

#203 Professional Communication Skills

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Approach to Professional Communications

Professionals who are consistently effective communicators and who can persuade and influence others through communication are not necessarily great public speakers. Yes they have confidence because they have practiced their communication skills. But most importantly they have good techniques for:

- Sizing up the audience they will be speaking to:
 - Determine the personality types who make up the audience and how they like to receive information
 - Design a communications plan for the presentation that meets the needs of the various personality types who will be in the meeting
 - Deliver the information and ideas in ways that will appeal to the personality types in the meeting

- Designing visual aids that help convey the information and also hold the audience's interest
- Using effective personal skills, body language, eye contact and gestures to make themselves attractive to the audience and make them willing to listen.

Course Overview

Professional Communications Skills is designed for experienced professionals who want to enhance their skills in making formal presentations, leading small group discussions, communicating clearly with individual executives, subordinates and team members. The course blends reading assignments in several textbooks, lectures, written assignments and four live presentations which will you will deliver privately, working with your instructor over the Internet, and which will be filmed for analysis and feedback.

You will begin by learning the basic techniques of effective communication. You'll learn about eye contact and body language and the physical aspects of giving an effective presentation. Then you'll apply those ideas in your first presentation working privately with your instructor and filming your effort for analysis and feedback.

Next you'll learn about using visual aids to support your presentation. We'll focus on PowerPoint in both the reading and lecture and then you will prepare a PowerPoint presentation and deliver a talk using the PowerPoint you have created. After the presentation you will receive coaching and feedback from your instructor.

In the third module, we'll explore techniques for assessing your audience so you can deliver information in the way they like to receive it. We'll explore various personality types, talk about how you should deal with them and how you should convey information to them. You'll watch videos of individuals and practice determining their personality type by observing them talk.

In the fourth module we'll move on to communicating with groups of people. You'll apply the same personality typing but now dealing with small groups of people rather than just an individual. You'll watch movies of groups of people communicating and analyze them for effectiveness. In the assignment you'll take over the meetings that have not gone well and communicate with the attendees effectively.

In the fifth module you'll tie all the knowledge and techniques together and give a 15 minute presentation with a question and answer session at the end. You'll use your communication skills and techniques to identify the personality types you're dealing with and design a presentation and visual aids to persuade them to reach consensus about issues they are having conflict about.

Learning Objectives

You will gain professional level skills in analyzing an audience and developing quality presentation materials and delivery skills while speaking in front of others. An important element of the course is repeated practice sessions giving presentations which develop self-confidence and conquer nervousness in public speaking which is an obstacle for most people.

Grading Criteria and Earning Educational Credits

You must complete all assignments in the course and receive a grade of B or better to pass the course, and earn Professional Development Units (PDUs) from the Project Management Institute. Your instructor will ask you to redo assignments that do not meet that standard.

Course Syllabus

Course Materials

Face-to-Face Communications by The Harvard Business School Press.

Power Points!: How to Design and Deliver Presentations That Sizzle and Sell by Harry Mills.

The Art of Speed Reading People by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger.

A USB Camera for live presentations (with microphone); newer PCs have these built in. If you must buy one, your local office supply carries them for around \$50

Course Modules

Module One: Overview of Professional Communication Skills

1. Read pages in Face-to-Face Communications, Harvard Business School Press. Read pages 19-45, 65-95
2. Watch Module #1 Overview of Professional Communication Skills: "Introduction and Overview" and "Body Language" covering body language, eye contact, gestures and expressions on your course website.
3. Assignment - Deliver a live, 10 minute presentation on one of the following topics without any visual aids, handouts or materials:
 - a. Keys to a successful management career
 - b. Keys to a successful project management career
 - c. Most important challenges facing your country today
 - d. Suggest a topic of your own.
4. Send your instructor a one paragraph e-mail summarizing the subject you're going to discuss and suggest several times that are convenient for you to deliver this 10 minute

presentation. Your instructor will confirm a mutually agreeable time and send you a link to login to the presentation and instructions for your USB video camera.

5. After the presentation you will have a copy of your live presentation as well as receive written feedback from your instructor on how you did as well as areas for improvement.

Module Two: Learning to Create and Use Visual Aids Like PowerPoint

1. Read pages 87-175 in Power Points!: How to Design and Deliver Presentations That Sizzle and Sell by Harry Mills.
2. Watch Module #2 "Presentation Visuals" on designing and delivering PowerPoint presentations on your course website.
3. Develop a PowerPoint presentation on one of the following topics and send it to your instructor for evaluation and feedback
 - a. Key steps in designing and constructing a deliverable you select
 - b. Four keys to making a successful sales call
 - c. Five secrets to my success
 - d. The seven best things that happened on my last vacation.
4. After you receive your instructor's feedback and make any necessary changes to the presentation, schedule a mutually convenient time for your second live presentation on camera and using the PowerPoint slides you created. The idea is to apply the suggestions from the first presentation so you improve.
5. Your instructor will send you written feedback and coaching suggestions.

Module Three: Assessing Your Audience to Improve the Design of Your Presentation

1. Read pages 1 through 86 in The Art of Speed Reading People by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger.
2. Watch Module #3 "Personality Types," a 1:20 lecture on personality types on your course website.
3. Watch the "Assignment Video," which are videos of the individuals (you can pause it between people) and send your instructor an e-mail with a brief one paragraph write up on what type you think they are, why you came to that conclusion and what techniques you would utilize with each of these individuals.

Module Four: Communicating with Groups

1. Read pages 87 through 154 in The Art of Speed Reading People by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger.
2. Watch the Module #4 "Small Groups" lecture videos SP, NT and SJ on the challenges of different types of leaders working with groups of mixed personality types.

3. Watch the Module #4 “SJ Assignment,” “SP Assignment” and “NT Assignment” videos on failed group meetings and send your instructor an email write-up of how you would have handled the meeting and what you would do to get the meeting back on track.
4. When you get your instructor's feedback schedule a mutually convenient time for your fourth presentation. In live, three 5-minute sessions, take over the meeting from the leader in the failed group meetings and apply your communications plan to moving the meeting ahead and to answering the questions and comments from your team as role played by your instructor.
5. Your instructor will send you written feedback on each of these three sessions.

Module Five: Tying it All Together and Final Presentation

1. Read pages 155 through 187 in [The Art of Speed Reading People](#) by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger.
2. Watch Module #5 “Z Technique Lecture” and “Summary Lecture.”
3. Watch Module #5 “Vailcrest Executives” and “Individual Meetings” which are group and then individual videos of the four executives of the Vailcrest Corporation. They are debating corporate priorities and whether to expand internationally or improve their existing service.
4. Your assignment is to lead the executives to a consensus decision.
5. Start by typing the executives and determining the best way to communicate with them.
6. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to persuade the group and reach consensus on one of their strategies. Also lay out your communication strategy (group meeting, individual meetings, two at a time, advanced reading, agendas etc.)
7. Your instructor will send you feedback on the PowerPoint and communication plan and then schedule a mutually agreeable time to deliver a 15 minute presentation with a question and answer session.
8. Your instructor will send you written feedback on your work.