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Program Director’s Training Course: Focused Topics
Improving Your Communication Skills
A Few Screening Questions:

How Often I...

- Communicate the right message to the right person at the right time.
- Project self-confidence and speak confidently.
- Listen intently and check I have understood before reply.
- Think carefully about a message before decide how to communicate it.
- Welcome feedback about my communications.
- Try to exclude personal prejudices of all kinds when judging others.
- I am civil and constructive when meeting others.
- Use one-to-one meetings for reviews of performance and coaching.
Learning Basics

- Communication
  - Verbal
  - Non verbal
- Environment should encourage to improve all types of communication.
  - Speaking, writing, listening.
- Break the barriers to good communication.
  - Be non judgmental
- Be clear:
  - Think first what you want to communicate
  - Deliver the message succinctly
  - Ensure that the message was clearly and correctly understood.
Choosing a Communication Method

- **Written:**
  - Letters, memos, reports
  - Basis of organizational communication
  - Permanent and accessible

- **Spoken:**
  - Meetings, phone calls, speeches
  - Useful for day-to-day basis

- **Visual:**
  - Photos, illustrations
  - Conscious and unconscious messages

- **Multimedia**
  - TV, magazines, flyers
  - Better when active participation expected.
Body Language: Tips

- **Eye contact**
  - Direct
- **Posture**
  - Frontal and open
- **Gestures**
  - Listening with approval
    - Smile
  - Paying attention
    - Raise eyebrows
  - Emphasizing a point
    - Hand gesture

- **Avoid:**
  - Uncertainty
  - Indirect gaze
  - Needing reassurance
    - Arms crossed
  - Conflict
    - Knitted brow
    - Closed eyes
    - Nose pinching
How to Become a Good Listener

- Be attentive
- Use silence as a tool to encourage hesitant speakers
- Avoid prejudice
- Don’t be a selective listener.
- Use mirroring:
  - “I see”
  - “I hear”

Listening:
- Empathetic
  - Relate to their view
- Analyzing
  - Separate fact from emotion
- Synthesizing
  - Establish an action plan
- Listen → Respond → Act
How to Ask Questions

- Ask yourself first:
  - What would you want to know?
- Write them down
- Speak softly
  - Creates a favorable environment
- Pause if needed before your next question

- Questions:
  - Open:
    - To gain insight
    - Opens discussion
  - Specific:
    - For specific answers
      - Yes or no
  - Follow up:
    - For more information
  - Feed back:
    - For a particular type of information
Exchanging Information
Making Personal Contact

- Greeting People
  - Use of words:
    - Friends
    - Strangers

- Using bodily contact
  - Hand shake:
    - Extended hand
    - Firm
    - Not sweaty

- Ending meetings
  - Thank the other party
  - Hand shake again
    - Longer
    - Two arm
  - Show them the exit
Passing on Information

- To whom?
  - Your superiors, peers or subordinates
- Finding the right information:
  - Audience focused
- Being better understood
  - Be clear
  - Avoid misinterpretations
  - If in person observe your body language

- Giving feedback
  - Positive
  - Negative
    - Be factual, non judgmental
    - Use question format as possible
    - Be “positive” in your negative feedback
    - Remove emotions
    - Offer solutions
    - “Sandwich” approach
Using the Email

- Excellent communication tool
  - But miscommunication common
- Send only essential messages
  - No gossips
- Keep messages short
  - Email format is hard to read in long paragraphs
- Avoid colloquialisms
  - It will be misinterpreted
  - Avoid jokes
- Avoid delays in replying
- Avoid “reply to all” unless really needed
Reaching an Audience

- Preparation
  - Prepare well
  - 30 minutes presentations
  - Summarize
- Making your point
  - Use repetition
  - Refer but not read your notes
  - Link your points
  - Provide a copy of your material

- Encouraging reaction
  - Speak without notes
  - Speak slow
  - Move around
  - Move hands, open-palm
  - Focus on the center of the audience, 2/3’s back
  - Make eye contact
  - Ask questions
Summary:

- Communicating effectively requires a combination of skills and strategy.
- Customizing your delivery is the most effective way to convey your message.
- Except for the gifted, the rest of us need to continuously work on the techniques to improve.
The Definitive Book of Body Language

Allan and Barbara Pease
End of the Presentation