accept that change is a fact of life. Be surprised if your customers do not change their minds.*

◊ *Always respond with a "can do" attitude, but be ready to list the trade offs (e.g. increased costs, delayed deadlines, impact on other projects, and strain on resources).*

Trainer Notes

Review the tips and strategies for communicating with customers. Ask participants what other effective techniques they use.

Expect that users will change their minds as projects progress. Given that they will not understand the full scope of the technology and its capabilities at the onset of a project, as they move through the learning curve, they will most likely want different options.

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Communicating with your manager

The SIDES Model

Style

You can raise the odds of success when communicating with management by tailoring your communication to the person's background, organizational role and position.

Informed

- ◊ *Discuss with your manager, ahead of time, how he or she would like to be informed and about what. Some want all the details and others want to know only when something goes wrong.*
- ◊ *Use a written report with a concise executive summary.*
- ◊ *Use the "unless I hear from you" memo.*
- ◊ *Use voicemail regularly but plan your messages to be concise, to the point, and informative.*
- ◊ *Use e-mail the same way.*

Disagree

- ◊ *Make sure you and your manager agree ahead of time on how, when, and under what circumstances to disagree.*
- ◊ *Pick your battles.*
- ◊ *Acknowledge the merits of your manager's point of view before expressing your observations.*
- ◊ *Use data to support your case. Relate the data to the big picture.*

Trainer Notes

Explain the SIDES model. Provide examples of each step.

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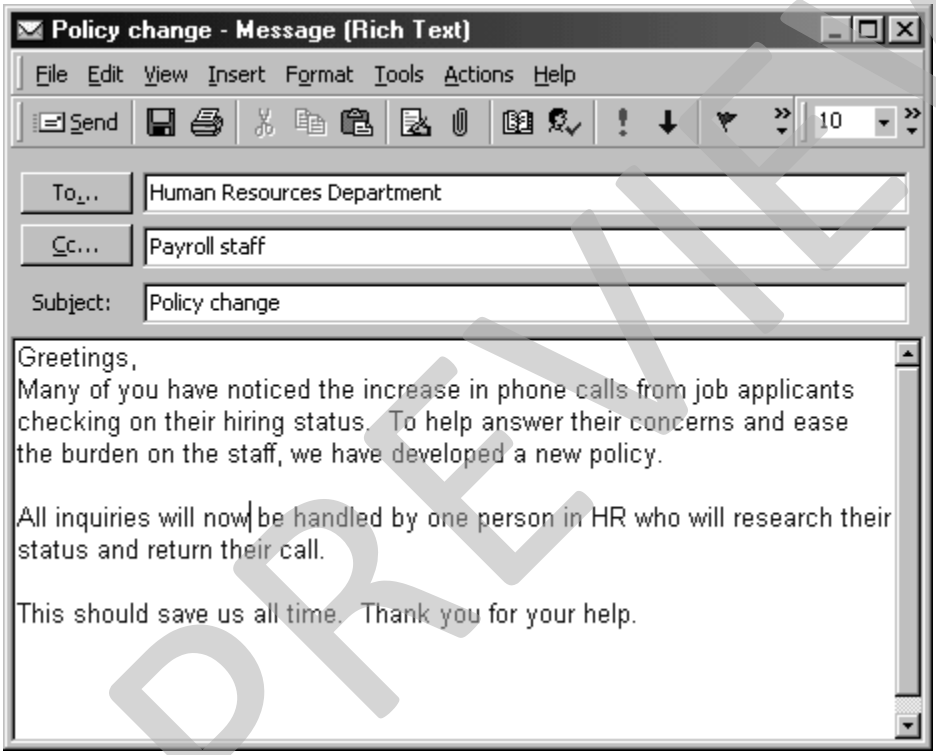
What should you include?

An outline can be created quickly and easily. Remember the five Ws and an H? Answer these questions – who, what, when, where, why, and how—and you have probably addressed everything that needs to be included in the document.

What is missing?

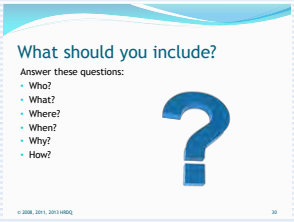
Read the e-mail below for completeness. What information could be added for a better message?



For more complex messages, use the point-and-fact outline method. Write each point you wish to make, and then list the supporting information (or facts) below.

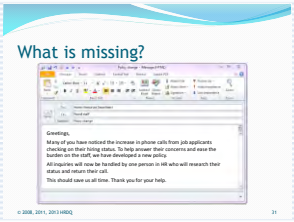
Tip: *Write each point on a sticky note of one color and write supporting facts on the same color sticky notes. This allows for visual arranging and rearranging of the information.*

Trainer Notes



Don't be intimidated by writing an outline. Remind participants that it is not a formal outline, but simply a way to ensure the completeness of information as well as the flow.

Exercise*: Read the sample e-mail out loud. Review the 5 W's and an H to see if all the necessary information is included.*



Answers*: The missing information is Who will handle these calls, How will people transfer inquiries to this person, What is the time frame for return calls, and When will the policy be effective.*

Debrief*: Ask participants what their response would be if they received this e-mail. Discuss how much time is wasted to clarify documents that are poorly written.*

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Don't let writer's block bog you down

Have you ever had paralysis set in the moment you sit down to write the memo that you must get out that day? Feeling absolutely stuck, or having writer's block, is a common occurrence.

Causes of writer's block

- ◊ *Procrastination*
- ◊ *Fear*
- ◊ *Distraction*
- ◊ *Perfectionism*

Jumpstart out of writer's block

- ◊ *Start with the facts*
- ◊ *Start by writing a chronological document*
- ◊ *Remember you are writing a draft*
- ◊ *Collect more information*
- ◊ *Beef up your outline*
- ◊ *Write your opinions*

***Tip**: Just write anything! Remember, you will edit and revise later.*

PREVIEW

Trainer Notes

The other extreme of wordy documents is no words, or writer's block.

The causes of this phenomenon are:

-procrastination

-fear that you don't write well

-fear of what others will think

-distraction by competing priorities

-perfectionism of having to do it right the first time

The cure to writer's block is simple: write something, write anything, but just get started. Edit and revise to tune up the document later.

Netiquette

Get to the point

◊ *Be direct and concise.*

◊ *Do not overload readers with too much information.*

◊ *Keep the reader's attention.*

◊ *Deliver a message with impact.*

◊ *Include all necessary pieces of information.*

Be nice

◊ *Choose your words and tone carefully.*

◊ *Use a conversational tone.*

◊ *Use humor cautiously.*

◊ *Never send e-mail when you are upset.*

Edit

◊ *Always re-read prior to sending.*

◊ *Edit just like a written document.*

Reply

◊ *Always answer e-mails that require a response.*

◊ *Acceptable response time varies; find out what is expected in your organization.*

◊ *Make sure to respond to all questions asked.*

◊ *Use read receipts when necessary, not all the time.*

Don't assume privacy

◊ *Do not write anything in e-mail that you would not want broadcast to many people. Never assume e-mail is confidential.*

◊ *Never make negative or disparaging remarks.*

◊ *Check your "to" line before sending, and make sure that you do not use "reply all" when you only meant to reply to one respondent.*

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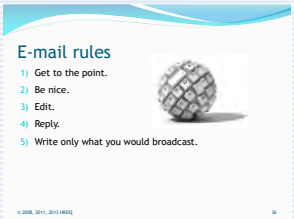
Trainer Notes

Just as you would demonstrate good manners when interacting with someone in person, use proper netiquette to avoid offending others with email as well.

Discuss the use of "emoticons such as smiley faces and other symbols that can help explain the tone of the message.

Review the rules of Netiquette.



Thought you still want a conversational tone in email, don't go overboard. Be appropriate to your readers, and never use email to avoid personal contact. Some news simply needs to be delivered in person.

Behavioral goal: Be able to prepare concise, direct and effective email that is not misinterpreted.

Handling conflict

The greatest areas for conflict occur between Thinking and Feeling, and between Judging and Perceiving.

Type	Focus when dealing with conflict
Thinker	*Finding the facts* *Analyzing differences* *Fixing the problem*
Feeler	*Caring about the people involved* *Accepting and appreciating differences* *Ensuring give and take in resolving the conflict*
Judger	*Seeking resolution* *Focusing on the present and future* *Experiencing satisfaction when conflict is over*
Perceiver	*Seeking clarification* *Focusing on the present* *Soliciting input from participants involved*

Make it what, not who

Be scrupulous about separating who someone is from what the person did or said. To resolve conflict, it is essential that people not feel attacked personally. Be clear that what they are doing doesn't work in this situation.

Good introductions to these conversations include stating your intention, which is to discuss the issue, improve the situation, and usually build on something in the past.

Say something like:

- ◊ *"I want to talk about your work."*
- ◊ *"When (this) happens, it affects my work in this way."*
- ◊ *"You want (this) to happen. Let's see if we can do some things differently that will help."*

Trainer Notes

When conflict occurs, it is often between these two pairs: T-F and J-P. Feelers call Thinkers "insensitive jerks" and Thinkers call Feelers "bleeding hearts." Think of Simon Cowell (Thinker) and Paula Abdul (Feeler) on American Idol.

Differences between Judgers and Perceivers can create tension when trying to resolve conflict. Judgers can become impatient with Perceivers, who want to delay making decisions, while Judgers want to make an agreement and reach closure as soon as possible.

Turn disagreement into dialogue by committing to understand each other. Use active listening; summarize your interest and the other's interest (what you really want), and team with the other to solve the problem, not find someone to blame. Working agreements or contracts help by clarifying expectations prior to beginning a project or working relationship.

PREVIEW

Course review

1. *Perfectionists are excellent communicators.*
   ❑ *True* ❑ *False*

2. *The main components of communication include which of the following?*

   a. *Speaker*
   b. *Subwoofer*
   c. *Receiver*
   d. *Filter*
   e. *Background noise*

3. *List the three simple steps in the communication process:*

_____

_____

_____

4. *Subtext is the part of communication that appears in small print at the bottom of the page.*
   ❑ *True* ❑ *False*

5. *Communication filters include which of the following?*

   a. *Age*
   b. *Gender*
   c. *Birthplace*
   d. *Personality type*

6. *Define communication filter:*

_____

_____

_____

Trainer Notes

1. False

2. A, C, D and E

3. Encoding, sending and decoding

4. False. Subtext is the underlying meaning of a message.

5. A and B. While birthplace and personality type can also be communication filters, they were not included in this training session.

6. Communication filters are the factors that provide ach individual with the perspective with which they see the world around them.

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"I have used many of the *Reproducible Training* programs and I can't say enough good things about them. The content is easy to tailor—I've even combined programs to meet my clients' specific needs. Not only am I able to provide my clients with a professionally developed, customized program at a reasonable price, but I've saved myself a lot of time and frustration, too. I plan to buy more programs in the future. I highly recommend them!"

Rosemary C. Rulka, MS, SPHR
President
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"We chose the *Reproducible Training Library* for the open-source format and customizable materials. The programs are well structured and rich with content. Preparation to delivery was less than 2 hours, and the addition of our company themes make the materials look like they were designed in house."

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