

Communication skills

CMM201

Prepared by Dr. Merna Emad

Workplace Excellence

Lecture 6



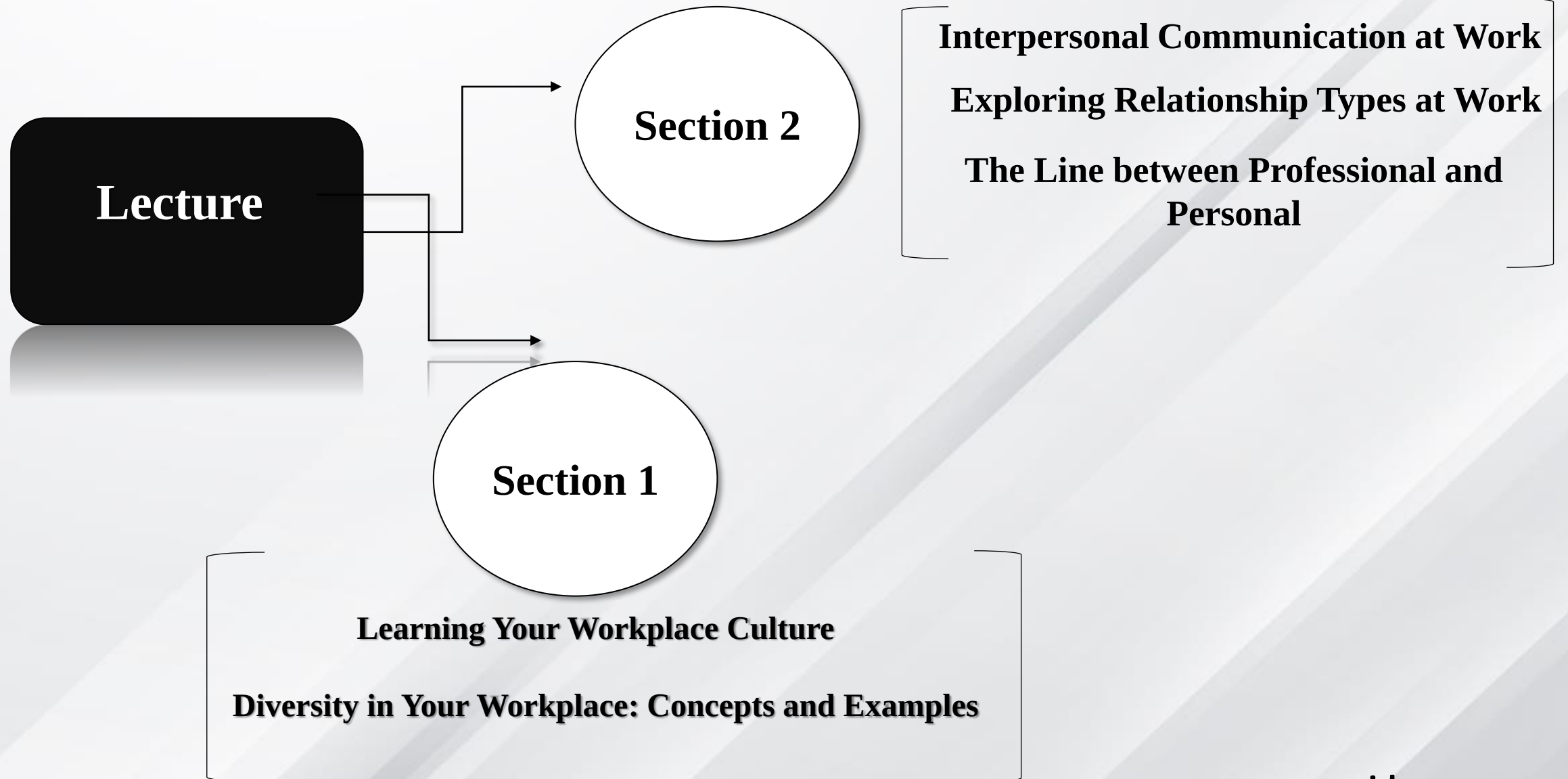
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NEXT STEP

After weeks, or more likely months, of job seeking, the day you have been waiting for will finally arrive. You will begin your life as a professional.

Beginning a new job, even if it's a promotion or a different position within the same company, brings with it almost as many emotional ups and downs as job seeking.

Section One

Learning Your Workplace Culture

Learning Your Workplace Culture

Just as every other new employee does, you will learn about your workplace's organizational culture through an assimilation process.

The assimilation process is really part of a much larger phenomenon known as socialization—the experiences that shape our attitudes, perceptions, emotions, and communication choices.

From the day you were born, your parents, your siblings, your relatives, your friends, your teachers, and even strangers have been working to socialize you into the culture or cultures that make up their experiences.

Learning Your Workplace Culture

What is culture?

Culture is the rules of living and functioning in society. It is how you talk, behave, dress, and think is heavily influenced by the ways others have socialized you into various cultural groups.

What is Organizational culture?

Quora

Google

An organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that have been invented, discovered, and/or developed by a group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration in ways that have worked well and are considered valid, and, therefore, can be taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to a problem.

Diversity in your workplace

Some Important Concepts

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

Part of the assimilation process involves getting to know the people who make up your organization. A common mistake among so-called professionals is neglecting to take an inventory of others in the working environment. In today's world, getting to know your diverse workplace is important for two reasons.

First, for you to succeed in any professional environment, you must be aware of and sensitive to differences between yourself and others.

Second, your ability to communicate effectively when encountering difference (e.g., ethnicity, race, language barriers, religion, spirituality, marital status, sexual orientation, age) is an essential component of professional excellence.

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

The term cultural competence refers to the level of knowledge a person has about others who differ in some way in comparison with himself or herself.

Cross-cultural attitude strategies that help you to develop and enhance one's ability to practice effective communication in intercultural situations:

Practice openness

by demonstrating acceptance of difference.

Demonstrate humility

Through suspension of judgment and the ability to learn.

Be flexible

by demonstrating acceptance of ambiguity.

Be sensitive to others

by appreciating cultural differences.

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

Cross-cultural attitude strategies that help you to develop and enhance one's ability to practice effective communication in intercultural situations:

Show a spirit of adventure

by showing curiosity and seeing opportunities in different situations.

Practice positive change or action

by demonstrating a successful interaction with the identified culture.

Use a sense of humor

Through the ability to laugh at ourselves.

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

These attributes will guide you in developing cultural competence:

- Self-knowledge and awareness about one's own culture.
- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview.
- Experience and knowledge of different cultural practices.
- Attitude toward cultural differences.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

You may not think of men and women as being part of different cultures, but men and women are indeed part of very different cultures.

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

1. Giving Orders

Men and women often differ in the way they give orders. Many women are conditioned by the culture of maintaining harmony in relationships. Several well-respected studies have shown that women tend to soften their demands and statements, on the contrary, men tend to be more direct in their statements.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

2. Emotions and information

Women prefer connecting through conversation, while men prefer connecting through action. **Based on “Psychology Today – Men, Women, Emotions and Communication”, when a woman wants to talk, she wants to share her emotions and thoughts to others, while a man tends to share his ideas and suggestions and avoids talking about his feeling.** Take note that this doesn't mean that men won't talk about their feelings, but they might be uncomfortable while doing so.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts**Gender**

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

3. Communication pattern

Women and men have different conversations patterns. Women tend to punctuate the conversation with affirmative noises, for instance, “Uh huh” and “OK” to let you know she is concentrating and listening. On the other hand, men prefer to sit quietly and focus on what is being said. As a result, it doesn't mean that he doesn't agree on what you are saying. So, when talking to a guy, don't feel nervous or weird when he is not giving responses to you.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

4. Asking questions

Men ask questions for one purpose only – to gather information. But for women, asking questions serves for two purposes – to gather information as well as asking questions which they already know the answers. But why are they asking things that they already know? As mentioned above, women wish to maintain harmony in relationships, they want to show interest in what others have said to cultivate relationships. Therefore, you tend to see women asking more questions in business.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts**Ethnicity and Race****Race**

Race is the categorization of people based on physical characteristics such as skin color, dimensions of the human face, and hair. The old typology placed people into one of three races.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a social group that may be joined together by factors such as shared history, shared identity, shared geography, or shared culture.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Major mistake you do;

Rely on nonverbal cues to detect someone's ethnic background, you do so without taking into account that what you see visually may not always be accurate.

Solution

Remember that what you see visually through nonverbal dimensions of physical appearance does not always shape accurate perceptions of another person's ethnicity.

Although this term tends to have a negative connotation, stereotypes merely describe the way humans categorize or understand.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Stereotyping

Stereotypes are generalizations about the personal attributes or characteristics of a group of people.

How to avoid?

When developing professional excellence as it relates to cultural competence, it is important to begin by knowing yourself.

Ask yourself these questions?

What are your experiences with this ethnicity?

What stereotypes (positive or negative) do you hold?

What questions or concerns do you have about communicating with someone from this ethnicity?

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Stereotyping

How to avoid?

The next step is to evaluate the professional context, through:

Researching a culture to increase your understanding of difference.

Ask questions of the person with whom you are communicating in the professional context.

Open and respectful communication is a must when getting to know people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the workplace.

Language

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

THINK WITH ME

Have you thought at all about globalization and how it will influence your career?

Keeping your own professional goals in mind, how do diversity and globalization impact the industry or profession in which you're interested?

One way globalization will affect your communication is through differences in accents, dialects, and languages. The word accent refers to a person's pronunciation of various words in a language.



Be
aware

“Language differences will compound other cultural differences that surely exist.”

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Language

What should we do?

Be prepared to ask and answer many questions to ensure a clear understanding.

Try to avoid the common mistakes of losing patience and giving up.

Try to avoid speaking louder or, even worse, yelling at another person when a language barrier is present can often lead to frustration and further misunderstanding.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Remember

Not all disabilities are visible, such as heart disease, depression, or asthma.

Many people have temporary disabilities which are equally as limiting as permanent disabilities.

Not everyone with a disability wishes to discuss it or its limitations. Wait until you know an individual before asking personal questions.

People with disabilities

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Tap someone who is deaf on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention.

Write notes if you don't sign (short sentences; common words).

Wheelchair Users/Mobility

Position yourself at the same eye level by sitting down if engaged in a long conversation with someone who uses a chair.

Treat the chair as part of the user's personal space; do not touch or lean on the chair.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Speech & Language

Allow time for the person to speak, as they may need more time to respond to you.

Avoid the urge to interrupt or complete a sentence for the person.

Learning Disability/ADHD

Realize that this is rarely visible evidence of learning disabilities.

Use multiple methods to deliver information.

People with disabilities

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Chronic or Acute Health

Examples: Cancer, Asthma, Emphysema, Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Sickle Cell

Understand that each person has unique set of symptoms and treatments.

Do not treat the person as if they are contagious.

Learning Disability/ADHD

Understand that social skills may be impaired.

Be sensitive to emotional stress or triggers.

Be patient.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts**Generational Differences**

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to a Traditionalist (born 1922-1945)

They're very directive and prefer to be communicated to formally and through the written word (think...memos). They take satisfaction in doing a job well, so make sure that you share with them how much you respect their experience. When it comes to providing feedback, no news is good news, so only approach them with something that is paramount to their performance.

Generational Differences

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to a Baby Boomer (1946-1964)

Baby boomers are known to be workaholics, desire high quality in their products and services, and aren't afraid to question authority. They want to be collegial leaders, so working with them, as a team member is relevant and valuable. Communicate in person, but try to avoid meetings, one-to-one will be the best method

Communicating to Generation X (1965-1980)

Having a conversation immediately after an event is more relevant than waiting too long. They like hearing feedback, so give it freely, but also remember that autonomy is important to them, so inspect what you expect. To fire up small talk, feel free to talk about both personal and professional lives.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts**Generational Differences**

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to Millennials (1981-2000)

The folks from Generation Y are always wondering about what is next. Their entrepreneurial, goals oriented, and feel comfortable with multitasking, so feel free to create participative conversations. We all know that they like to communicate electronically, so send SMS messages, e-mails, and social media wall posts. They want their work to be meaningful, so provide feedback continually and put them on teams with other bright and creative people.

Section Two

Interpersonal Communication at Work

What is Interpersonal communication?

Interpersonal communication is the process of **exchange of information**, ideas and feelings between two or more people through verbal or non-verbal methods.

Is interpersonal communication important?

Did you know that interpersonal communication played an important role in human evolution?

Early humans who lived in groups, rather than alone, were more likely to survive, which meant that those with the capability to develop interpersonal bonds were more likely to pass these traits on to the next generation.

Is interpersonal communication important?

Did you know that interpersonal skills have a measurable impact on psychological and physical health?

People with higher levels of interpersonal communication skills are better able to adapt to stress, have greater satisfaction in relationships and more friends, and have less depression and anxiety.

Importance of Interpersonal communication in workplace:

- (1) Your ability to relate with other people is central to achieving professional excellence.
- (2) Interpersonal communication helps you form professional connections with other coworkers, leaders, and clients.
- (3) Your interpersonal relationships at work provide a supportive social system that will increase your job satisfaction.

Good communication skills in the workplace

Solving problems - Good interpersonal skills are necessary as they allow people to discuss their issues and help them weigh the many pros and cons surrounding a topic. If you have good problem-solving skills, it becomes more effective as you can share your voice among people and help them feel involved.

Aligning with business goals - Poor communication between employers and employees can lead to unproductivity. When leaders and managers don't communicate clearly, team members become more disconnected and uninterested in work. Good interpersonal skills help employees receive a proper direction and goal towards which they can work.

Good communication skills in the workplace

Trust - Trust is one of the most critical assets in the workplace, and employees need to feel like they're trusted while also trusting others. If there's a lack of trust, it can lead to poor communication, especially among business leaders and the senior brass involved in ensuring a company's day-to-day affairs.

Company culture - When interpersonal relationships are executed the right way, it can lead to an organization thriving with the positive work culture. Employees who possess good interpersonal communication skills in the workplace can help an organizational culture become more positive and synergic. Negativity, conflicts, and confusion can lead to bad interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, it can ruin the environment at work and reduce productivity if not done the right way.

Good communication skills in the workplace

Employee recognition - Good interpersonal communication skills in the workplace can also drive recognition among employees. When employees have better interpersonal relationships and upper management, they will recognize the excellent work being done and provide quality feedback.

Workplace miscommunication - Managers who ensure that professionalism is maintained at the workplace are also seen as approachable. If you're a manager, make sure you always communicate how you're feeling with the team to know where they stand. It can also defuse any tension and help employees speak directly with you.

Good communication skills in the workplace

Personal relationships - It's vital to create meaningful connections in the office. As an employee, you spend more than half your life in the office, and your colleagues tend to be your friends outside of the office. Good interpersonal skills can help you build better teams at work and create relationships that can last for life.

Management and leadership - Fostering trust and great communication are some of the non-negotiable skills of an effective team leader. When a manager doesn't possess these interpersonal skills, they can confuse employees who begin to work less productively or lose motivation.

Development of the career - As more employers look for employees who have good communication skills, improvements in interpersonal relationships can also bring progression regarding many employees' careers.

Good communication skills in the workplace

Employee success - Employee success is another critical factor and is necessary for managers to help their team perform well. Leaders who can pass on crucial information and the right words of motivation will see their employees respond the same way and achieve the company's business goals much faster. These skills also get passed on to the employees who can use it as they progress as leaders.

Managing conflict - A good workplace will always have disputes from time to time as ideas and thoughts clash. What's important is that these conflicts are resolved quickly and smartly without bad blood or tension among the parties involved. Interpersonal communication is crucial for fixing these conflicts and softens situations, especially in stressful work environments.

Exploring Relationship Types at Work

Superior-Subordinate Relationships

In the language of the workplace, the superior (supervisor/employer) is typically the higher status person and the subordinate (employee) the lower-status person.

Communicating Information

The interpersonal communication between supervisors and subordinates is not limited to the relational layer, nor does it focus exclusively on conveying status.

After all, some content has to be communicated if any work is ever to get done.

Unfortunately, the status differences between supervisors and subordinates contribute to the creation of less-than ideal communication conditions.

Communication problems

Semantic information distance

Semantic information distance—a term that describes how employees and supervisors do not share the same view of some fundamental areas such as organizational issues or basic job duties.

Upward distortion

Upward distortion occurs when the messages sent up the chain of command, from subordinates to supervisors, are altered.

Messages are altered in one of four ways: gatekeeping, summarization, withholding, or general distortion.

Communication problems

Upward distortion

Messages are altered in one of four ways: gatekeeping, summarization, withholding, or general distortion.

Gatekeeping occurs when some, but not all, of the information is passed on to the supervisor.

Summarization occurs when the employee summarizes the message in such a way that emphasis is placed on certain aspects of the message.

Withholding occurs when information is not passed on to the supervisor.

General distortion, a close cousin to out-and-out lying, occurs when the message is changed to serve the subordinate's purposes.

Exploring Relationship Types at Work

Communication problems**Solution**

As a supervisor, you must take steps to limit message alteration by doing some, if not all, of the following:

(1) Limit the number of people a message must travel through before it gets to you,

(2) go to the source of the message for clarification,

(3) keep communication channels open with subordinates and customers.

Communicating With Your Supervisor

To communicate effectively with your supervisor, you must

Evaluate him or her in the same way you evaluate everyone else.

Remember the power of communication; appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors often make or break your chances of being viewed positively on the job.

In terms of interpersonal communication in the workplace, it is important to consider the way a supervisor communicates with a subordinate.

For those seeking professional excellence, advocacy is the strategy of choice when communicating with supervisors.

Advocacy utilizes a simple persuasive technique. Specifically, you evaluate your boss's needs and preferences and then develop messages, arguments, and proposals that line up with those needs and preferences.

Communicating With Your Coworkers

To communicate effectively with your supervisor, you must

Although communication with your boss is important, effective interpersonal communication with your coworkers is equally important.

Coworker relationships may also be based on needs or, more accurately, the fulfillment of needs. These needs may be task related.

For example, if your computer is not working properly, you may need the expertise of the computer specialist, resulting in an interpersonal communication interaction between the two of you.

Coworkers can also fulfill the need for support on the job. Having coworkers who can help you complete tasks, provide professional advice, and laugh with you is a real plus to your professional development and stress level on the job.

Coworkers “who work in adjacent desks, cubicles, or offices are more likely to develop close relationships than people who work for the same company but on different floors or opposite ends of a building”.

Exploring Relationship Types at Work

Customer-Client Relationships

Customer service “is the interaction between employees or representatives of an organization or business and the people the organization sells to or serves”.

4 ways to build up strong client Relationship**1. Focus on Exceptional Communication**

Timely, efficient communication should be a priority. Of course, communication with a single client should not consistently and unreasonably encroach on your personal time or negatively affect your productivity. However, being available demonstrates that your client’s project and satisfaction are important to you.

2. Maintain a Positive Attitude

it’s important to show a positive face to your clients. Exude the energy and confidence that you want your clients to feel about your work.

Customer-Client Relationships

4 ways to build up strong client Relationship

3. Acknowledge Your Client as an Individual

While your relationship with your client is of a professional nature, acknowledging that you see them as a person—that is, more than just a paycheck—can go a long way. The extent to which this personal connection is appropriate will vary depending on your industry, client type, and the individual client's personality.

4. Share Knowledge

While your relationship with your client is of a professional nature, acknowledging that you see them as a person—that is, more than just a paycheck—can go a long way. The extent to which this personal connection is appropriate will vary depending on your industry, client type, and the individual client's personality.

The Line between Professional and Personal

The Line between Professional and Personal

In order to develop professional excellence in the workplace, you must have a clear understanding of the line between personal and professional relationships, as well as what constitutes professional versus personal communication.

Romance in the Workplace

Having a sense of social belonging is a core motivational factor on the job. However, what happens when feelings between cohesive colleagues turn into something more?

Be forewarned that many organizations have norms and in some cases written policies that discourage or forbid romantic relationships in the workplace.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Romance in the Workplace**Why do such policies exist?****Distraction****Favoritism**

A study found that of women who had been involved romantically with someone at work, 86% reported motives that were not job related, while 14% did report job-related motives. Clearly, the vast majority of those surveyed entered relationships for other reasons, but 14% with the wrong motive is more than enough to create problems in the workplace.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Sexual harassment

What is sexual harassment

Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment

It happens when

- (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals,
- or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Sexual harassment

What should we do if you are harassed?

Confront the harasser.

Report the behavior to a supervisor and/or your human resources department.

Keep written record of the behaviors and comments that you feel constitute harassment.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Professional etiquette

Professional etiquette means practicing the behaviors of social etiquette or good manners in a professional setting.

Introduce Yourself

When you make a call, dial into a phone conference, or are meeting new people, introduce yourself. State your name, your role and if the situation demands, your place of business.

Using Titles

Not everyone in the workplace needs to, or wants to, be addressed as Mr. or Mrs. How someone introduces himself or herself to you is how they expect to be addressed by you. As a general matter, if you are addressing someone who ranks highly in the company or a client, address him or her by the proper title.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Professional etiquette

Professional etiquette means practicing the behaviors of social etiquette or good manners in a professional setting.

Avoid Gossip

How you treat people says a lot about you. Don't make value judgments on people's importance in the workplace or speak negatively about your coworkers, even if you find yourself frustrated over a certain situation.

Professional Tone

Don't insult management or your co-workers, berate your employees or use profanity in the workplace. The office is not the proper place to casually vent your work-related grievances. Private emails can easily be forwarded to unintended parties, and private conversations may be overheard, resulting in your embarrassment and possible sanctions from your employer.

The Line between Professional and Personal

Professional etiquette

Body Language

Be mindful of body language. Keep good posture and maintain eye contact. Remember to respect personal space. Also, don't touch the person you are speaking with. Although you may not mind when someone touches your arm or shoulder when speaking, it may make others uncomfortable.

Using Speakerphone

Ask before using speakerphone. Most people will want to know if there are others, apart from yourself, on the line. If it's a one-on-one conversation, avoid using speakerphone.



Thank You