



BUILDING UP SOFT SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

Dr. Amit Nagwan*

The education system has been made in such a way that students learn the topics through activity which in terms develop skills. The corporate world today demands skills. Here soft skills have its own importance. Soft skills can make one's career or break the same; it can enhance promotion prospects and can become a stepping stone to success. There is always demand of people who are not only professionally savvy on paper but also in practice. Here it is important to mention the vital soft skills that need one's attention to make a go at a successful career.

As professionals, of us want our work environment should be harmonious, professional and friendly. Unfortunately, bad mannered co-workers happen to exist at almost every work place. They can be rude without any reasons and can spoil another wise perfect day. Dealing with such individuals can be tough task especially when we spend most of the time in office. Lowering expectations and accepting that not everyone is going to get along can be an option. However, squashing repetitive rudeness is essential as it can hurt productivity and morale. Address the situation in a calm, reasonable and unemotional manner. Talk to the co-worker and let them know that their behavior is unacceptable. Make sure to be positive, paving way for an improved and stronger work relationship.

*Assistant Professor, BRCM College of Engineering and Technology, Bahal (Bhiwani), India.



We cannot think of a life without communication. As reading completes a person; speech trains them for the job; writing teaches accurate expression¹. Hence communication skills are most important to grow in today's world. Communication in today's world has acquired different colours altogether. Internet has laid new communication channels like e-mails, video and audio conferences. In this kind of highly competitive world it is important that written, spoken and non-verbal communication is clear and concise. Brush your e-mail etiquette, hone the effectiveness of the spoken word and be conscious of the body language cues you transmit to the receiver. With the growing public interface of employees with supervisors, colleagues and customers, spoken communication comes largely into play during presentations making a sales pitch or engaging in water-cooler talk. For enhanced team work communication channels have to be well oiled and without any room for misunderstanding or unintended meaning.

The future belongs to those who know how to wait². It is important to stay calm at work place. An important aspect of tracking a rude co-worker is keeping check on emotions irrespective of the circumstance. Pause, take deep breaths and relax for a few minutes before entering the workplace. Whenever a colleague behaves rudely, remain calm despite their constant misconduct. Out burst of anger at other person will only aggravate the situation. Speak rationally when communicating with the co-workers to make them realize how ridiculous they sound in comparison. Moreover, by remaining composed you will gain respect from those around you, including your seniors. Most importantly avoid letting your emotions get the better of you because you might end up saying some thing regretful.

Social etiquette now extends to the virtual and cellular in the world of connectivity. There is a great need to polish these skills. Be empathetic in using your internet and mobile networking devices. Do not have loud sounds or music as ring tones or caller tunes. Before entering a conference, meeting or a discussion session turn off your mobiles or keep it in silent mode. Vibration mode is as annoying as the device not being turned off at all. If you have to take a call excuse yourself for only one and talk softly. Limit your social networking to home only as it can be great hindrance to work hours. Have a company e-mail id for all official interaction and correspondence. Having a goofy display picture in e-mails might be interpreted as being unprofessional and non-serious towards work. Check the receiver of



the communication what his mode of preferred communication is before sending the client a friend request on networking sites.

Showing kindness would be helpful and beneficial to you. Irrespective of how nasty or rude a colleague behaves at workplace try to be kind to them. "One can pay back a loan but one is forever in debt to kindness³." Although easier said than done, it can prove to be an effective technique to handle such people. When ever the co-worker becomes offensive counter it by responding in a polite and friendly manner. Refrain from bending to their level by speaking in an unpleasant tone. The nicer you are to someone; the most difficult it is for that person to treat you poorly. Moreover, it will not only make them feel guilty and ashamed but also shock them into behaving better. This strategy works particularly well when there is an audience or gathering.

Balancing your work life is essential and one must practice this. Deadlines have to be respected. Deadlines don't necessarily have to leave you lifeless or stressed as that will result in lifestyle diseases such as diabetics and thyroid disorder. There the skills to manage time, set priorities and pre-empt situation comes into existence. The regular struggle that one does in the form of deadlines, instant results and assessments require peace of mind and complete control in constraints. Be active at work place and outside, meditate and the most important thing to do is mind mapping exercise that will come in handy at crunch time.

"I here, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand⁴." There is a need to understand the diversity in the work environment. Living in a world where cross-cultural work places are the norm, one has to sensitize oneself with the myriad attitudes, dress norms, language differences and cultural variations that exist globally. Keep professional goals rather than personal differences on the agenda. Sur, expect company norms of professional ethics to be compiled with but have compassion and understanding of the new employee's cultural background. Not being judgmental about a person of a different nationality or region can go a long way in making the 21st century workplace a more harmonious if not a homogeneous place of work.

Another way to steer clear of rude colleagues is to keep minimum contact with them. One may not be able to dodge them forever but try to spend as little time as possible. Choose to work on projects with other individuals to avoid work related encounters. However, if a



situation requires interaction with the co-workers limit it to e-mails and brief phone calls. Maintain a safe distance from the impolite colleagues by not going to the lunchroom in their presence. Additionally, discourage long conversations that may eventually become daily rituals. This will help to avert unnecessary conflicts and also keep you protected.

Giving less attention to what people say, one must not take things personally and to heart. Every individual has his own reasons for acting in a certain way, which may be perceived as rude by others. In fact, no one is intentionally nasty as all of us try to do our best both professionally and personally. As a result one must not take an impolite co-worker conduct to heart. They may be facing some problem which is bothering them enough to translate into unsavory action. Make an attempt to understand the co-worker since their behavior could be a cry for help. Reaching out to them will be probably hard at first but you may discover a decent person deep down.

Thinking critically would be a goods exercise for mental faculties to adapt to an ever changing situation at work, having a positive attitude is must. Having brainstorming session of mind jog activities such as that involving situation analysis can supplement one's evaluation thought process. Reading and analyzing one's response to any text aids in developing the thinking faculty and the ability to think on one's feet. To process information at hand, one's analytical, listening and visualizing skills have to be honed. Work places are increasingly becoming demanding, often throwing unknown problems at employees, where quick results are expected without giving sufficient time to react. Mind, therefore has to be made ready to face the challenges of this century's work station.

Before approaching the higher authorities have a face-to-face conversation with the rude worker. Although confrontations are emotionally draining, ignoring them can be even worse. Talk to the colleagues privately in a manner that is neither confrontational nor threatening. Explain to them tactfully that you found their behavior inappropriate and unacceptable. Rather than throwing insults make an effort to identify the causes of the conflict. Also ask the co-worker if there is anything that you are doing is bothering them. More that often rude people don't realize that they are hurting the feelings of others. As a consequence speaking directly can resolve misunderstandings and clear the air.

"The key to leadership is to accept responsibilities⁵." Taking decisions, negotiating, proposing change or suggesting new trends is not the prerogative of the boss/ higher



authorities only. As an employee you can stand out by taking initiative and leading a team. Keep your eyes and ears open to learning and accept constructive criticism. Conflict resolution, supervising, coaching, mentoring, creating options, innovating and organizing all fall within the purview of leadership skills. Merit based promotions are made largely on the basis of these skills.

Subsequent to exhausting every attempt to reconcile with the discourteous co-worker, escalate the matter. Approach your supervisor and explain the situation in a calm and rational manner. Prepare a strong case and share it with him/her without getting too negative or defensive. Give facts and specific examples so that your claim does not look playful. Also offer practical solutions which could improve your relationship with the uncivil co-worker. However, don't run to the seniors every time a colleague misbehaves with you. Frequently complaining to them will indicate you're incapable to manage things independently. Keeping the same in mind seek the assistance of higher authorities only as a last resort. Added to this, to get an edge over competitors, people are left with no choice but to add value to their hard skills with soft skills to exhibit one's true potential⁶.

REFERENCES:

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- [3] Ibid, pg 72
- [4] Ibid, pg 150
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