



Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLM)

**Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A)
Methodology**

Level-5

**Module: Applying Creative and Critical Thinking
Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and
Leadership**

Code: CBLM-GU-TAM-01-L5-EN-V1



**National Skills Development Authority
Prime Minister's Office
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Copyright

•

National Skills Development Authority
Prime Minister's Office
Level: 10-11, Biniyog Bhaban,
E-6 / B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
Email: ec@nsda.gov.bd
Website: www.nsga.gov.bd.
National Skills Portal: <http://skillsportal.gov.bd>

This Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLM) on “applying creative and critical thinking skills for effective communication, negotiation and leadership” under the CBT&A Methodology for Trainers &Assessors, Level-5 qualification is developed based on the national competency standard approved by National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)

This document is to be used as a key reference point by the competency-based learning materials developers, teachers/trainers/assessors as a base on which to build instructional activities.

National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) is the owner of this document. Other interested parties must obtain written permission from NSDA for reproduction of information in any manner, in whole or in part, of this Competency Standard, in English or other language.

This Competency Based Learning Materials is a document for the development of curricula, teaching and learning materials, and assessment tools. It also serves as the document for providing training consistent with the requirements of industry in order to meet the qualification of individuals who graduated through the established standard via competency-based assessment for a relevant job.

This document has been developed by NSDA in association with industry representatives, academia, related specialist, trainer and related employee.

Public and private institutions may use the information contained in this CBLM for activities benefitting Bangladesh.

List of Abbreviations

CS	- Competency Standard
ISC	- Industry Skills Council
NSDA	- National Skills Development Authority
NSQF	- National Skills Qualifications Framework
BNQF	- Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework
OSH	- Occupational Safety and Health
PPE	- Personal Protective Equipment
SCVC	- Standards and Curriculum Validation Committee
STP	- Skills Training Provider
SOP	- Standard Operating Procedure
TNA	- Training Need Analysis
UoC	- Unit of Competency
EC	- Executive Committee
CBT&A	- Competency based Training & Assessment
CBC	- Competency based Curriculum
CAD	- Course Accreditation Document
CBLM	- Competency Based Learning Materials

Approved by

27th Authority Meeting of NSDA

Held on 24.07.2024

Copyright.....	i
List of Abbreviations	ii
Overview of the Module	1
How to use this Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLMs)	3
MODULE CONTENT.....	4
LEARNING OUTCOMES#:	7
Learning Experiences.....	8
Information Sheet 1-1.....	9
Self-Check 1-1.1.....	14
Information Sheet 1-2.....	15
Self-Check 1-2.1.....	18
Information Sheet 1-3.....	19
Information Sheet 2-1.....	24
Self-check 2-1.1.....	31
Activity Sheet 2-1.1.....	32
Information Sheet 2-2.....	35
Information Sheet 2-3.....	51
LEARNING OUTCOMES # 03: ADOPT COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS IN DIFFERENT WORKPLACE CONTEXTS	56
Information Sheet 3-1.....	58
Self-Check 3-1.1.....	66
Information Sheet 3.2.....	68
Information Sheet 3-3.....	78
LEARNING OUTCOME#4: MANAGE WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND CONFLICT THROUGH APPLICATION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	87
Information Sheet 4-1.....	88
LEARNING OUTCOMES # 05: ADOPT PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS AND APPROACHES IN MANAGING COMPLEX WORKPLACE SITUATIONS.....	94
Information Sheet 5.1.....	95
Information Sheet 5-2.....	110
Self-Check 5.1.....	115
Review Workshop of Competency Based Learning Material (CBLM).....	120
References:	121

Overview of the Module

Applying Creative and Critical Thinking Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and Leadership.

This module comprises five (5) elements (1 to 5), five (5) learning outcomes derived from the elements of competency **GU-01-L5-V1: “Apply Creative and Critical Thinking Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and Leadership.”**

Upon completion of this module, the trainee must be able to:

1. Demonstrate creative thinking techniques and processes
2. Strengthen critical thinking to solve work related challenges
3. Adopt communication and negotiation skills in different workplace contexts
4. Manage workplace relations and conflict through application of interpersonal skills
5. Adopt problem solving skills and approaches in managing complex workplace situations

After completion of the training, the trainees will be required to demonstrate their competency through the following performance criteria

- 1.1. New and creative ideas using various approaches to improve organizational management are generated
- 1.2. Negative thought patterns and assumptions are assessed
- 1.3. Thought patterns and assumptions are modified
- 1.4. Future consequences of the proposed ideas are envisaged
- 2.1 Situation, statement or process is evaluated
- 2.2 Information is assembled and evidence is provided
- 2.3 Comparisons, differentiating and classifying items, information, or ideas are made
- 2.4 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are tested and ensured against relevant criteria and standards
- 2.5 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are used
- 3.1 Different styles of communication on how to improve understanding and build rapport with others are recognized
- 3.2 Messages are communicated in an effective and engaging way
- 3.3 Negotiation skills in resolving differences are demonstrated
- 4.1 Effective approaches to working within a diverse workforce are identified
- 4.2 Effectively mitigating and resolving workplace conflict is demonstrated
- 4.3 Open lines of communication with staff and employees are maintained

- 5.1 Problems at an organizational level are defined Components of a complex problem are analyzed Alternative or creative solutions are generated
- 5.2 Outcome of the implemented solution is evaluated

CONTENTS

This learning package includes the following:

- 1. Demonstrate creative thinking techniques and processes
- 2. Strengthen critical thinking to solve work related challenges
- 3. Adopt communication and negotiation skills in different workplace contexts
- 4. Manage workplace relations and conflict through application of interpersonal skills
- 5. Adopt problem solving skills and approaches in managing complex workplace situations

PRE-REQUISITE: N/A

How to use this Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLMs)

The module, Maintaining and enhancing professional & technical competency contains training materials and activities for you to complete. These activities may be completed as part of structured classroom activities or you may be required you to work at your own pace. These activities will ask you to complete associated learning and practice activities in order to gain knowledge and skills you need to achieve the learning outcomes.

1. Review the **Learning Activity** page to understand the sequence of learning activities you will undergo. This page will serve as your road map towards the achievement of competence.
2. Read the **Information Sheets**. This will give you an understanding of the jobs or tasks you are going to learn how to do. Once you have finished reading the **Information Sheets** complete the questions in the **Self-Check**.
3. **Self-Checks** are found after each **Information Sheet**. **Self-Checks** are designed to help you know how you are progressing. If you are unable to answer the questions in the **Self-Check** you will need to re-read the relevant **Information Sheet**. Once you have completed all the questions check your answers by reading the relevant **Answer Keys** found at the end of this module.
4. Next move on to the **Job Sheets**. **Job Sheets** provide detailed information about *how to do the job* you are being trained in. Some **Job Sheets** will also have a series of **Activity Sheets**. These sheets have been designed to introduce you to the job step by step. This is where you will apply the new knowledge you gained by reading the Information Sheets. This is your opportunity to practise the job. You may need to practise the job or activity several times before you become competent.
5. Specification **sheets**, specifying the details of the job to be performed will be provided where appropriate.
6. A review of competency is provided on the last page to help remind if all the required assessment criteria have been met. This record is for your own information and guidance and is not an official record of competency

When working through this Module always be aware of your safety and the safety of others in the training room. Should you require assistance or clarification please consult your trainer or facilitator.

When you have satisfactorily completed all the Jobs and/or Activities outlined in this module, an assessment event will be scheduled to assess if you have achieved competency in the specified learning outcomes. You will then be ready to move onto the next Unit of Competency or Module

MODULE CONTENT

UNIT OF COMPETENCY: Apply Creative and Critical Thinking Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and Leadership

MODULE TITLE: Applying Creative and Critical Thinking Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and Leadership

MODULE DESCRIPTION: This module discusses the aspects that must be given attention when applying creative and critical thinking skills for effective communication, negotiation and leadership. It shows the knowledge and skills requirements for demonstrating creative thinking techniques and processes, strengthening critical thinking to solve work related challenges, adopting communication and negotiation skills in different workplace contexts, managing workplace relations and conflict through application of interpersonal skills and adopting problem solving skills and approaches in managing complex workplace situations

NOMINAL DURATION: 15 Hours

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this module the trainees must be able to:

1. Demonstrate creative thinking techniques and processes
2. Strengthen critical thinking to solve work related challenges
3. Adopt communication and negotiation skills in different workplace contexts
4. Manage workplace relations and conflict through application of interpersonal skills
5. Adopt problem solving skills and approaches in managing complex workplace situations

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 1.1. New and creative ideas using various approaches to improve organizational management are generated
- 1.2. Negative thought patterns and assumptions are assessed
- 1.3. Thought patterns and assumptions are modified
- 1.4. Future consequences of the proposed ideas are envisaged
- 2.1 Situation, statement or process is evaluated
- 2.2 Information is assembled and evidence is provided
- 2.3 Comparisons, differentiating and classifying items, information, or ideas are made

- 2.4 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are tested and ensured against relevant criteria and standards
- 2.5 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are used
- 3.1 Different styles of communication on how to improve understanding and build rapport with others are recognized
- 3.2 Messages are communicated in an effective and engaging way
- 3.3 Negotiation skills in resolving differences are demonstrated
- 4.1 Effective approaches to working within a diverse workforce are identified
- 4.2 Effectively mitigating and resolving workplace conflict is demonstrated
- 4.3 Open lines of communication with staff and employees are maintained
- 5.1 Problems at an organizational level are defined
- 5.2 Components of a complex problem are analyzed
- 5.3 Alternative or creative solutions are generated
- 5.4 Outcome of the implemented solution is evaluated
- 5.5 Modifications to the solution are suggested if required

CONDITIONS:

Trainees must be provided with the following:

- Handouts or reference materials/books/ CBLMs on the above stated contents
- PCs/printers or laptop/printer with internet access
- Digital projector and Screen
- Bond paper
- Ball pens/pencils and other office supplies and materials
- Relevant learning materials
- Workplace or simulated environment

METHODOLOGIES:

- Lecture/discussion
- Demonstration/application
- presentation

ASSESSMENT METHODS:

- Written test
- Demonstration
- Observation with checklist
- Oral questioning
- Portfolio

LEARNING OUTCOMES#:

- 1. DEMONSTRATE CREATIVE THINKING TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES**
- 2. STRENGTHEN CRITICAL THINKING TO SOLVE WORK RELATED CHALLENGES**

Contents:

1. Creative Thinking
2. Critical Thinking
3. Importance of Creative and Critical Thinking
4. Be a Leader
5. Creative and Critical Thinking for Organizational Management
6. Maintaining a Positive Outlook
7. Creative and Critical Thinking for Better Organizational Management

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- 1.1. New and creative ideas using various approaches to improve organizational management are generated
- 1.2. Negative thought patterns and assumptions are assessed
- 1.3. Thought patterns and assumptions are modified
- 1.4. Future consequences of the proposed ideas are envisaged
- 2.6 Situation, statement or process is evaluated
- 2.7 Information is assembled and evidence is provided
- 2.8 Comparisons, differentiating and classifying items, information, or ideas are made
- 2.9 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are tested and ensured against relevant criteria and standards
- 2.10 Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions are used

Learning Experiences

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate creative thinking techniques and processes
2. Strengthen critical thinking to solve work related challenges

Learning Activities	Recourses/Special Instructions
Information sheet 1-1: Creative Thinking	Read Information sheet 1-1 Answer Self-check 1-1.1, refer to answer key 1-1.1, to check if you have answered the questions correctly.
Information sheet 1-2: Critical Thinking	Read Information sheet 1-2 Answer Self-check 1-2.1, refer to answer key 1-2.1, to check if you have answered the questions correctly.
Information sheet 1-3: Importance of Creative and Critical Thinking	Read Information sheet 1-3 Answer Self-check 1-3.1, refer to answer key 1-3.1, to check if you have answered the questions correctly. Perform Activity 1.3
Information sheet 1-4: Be a leader	Read Information sheet 1-4 Answer Self-check 1-4.1, refer to answer key 1-4.1, to check if you have answered the questions correctly.

Learning Activities	Instructions
Information sheet 2-1: Creative and Critical Thinking for Organizational Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Information Sheet 2-1.1 ○ Complete Self-Check 2-1.1 ○ Complete Activity Sheet 2-1.1
Information sheet 2-2: Maintaining a Positive Outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Information Sheet 2-2.1 ○ Complete Self-Check 2-2.1 ○ Complete Activity Sheet 2-2.1
Information sheet 2-3: Creative and Critical Thinking for Better Organizational Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Information Sheet 2-3.1 ○ Complete Self-Check 2-3.1 ○ Complete Activity Sheet 2-3.1

Information Sheet 1-1

Creative Thinking

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Define Creativity
- Identify Key Concepts about Creative Thinking
- Examples of Creative Thinking
- Test creative thinking skills
- Understanding brainstorming

- **Define Creativity**

When we think about creativity, we often think about things like art or music. However, creativity is defined as individual or group *thinking* that results in something **new**, **unique** and **useful**.

These are the three essential components of creativity. They are also what is meant by the term “creative thinking”.

Creative thinking helps people find solutions to problems by introducing different ideas that haven’t been tried before.

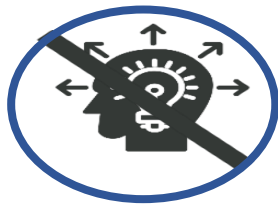
Not all different ideas end up being useful. But ideas that are both novel and useful—that come from creative thinking—often end up resolving challenges in ways that are better than what was done before.



- **Key Concepts about Creative Thinking**



1. Each and every person has creative potential.
2. To begin to think creatively, we first have to believe in ourselves, and trust that our own unique ideas are valuable.
3. Then, we have to think about and/or do something in a **non-traditional** way.
Non-traditional = New or different
4. When we think creatively, we do NOT have to come up with BIG or complicated ideas.
LITTLE, SIMPLE ideas are just as creative.



Complicated



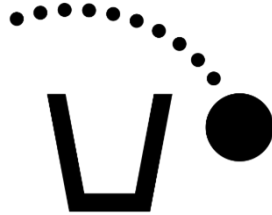
Simple

Examples of applying creative thinking in simple ways:

- Discovering a new, tasty dish by experimenting with the limited ingredients you have available
- Finding ways to get a resistant child to eat
- Reorganizing personal items to better fit in a small or shared space

Discussion question: What could be creative solutions for the examples above? Can you think of any other possible examples of simple, creative ideas?

5. When using creative thinking, it is OKAY to make mistakes! Making mistakes and continuing to move forward actually makes us less afraid of sharing our own unique ideas.



- **Creative Thinking Examples**

Do you know any examples from Bangladeshi society that resulted from creative thinking?

Grameen Phone's Village Phone Program

Grameen Phone is a private company that started in 1997. It was created with the purpose of using its profit to help bring access to telephones to people living in rural areas. Prior to the Village Phone program, rural residents in Bangladesh did not have easy access to telephones. Instead of obtaining or sharing information through telephone calls, they had to travel to other villages, towns or cities to conduct business. This was both expensive and time consuming. The Village Phone program provided small loans to women to purchase a phone and then sell telephone calling services to other people. Because having the ability to make and receive phone calls saves people money and time, the program became very successful. It also helped provide good income to the Village Phone operators.

Discussion question: In what way does the description of the Village Phone program reflect creative thinking?

- **Test creative thinking skills**

Ways to Use a Tin Can



- Discussion questions:

1. What are the traditional ways that a tin can is used?
2. What different, creative uses for a tin can, can you think of?

Students share and discuss as a class with the instructor facilitating.

- **Understanding brainstorming**

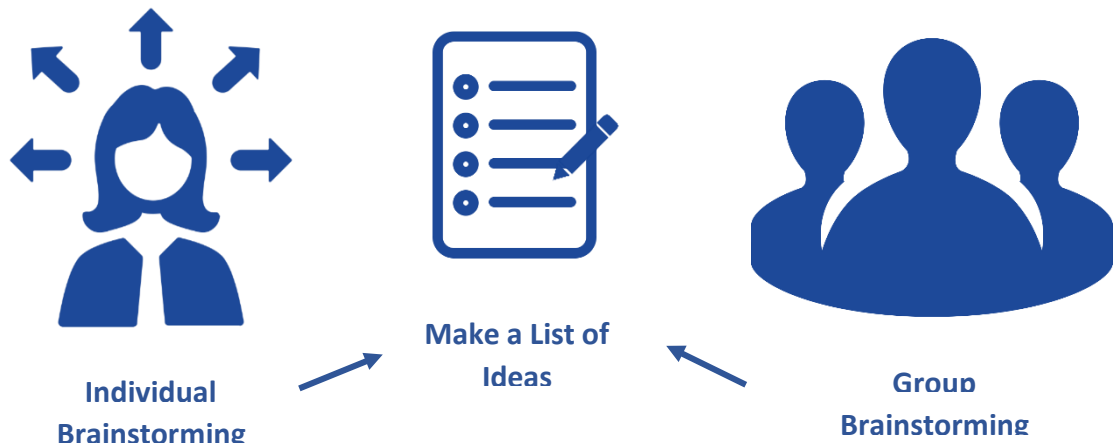
Brainstorming is a well-known and important creative thinking tool.

Brainstorming describes the process of thinking of new ideas without any restrictions, limitations or judgement. Brainstorming can be done individually, but is often done with people in groups.

When we brainstorm,

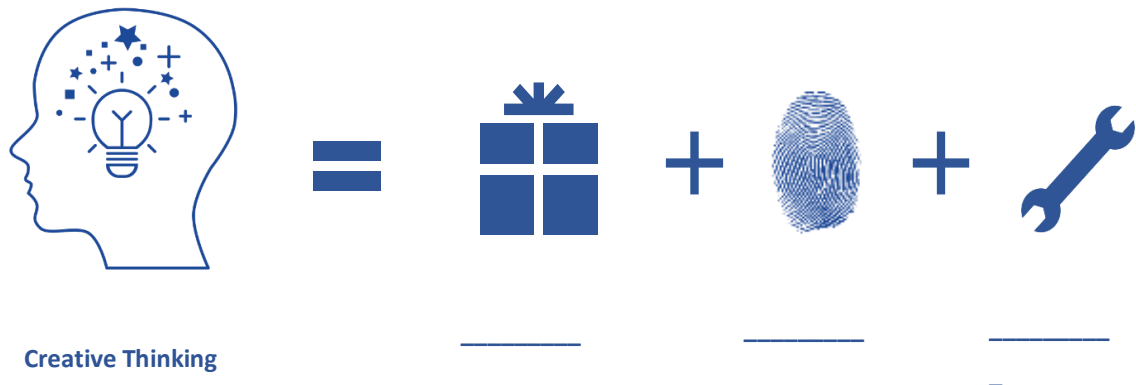
1. We think about possible ways to solve problems or steps to take to address an issue.
2. We then write down the first things that come to mind.
3. In brainstorming, it doesn't matter whether ideas are good or bad; all ideas are OK.

- **Brainstorming**



SELF-CHECK 1-1.1

A. Can you remember what the three essential elements of creative thinking are?



B. Select from the list below the key concepts that are part of creative thinking. Circle all that apply.

1. You need to be good at drawing or painting to be creative
2. Creative ideas must be big ideas
3. Creative ideas can be simple ideas
4. You should believe in yourself and trust that you can have good ideas
5. Some people are naturally creative, but being creative is not something that everyone can achieve
6. It is important to do everything right and avoid mistakes when being creative
7. Creative thinking involves doing things in a non-traditional, or different, way
8. It is okay to make mistakes when using creative thinking. In fact, it can be helpful.
9. Everyone has creative potential

C. Mark whether the following statements about brainstorming are True or False:

1. Brainstorming is best done alone
2. Brainstorming is a creative thinking tool
3. Brainstorming involves writing down ideas
4. You should limit yourself to only good ideas when brainstorming
5. When brainstorming, it is important to think through your ideas a lot before writing them down
6. Brainstorming is a process of coming up with possible solutions to an issue
7. When we brainstorm, all ideas are okay to write down
8. Brainstorming is always a group process
9. It is okay to tell another person that their idea is not good when brainstorming with a group
10. When we brainstorm, we write down the first ideas that come to mind

INFORMATION SHEET 1-2

Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Describe Analysis
- Analyze Critical Thinking

- **Introduction to Analysis**

Analysis is the process of breaking down a complex subject into smaller pieces. A ‘complex subject’ is something that we do not fully understand, or cannot see all the way. The water piping system for a building, a motor for a sewing machine, and other peoples’ feelings or behaviors are all examples of complex subjects. The goal of analysis is to improve one’s understanding of complex subjects.

For example, if we pretend that a brick wall is a complex subject, this is what is done to analyze the subject:

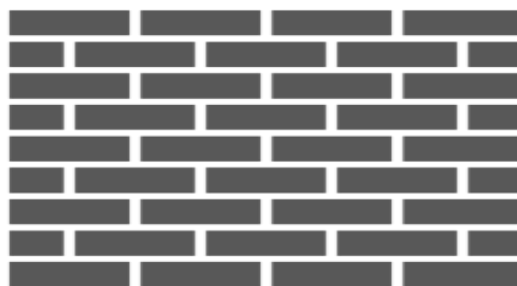
1. Complex subject



1 Break it down into smaller pieces that are easier to understand



2 Examine it in different ways



3 Gain a clearer understanding

- **Analysis for critical thinking**

Analysis is a fundamental component of critical thinking. To think critically means to be more careful about *how* we think in order to improve *what* we think.

For example, when thinking critically, we must:

- Think through things slowly, step by step.
- Ask questions.
- Consider all available information.
- Take into account our individual capabilities and limitations.
- Be open to suggestions and new ideas possibilities.
- Request information or clarification when needed.
- Make comparisons between different options.
- Think about the consequences of the different options and/or ways of doing things

SELF-CHECK 1-2.1

A. Connect the first part of the sentence with the correct second part, following the example.

Example:

A complex subject is something that.....	1. is easy to understand
	2. we do not fully understand
	3. helps us understand things

1. When we analyze, we.....	a. are examples of complex subjects
2. People's feelings or behaviours.....	b. to solve problems
3. The goal of analysis is.....	c. breakdown complex subjects into smaller pieces
	d. better understand complex subjects
	e. are usually easy to understand

B. Circle the best answer.

1. What is critical thinking?
 - a. Thinking long and hard in a quiet space alone to ensure that we find the best solution
 - b. Being careful about how we think in order to improve what we think
 - c. Being critical of ideas that you know are not good ideas
 - d. Talking to many people to gather their ideas and decide which one of their ideas you think is best

C. Circle the best answers. Select all options that apply.

2. What are some aspects of critical thinking?
 - a. Gathering all available information
 - b. Asking questions
 - c. Making quick decisions
 - d. Focusing only on your ideas
 - e. Being open to suggestions and new ideas
 - f. Recognizing your limitations
 - g. Trusting your gut
 - h. Asking someone more knowledgeable for the right answer
 - i. Thinking slowly, step by step

INFORMATION SHEET 1-3

Importance of Creative and Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Way of Thinking
- Creative and Critical Thinking in a Team
- Creative and Critical Thinking Warm up Exercises

- **Way of Thinking**

Creative and critical thinking are recognized as among the top skills that workers need to succeed in the workplace. Companies and managers value these skills because using them helps teams perform better.

Creative thinking—the generation of new ideas that are unique and useful—and critical thinking—active, careful analysis and reflection of problems and their solutions—help people think and work together in ways that support innovation and create value.

More innovation and value are seen when people use creative and critical thinking than when they use traditional, simple methods (such as following a formula or a set of instructions) for finding solutions to challenges.

Using creative and critical thinking involves applying methods and tools to improve your thinking skills. These tools help you move away from basing decisions on your or others' opinions, or on what you have always thought was the way to do something

The American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. once said,

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity¹.”

Instead, when you use creative and critical thinking, you move toward innovative and higher order thinking.

These are ways of thinking that are based on being able to:

- Avoid unnecessary assumptions
- Change your point of view
- Be imaginative
- Come up with novel ideas
- Be objective
- Analyse and evaluate facts and evidence
- Infer and interpret meaning based on limited information

- Reflect on your thinking process and conclusions, with consideration for how they may be improved

- **Creative and Critical Thinking in a Team**

When working with a team, team members are expected to collaborate.

This means they should work with each other toward a common goal. Collaboration is different from working independently side by side, competing, or working against each other. Collaboration means supporting one another.

Creative and critical thinking help strengthen teams. Also, when teams work well together, creative and critical thinking can be enhanced.

For example, when people brainstorm with their coworkers, or work on coming up with experimental ideas for how to address problems, they must accept all ideas without judging or frowning upon them, and also be accepting of mistakes. When you or your team members make mistakes, you have an opportunity to learn about why the mistake happened and what can be done differently the next time.

When people use these practices with their co-workers, it creates an environment where people feel safe and comfortable expressing their ideas and taking risks. People become less worried about being judged negatively or criticized, and more confident about suggesting and exploring creative ideas. This helps facilitate improvements in procedures and ways of doing things which can increase efficiency, productivity and professionalism.

- **Creative and Critical Thinking Warm up Exercises**

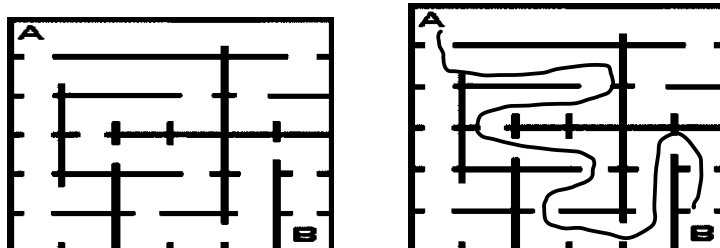
To use your brain to apply creative and critical thinking to situations in your workplace and in your daily life, you should exercise your brain a bit first. This helps get your mind comfortable with thinking differently, and also thinking carefully and reflectively

Here are some examples, with answers, of some types of creative and critical thinking ‘warm up’ exercises. They are shown here to familiarize you with these types of problems.

Use five identical sticks to make two equilateral triangles



Trace various pathways from point A to point B, avoiding unnecessary assumptions but instead by thinking out of the box.

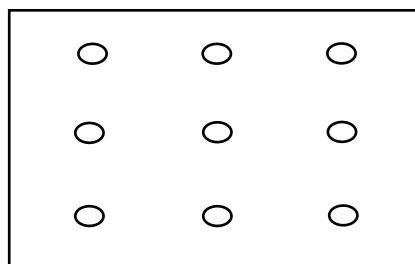


Option 1: The obvious answer:

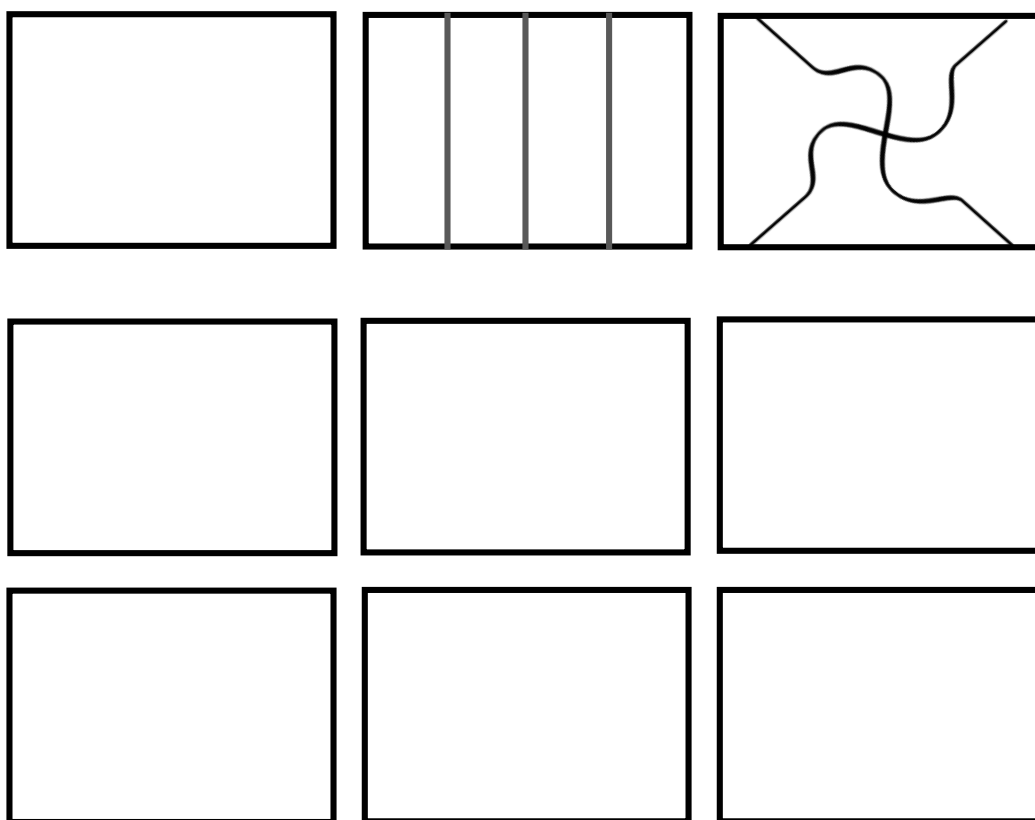
Activity Sheet 1.3

- **Creative and Critical Thinking Activities to Warm up Your Brain**

Connect these nine dots using only four lines and without picking up your pencil from the paper. Hint: Think beyond real and imaginary boundaries with this puzzle.



Divide a square into four identical pieces. Two examples are provided. Complete the rest working individually, or with a partner. Hint: There is an infinite number of solutions.



Information Sheet 1-4 Be a Leader

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Characteristics of a Leader
- Envisioning leadership

Characterstics of a Leader

Someone who guides others....

At its most fundamental level, a leader is defined as a person who guides or directs others. Very simply, for someone to be considered a leader, there must also be people who follow them. However, some definitions of leadership describe its qualities differently.



Someone who influences others....

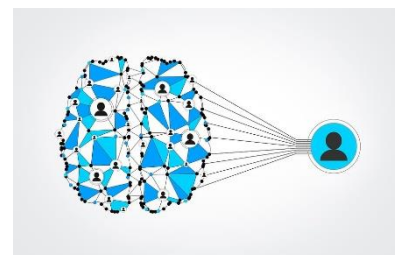
For some, leadership is a mind-set, rather than a position or a title. This perspective would consider anyone a leader, regardless of age, gender, title, education or experience. If the person demonstrates qualities that influence others to follow, then they are a leader. This is done through an individual having a mind-set that allows them to communicate clearly and/or persuade others through their actions. In this sense, a child, a person without formal education, or a person with other specific disadvantages can be a leader.



Someone who supports others from behind the scenes....

Another description of leadership comes from the late South African President, Nelson Mandela, who led the dismantling of apartheid in that country,

“It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”



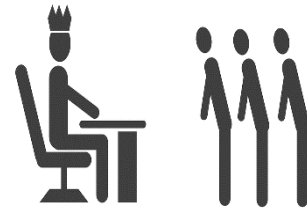
In this quotation Mandela refers to the idea of leading from behind, which he was introduced to growing up. He describes leading from behind as being like a shepherd behind a flock of sheep. From this perspective, the leader encourages the most capable individuals on the team to stand out in front, while others follow them. This approach to leadership is focused on empowering

managers and team leaders to take responsibility and credit, and only coming into the forefront to handle emergencies or crises.

Two essential leadership characteristics

Informal power

Another trait that makes a leader is the possession of informal power. While formal leadership roles come with titles and designated authority, a leader's informal power comes from her/his behaviours and actions that create the desire within others to follow them. These may be things like being inspirational, visionary or charismatic. Or, they may simply be a leader doing things that her/his followers believe are the right things to do.



Staying calm in the face of challenges



A key characteristic that distinguishes good and great leaders from others is the ability to stay calm when presented with challenges. When under pressure, most people feel the effects of stress and this influences their actions and communication patterns. Those who are able to manage their stress, and continue guiding calmly and with a clear head, are much better able to maintain the support of

the people they lead.

Ultimately, for people in leadership roles to achieve success, they must not only possess a formal leadership title. They also must be able to sustain the support of their team members through their behaviours and actions.

The crux of this concept is that, for someone to be considered a leader, people must be prepared to follow, or be guided by, them.



Envisioning leadership

One can imagine the V formation that birds often fly in as a way of envisioning leadership:

Sometimes the head of the V is in front.

Sometimes an inverted V is formed, with the bird at the tip in the back.

At the same time, any of the birds in the flock could take the role of being at the tip of the V...

The official role of that bird within the flock is not based on a rank or title, rather it is based on its behavior during that flight.



INFORMATION SHEET 2-1

Creative and Critical Thinking for Organizational Management

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Brief Snapshot of Organizational Management Basics
- Function of organizational management
- How Creative and Critical Thinking are Related to Organizational Management

- **Brief Snapshot of Organizational Management Basics**

An organization is a structure in which individuals with different backgrounds, educational qualifications, and personal interests work together toward a common goal. In order to achieve the organization's goals, individuals need to collaborate effectively and perform individually at their best. They also need to feel valued by the organization. To achieve these things, employees must be managed well.

Organizational management refers to the art of getting people to work together within the same structure toward a pre-defined goal. In Advanced Life Skills, creative and critical thinking are applied toward the organizational management responsibilities that leaders at different levels are responsible for.

Organizational management involves planning and control to optimize the use of resources, and it structures and focuses employees' work. It also helps build connections among employees, and between employees and the organization itself. Ultimately, organizational management is the effective management of organizational processes and employees. Its overall purpose is to enable employees to produce their best work possible within a specified amount of time.

This is a vast field that cannot be adequately covered here. However, this snapshot provides a basic grounding for the creative and critical thinking concepts that follow.

Organizational management is needed because it:

- Gives employees a sense of security and unity
- Facilitates productive coordination between operational units
- Enables employees to meet deadlines
- Boosts employee motivation
- Creates a positive workplace mentality

- **Function of organizational management**

Organizational management consists of:

Planning

This is thinking through how you intend to do things. By making an effective plan, confusion later on can be avoided.

Organizing

This refers to using resources judiciously to get the best out of employees. It involves a range of activities such as the establishment of a monthly budget, structuring teams, and making sure employees have clear, accurate job descriptions.

Staffing

Staffing is about recruiting people with the right skills and talents for the work. Poor organizational management can lead to unhappy employees who may be problematic as workers and for the organization.

Leading

From the organizational management perspective, leaders must make sure teams work effectively toward achieving work objectives. They must set clear targets and are key decision makers in most situations.

o Control

Hierarchies should be well defined, and supervisors must be aware of their teams' activities. Progress and performance must be reviewed by superiors and guidance provided to workers.

Time Management

Effective time management is incredibly important. It helps employees to do the right thing at the right time, and pays off in the long run.

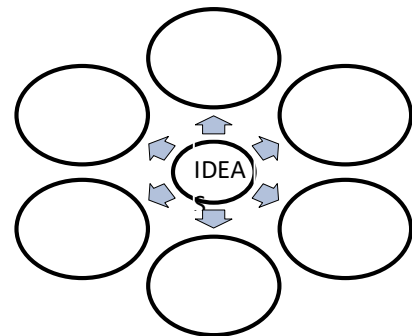
Motivation

Motivation is built through multiple forms of showing appreciation to employees. Appreciation may be in the form of praise, awards, providing a meal, organizing a fun activity, a compensation package, or a financial bonus.

- **How Creative and Critical Thinking are Related to Organizational Management**

There are many ways that organizational management tasks can be carried out. A wide range of tools and methods exist to support different organizational management needs across many industries. Ultimately though, good thinking skills are required to ensure that whatever tool or approach is being used is done effectively.

This then depends on how individual leaders employ their creativity in coming up with ideas, and use sound reasoning in drawing conclusions and making judgements.



- **Creative thinking**

A famous writer once said, when asked where she got her ideas from, “Ideas come from a confluence of rivers that meet in roiling white water in my mind.”

Creative thinking is about coming up with new ideas that are both unique and useful. Creative thinking happens every day by all kinds of people, whether they realize it or not. For example, a labourer who thinks of a new way of carrying goods that makes the work easier is using creative thinking. A leader who can adeptly use creative thinking can have a major impact on whatever area s/he applies this thinking toward, whether productivity, quality, team relations or something else.



Divergent thinking, which describes the generation of many different types of ideas, is another important part of creative thinking. Divergent thinking is about thinking in many different directions, as opposed to following a logical, linear format

To allow yourself to engage in divergent thinking, you must allow yourself to “think outside the box”. This means casting aside assumptions that may typically be used to constrict your thinking, imagining new possibilities, and breaking patterns that those around you may think are just, “how things are”.



When engaging in divergent thinking, you may generate a number of different ideas, but rather than list them out, it may make more sense to create a bubble for each of them (as pictured) to allow each one its own space for further development. For example, say you really care about preventing workplace harassment under your leadership. You have several ideas, one of which is promoting a code of conduct to your boss. You place this idea in one of the bubbles and your other ideas (such as developing a training program and establishing an anonymous complaint management system) in other bubbles. Then, each of these ideas needs further thinking and idea generation to be brought to life.

Brainstorming is a useful tool for generating creative ideas. In brainstorming, an individual or group sits together to generate a list of ideas in response to a question, or to address an issue. All ideas are accepted, and no ideas should be judged or rejected. Creating an environment that allows this facilitates the uninhibited thinking necessary to get to ideas that are both unique and useful for dealing with the situation at hand. A brainstorming session might generate one or more linear lists of ideas, such as the one pictured on the right.



Discussion questions: For what issues would you - as a manager - use the brainstorming tool for? Who would you involve in the brainstorming, and why? Have you used this tool before? If so, what were the benefits and challenges?

At its most basic level, to master creative thinking as a leader, you must give yourself the space to recognize, nurture and pursue ideas, however outrageous they may seem. This same principle applies to your team. To cultivate creative thinking in your team, your team members need space and encouragement to generate and develop ideas.



The concept of creative flow creates a fertile thinking ground for nurturing and pursuing creative ideas. Creative flow is a state of mind that is achieved when you are fully and actively immersed in an activity you are carrying out. In this state, you are both calm and energized at the same time. The task you are working on is the right type of challenging such that it is not too easy but not too difficult either. You know you can achieve it, and it is also interesting and engaging at the same time. To find your creative flow, you must find a calm state of mind and choose tasks that are appropriately challenging. Reframing is a creative tool that is used to help you see things from a different perspective. It is based on the idea that, if you exchange an old frame for a new one, the thing you are looking at appears completely different. It is frequently, though not always, used to help change people's perspective from a negative to a positive.

Discussion questions: Have you ever changed your opinion about someone after seeing them in a new light? If so, this is an example of reframing.

Let's look at this idea more closely.

For example, say your boss has requested that you do extra work that your peers have not been asked to do. You do the work, but feel frustrated as you see the other supervisors having easier days and leaving before you at the end of the day. As a result of this, you feel resentful toward your boss and feel that you are being treated unfairly. However, once the work is completed, your boss offers you a promotion. You realize that the extra work was related to your being considered for the promotion. This has helped you reframe the situation and see it in a more positive light.

- **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking for leaders involves routinely applying the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Leaders must make impactful decisions and address problems every day. Sound reasoning and the ability to make good judgements are essential for people in leadership roles.

Review the definitions of analysis, synthesis and evaluation below.

- **Analysis**



To analyse is to break down concepts into their component parts in order to look for relationships, trends, differences, or other new information. The overall purpose is to gain a better understanding of the thing you are analysing. Analysis involves actions such as categorize, compare, organize, differentiate, experiment, model, or point out.

Let's say you are a quality inspector on a garment factory floor. You need to find a way to reorganize production lines for new types of clothing that your factory is contracted to produce. To do this, you have to first do an analysis. For example, you need to know what the requirements are for the new products. You also need to know what your workers are good at, and what new skills or techniques different workers need to learn. It may be useful to include some experimentation and testing in your analysis. This could entail having one production line create a product one way, while another production line creates the same product a different way. After this is completed, you compare the quality, speed and error rate of each approach.

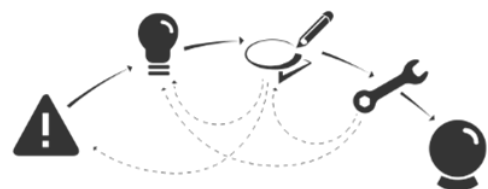


- **Synthesis**



To synthesise, you compile component parts, information or ideas into a new whole, and/or propose alternative solutions. Other words to describe synthesise are assemble, combine, formulate, reconstruct, summarise, condense, design, revise, generate.

To synthesise the information from your analysis, you essentially want to condense it into a format that is simple, clear and easy to understand



In the synthesis, you want to be able to answer questions such as:

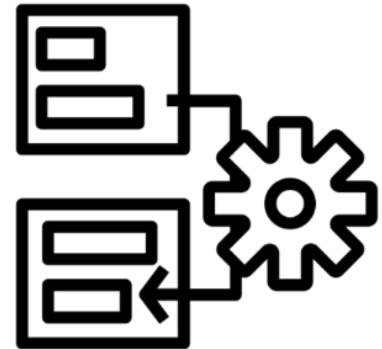
- Which set ups would likely produce the highest numbers?
- Which set ups appear to be most efficient?
- Which set ups would likely be best for workers?



The purpose of doing this is to support the decisions that need to be made in order to set up an organized, efficient floor arrangement. Some decisions may be made by you, some may be made together with your peers, and some made be made by your superiors (with your input). With any of these scenarios, a good synthesis will help inform good decisions.

Whatever floor arrangement is ultimately decided upon, it should consider workers' needs for space, breaks, bathroom and exit access, communication with colleagues and line managers, and other facilities that may help them feel comfortable and motivated.

A synthesis would involve pulling out the most useful information you found in your analysis and putting it together for further examination and judgement.



• Evaluation

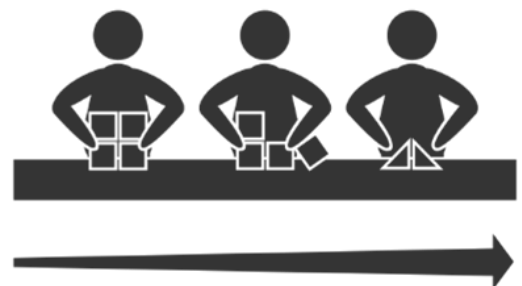


To evaluate is to make an informed judgement or determination. An evaluation must be based on facts, evidence, criteria, or standards.

Evaluative actions include to review, interpret, critique, assess, validate, conclude, score, rate, judge, and recommend. When using evaluative thinking in the context of a garment factory floor, you would look at data to try to find answers to questions such as:

- What were the main causes of the challenges faced last year?
- Which approach led to better worker motivation and unity?
- What communication tactics are most effective in meeting quotas and reducing worker stress?
- Under which line managers is the highest product quality seen?
- What factors led to the greatest efficiencies?
- What investments led to the most profits? Why?
- Based on the criteria provided by the human resources department, which teams deserve an award?
- How well did we comply with the standards for health and safety?

To answer these types of evaluative questions, you must conduct an analysis. From a synthesis of the information analysed, you can use sound reasoning to come to an informed judgement or determination about a course of action. For example, answers to these questions may help you and/or your superiors determine future actions the company could take regarding types of contracts to pursue for revenue and investments to make internally to improve efficiency, morale and motivation.



Discussion questions: How do you currently use analysis, synthesis or evaluation skills in your workplace? Are there any situations or processes in your current work that you think could be better if they were organized or carried out differently? In what ways could using these skills help with doing things differently? When you think about the issue/s, how would you apply these thinking skills toward it/them? What questions come up that you would want to find answers to?

SELF-CHECK 2-1.1

A. Indicate whether the statement is True or False

1. Organizational management refers to the art of getting people to work together within the same structure toward a pre-defined goal.
2. Planning usually creates confusion in the organisation.
3. Brainstorming allows for generating ideas in a free-thinking environment.
4. Appreciation is only given to superiors in the organisation.
5. Analysing an issue is part of creative thinking.
6. Divergent thinking concentrates on finding out the single best solution to a problem or answer to a question.
7. Reframing is a tool helped to create a different way of looking at a situation, person, or relationship by changing its meaning.
8. A synthesis would involve pulling out all, including irrelevant, information you found in your analysis and putting it together for further examination and judgement.

B. Circle the correct responses. Select all options that apply.

1. When done well, organizational management....
 - a. Is the effective management of organizational processes and employees.
 - b. Often makes employees feel less motivated because they have to follow strict rules.
 - c. Facilitates coordination between individual workers and between teams.
 - d. Brings people together to work toward a common goal.
 - e. Ensures all employees do what the boss says.
 - f. Is based on making an organizational chart and making sure everyone has a job description.
 - g. Enables workers to produce desired results within a specified amount of time.
 - h. Involves making sure employees are motivated and appreciated.

ACTIVITY SHEET 2-1.1

Work with a partner. Review the following scenario and complete the worksheet that follows. Make sure that your responses are well thought out. You will be presenting them to the class and also expanding upon them in the other activity sheets in this unit.

Scenario

You are a supervisor who is responsible for overseeing a garment factory floor at a large export factory. This factory has contracts with international buyers to develop clothing and other textiles to sell in Europe.

Your senior leadership has asked you to participate in a factory-wide task force that has the mission of creating a plan to prevent workplace harassment and ensure any incidents are appropriately responded to. The task force has been given a period of three months to assess the issue and present some viable options to senior management for consideration. Senior management would like to examine 2-3 options before making a decision about a path forward.

Each option should be thought through enough so that senior management will feel like they have enough information to make an informed decision. But the information presented should also be succinct enough that the senior leadership can absorb it quickly, without having to read through many pages, or listen to a long, detailed presentation.

The information you have to get started is:

In your discussions thus far with the leadership, other managers and your fellow task force members, there seems to be a lot of anger about the situation, confusion about what constitutes workplace harassment, and fear about the implications of the negative publicity

A workplace harassment committee exists in the factory but you are unclear on what the committee does or how it works

The task force has been given the freedom to come up with the best ideas possible without worrying about budget constraints

1. Brainstorm an initial set of ideas. Remember that in brainstorming are not supposed to judge ideas before putting them on paper. All ideas are okays.

2. Create an analysis plan to better understand the situation and which idea might make the most sense. Which topics do you need more information about?

What methods would you use to gather and review the information?

Make sure your responses are specific and detailed. They should be both thorough and realistic.

[Example: Analysis plan Content for Help: “We need to have a better understanding of how the workplace harassment committee works. To do this, we will review its mission statement, and discuss with representatives from the committee. We will try to find out what its responsibilities are, how it has handled any previous harassment issues, what its challenges are.

3. Pretend you have finalized gathering and analysing information and have arrived at five good ideas (listed in the box below) to recommend to senior management. For each idea, come up with three questions to ask to evaluate the idea. Make sure to develop highly useful questions. The answers to these questions should give you the information you need to develop each idea and finalize a detailed but succinct set of 2-3 options to present to senior management. The first one is done for you.

Ideas	Evaluation Questions
<p>1. Develop a code of conduct that includes specific behavioural expectations regarding workplace harassment</p>	<p>In order to influence behaviours in the factory,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What content would the code of conduct need to contain? • How would the code of conduct be communicated to employees and enforced? • What consequences would need to be in place if the code of conduct were violated?
<p>2. Develop a complaint management system and a process for investigating workplace harassment incidents that are reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Ideas	Evaluation Questions
<p>3. Develop and enforce stronger consequences for individuals who have been found to have committed workplace harassment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
<p>4. Establish a training program for all employees that covers workplace harassment and other issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
<p>5. Launch an awareness campaign in the factory with posters and informational messages about workplace harassment and its consequences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

INFORMATION SHEET 2-2

Maintaining a Positive Outlook

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Adjust Thought Patterns to Identify and Manage Negativity
- Build Positive Thinking
- Positive thinking techniques
- Positive Thinking as a Leader

- **Adjust Thought Patterns to Identify and Manage Negativity**

Leaders have an important role to play within their organizations regarding managing negative attitudes. Managing negativity in your team is a component of ensuring good organizational management because it helps team members stay motivated. In addition, it involves consciously shifting thought patterns using fact-based reasoning. This then allows for an environment in which better creative and critical thinking can take place.

While negativity may seem like an annoyance, or an inevitable presence sometimes, it is actually something that can cause significant damage at work. One person's negative views can influence others and quickly spread, resulting in lower morale, less cooperation, more staff turnover, and reduced productivity. Negative thinking also stifles creativity and limits our ability to use higher order thinking skills.

However, the good thing is that negativity can be managed.



- **Examine your own attitudes**

In fact, as a leader, you should manage both your own negativity and that of your team members. Even if you think you have a positive attitude, you might be able to improve how your team functions by reflecting on where there might be areas of negativity in your own attitudes that you haven't considered. This is because people in leadership roles have a powerful influence on their team members' mindset and outlook. Therefore, leaders (including supervisors and project team leaders) should work to identify and address where their own negative thought patterns may be on display and influencing their teams.

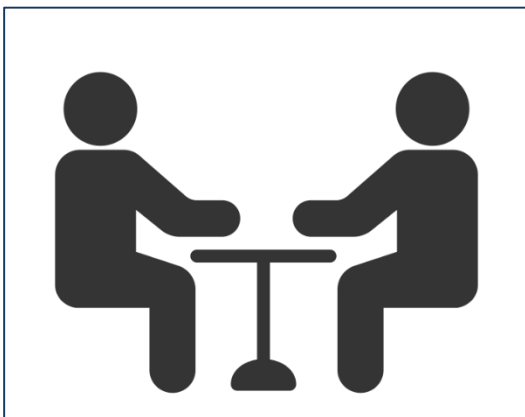
To do this, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have a positive attitude when you arrive at work each day? When do not have a positive attitude?
- Do you have high morale? Why/why not?
- Are you frequently very upset or irritated about work issues? What are the things that cause you to feel this way?
- Do you complain about work or personal issues regularly with your colleagues? What do you complain about? How does it make you feel when you share your complaints with your colleagues?
- Do you treat your colleagues equally and with respect? Where do you think you might falter in this area?
- Do you listen actively to all members of your team? How do you make sure you do this?
- Do you listen with empathy when team members share problems? How do you know when you are listening with empathy?
- When you give critical feedback, do you balance it with praise and offer constructive suggestions? In what ways do you do this? Think of some examples.
- Do you recognize the efforts and achievements of your team members both privately and publicly? How do you do this?
- Do you set reachable goals for your team? What types of goals do you set for them? How do congratulate team members when they reach goals or other work targets?



• Examine your team members' attitudes

Once your own attitudes have been examined, other factors contributing to negativity should be assessed. This involves taking a close look at your team members and identifying who the most significant contributors to negative thinking are.



Then meet with each of them one-on-one. To prepare for the meetings, clearly identify for yourself instances where their negative attitude has impacted the team's productivity, and polluted the team environment.

As you think through the issues, use your analysis skills to be sure that your reasoning is thorough and valid. Also, be aware of possible biases in your and/or your colleague's views as you prepare for the

meeting/s. Biases may be related to age, status, gender or something else.

For example, say it has been identified that a female colleague is problematic because she is vocal and has strong opinions that she is not shy about sharing. Though these usually aren't issues when male employees are vocal, this situation is causing negativity because this way of behaving is unusual for women, and other employees are feeling uncomfortable.

This is not a straightforward negativity situation because gender biases are likely influencing the negative attitudes here. In this case, the problem is not necessarily only the female employee's behaviour. You would need to use critical thinking to thoroughly assess this situation and come to a reasoned conclusion



Once you have a well-reasoned assessment, have a calm conversation with each team member to gain a better understanding of where each person's negative attitude is coming from. As you do this, use active listening to focus your full attention on the person without influencing his/her responses. This will help you to empathize with the person, giving you a genuine understanding of why they have the attitudes that they do.

Then, validate the person's perspective and ask whether there is anything that you or the organization could do to help reduce the person's negativity. Finally, point out how the behaviour affects the team and the changes you expect the person to make for things to improve.

Discussion questions: Suppose you have identified that one of your team members is regularly disengaged. The team's productivity and effectiveness does not seem to be affected at first glance. Would you decide to have a meeting with this person? If so, can you think of any individual, team, leadership, and/or organisational causes for the disengagement?

In this kind of a situation, you might find out that the team member is being excluded from and ignored by the team without you knowing. This means that the team member's negativity is a result of other people's negative behaviour. To make sure you have thought through the situation well, you would need to employ critical thinking. It would be necessary to gather, analyse and synthesise a range of facts before you could make a well-reasoned conclusion.



- **Accept and contain negativity**

You can also proactively allow the expression of negative attitudes by and among team members in a managed fashion. The purpose of this is to reduce, and ideally

eliminate, them. This works because, often, when there is a constructive outlet for it, sharing negative attitudes can reduce them. There is evidence for this in that the personal practice of keeping a journal, or discussing something with a trusted confidant, actually helps eliminate the dominant position that certain thoughts have in people's minds.



This can be employed when you are managing other people by encouraging people to share concerns and complaints through formal channels. A confidential complaint management system is one way of doing this. In such a system, complaints should be thoroughly examined and critical thinking skills used to be sure they are fully understood and responded to properly.



Another is encouraging people to talk about issues and problems in team discussions. However, a time limit should be placed around these discussions, and people should be pushed to pursue or suggest solutions for the problems they share. Creating an opportunity for discussions like these can be a good way for leaders to gain a better understanding of issues and their

underlying causes. It may also be an opportunity to brainstorm possible solutions as a group.

As a leader, you have the job of finding the right balance in these discussions. You also have a responsibility to continuously seek out ways to address issues and complaints raised by your employees.

Discussion questions: Can you describe a situation in which one of your team members had a negative attitude? What steps did you take to solve this situation? What did you learn from this situation? Looking back, is there anything you could have done differently or better to contain the negativity?

- **If negativity comes from above....**

If negative attitudes are generated by your superiors, you have less ability to change them. However, you may be in a position to try. First of all, you are now aware of how significant an impact a leaders' negative thoughts and attitudes can have on employees. Therefore, you should be able to recognize the need to take action to try to change negative attitudes for the organization's success. Since the organization's success is also of interest to your superiors, you have a starting point for discussion.

If possible, arrange for workers to complete an employee satisfaction survey. In such a survey, where literacy levels are very low people could be assisted to complete questionnaires verbally or to listen to questions and choose a response based on a picture or an icon. Or, if a survey is not a realistic option, find out if common complaints can be organized and shared with superiors in another way. Then, push for dialogue among superiors about the issues shared. In this dialogue, raise points that demonstrate the need for and importance of leaders' positive attitudes for company success.

Discussion questions: Have you ever had a negative boss? What about a supervisor or team leader who frequently had a negative attitude? How did this affect you? How did it affect your team?

- **Build Positive Thinking**

There are many ways to transform your own personal thought patterns. In fact, there is a relatively new field called Positive Psychology. This field is based around scientifically proven methods to create positive thinking, which has an additional benefit of greater personal happiness and well-being. Some tools that you may use personally, and that you may encourage (or even teach) among your team members are described below.

The general process known as cognitive restructuring is the broad basis for changing negative thought patterns into more positive ones.

Cognitive restructuring consists of:

1. Building **thought awareness** to identify negative thoughts
2. Using rationale thinking to shift the negative thoughts to more neutral and thoughts



3. Using positive thinking techniques to build more positive thoughts and behaviours

Each of these steps is described in detail, with examples, over the next ten pages.

1. Build thought awareness

Initially, you must build awareness of your own thoughts. To do this effectively, you must first find a way to calm your mind and relax your body.



STRESS

When we experience stress, our brains operate from a primitive place in which we feel like we are under threat. When our brain operates from this place, we are highly agitated and feel the strong need to take immediate action. Typically, we feel certain that the action we want to take is 100% correct. However, this is unbalanced thinking.

Yet, even when not experiencing stress, our thinking can be similarly unbalanced. Negative thought patterns (e.g., “this is terrible,” “I dislike this person,” “I refuse to be open to this idea”), or automatic assumptions (e.g., “that approach is not possible,” “he is the boss so he is right,” “we have to do it this way because this is what we are used to”) can dominate our thoughts and strongly limit our ability to be creative, rationale and productive.

We often have automatic assumptions when we experience certain moods, interact with certain people, or are in certain situations. Sometimes these thoughts are balanced and accurate, and sometimes they are not. To be aware of your thoughts, you have to be able to relax, take a step back, and calmly observe what you are thinking.

One way to do this is to write down your thoughts. When doing this, stay away from judging them or being directed by them. Just write them down so you can identify what they are.

Or, if you are skilled at maintaining a calm mind and relaxed body, you may be able to sit quietly and observe your thoughts, mentally noting what they are.



CALM

Discussion question: What methods do you use to help your body and mind to calm down when experiencing stress?

Once you have gathered a list of your negative thoughts, identify which ones are the most common, the most powerful and the most damaging. Focus on addressing these first.

A list of negative thoughts or automatic assumptions, might look like this

- “My analysis skills are not good enough”
- “This team member is not a good decision-maker”
- “She will not be able to do this task because she is not confident”
- “I am not capable of doing this task”
- “My team does not like me”
- “My boss thinks I am not smart enough to handle this”



Discussion question: If you were to do this exercise right now, what would your list look like?

2. Develop rationale thinking

Discussion question: Without looking below, how would you describe rationale thinking?

In this section you will study a way to hold a **debate** with yourself to develop more rationale thoughts.

Rationale thinking is the ability to assess facts and other relevant information about a situation in order to arrive at a sound conclusion. The purpose of the debate is to determine whether your negative thoughts are rationale or not. If they are found to not be rationale, they can more easily be challenged.

The debate has three stages:

Stage One

In the first stage, you look for objective evidence that your thoughts accurately represent reality. This may be that a mistake you made is evidence that you are not capable of carrying out a task. If you are stuck in negative thinking, doing this will be fairly simple because this information is driving your current thinking.

Stage Two

In the second stage, you look for facts that refute the validity of the negative thoughts. These are pieces of information that are evidence that your negative thinking may be an inaccurate reflection of reality. This forces you to see another perspective that is less negative.

- For example, you identified in Stage One that having made a mistake is evidence that you are not capable of doing a task. Now, you try to refute this by identifying evidence to the contrary. Contrary evidence might be that your other colleagues also made mistakes and still became capable of carrying out the task. This step might be a little bit more challenging, especially if your negative thoughts are very strong.

o **Stage Three**

In the third stage, you come up with new thoughts that are more balanced. You develop these thoughts based on looking at the facts that support and counter your negative thoughts. Usually, by having realized that there is factual information that counters your negative thoughts, it becomes possible to develop more rationale thoughts to replace them.

Rationale thinking example 1

Let's examine this debate process through an example. In this example, we will imagine that you work for a company in the leather industry. Your superiors have given you project with impossible objectives. You are overwhelmed and have become stuck in a negative thought pattern.



The details are that you have been told you that you need to ensure that the factories you work with follow strict standards for health and safety. Complying with the standards has become an immediate priority as a result of the requirements detailed in a contract with a lucrative new client.

This type of compliance is new in the leather industry. You are certain that the standards cannot be met without major changes, and they will take time to implement. However, your senior management has given you an impossible timeframe and they are insistent that it not flexible. It turns out they have already signed the contract with the client and have promised to deliver.

You feel like you will fail at this task and your bosses will blame you for damaging the relationship with this important client. You are motivated to try your best, but also feel like you are just not capable enough to get the job done.

You feel bad about the issue every day and are stuck in this thinking.

Stage One – Evidence your thoughts are accurate

When you look for evidence that your thoughts are an accurate reflection of reality, you might come up with the following statements:

When I shared my doubts about this issue with my bosses, I was dismissed in front of four other senior managers and some of my peers and that made me feel embarrassed and ashamed.

- There are health and safety issues that I have thought about pushing in previous years but have not, so this situation is my fault and now I am paying for it.
- My bosses gave me this task so if they think it is realistically possible, then I must be incorrect in thinking that it is not possible.

Stage Two – Evidence your thoughts are NOT accurate

When you look for objective evidence that your negative thoughts are NOT an accurate reflection of reality, you might come up with the following:

- Every way I have looked at how to address the required health and safety standards, I come up with a timeline that is way beyond the client's requirement.
- I am skilled and experienced and have good technical training in this specific area of work (perhaps more so than some of my superiors).
- My superiors are strongly motivated by having this new, lucrative client.
- I could have taken actions in previous years regarding issues I have been aware of (like workers' exposure to chemicals, pollution of nearby rivers, and/or employment of underage workers who are not attending school) but there has never been any pressure to do so from above; it has never been a formal performance expectation until now.



Stage Three – Develop new, rationale thoughts

Based on calmly looking at all of this evidence, you may be able to come to a more balanced viewpoint. This may allow your thinking to shift in a more positive direction.

For example:

- My superiors' motivation about this client might be causing them to overlook what is actually required to ensure health and safety compliance.
- Maybe someone else could find another way to achieve this, but I am confident in the accuracy and validity of my assessment of the time and work required.
- It was not appropriate for the superior to dismiss me in front of others; everyone makes mistakes sometimes.



By going through this process, you can make balanced thoughts become more prominent in your mind than your negative thoughts were. Doing this can then position you to make different daily choices about how you communicate with your colleagues and your superiors on this issue.



To relate to this example, by going through these steps, the rationale thoughts have become more dominant for you than your initial negative thoughts. This may enable you to continue engaging calmly in dialogue about the challenges with your superiors. If the negative thoughts had continued to dominate your thinking instead, they might have led you to express your frustration to your superiors in an outburst that they would not respond to well.

Rationale thinking example 2

Let's look at another scenario where you adopt rationale thinking in order to build more positive attitudes among your team members. In this example, rationale thinking is linked with the third component of cognitive restructuring: building positive thinking.



For this scenario we will pretend that you work in hospitality management and are instructed to ensure that cleaners always leave hotel rooms spotless. However, your team members' performance constantly disappoints you.

You give your cleaning team training and feedback, but there are still regular complaints from hotel guests about cleanliness issues. You become convinced that the cleaning team is incompetent and purposefully avoids attending to necessary details. When you interact with the cleaners, they often seem disengaged and apathetic. When you share with them that hotel guests have complaints, sometimes they respond saying that the guests are too picky. This really disappoints you and gives you a strong negative attitude toward the group of cleaners.

To try to shift this negative attitude toward more positive thinking, you might be able to observe your thoughts and have the following debate with yourself:

Initial position

“This group is unbelievable. They are terrible workers. I have told them many times to be sure all the details are attended to. They always say they will and complaints from customers keep coming. It is like they are blind or completely don't care. This is making me look bad and I am angry and frustrated.”

Rational thinking

“This group has not had much formal training or education, and their own living circumstances are surely very far from what the standards are at this hotel. While we have had the same conversation multiple times and I see I am being ignored, may be there are reasons for this that I do not fully understand given the very different circumstances of our lives. If I think about it hard, there might be a different way to motivate or teach them that could work better.”



Positivity creation

Following this, you may be able to instil some more positive attitudes and behaviours among the members of your cleaning team. This could be done through compliments or rewards for

the (few) times a job has been done well, showing and telling them repeatedly that you believe in them, and providing a much more hands on training where you observe errors and gently, but clearly provide feedback on the spot.

3. Positive thinking techniques

Once you are in a place where rationale thoughts are accessible to you, you may use positive thinking techniques to build more positivity in your thinking as well as among members of your team. The positive thinking techniques covered here include positive affirmations, remembering positive moments, savouring the present moment, being hopeful, responding to good news in an active-constructive way, and seeking out and building good relationships.

Here, you will explore each of these in further detail.

Positive affirmations – Positive affirmations are positive statements that help challenge destructive negative thoughts. You can use them to build your own self-confidence, or to build the self-confidence of others.

If based on rationale thinking, positive affirmations can undo the damage that negative thinking may have caused. For affirmations to be most effective, they should be specific, have strong emotional content, and be stated in the present tense.

Positive affirmations for yourself might be:

- “I am well trained for this. My thinking is solid. I can do a good job.”
- “I am doing the best that I can. Fair people will respect this. I will rise above unfair criticism in a mature and professional way.”



Positive affirmations to improve positive thinking among your team members might be:

- “You are well prepared and have worked hard. I am here to support you.”
- “I know this feels challenging, but I have full confidence in your ability to learn these skills and do a great job.”
- “I agree that other people may be acting unreasonably. However, this doesn’t mean that you also have to be unreasonable. There is probably a way to solve this problem if you first calm down and then try to find some common ground. I know you can do this.”
- “You are dedicated, reliable people who our clients have a lot of respect for.”
- “You are really good at”
- “You are leaders and change makers. You should feel proud that you are improving other people’s lives.”

Remember positive moments – This technique, called positive reminiscing, helps remind you of good experiences from the past that are related to whatever negativity issues you are currently dealing with.



For example, say you are sick and tired of dealing with an annoying co-worker. Your negative thoughts about that person dominate your mind in all of your interactions with them.

To motivate yourself to change this, try to think of a time you have dealt effectively with another difficult person in your life. Perhaps you have a positive memory of being able to tune out an overly talkative relative while still smiling along in conversation with them, keeping both of you more or less content. Try to apply this when dealing with the annoying co-worker.

Savour the present moment – Finding a way to be fully immersed and actively engaged in your current experience. Try to be perceptive about the more interesting or pleasant sights, sounds, smells and textures of the things around you, and block out the less pleasant ones.

Take a mental photograph of the present moment and reminisce about it later. Tell others how much you value whatever you are doing together. Allow yourself to feel proud of what you have accomplished and how impressed other people are. Share these same tips with the people you supervise to help shift their thinking along these lines too.



Be hopeful – Hope is the belief in something better happening in the future. Hope is a strong driver of intentional change. To build hope, envision your desired future. Try to maintain that vision or revisit it frequently over time.

If you focus on your hopes regularly, your general sense of hopefulness for the future will grow. Your hopes may be about outcomes or results you want, your own career growth, or changes in other people's behaviour.

In addition to being hopeful yourself, you can also help people you supervise to be hopeful as well.



Respond to good news in an active-constructive way –

This means to both say and show positivity in how you respond to other people’s successes. For example, if a team member is proud of an accomplishment, you may say, “great job,” and shake their hand or give them a big smile. This would be instead of saying, “good job,” and then moving on, ignoring the announcement (such as pretending you are distracted and didn’t hear), or criticizing the person (“what about the other areas I told you to work on?” “What should I do now, promote you?”).



Seek out and build good relationships –

Good relationships are fundamental to human wellbeing. In the workplace, interacting with your coworkers, superiors, subordinates and clients in a way that builds mutually trusting relationships will help you have a support network of positivity around you. Working to ensure your relationships outside of work are also strong, and mutually beneficial can be another powerful source of positivity. As a leader you should help your team foster good relationships with each other in order to strengthen the environment for a positive workplace mentality.

Discussion questions: Have you used any of these positive thinking techniques before? If so, which ones? Does positive thinking come naturally to you, or is the information in this lesson is new to you? Would you be willing to try out one of these techniques within the next week?

- **Positive Thinking as a Leader**

The initial references to a strategy document and mounting emails may or may not be reflective of your workplace. However, the larger themes of strategic thinking, the pressures of competing priorities, and managing negative emotions are relevant for everyone in leadership positions, regardless of the work setting.

Self-Check 2-2.1

Circle the correct answer(s). Multiple answers can be circled.

1. A negative attitude of a team member can affect
 - a. cooperation within the team
 - b. satisfaction among team
 - c. the team's productivity
 - d. other team members' attitude
2. As a leader you are responsible for
 - a. managing your own attitudes
 - a. helping to develop positive attitudes among team members
 - b. allowing and managing the expression of negative attitudes by and among team members
 - c. none of the above
3. Which of the following statements are true?
 - a. Negative attitudes can be reduced or even eliminated by avoiding discussion of them.
 - b. You have as much power to change the negative attitudes of your superiors as of those you are leading.
 - c. People in leadership roles have a powerful influence on their team members' mind set and outlook.
4. When we experience stress, our brains operate from a primitive place in which we feel like we are under threat. When thinking from this place:
 - a. You can feel the strong need to take immediate action and are certain that the action you want to take is correct.
 - b. Your thinking is usually balanced.
 - c. Most people are rational and productive.
 - d. None of the above
5. Rational thinking is
 - a. a thinking process based on an evaluation of objective facts rather than powerful emotions
 - b. a thinking process based on an evaluation of objective facts and powerful emotions
 - c. a thinking process based on powerful emotions rather than an evaluation of objective facts
6. The following techniques can be used in developing positive thinking
 - a. Positive affirmations
 - b. Chastising others to get negative thoughts out of your head
 - c. Active-constructive responses
 - d. Savouring the present moment

Activity Sheet 2-2

This is a continuation of Activity Sheet 2.1.

Work with a partner. Your factory senior leadership has decided to introduce a training program on workplace harassment for all staff and launch an awareness campaign. It has also made an example of the manager who had earlier been involved in the workplace harassment incident and fired him, making it clear to all employees why he was fired.

Many people who work in the factory are very upset. In floor meetings, people constantly raise questions about the issue and discussions often become heated. A group of managers has begun to organize what appears to be a protest against the new measures and negative attitudes are spreading quickly. Some of the new posters that have been put up as part of the awareness campaign have been ripped down or drawn over with a thick black pen.

Despite all of this, the managers who have been able to stay calm and focused have determined that most of the concerns seem to come from people being uncertain about what actually constitutes workplace harassment. There are widespread confusion and people are uncomfortable talking about it. When it is spoken about, it appears as though misunderstandings are prevalent. As a result of this confusion, there is fear that false accusations will be made, or that people will accidentally act in a way that is perceived as workplace harassment and face harsh consequences for it. The negative attitudes among many employees and the challenge presented by the group of managers that is protesting are threatening to derail the new measures.

Your job now is to come up with a plan to contain and reduce the negativity so that the new measures the senior leadership has introduced will succeed. Your plan needs to have at least 3 (though more is good too) new activities that will be introduced in a staged fashion over the next 4 weeks. Describe the activities you will carry out in detail so that everyone who is responsible for implementing them has a clear understanding of what they are doing and why. Be sure to address the below questions in your activity plans. At the same time, do not limit your thinking to these questions. Come up with as many areas to work on as you think will be effective.

- What would you do in regards to the group of managers who are leading the spread of negativity?
- What can be done during meetings to avoid the heated discussions that have been happening?
- What would you advise to the senior leadership to help guide them in a positive direction?

Activity 1:

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Other activities (be creative!):

Be prepared to share your activities with the class for feedback!

INFORMATION SHEET 2-3

Creative and Critical Thinking for Better Organizational Management

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Bringing creative ideas to life \Turn Your Idea into Reality
- How to implement your creative ideas

Bringing creative ideas to life \Turn Your Idea into Reality

Getting good ideas off the drawing board

How many times have you thought of a really fantastic idea? Maybe it was something that would revolutionize the way your office operates. Or perhaps it was a great product that would appeal to millions of people worldwide.



Most of us have been in this situation at least once, and we'll probably have to admit that this great idea never became a reality. Sure, it was creative – and it could be done. But we never acted on it. Why? Why do we think of ideas that we know are good, only to let them sit in the back of our minds – without doing anything about them?

One reason is that putting an idea into practice can seem like a huge amount of work. Even if it's a small idea, most of us see nothing but potential obstacles when we imagine taking action. We assume we've lost the election before we've even started the campaign! Another reason can be fear – fear of moving out of our current, comfortable space.

How to implement your creative ideas

OK, so you've got the idea. Now what?



Step One: define who will be affected by your idea

Imagine that your great idea is a process that will cut your company's month-end reporting time in half. Who will benefit from this? Obviously, everyone who's involved in the current month-end reporting system. But who else? Your company's executives will clearly be interested if timely information is business-critical. And if your new process will save half a day's work for everyone, then your team will have more time for other things – perhaps for taking care of clients?



Step Two: think about how it will affect them

Now that you know **who** will be affected by this idea, briefly think about **how** it will affect each of them, as an individual. What will the benefits be? What will be the costs? And will the benefits sufficiently outweigh the costs for this to be worth doing?

At this stage, you can do this at a superficial level. In step four, after you've planned what you'll do, you can look at this in more detail.

Step Three: Plan "Backward"

Next, create a plan for **how** you're going to help these people. The easiest way to do this is to create a "reverse" plan.



For most people, this may not seem to make sense. You need to plan your steps by moving forward, right? Well, that's one way to do it. But when you start at the beginning, there are many directions you can take to reach your end goal, so it's easy to get lost. However, when you start with your end goal and work backward, things tend to come together much more easily.

Here's an example: one of your internal month-end processes takes 4 days to complete because of the vast amount of data that your colleague Mahjabeen has to process when the month is over. This causes a lot of stress as senior management are always agitating to get the figures earlier, and it means that Mahjabeen can never take vacation during that period – which is sometimes frustrating for her. You want the month end work to take no more than one day. But how can you make that happen?

Think "backward":

- What's your end result? You want the final results available no more than a day after the last activity report on has been completed.
- Immediately, you realize that if Mahjabeen could process data in batches throughout the month, she wouldn't have so much to do after the month end. But this would require other departments to provide figures every week instead of only every month.
- You talk to your colleagues in other departments, and they agree to provide the data every week. Although this does create more work for them, they're happy to make the change as it means they won't have to handle a large batch of queries from a stressed-out Mahjabeen at month end.

By working backward like this, you'll develop a plan to take that idea you've imagined and make it a reality. You probably won't get lost along the way, because you started planning in the place where you want to finish.

Make sure you write down your plan – it's very unlikely to become real while it exists only in your imagination. Work on ways to reduce the likelihood that any identified risks will occur – or reduce their effects if they do occur.



This is especially important if you depend on someone else for support to implement your plan. Assess, and then explain, the risks. This will show that you're realistic about your idea **Step Four: Evaluate your proposal**

Now that you have a plan in place, you'll need to check it again to make sure that it works as a plan, and that this plan is worth implementing.

Step Five: Ask for feedback

Next, discuss your ideas with a few people whom you trust. Does the idea seem reasonable and possible to them? In particular, try it out with some of the people who you think will benefit. Their input will help to improve the idea.

Be careful here. Avoid negative people who like to discourage others. Feedback can be tremendously helpful, but don't let yourself be affected by people who don't have vision. Approach those whose opinions you trust, and stay away from the others.



Tip

If you want to set up a business to exploit this idea, be particularly careful who you talk to. On one hand, talking to others will help you improve your idea. This can be very important, and can help you find allies and backers. On the other hand, you don't want to lose control of the idea. Trust is all-important here!



Step Six: Start taking action

This is when a lot of people give up. After all, thinking about an idea and planning how to bring it about are easy and fun, and involve little commitment beyond the time put in. The thought of actually doing all of the steps you've carefully planned can be a bit frightening, and hard work can be difficult and boring.

But this is your chance to achieve something great!

You've done everything right so far – you know who will be helped, you know exactly what you need to do to get it done, and you've received some feedback from your peers. So, get going. An idea will remain just that – an **idea** – unless you take action to turn it into a reality. In most cases, you'll need the support of others – either for permission to implement **your** plan, or for help to actually make it happen.

When you seek approval to go ahead with your idea, make sure that your "sales pitch" focuses on benefits as well as features. A feature is a fact – for example, "This new cell phone feature

is a camera zoom lens offering 10 times magnification." A benefit is the result of the fact, the "What's in it for me?" So, "This lens helps you take great impromptu photos of things that would look tiny on a normal phone camera." With that sentence, your recommendation just became a lot more personal. Show people what they have to gain – ideally in time or money, or both. And when you try to persuade others to help you implement your idea, focus your requests on your **allies**, or "friends," to increase the chances that they'll agree. Make sure the work you ask people to do is within their capabilities, and be sure the work reasonably fits into their schedules. Set yourself, and others, periodic short-term goals and deadlines. This will keep the project moving and help ensure that it's completed.

o Step Seven: Focus on the end result

Will there be obstacles and unexpected delays when you finally implement your plan? Almost certainly. Things usually happen that we don't plan for, so it's important to be persistent. Keep your end goal in mind. Obstacles don't necessarily mean complete stops – they're just issues that you have to work through. You're probably going to face a few, so expect them.

You can see the power of persistence when you look at one of the world's greatest inventors. Famously, Thomas Edison had over 10,000 failures before he successfully created the light bulb. Through it all, he never lost his vision. If he had, he never would have made it through so many unsuccessful attempts – and we would all be sitting around in the dark. So above all, don't give up!

Key Points

Many people have fantastic ideas. But because they fail to act on them, the ideas are never put into practice. By creating a plan, asking for feedback, and taking action, your great idea can become a reality. But don't think it's going to be easy. Look closely at the risks and potential barriers – and create solutions to overcome them. The more you prepare, the higher chance you'll have for success.

Activity Sheet 2-3

This is a continuation of Activity Sheets 1-1 and 2-1

Work with a partner.

As a result of your and your colleagues' efforts, negative attitudes have largely been contained (for the moment). After speaking to the dissenting managers and many other employees, it is clear that there is too much confusion around workplace harassment issues, and this is causing unnecessary resentment and fear. As a result, senior management has put a hold on the new measures and is taking a different approach.

One of the factory's buyers has agreed to provide a grant to develop a customized workplace harassment training program. It needs to be developed with input from workers at different levels to try to make the content as relevant as possible and to address workers' fears. The buyer wants to do some experimentation and test different approaches to be sure that the program is effective. They have mentioned that if it is effective, they would be interested in implementing it in other factories. Senior management is motivated by this and pleased that this could have a positive impact on their factory's reputation.

1) Plan out how to develop the training program

Follow the steps in Article 1, "Turn Your Idea into Reality," and develop a full plan to bring the training program to life. Following steps 1-7, describe in detail how you would carry out each of the steps. Use your own notepaper to brainstorm, and use the following blank page to develop your final description (or, follow instructions provided by your teacher regarding how to document your response if they are different from what is stated here). Remember in designing the program that the buyer wants to test it and gather data to know how well it works.

2) Design an experiment

In addition to designing the program itself, you need to find a way to measure whether it is effective or not. Following the guidance in Article 2: "Business Experiments," come up with a way of measuring how well the program improves employees' understanding of workplace sexual harassment. You may want to consider factors such as the format used to deliver the training, employees' satisfaction of the training, whether (and how much) employees' understanding of workplace harassment issues improved following the training, and whether employees felt the information will influence their behaviours and/or acceptance of future workplace measures to reduce sexual harassment

LEARNING OUTCOMES # 03: ADOPT COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS IN DIFFERENT WORKPLACE CONTEXTS

Content:

- Basics of Effective Communication
- Communication Effectiveness
- Common Communication Challenges

Assessment Criteria:

- 3.1 Different styles of communication on how to improve understanding and build rapport with others are recognized
- 3.2 Messages are communicated in an effective and engaging way
- 3.3 Negotiation skills in resolving differences are demonstrated
- 4.4 Effective approaches to working within a diverse workforce are identified
- 4.5 Effectively mitigating and resolving workplace conflict is demonstrated
- 4.6 Open lines of communication with staff and employees are maintained

Resources Required

- 1. Paper and pen

Learning Activities

Learning Activities	Instructions
Information Sheet 3-1: Review the Basics of Effective Communication	1) Read Information Sheet 3-1 2) Complete Self-Check 3-1.1 3) Complete Activity Sheet 3-1.1
Information Sheet 3-2: Improve Your Communication Effectiveness	1) Read Information Sheet 3-2 2) Complete Self-Check 3-2.1 3) Complete Activity Sheet 3-2.1

Information Sheet 3-2: Handle Common
Communication Challenges

- 1) Read Information Sheet 3-3
- 2) Complete Self-Check 3-3.1
- 3) Complete Activity Sheet 3-3.1

INFORMATION SHEET 3-1

Review the Basics of Effective Communication

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Communicate effectively
- Guiding engaging and task-oriented meetings and discussions
- communicate under pressure
- Skilled sharing of critical feedback with team members
- How to receive critical feedback gracefully

Effective communication

Effective communication involves a combination of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques. The primary purpose of verbal communication is to convey a clear message. The verbal communication process has been documented in the literature as having seven stages. Each of these is described in the article, “Understanding Communication Skills”.

- **Non-Verbal communication for leaders**

While verbal communication passes informational messages, non-verbal communication facilitates effective transfer of messages by smoothly establishing human connection. For example, when you bring a new person on to your team, you may spend extra time with them, look them in the eye, and smile more than you would do so with the team members you see day-to-day. You do this to help them feel comfortable and welcomed into their new workplace.

Non-verbal communication can also be used to create emphasis and to convey emotion associated with certain topics. As an example, you might spread your arms out to either side to emphasise the large size of an available plot of land that you are reporting to your superiors about. Or, you may lower your tone of voice to try to mediate a heated conversation between two of your team members.

Using non-verbal communication tools well is a major way to improve how people understand you and perceive you as a leader.

Among your tone of voice, eye contact, gestures, posture, and facial expressions. Other key aspects of effective non-verbal communication are keeping an appropriate distance from the person you are speaking to, dressing well, and maintaining the spaces that you occupy at work tidy.



Being on time is also very important. Despite the common challenges faced in urban settings, if you plan well in advance, you can ensure timeliness even with obstacles.

Appropriate workplace attire depends on where you work and is different in different settings. However, as a leader, you are noticed by team members, clients and senior management. As such, if you are unsure, it is always better to dress more formally than may be necessary. Make sure your colours go well together and take the time to ensure everything fits properly.



Discussion questions: In your role, what non-verbal tools have you found to be most effective? Why? Are there any other non-verbal tools that you would consider employing more in the future?

• Empathic communication and active listening

Unfortunately, some research shows that as people rise up through the ranks, they have fewer strong connections with colleagues. This is important to be aware of because it indicates that ensuring your empathy and listening skills are well honed is more important than ever.

You may have an image in your mind of boss who dominates discussions and barks orders to workers. However, this is not how modern workplaces operate, and it is not how to be an effective leader. Leaders need to be able to empathize with others and regularly use active listening. Empathy and active listening are also powerful tools for human connection

because when people feel heard, they feel valued and are more willing to work collaboratively.



Empathy is about stepping into another person's view and experience of the world in a way that is not clouded by your own emotions, views or opinions. The goal is to see others' perspectives and accept them without judgement. For example, if one of your team members tells you that s/he is unsure about how to carry out a task, or disagrees with how something is done, your job is not to chastise. Instead, your job is to show empathy and listen to why your team member

feels the way they do. Once you fully understand, then you should respond to the situation to try to address the concerns the team member shared.

When you become skilled at active listening, you will be able to actually feel like you are in another person's shoes. When you do this, remember to stay away from judgement. You should instead make neutral statements (e.g., "I see," "Yes, that makes sense,"



"Certainly," "Indeed") and ask questions that help the speaker share more about the subject they are talking about rather than shift their thoughts a different direction (such as giving you information to help you form your viewpoint).

Empathy is considered by many to be the basis for building community. This is why active listening at work builds stronger, more collaborative teams.

Discussion questions: Can you think of the last time you used active listening to support one of your team members? Did you observe your mind wandering at any point? How could you engage more in active listening when you talk to your team members?

• **Guiding engaging and task-oriented meetings and discussions**

As a leader it is essential that you use tested techniques to guide your discussions with your team members. Doing this will help you be more successful as a leader and improve your team's productivity.

Group discussions at work, whether they are exchanges between groups workers finishing a shift and those starting, or whether they are more formal meetings, are critical times. They can be highly productive, or completely unproductive, depending on how they are facilitated.

If you lack confidence in any facilitation situation, practice at home, or in a no or low-pressure environment to build your confidence and refine your approach.

- Always think about the structure and goals of the discussion beforehand
- Mentally prepare an agenda and ask others if they have any points they would like to add
- Make sure you think about how much time the discussion will take and communicate this to the



participants (e.g., “this will take about 10 minutes,” “let’s get together and talk for about 30-40 minutes”).

Your job as a facilitator is then to manage the discussion. You need to make sure the agenda items are covered, prevent people from talking too much, keep the discussion focused on the most important issues, and encourage people who have not spoken to contribute.



You also have to keep an eye on the time, and work to make sure all relevant points are covered within a specified period of time. Another important role you have as a facilitator is to listen.

Remember that meeting facilitation is not a performance—rather it is a way to make collaborative work more productive. Active listening, observing and reflecting on dynamics between team members may make you aware of things (e.g., areas of confusion or interpersonal conflict) that you were not otherwise aware of. With this awareness, you can help to manage and diffuse situations between team members after the meeting.

Meeting participants should also show respect to one another in how they communicate, and if you are the facilitator, you should communicate this clearly as an expectation, especially in instances where respect is not shown.

At the same time, this does not mean that disagreement, or even conflict, is not okay. Disagreements between colleagues about work issues are completely normal. As a facilitator, you should validate all opinions that are shared during meetings and do your best to include your co-workers’ ideas and points of view in any decisions that are made.



Finally, to conclude a meeting well, you should try to end it on time. If it goes overtime, thank participants for their time. Before disbanding, verbally review the actions that need to be taken (and by whom) that were agreed on. This is an important final step that will help people remember what needs to be done.

Discussion questions: What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to facilitating meetings and discussions with team members?

Have you ever employed techniques to guide conversation when in discussion with your superiors? What could you do to improve your meeting facilitation skills?

- **Effective communication under pressure**

High pressure situations is not uncommon at work. They are also the times that test us the most because they increase our stress levels though we have to keep performing. When working under pressure, most people change how they communicate as a result of having increased stress.



Often, supervisors and managers either express their tension through using harsh words with their teams. Alternatively, they may close down and stop communicating well.



However, those who find the most success and productivity in the long term are able to remain calm, listen to their team members, show respect and make good decisions. Remaining calm is the most important way to ensure you continue to communicate effectively when under pressure.

While not easy, it is achievable through the application of stress management skills.

To do reduce stress in the moment, focus your mind on yourself and push aside thoughts about what other people are doing or saying. Then, try some of the things listed below.

- Think about things that you love and that make you happy (like your children, partner, or other family members).



- Look at a photo, an image on a screen, or out a window. Looking at nature, images of nature, or images of people you care about can be particularly helpful ways to calm down.



- Write your thoughts down on paper in a notebook or personal diary. This can be an effective way to stop negative thoughts that seem stuck in your mind.



- Think about something enjoyable that you wish you could be doing in that moment instead of what you are doing. This is a good distraction technique to mentally separate yourself from the situation you are in.



- Think about at least one action you can take that you know will help you feel calmer. This may be taking some deep breaths, taking a short break, talking to a friend or loved one, or making sure that you get a good sleep that night.



If you are able to manage your stress and strong emotions, you will be able to communicate more effectively under pressure and be more respected as a leader. Your team members will also stay more focused and motivated and have more respect for you down the road.

Discussion questions: When was the last time you were in a highpressure situation at work? During this situation, how did your stress level influence your communication style? What tools did you use to manage your stress? Were you successful in maintaining a calm, steady communication approach?

- **Skilled sharing of critical feedback with team members**

When giving a team member critical feedback on their performance, behaviour or a specific task that they are working on, your goal is to be constructive. The overall aim is to influence the person receiving the feedback to change their behaviour. It is important to be clear, direct and specific.

You should also be sensitive to what the person you are giving feedback to might take offence to. Style your communication in a way that avoids causing offence. Also, make sure the feedback is about the person's behaviour, rather than the person. This helps them receive the feedback in a way that shifts it from being about who they are. Instead, it focused it on the way the person has acted, which they can change.

When you share critical feedback, you need to explain why the behaviour is undesirable. Do this by describing the effects the behaviour had (or could have).

For example, if a team member made a mistake and did not inform anyone, you can explain that you are not mad at them for making a mistake, but are concerned that the mistake could have led to a larger problem later. Also, feedback does not need to happen in formal "feedback" conversations. Feedback can be given more regularly and informally, but in appropriate moments when you think the person will be receptive and there is privacy to prevent others from overhearing.

Discussion questions: Think about a time when you gave critical feedback to a team member. Did you describe it in terms of the person's behaviour? Where you clear and specific? Did you explain the negative effects of any undesirable behaviours? What would you differently next time?

- **How to receive critical feedback gracefully**

Receiving critical feedback at work can be challenging, especially if the person giving the feedback is not skilled at doing so. Even more so if the feedback comes from a high-level, well-respected supervisor. If feedback is negative, it will most likely feel upsetting. However, learning to receive negative feedback is an important skill for workplace success.

In the moment, you should try to remember that the feedback is not about who you are, it is about a behaviour that you can change in order to improve your performance. You may be tempted to express disagreement with the feedback, or try to demonstrate why the person giving the feedback is not correct. However, the professional way to receive feedback is to acknowledge the perspective of the person giving you feedback and then reflect on the ways they may be correct.

Essentially, when receiving feedback, you should use active listening and accept the feedback instead try to respond or counter. Even if the feedback is inaccurate, receiving it well can be an effective way of communicating respect to the person giving the feedback.

Discussion questions: When was the last time you received critical feedback from a superior? How did you feel? How did you react? Did the person give you the feedback do it in a skilful way? Is there anything you can learn from the way the feedback was delivered, and your reaction, that can help you improve how you deliver and/or receive feedback in the future?

- **Managing Up**

Managing up means actively managing the relationships you have with your superiors. If you are able to proactively maintain a positive and productive relationship with your direct supervisor, you will be more satisfied with your job and it will help your career.



To do this, develop a positive interpersonal relationship with her/him and be as effective as possible in your communication. You should work to understand what things are high priorities for your boss, and what things are not. Also, try to meet your boss' needs before they are communicated to you. Do your job well, and help your boss understand the ways that you work most productively. It is also important to use your boss' time well and minimize the amount of time your boss has to spend overseeing or reviewing your work.

Because managing up is about engaging effectively in an interpersonal relationship with a superior, you might need to act in ways that are unexpected. You may find in some instances that you know more than your boss about something, or that your ideas or way of thinking about

something might be better than your boss's. Or you may find that your boss highly values your loyalty over your quality of work, or that s/he does not always follow company rules or ethics. Each of these situations should be handled delicately using various communication and problem-solving tools. If your boss trusts you, you may be able to increase her/his knowledge about certain topics or guide him/her in certain directions that you think are good for the company.

Ultimately, your relationship with your boss is important, and actively managing it can produce helpful results for you and for your employer.

Discussion questions: Do you consider yourself skilled in “managing up”? What new approaches (that you haven’t used before) would you be willing to use to improve your relationships with your superiors at work?

“COMMUNICATION SECRETS”

Communication Secrets is a Bangla video series created by the online platform 10 Minute School. It consists of 31 short videos (all less than 3 minutes) about professional communication skills. It is also provided as part of the Intermediate Life Skills curriculum. The first video in the series, “Taking Responsibility,” is pictured here.



To locate the video series, go online to YouTube. Within YouTube, search for “Communication Secrets+10 Minute School” to find it. Individual videos will appear, as well as a link that has “view full playlist” written next to it. Select the full playlist option instead of the individual videos. This will take you to where all 31 short videos can be viewed in order.

If you participated in Intermediate Life Skills within the past six months, feel free to choose which of the videos to watch based on what interests you the most, or what content you think you can benefit from the most. If not, set aside time, and watch all videos. To view all the videos in one sitting, set aside 60-90minutes.

SELF-CHECK 3-1.1

Select the correct answer(s).

1. Non-verbal communication....
 - a. facilitates the transfer of messages by subtly establishing human connection
 - b. tools are e.g. tone of voice, posture, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact
 - c. is the written text in a book or article
 - d. can improve your way of communicating significantly
 - e. is the information exchanged or communicated through words

2. Which statements about empathy are incorrect?
 - a. Empathy is about stepping into another person's view and experience without being clouded by your own views
 - b. Empathy and sympathy have the same meaning
 - c. Empathy connects humans
 - d. All of the above

3. Providing and receiving feedback is important for personal and professional growth. When providing constructive feedback, what do you need to consider?
 - a. Providing feedback can be sensitive because the receiver can take it as an offence
 - b. The feedback is about the person's behaviour instead of the person
 - c. Explaining why the behaviour is undesirable is important
 - d. Interrupt the person when s/he feels attacked by the feedback

4. Which of the below tools are active listening tools?
 - a. Sounds of affirmation,
 - b. Relaxed facial expression
 - c. Asking questions
 - d. Provide your opinion
 - e. Nodding your head

5. Which statements are correct about assertive communication?
 - a. By being assertive you can protect yourself by communicating boundaries, limitations, and behavioural expectations of others.
 - b. Assertive communication is also meant as a pressure tool to get things done from others.

- c. “You will finish this task by today, no matter what” in example of assertive communication.
 - d. Respect and validation of the other person’s perspective is part of assertive communication.
6. Your job as a facilitator of a meetings or discussions is to make sure that...
- a. All agenda items are covered
 - b. Dominate the discussions
 - c. Have the last word
 - d. Keep the discussion focused
 - e. Encourage others to speak
7. Which of the answers below contribute to effective communication?
- a. Ensuring that emotions are under control
 - b. Non-verbal communication is in line with the verbal message
 - c. Active listening
 - d. Others’ perspectives are accepted without judgement

INFORMATION SHEET 3.2

Improve Your Communication Effectiveness

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Interpret Seven Stage Communication Process
- Build Rapport
- Building Relationships with Your Team
- **Seven Stage Communication Process**

This Mind Tools article, “Understanding Communication Skills,” describes verbal communication in terms of a communication process with seven stages. Each stage has a unique function. In addition, there are various actions that individuals can take at different stages to improve the chances of their message being accurately understood.

As you read this article, consider at what stage of the communication process you may have run into challenges in the past. After reading, discuss your answers to the discussion questions that follow with a classmate.

- **Understanding Communication Skills**

Applying the Seven Stages of the Communications Process

Conveying a message to other people clearly might sound simple, but it's a process that is often fraught with error.

Many people struggle to communicate effectively – verbally and in writing. They impart thoughts and ideas that don't reflect their intended meaning, and that their recipients misinterpret or misunderstand. This can result in confusion, frustration, wasted effort, and missed opportunities. Communication breaks down, causing collaboration and progress to become impossible.

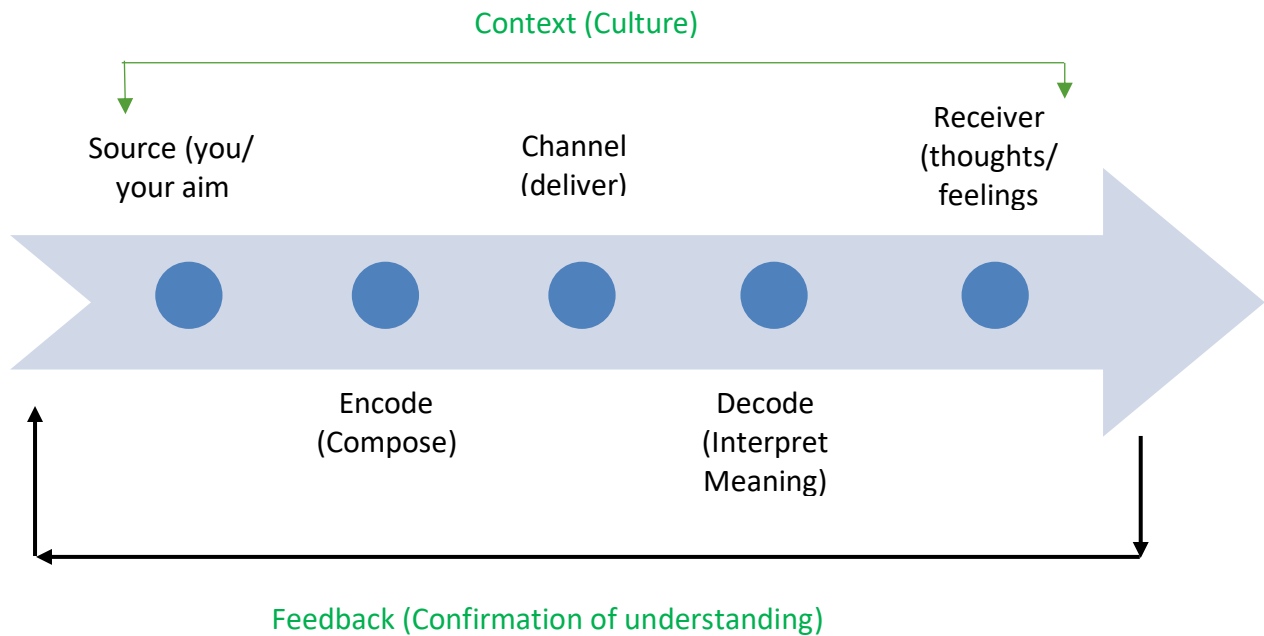
Research shows that good communication is one of the top "soft" skills that managers look for in employees. But communication will only ever be successful when both the person sending the message and the person receiving it understand the key messages being put across.

In this article, we look at how to make your communications fool proof using a seven-step framework known as the Communications Process.

How Do We Communicate?

Did you know that any time that you communicate with another person, you are using the Communications Process (see figure 1, below)?

Figure 1. The Communications Process



It stands to reason then that understanding this process will help you to become more aware of what is happening as you communicate, and the things you can do to ensure that your message gets received “loud and clear.”

To be effective communicator, you need to make sure that your messages are clear, concise, accurate, and well planned. This will avoid misunderstanding and ensure that they get enough stage of Communications Process without a hitch.

Let’s take a look at the seven stages of the process in more detail:

1. Source (you/your aim)

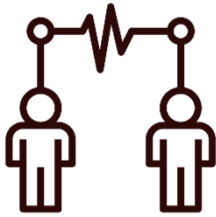
The "source" is the sender of the message – in other words, you! And the “message” refers to the information and ideas that you want to deliver.

You need to be clear about **what** message you want to communicate, and **why** it's important – what's its main purpose? And, moreover, why should anyone care? You also need to be confident that the information that you impart is useful and accurate.



2. Encode (compose)

This stage involves putting your message into a format that you can send, and that the receiver will be able to easily understand or "decode." Your success will depend on your ability to convey information clearly and simply, and to eliminate areas of confusion. For example, be aware of any cultural mismatch between you and your recipient. Also, avoid making assumptions about the receiver's existing knowledge of the subject. You might know the "ins and outs" of what you're talking about, but he or she probably won't. Lastly, steer clear of gaps in the information that require a "mental leap."



A key part of being a successful encoder is knowing your audience. Failure to understand and respect **who** it includes will likely result in your message "falling flat," and being misunderstood, dismissed or even ignored.

3. Channel (deliver)

There are countless different channels that you can use to send your message. Verbal communications channels include face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing. While written communications include letters, reports, emails, instant messaging, and social media posts. You might also want to include videos, photos, illustrations, or charts and graphs in your message to emphasize your main points.



Different channels have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, it's not particularly effective to give a long list of directions verbally, and you'll be better off delivering sensitive feedback in person, rather than via email. So, choose the channel that you use carefully.

4. Decode (interpret meaning)

Successfully decoding a message is as much a skill as encoding it is. To accurately decode a message, you need to take the time to read through it carefully, or to listen actively to it. Confusion will most likely occur at this stage of the communications process, though that doesn't mean it will always be the decoders fault. He might lack sufficient background knowledge to understand the message, or he might not understand the specific jargon or technical language that you are using. It's therefore essential that you tackle issues like these at the encoding stage.



5. Receiver (thoughts/feelings)

No doubt, you'll want your audience members to react in a certain way or take a specific action in response to your message. Remember, though, that each person is different, and will interpret it subjectively. Every receiver who enters into the communication process brings with them their own ideas and feelings that influence their understanding of your message, and their response to it.



That means it's your job, as the sender, to take these ideas and feelings into consideration when drawing up your message. To do this effectively, brush up on your emotional intelligence and empathy skills.

6. Feedback (confirmation of understanding)



Your audience will likely give you feedback reactions. Pay close attention to these, as they will reveal whether your audience truly understood your message. If you find that there has been a misunderstanding, try to adapt the message. For instance, if you're talking about a complex subject, find a simpler way to communicate it. Could you break it down into steps, or remove technical jargon? This will make it easier for everyone in your audience to grasp the subject matter, no matter their background knowledge.

7. Context (culture)

The "context" is the situation in which you deliver your message. This may include the current political and social environment, or the broader culture (for instance, the corporate culture or the national culture.)



• How to remove barriers from the communication process

Barriers to communication can pop up at any stage of the process. So, to deliver your messages effectively, you must break these down.

- If your message is too lengthy, disorganized, or is full of jargon or errors, it'll likely be misunderstood and misinterpreted – it might even make your recipient confused or angry!
- Using poor verbal or body language can also muddle the message that you're trying to send.
- Contextual barriers tend to stem from offering too much information, too fast. Remember that often "less is more." Be mindful of the demands on other people's time.
- Finally, put your message into context. Make sure that you know your audience's culture. This will help you to converse with and to deliver your message to people that have different backgrounds and cultures than you.
- Now that you have read, "Understanding Communication Skills," discuss the following questions with a partner or in a group of three.

Discussion questions: At what stage in the communication process do you usually run into barriers or breakdowns? In what ways might gender, culture, or social class have an effect influence on communication? When communicating in the future, what new things will you do to improve the effectiveness of your professional communications?

- **Build Rapport**

Now, read the following Mind Tools article with guidance on how to build rapport and better relationships with your team members. A quiz is included in the article to give you a baseline estimate of how “approachable” you are to colleagues at work. As you read this article, think about your own behaviours in your workplace.

- **How Approachable Are You?**

- Building Relationships with Your Team**

- o **Do you ever get the impression that people are avoiding you?**

- Being approachable is key to building relationships with your colleagues, and to creating a strong team in which trust, confidence and ideas can flow. When you're approachable, team members do not sit on or cover up problems. This means that they are able to bring issues to you before they become full-blown crises because they know that you won't react badly.

- Team members who have approachable managers feel able to contribute ideas and find the workplace a safe environment in which to do so. They're not scared about being knocked back because they know their manager is open to their suggestions and will consider them fairly. Certain organizations have reputations, correct or otherwise, for keeping their leaders in "ivory towers," far away from their team members. In these high "power-distance" situations, you might have to call your boss "madam" rather than by her first name, and go through a personal assistant if you want to talk to her. She might have her own reserved car-parking spot, chair meetings from the end of the table, send overly formal communications, and so on. It can be scary to approach this kind of person!

- Often, leaders who act this way do so as a way of maintaining their authority. However, they will be missing out on opportunities to identify issues or discover ideas for improvement by not being “on the front line.” You'll be much more approachable if you reduce power distance.

- How approachable you appear to others is very much down to you. Sure, some of the people who work for you may have a fear of authority, but you need to break down those barriers and create an environment of trust.

- Approachability is about being accessible, consciously breaking down perceived barriers, having appropriate body language, and using the right verbal communication and listening skills. Take our quiz to find out just how approachable you are, and discover strategies for becoming more approachable in areas that are holding you back.



- **Take the quiz on the next page to get an estimate of how approachable you are**

Instructions

For each statement, put a check in the box that best describes you. Please answer them as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be), and don't worry if some seem to score in the "wrong direction." When you are finished, add up your total score and review the interpretation in the table that follow.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. The positive feedback I give outweighs my negative feedback					
2. I step away from my work area and walk up to my co-workers to speak to them					
3. I smile at people, whatever their level in the organization					
4. When my colleague pitches an idea, I provide constructive feedback					
5. I make time available to speak with team members					
6. I let my colleagues know where I will be if I am away from our work site					
7. I avoid letting negative emotions show when I receive bad news					
8. If I am talking to a team member and the phone rings, I don't take the call					
9. I empathize with my colleagues' positions					
10. I make eye contact when talking to people					
11. I tailor my communication style to the person I am talking to					
12. I avoid folding my arms across my chest while talking					
13. I do not complain					
14. I give team members my cell phone number					
15. I talk about my life outside work with my colleagues					
16. I provide a platform for ideas					

Now, add up each column Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, Always = 5	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:
<p style="text-align: right;">Final Score</p> To finish calculating your score, add the column totals together					

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
16-36	<p>You need to work on your approachability. Your attitude and demeanour are cutting off the flow of information that you receive from your team members. This might mean that problems are swept under the carpet, or great ideas aren't being allowed to flourish. You may have to make some fundamental changes to how you manage, but don't worry, there are plenty of simple ways to get started and boost your approachability. (Read below to start.)</p>
37-58	<p>You are in a great position to improve. You can be approachable, so problems may come to you before they get serious. However, your team members may also be put off telling you when something's up, because they're worried about your reaction. Take a closer look at your results and focus most on where your score is low. You may find that a simple change to the way that you manage will make a huge difference. (Read below to start.)</p>
59-80	<p>Well done! You are approachable, which means that your team members feel relatively little fear in coming to you when they have a problem or an idea. This is because your reaction to bad news is measured and calm, and you treat ideas with relish and positivity. As a result, crises develop far less often than they would do under a more unapproachable manager, and your organization benefits from the ideas culture that your welcoming attitude has fostered. However, there is always room for improvement! (Read below to start.)</p>

This quiz is based on four attributes that make up approachability: looking available, using the right body language, and having good verbal communication and listening skills. We look at each attribute in more detail below. By improving in these areas, you'll become more approachable and find that your team is more productive and creative as a result.

Look Available (Questions 2, 6, 14)

It seems obvious, but looking available is one of the most effective steps you can take toward breaking down physical barriers, reducing power distance, and keeping lines of communication open. Not much says "leave me alone" more than keeping your office door closed, not talking to team members because they're less senior than you, or expecting people to address you differently from everyone else!

If you don't have an office, improve your visibility by getting up from your desk and walking around. Your desk is your turf, and this can make it hard for team members to approach. So, go and speak with people at their desks, where they feel comfortable, or talk to them somewhere neutral, like at the water cooler. Use this informal time to recognize good work – Management by Walking Around – has become popular. But it takes more than simply strolling through your office or around your site. You must make a determined and genuine effort to talk to and understand your team members, to find out what they do, to check that they have what they need, to make sure that they're happy, and to take action where necessary to correct things that are going wrong.

And don't just talk about work: indulge in a little personal disclosure with others by finding out about their lives outside work, too. When you share information and take the time to chat, you'll probably find that you end up liking the people you work with more. This means that working alongside them will not only be productive, but fun, too. If you're in and out of meetings a lot, let your team know where you'll be and when you'll be back. Tell everyone how to contact you if there are any problems, and make sure that you're available. Should you not be able to respond immediately, reassure people that you'll do so at the first opportunity you get.



Listening Skills (Questions 5, 7, 8, 9, 16)

Put simply, if your team members think you are not listening to them, they won't want to approach you.

Good listening is not about hearing what someone is saying and waiting for him or her to finish so you can have your "two cents." You have to engage your eyes, as well as your ears, give the other person your full attention, and draw on your emotional intelligence. Being switched on in this way builds trust and respect, both of which are important for increasing approachability.

Engage in active listening and create a strong team spirit, isn't always easy but problems can fester if team members are too scared to come to you with their issues. Appreciate that it takes courage to speak up when something is wrong, so always thank the person for letting you know.



Body Language (Questions 3, 8, 10, 12)

Your team members could be sitting on ideas that could transform your organization, but previous experiences (when you've seemed disinterested or irritated) may have put them off telling you about them. And you could be none the wiser!

We know that positive managers tend to have happy teams and they are naturally far more approachable than those with a negative outlook. Positivity shines through all communication, including our posture, eye contact, hand gestures, speech, and tone of voice. And how we hold ourselves determines the way people act toward us.

Using the right body language is a vital yet simple way of increasing your approachability. Smile more, unfold your arms, look your team members in the eye when you talk to them, and speak slowly in a moderate to low tone.

Take your time when you're walking to and from your desk – even if you're in a hurry – and remember to look around rather than straight ahead or down at the floor.

Key Points

Being approachable is the foundation of building good relationships with your colleagues, and of creating a strong team in which confidence can grow and ideas can flow. You can improve how approachable you are by breaking down barriers and creating an environment of trust. Develop your skills by increasing your visibility, using appropriate body language, and working on your communication and listening skills. When you have finished reading the article, consider the following questions.

Discussion questions: Do you consider yourself approachable for your team members? What about for lower-level workers? Does your sense of how approachable you are correspond to your quiz results? How do you work to build rapport with members of the opposite sex, people from different ethnic groups, or shy people? What observations did you take away from the quiz and the article?

Self-Check 3-2.1

A. Describe the seven stages of the communication process in two lines:

Stage	Name of Stage (e.g., “encode”)	Two-liner description
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

INFORMATION SHEET 3-3

Handle Common Communication Challenges

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Understand others better
- Make "High-Quality Communications"
- Way to create high-quality Communications
- Win-Win Negotiation

- **Understand others better**

Read the following article, “How to Make ‘High-Quality Connections’”. Consider how you form and maintain connections with others in your job. As you read this article, contemplate the below questions.

Discussion questions: What benefits do you see in your workplace arise from people having good connections to one another? What are the potential consequences of “low-quality connections”?

- **How to Make "High-Quality Communications"**

Creating an Energetic Workplace

Making the right Communications can boost your team’s health and happiness.

Our daily dealings with people can have a real impact on our mood, our energy levels, and our motivation.

A positive, upbeat exchange with a friendly colleague can get your working day off to a great start, but a listless greeting from another team member might bring down your energy level and dampen your enthusiasm.

Our sense of communications to the people around us influences us



personal outlook and can also impact the atmosphere of our workplace as a whole. So how can we create a happier, more productive environment?

The key to building a healthy and energizing workplace is to create "high-quality communications."

In this article, we explain what high-quality communications are and why they are beneficial, and look at the consequences of poor-quality communications. We also suggest ways you can create high quality Communications at work – and in your personal life.

High quality Communications are interactions that make you feel engaged, open, motivated, and revitalized. They are not necessarily dependent on close or intimate relationships – a quick message or a simple exchange in a meeting can be high quality if it makes both participants feel valued. Whenever your Communications are high quality, you can transform a conversation into one that benefits everyone.

Benefits of high-quality Communications

Positive Communications can create enormous benefits to individuals and organizations. Friendships are examples of high-quality Communications – and we all know how much happiness and energy a good friendship can bring. Many of the approaches we explore in this article can be used outside the workplace – you may find they help energize and improve your relationships with friends and other social contacts.



High-quality Communications offer three main advantages:

o Health

Studies show that high-quality Communications improve your psychological and physical health. They create positive emotions and vitality, which helps reduce stress.

o Engagement

We are social creatures, and enjoy friendship and positive dialogue. When we make high-quality Communications, we feel happier and more productive. Open, trusting relationships can give us the confidence to express our feelings, including fears and worries, because we know we will receive the right support.

o Learning

You learn more easily when you feel positive about yourself and the people around you. This is because feelings of happiness, excitement and enthusiasm can get you interested in new ideas and learning new things. You are also more playful and creative. This allows you to learn from your experiences.

o Consequences of poor-quality communications

Unfortunately, stressful interpersonal working conditions are common. If your relationships at work lack trust, or you feel that your contribution is not valued, it can have a negative effect

on you and your productivity. Poor-quality Communications drain your energy, making it difficult to concentrate and to engage with others. You can become distracted as you try to understand and deal with other people's motives and behaviours. Over time, these worries can erode the quality of your work and spread negativity around the workplace.

Poor Communications can make you feel unappreciated, undervalued and anxious. Many people take these negative feelings home with them, where they affect their friends and family, too.

Way to create high-quality Communications

You can create high-quality Communications in three ways: respectful engagement, task enabling, and trust. Here are some of the ways you can do this:

1. Respectful engagement

When you treat people with respect, you create a cycle of good feelings and positive energy that increase the happiness and productivity of everyone involved. Here are some of the ways you can practice respectful engagement:

- **Be Present.** Sometimes we are too busy with To-Do Lists, projects, meetings, and things we're worrying about to give people our full attention. When you are present, **YOU** are telling people that you are open and available to them. You are also letting **them** know that their thoughts, ideas and opinions matter.

How do you do this? Your body language can send a clear message that you are paying attention to someone. Not clear. Make eye contact and relax your body a little. You can also close your book, put down your pen, turn away from your laptop, and direct your attention to the person who's speaking.

- **Listening.** As part of this, when someone is talking to you, are you really listening? Or are you only half-listening, while you jump to conclusions, interrupt or think about what you want to say? Effective listening lets people know they have been heard, which conveys your respect. You can do this by acknowledging their feelings and then confirming your understanding. For example, "So it sounds like you feel angry and hurt. Is that right? And that's because you think you were treated unfairly?"

Can you tell me why?"

- **Punctuality.** Being on time for meetings is not just good manners, it also shows that you respect other people's time, and that you understand the commitments they have to meet.
- **Authenticity.** Be yourself. When you are authentic, you are telling people that you are honest, trustworthy and not "playing games." It also means that your behaviour is based on your own true feelings, rather than on any external pressures or expectations.

- **Affirmation.** It's important to communicate your awareness and understanding of someone's situation. For example, you can tell people that you know they are under a lot of pressure, and praise them for how well they are handling it. Encouragement makes them feel noticed and appreciated. You can also provide affirmation by expressing how much you value team members and their skills, abilities and talents.
- **Communicating.** The way you express yourself also demonstrates your willingness and ability to engage respectfully with people. For example, try making requests rather than demands. A request suggests that you are working together and that everyone's input is valued. A demand suggests that there is a right way and a wrong way to do things, which creates tension and breaks down trust. You can also avoid miscommunication by using positive language, clearly defining terms, and setting specific objectives.

2. Task Enabling

This involves encouraging team members and helping them perform effectively. Here are some approaches you can use:

- **Coaching.** When you coach people, you are developing their skills and abilities. You are helping them discover answers for themselves. Your team members will be much more engaged with solutions that they have come up with by themselves. Helping them to achieve their goals and ambitions will create high-quality Communications.
- **Facilitating.** You can help your team members understand and navigate the structure of an organization by providing them with access to the people they need. For example, open up avenues for them to meet key people at special events or by creating speaking opportunities.
- **Be Accommodating.** Do you keep a strict schedule and expect everyone else to fit round it? With a bit of flexibility, you can accommodate your team members' needs, which creates a sense of mutual support and builds high-quality Communications. This may involve extending deadlines or offering flexible working hours to allow them to complete their work more effectively. Colleagues can also accommodate one another's changing workloads to help everyone succeed.
- **Nurturing.** The word "nurturing" is used to describe supporting people's emotional needs. Through role modelling and encouragement, managers can address issues such as competence and self-esteem. By offering support and compassion, you can provide your team members with a solid foundation for developing, both personally and professionally.

3. Trust

Trust, is important in any relationship, but it is essential when developing high-quality Communications. Here, we explore how trusting your team members and adopting a more participative approach to management can boost motivation and engagement. The key ingredient of trust is believing in someone's integrity and dependability.

Here are some ways you can build trust:

- **Sharing.** When you share something important or valuable, you are telling the recipient that you trust him or her, and that he can trust you to give him what he needs to do his job well.
- **Self-disclosure.** Revealing details about yourself, especially if that information is personal or may expose a vulnerability, can help to build a strong connection. For example, letting your team members know that you are always nervous before a presentation shows that you can open up to them a little. They will appreciate that you can trust them with personal information.
- **Language Use.** The words you use can tell people whether you believe you are all working together as a team. If you want to create an inclusive environment, try using “we” instead of “I” or “you.” This shows that you trust others to join you in a collaborative effort, and that you believe they are reliable. If you want your team members to trust you when you use inclusive language, however, your actions must match your words.
- **Delegating.** As a manager, you can convey trust when you delegate tasks and hand over responsibility for projects to your team. It shows that you believe in members' ability to do the job right. If you delegate a task to someone, give her the room to do the job – you can undermine trust if you continually check up on her.
- **Feedback.** It's usually managers who give feedback to their team members – so if you ask your people for their opinions on your ideas, you are demonstrating that you value their points of view. People respect and trust this kind of openness, especially when you accept and act on the feedback you receive.



Key Points

High-quality Communications can energize you and the people you work with by improving your health and wellbeing, increasing your engagement with others, and stimulating your desire to learn. When you interact with people using respectful engagement, task-enabling and trust, you can create a supportive workplace environment that gives everyone the opportunity to live up to their potential, and so be more productive and happier.

Discussion questions: Which of the suggestions on establishing high-quality Communications do you feel you have mastered already? Which ones need further improvements?

- **NEGOTIATION**

Discussion questions: If you were to define negotiation, what would you say? What the desired outcome of a negotiation? How does ego play a role in negotiation? What would you advise others when they have to negotiate?

- **Win-Win Negotiation**

Finding solutions that work for everyone



Do you dread entering a negotiation? Do you worry that what you want will not match what the other person wants to give? Do you worry about having to "play hardball" and souring a good working relationship? After all, for someone to win,

someone else has to lose, right? Well, not necessarily.

Chances are, you can find a solution that leaves all parties feeling like winners by adopting the aptly-named "win-win" approach to negotiation.

In this article, we examine the meaning of win-win negotiation, and we explore how you can apply the concept of "principled negotiation" within win-win, to build mutual respect and understanding while getting result that you both want.

- o **What is win-win negotiation?**

A win-win negotiation is a careful exploration of both your own position, and that of the other person, in order to find a mutually acceptable outcome that gives you both as much of what you want as possible. If you both walk away happy with what you've gained from the deal, then that's a win-win!

In an ideal win-win situation, you will find that the other person wants what you are prepared to trade, and that you are prepared to give what he or she wants. If this is not the case, and one of you must give way, then it is fair to negotiate some form of compensation for doing so. But both sides should still feel comfortable with the outcome.

Tip

People's positions are rarely as opposed as they may initially appear, and the other person may have very different goals from the ones you expect! So, try to keep an open mind and be flexible in your thinking

1. Separate people from the problem

First, avoid identifying the other person as your "opponent." Be sure to focus on the issue at hand, and try to ignore personality differences. To do this, be aware of three factors: perception, emotion and communication.

According to Fisher and Ury, perception means "putting yourself in their shoes," so you are better placed to see common ground or a compromise solution. You may be convinced that your position is fair, reasonable and "right," but it's likely so will the other person.

Examine and acknowledge your emotions, and to ask yourself why you feel the way you do. For example, could a previous bad experience in a negotiation be affecting your behaviour in this one?

Tip

Remain calm. Observe the emotions of the other party, and try not to respond in kind if the discussion becomes "heated." Instead, use your emotional intelligence, to avoid misunderstandings. Use active listening.

Finally, make sure that your communication is clear and you use (?) precise techniques, such as looking directly at the speaker, listening carefully, and allowing each person to finish before you respond.

2. Focus on interests, not positions

People are seldom "difficult" just for the sake of it, and almost always there are real and valid differences sitting behind conflicting positions. The way that each person sees the issue may be influenced by many factors, such as their values, beliefs, status, responsibilities, and cultural background.

Try to keep the conversation courteous and avoid attributing blame. Once everyone knows that their interests have been considered, they are more likely to be receptive to different points of view.

For example, if you're negotiating with your boss to get more resources for your team, consider that he may be under pressure to reduce costs. If you look beyond your two positions, you may find that you have a common interest, such as increasing your team's productivity.

3. Invent options for mutual gain

By now, each side will likely have a better understanding of the other's interests, and a solution might be obvious. You may even be on the verge of agreement. If not, stay open to the idea that a completely new position may exist and use the negotiation process to explore your options.

To return to our example, let's say that you've identified increased productivity as a mutual interest, but your company can't afford new staff or equipment. You could see this as an opportunity to assess working practices, training opportunities, and inexpensive ways to increase efficiency.

Tip

Brainstorm as many ideas as you can to find a solution to the problem. Be receptive to all suggestions, then develop the most promising ones into new proposals that you can bring to the negotiating table.

4. Use objective criteria

This isn't just "setting out the facts," as different underlying needs, interests, opinions, and goals can cause people to interpret facts differently, or cause you to select only those facts that support your position.

For example, during an interdepartmental negotiation in your company about the launch date of a new product, you become convinced that rushing it to market as early as possible is the best option. There's a danger your position could become entrenched, and your willingness to listen lessened.

Yes, there's some evidence to support this view within the marketing data, but also indications that delaying the launch until later in the year, to coincide with a national holiday, would also be good for sales in the longer term. It would also give your marketing team more time to prepare a campaign.

Try to agree on a set of objective criteria that provide a framework for your discussion. These could include measurements such as legal standards, market value, a mission statement, or contractual terms. Agreeing on standards demonstrates shared values, and a commitment to reaching an agreement.

Returning to our first example, both you and your boss could agree on a budget as a basis for discussion regarding more resources for your team, and proceed on the basis that any changes must be made within these financial limitations.

5. Know your "best alternative to a negotiated agreement"

Your "Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement" is your favoured fallback option if you can't get everything that you want. This is not the same as a "bottom line," which is a fixed position that can limit your options and may prevent you from discovering a new course of action.

Instead, think through what might happen if the negotiation doesn't achieve your desired result, and select the most attractive alternatives. Evaluate these alternatives and at the end of that process, the most promising alternative solution is your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement.

Returning to our example, if you start the negotiation with a "bottom line" demand for two extra departmental staff members, and your company refuses, the negotiation falls at the first hurdle. However, if you started with this request, but your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement was to achieve a commitment to training and updated software, you'd be in a better position to get a good result.

Win-win versus win-lose negotiation

In a negotiation where you don't expect to deal with the person concerned again, and you don't need their continued goodwill, it may be appropriate to seek a "bigger piece of the pie" for yourself. This "win-lose" approach, often called "distributive bargaining" is usually used for negotiating the price of goods or services (for example, a house or a car).

Similarly, when the stakes are high, it may be appropriate to push the rules to their limits to gain advantage, but without crossing the line into threatening to call off the negotiation unless a new demand is agreed to. But, when you want to have an ongoing, productive relationship with the person you're negotiating with these techniques can have serious drawbacks:

- One person "playing hardball" puts the other person at a disadvantage. This may lead to reprisals later.
- If the losing party needs to fulfil some part of a deal, they may decide to become uncooperative and awkward.
- Using tricks and manipulation during a negotiation can undermine trust and damage Page 4 teamwork.

LEARNING OUTCOME#4: MANAGE WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND CONFLICT THROUGH APPLICATION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Contents:

- Conflict Resolution

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- 4.1 Effective approaches to working within a diverse workforce are identified
- 4.2 Effectively mitigating and resolving workplace conflict is demonstrated
- 4.3 Open lines of communication with staff and employees are maintained

Learning Activities	Instructions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information Sheet 4-1: Conflict Resolution	Read Information Sheet 4-1 Complete Self-Check 4-1.1 Complete Activity Sheet 4-1.1

INFORMATION SHEET 4-1

Conflict Resolution

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Use the "Interest-Based Relational" Approach

Discussion questions: Have you ever dealt with conflict with a colleague? What about a disagreement with your supervisor? How did you approach these situations? Were the conflicts/disagreements resolved?

Read the following article on an approach to resolving conflict called the “Interest Based Relational” approach. Consider how you might apply this approach to different types of work-related conflicts

Using the "Interest-Based Relational" Approach

Conflict is an inevitable part of work. We've all seen situations where people with different goals and needs have clashed, and we've all witnessed the often-intense personal animosity that can result.

As you'll learn in this article, the fact that conflict exists, however, is not necessarily a bad thing. When you resolve it effectively, you can also eliminate many of the hidden problems that it brought to the surface.

There are other benefits that you might not expect, such as:

- **Increased understanding.** Going through the process of resolving conflict expands people's awareness, and gives them an insight into how they can achieve their goals without undermining others.
- **Better group cohesion.** When you resolve conflict effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.
- **Improved self-knowledge.** Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals and expectations closely, helping them to understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

But conflict can also be damaging. If you don't handle it effectively, it can quickly turn into personal dislike, teamwork can break down, and talent may be wasted as people disengage from their work and leave. If you want to keep your team members working effectively, despite coming into conflict with one another, you need to stop this downward spiral as soon as you can. To do this, it helps to understand one of the key processes for effective conflict resolution: the Interest-Based Relational approach.

- **The Interest-Based Relational Approach**

When conflict arises, it's easy for people to get entrenched in their positions and for tempers to flare, voices to rise, and body language to become defensive or aggressive. You can avoid all of this by using the Interest-Based Relational approach.

Roger Fisher and William Ury developed the Interest-Based Relational approach and published it in their 1981 book, "Getting to Yes," that also informed the previous article. One of the points they argue is that you should resolve conflicts by separating people and their emotions from the problem. Their approach also focuses on building mutual respect and understanding, and it encourages you to resolve conflict in a united, cooperative way.

The approach is based on the idea that your role as a manager is not simply to resolve conflict but to ensure that team members feel respected and understood, and that you appreciate their differences. In essence, it helps you to manage conflict in a civil and "grown up" way.

During the process, your focus should be on behaving courteously and consensually, and on insisting that others do the same. Your priority is to help each side develop an understanding of the other's position, and to encourage both to reach a consensus – even if that means agreeing to disagree.

To use the Interest Based Relational approach effectively, everyone involved should listen actively and empathetically, have a good understanding of body language, be emotionally intelligent, and understand how to employ different anger management techniques.

In particular, you and the conflicting parties need to follow these **six steps**:

1. **Make sure that good relationships are a priority.** Treat the other person with respect. Do your best to be courteous, and to discuss matters constructively.
2. **Separate people from problems.** Recognize that, in many cases, the other person is not "being difficult" – real and valid differences can lie behind conflicting positions. By separating the problem from the person, you can discuss issues without damaging relationships.
3. **Listen carefully to different interests.** You'll get a better grasp of why people have adopted their position if you try to understand their point of view.
4. **Listen first, talk second.** You should listen to what the other person is saying before defending your own position. They might say something that changes your mind.
5. **Set out the "facts."** Decide on the observable facts that might impact your decision, together.
6. **Explore options together.** Be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you might reach it jointly.

You can often prevent contentious discussions from turning bad by following these guidelines, and they can help you avoid the antagonism and dislike that can cause conflict to spiral out of control.

However, bear in mind that the Interest-Based Relational approach may not be appropriate for all situations. For example, you may not be able to resolve differences in such a consensual, collaborative way if your organization is in a crisis. On these occasions, you may have to "pull rank" as a leader and make quick decisions about disputes and conflicts.

o Putting the Interest-Based Relational Approach into Practice

Let's follow each of the six steps of the Interest Based Relational approach by applying them to a conflict resolution scenario.

Imagine that you work in a paper products manufacturing company and you work closely with two managers, Abid and Farzana. Abid heads up production, and is eager to buy a new machine that will increase his department's output. Farzana works in purchasing, and is keen to reduce costs. She understands Abid's motivation, but informs him that the organization won't be making any new purchases. This has created conflict and tension that is spreading throughout the workplace.

Step 1: Make Sure Good Relationships Are a Priority

As a manager, your priority in any conflict situation is to take control early and maintain good relationships within your team. Make sure that everyone understands how the conflict could be a mutual problem, and that it's important to resolve it through respectful discussion and negotiation, rather than aggression. Make it clear that it's essential for people to be able to work together happily, effectively and without resentment, so that the team and organization can function effectively.

So, in our example situation with Abid and Farzana, you might facilitate a face-to-face meeting with them to clarify the importance of good relationships and to identify the main problems. Tell them that you respect their points of view, and that you appreciate their cooperation and desire to resolve the situation. You should also make it clear that everyone needs to work together to build and preserve relationships that allow the organization to achieve its goals.

Step 2: Separate People from Problems

At this point, it's important to let team members know that conflict is rarely one-sided, and that it's best to resolve it collaboratively, by addressing the problem rather than the personalities involved. The problem is caused by neither person, but they do need to work together to resolve it. So, in our example, Farzana may initially think that Abid is the problem. She believes that he is being defensive and demanding, but you should point out that she is focusing on the person instead of the problem. The problem is whether the organization can afford the new equipment.

Step 3: Listen Carefully to Different Interests

It's important that everyone understands each party's underlying interests, needs and concerns. So, take a positive stance, keep the conversation courteous, and avoid blaming anyone.

Ask for each person's viewpoint, and confirm that you need his or her cooperation to solve the problem. Ask your team members to make an effort to understand one another's motivations and goals, and to think about how those may affect their actions.

Encourage everyone to use active listening skills, such as looking directly at the speaker, listening carefully, nodding, and allowing each person to finish before talking. By following these guidelines, everyone will be able to hear and understand one another's positions and perceptions. Focusing on listening will also help to prevent the conversation from becoming heated and getting out of hand.

Once everyone knows that their views have been heard, they are more likely to be receptive to different perspectives. In our example, perhaps Farzana didn't realize the amount of pressure that Abid was under to meet his production targets. Similarly, Abid may have assumed that Farzana was being unfair when she actually had a mandate to cut costs.

Tip

If the conversation becomes heated or your team members aren't listening to one another, remind them sensitively that it's important to work together and to stay calm.

Step 4: Listen First, Talk Second

Encourage each team member to listen to other people's points of view, without defending their own position. Make sure that each person has finished talking before someone else speaks, emphasize that you want to resolve the situation through discussion and negotiation, and ensure that listeners understand the problem fully by asking questions for further clarification. Be sure to focus on work issues, and leave personalities out of the discussion. You should also encourage everyone to:

- Listen with empathy, and to see the conflict from each participant's point of view.
- Explain issues clearly and concisely.
- Encourage people to use "I" rather than "you" statements, so that no one feels attacked.
- Be clear about their feelings.
- Remain flexible and adaptable.

Once you've listened to everyone's needs and concerns, outline the behaviours and actions that you will or won't tolerate, and gain the opposing parties' agreement to change

In our example, Farzana and Abid were both keen to get their opinions across, so they didn't listen to what the other had to say. Once they did listen, they began to understand the situation more clearly.

Step 5: Set out the "Facts"

This sounds like an obvious step, but different underlying needs, interests and goals can often cause people to perceive problems differently. You'll need to agree the problem that you are trying to solve before you can find a mutually acceptable solution, and you should agree the facts that are relevant to the situation.

Sometimes, people will see different but interlocking problems. So, if you can't reach an agreement, you should aim to understand the other person's perception of the problem.

In our example, the "facts" are that a new machine would improve the production department's output, meet customer demand, and increase sales. But it would cost so much that it would impact the company's profitability.

Step 6: Explore Options Together

By this stage, you may have resolved the conflict. Each side will likely understand the other's position better, and the most appropriate solution might be obvious.

However, you may also have uncovered some serious differences. This is where a technique like win-win negotiation can be useful, so that you can find a solution that satisfies everyone. Or, you might need to take action to change the fundamental circumstances that have caused the conflict.

By asking each team member to help generate solutions, you ensure that everyone feels included and that they're more likely to be satisfied with the outcome. Brainstorm ideas and be open to all suggestions, including ones you might not have considered before.

Key Points Are you trying to resolve a conflict between your team members? Have you found it difficult to get everyone to agree? Try using the Interest Based Relational approach:

- Set up a meeting between the conflicting parties to discuss the issue.
- Let them know that you are there to work together to find a solution, and that they need to focus on the problem, not the person. Ask them to listen carefully to one another's point of view, and to use active listening skills, so that everyone feels heard.
- Be clear about the facts and then work together to agree on a resolution.
- Get practice by focusing on a relatively mild conflict first, and then try it on a more significant one.

Discussion questions: What is your view on the Interest-Based Relational approach? For what type of situations would you consider using this approach? Why would you use it for those situations?

Self-Check 4-1.1

Indicate whether the statements are True or False.

Statements	True	False
1. High-quality Communications are interactions that make you feel engaged, open, motivated and revitalized.		
2. High quality Communications are only dependent on close or intimate relationships.		
3. Listening, authenticity and affirmation are examples of trust, which is important for creating high-quality Communications.		
4. Role-modelling and encouragement are important to a team member’s development.		
5. Negotiation is about getting as much as possible without considering the other person’s position		
6. Using tricks and manipulation during a negotiation is acceptable.		
7. Principled negotiation is a win-win strategy which consists of five principles: separate the people from the problem, focus on interest, invest options for mutual gain, use subjective criteria, know your “Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement”.		
8. According to the Interest-Based Relational Approach you should resolve conflicts by separating people and their emotions from the problem		
9. When your organization is in a crisis, the Interest-Based Relational Approach is the ultimate solution for resolving differences		

LEARNING OUTCOMES # 05: ADOPT PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS AND APPROACHES IN MANAGING COMPLEX WORKPLACE SITUATIONS

Contents:

- **Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Procedures and Principles**
- **SWOT Analysis**

Assessment Criteria:

- 5.1 Problems at an organizational level are defined
- 5.2 Components of a complex problem are analyzed
- 5.3 Alternative or creative solutions are generated
- 5.4 Outcome of the implemented solution is evaluated
- 5.5 Modifications to the solution are suggested if required

Resources Required

1. Paper and pen

Learning Activities

Learning Activities	Instructions
Information Sheet 5-1: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Procedures and Principles	1) Read Information Sheet 5.1 2) Complete Self-Check 5.1 3) Complete Activity Sheet 5.1
■ Information Sheet 5-2: SWOT Analysis	1) Read Information Sheet 5.2 2) Complete Self-Check 5.2

INFORMATION SHEET 5.1

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Procedures and Principles

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Basics
- Framework for Good Decision-Making and Problem Solving
- Ethical leadership
- Decision-Making Strategies
- Team Decisions Using Anonymous Contributions
- Vroom-Yetton Model
- Analytical Tools for Problem Solving
- Root Cause Analysis
- 5 Whys

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Basics

As a leader, it is your job to make tough decisions and address complex problems in your workplace. This is not an easy task.

Your team members count on you to guide them, and your superiors count on you to analyse issues well, and avoid making poor choices. Some decisions are easy to make, and some problems have simple solutions. For example, it is likely easy to determine that a skilled, responsible female team member should handle a certain complex task. Similarly, it may be easy to determine that the women and men on your team are equally competent at leading projects.

Other situations are not so simple though. It is less straightforward to ensure that gender bias is eliminated from the workplace. It is also less straightforward to ensure that men and women are compensated equally for the same work.



Discussion questions: Can you think of a tough decision you had to make in your workplace? Why was this decision challenging? What steps did you take to come to the right decision? What would you advise others when they have to make a challenging decision?

The more challenging issues may be fraught with uncertainties, interrelated factors to consider, interpersonal issues, and high-risk consequences. In these situations, you should use a systematic approach and follow a logical, ordered process



You should also avoid common pitfalls and biases, such as:

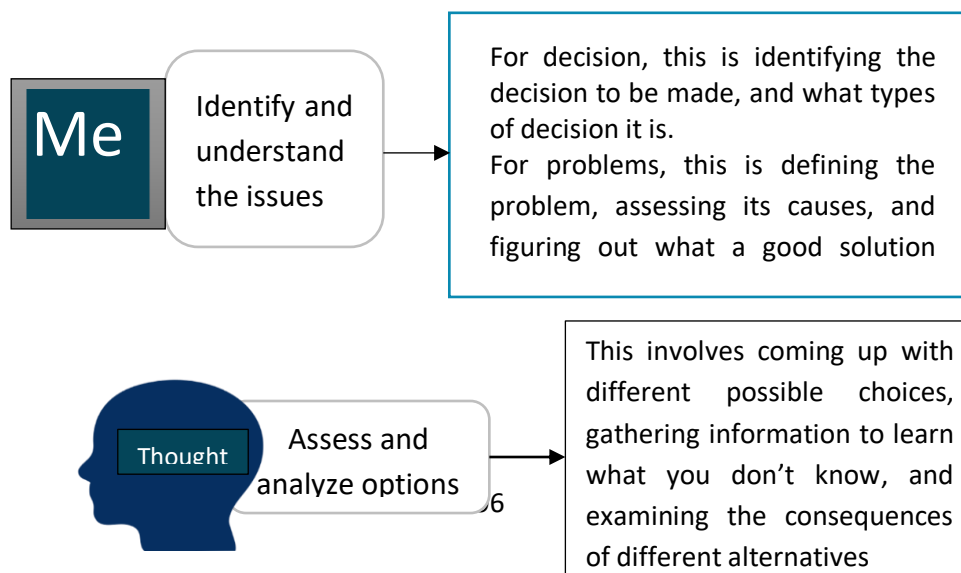
- **Procrastination** – Delaying can cause problems to grow. Push yourself to start by taking one small action toward tackling the issue.
- **Group think** – When team members avoid sharing ideas or concerns in order to go along with the group.
- **Ignoring failure** – It can be tempting to avoid reflecting on decisions or solutions to problems that did not turn out well—we may realize that a new decision is required, or the problem has not been adequately solved.
- **Lack of thorough analysis** – It is common to forget to 1) look at options from different perspectives, 2) get input from key stakeholders and 3) properly examine consequences.
- **Psychological bias** – This consists of confirmation bias, overconfidence, anchoring, gambler's fallacy, and fundamental attribution error.



Discussion questions: Have you personally experienced any of these pitfalls when making decisions? If not, have you seen it happening in your surroundings? What were the consequences?

To avoid overlooking these (and other) pitfalls, refer to the following framework on the next page when making big decisions and solving complex problems.

FRAMEWORK FOR GOOD DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

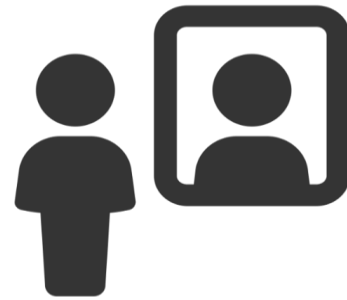


- **Ethical leadership**

Ethics are personal values that influence behaviour. They consist of principles such as integrity, accountability, fairness, respect, collaboration, comradery, trustworthiness, and responsibility.

Ethics are critical when it comes to making good decisions and solving problems in the workplace. This is especially true for people in leadership positions.

Essentially, ethics are about doing the right thing.



Leaders must rely on ethics when making decisions and solving problems. For example, if male team members make jokes about women or tease women when out on the street, a leader's ethics need to guide their response. On one hand, this may be common behaviour that doesn't seem to bother many people, aside from the women being teased. It also does not interfere with team members' work.

On the other hand, it is unfair to women and is considered sexual harassment. It may also affect the reputation of the company. Further, this kind of behaviour may make it undesirable for women to seek out the company's services or to pursue employment there. An ethical leader is able to weigh all these factors, and determine a course of action influenced by her/his value for gender equality.

Honesty and modelling integrity for others are sought after attributes for leaders as they foster similar behaviours among others in the workplace. Ethical leaders may also create organization-wide policies and procedures that benefit the company overall as well as its clients.

An example of this may be that a company institutes a voucher system that allows workers to obtain free sexual and reproductive health services. Or that a factory provides items like sanitary pads, condoms and birth control to workers, as well as iron supplements and pamphlets about antenatal care to pregnant workers.

Ethics also influence workplace decisions by forming basic common standards for the treatment of others in how work gets done. For example, say a team member's performance is not up to standard. In a situation such as this, ethics help determine whether a supervisor would discipline the employee directly, or first provide constructive feedback and clear guidance about expectations for improvements.

Workplace ethics consist of both organizational values and personal values.

Individuals in leadership positions must be clear on what their personal values are and act accordingly. This is the case even when others disagree or put pressure on them to take an easier path. Leaders must also understand their employer's values, and work to uphold them on a daily basis.

Ethics endorsed by organizations provide guidance to all workers regarding workplace values and expected behaviours.

They provide an organization-wide structure to:

- Promote positive personal and interpersonal behaviours
- Communicate expectations for workers' responsibilities and accountability
- Encourage employees to act professionally and do the best job they can



Establishing a code of ethics is a way to complement workplace policies, procedures, rules and standards. Doing so also provides visible guidelines for behaviour across all staff and to the public. A workplace culture guided by organizational ethics makes it much easier for employees to consistently make ethical choices when making decisions and solving problems.

Leaders play a critical role in both modelling ethical behaviour and establishing it in others across their organizations. In both decision-making and problem solving, personal and organizational ethics play an important role.



Discussion questions: Why do you think leaders play a critical role in modelling ethical behaviour? And why are they important in establishing ethical behaviour in others across the organization?

• **Decision-Making Strategies**

There are various models that one can use as a basis for structuring their decision-making process. They depend on the type of decision to be made and the time available to make the decision.



Not all decisions should be made using the same approach. The following is a selection of the main ways of approaching decision making in the workplace: autocratic, democratic, and consensual.

Each of these approaches has a different degree of participation and collaboration with and among team members. There are also different choices that may be made within each approach in terms of methods to use to gather and analyse information.



o Autocratic

Sometimes decisions may be made autocratically, or exclusively by the leader, with minimal or no input from team members. This style may be called for when a very quick decision is required or when input from others is not necessary for a successful outcome. However, this style of decision-making can be demoralizing for team members, and lead to disengagement or turn over.

o Democratic

Decisions may also be made through a democratic process, in which team members have input (Sometimes extensive input). While this style can lead to more engagement among team members and higher productivity, it is not always an effective strategy, particularly when time is limited. Democratic processes may involve the leader consulting individuals one-on-one and then making the decision, or getting a group together for discussion and idea generation.



o Consensual

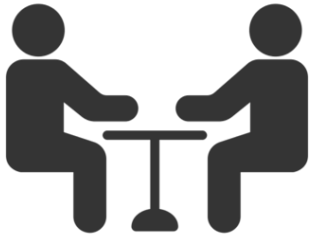
Consensus decision-making is another strategy in which the role of the leader is to facilitate collaboration and discussion. You may guide and instruct, but ultimately the team must reach a consensus. This type of approach is important when team buy-in is necessary. However, consensual decision-making can be time consuming. It can also be very difficult sometimes for a group to come to a consensus about an issue. Team buy-in usually matters most when the situation is complex and the consequences are significant. Consensus decision-making often involves voting. The leader must also work to ensure that participation from team members is balanced. This requires using effective communication skills to make sure more talkative people do not dominate, and that quieter people have a fair opportunity to share their opinions.



Discussion questions: What type of decision-making approach do you see most commonly used in your current organisation? What is your preferred way to approach decision-making? Why?

- **Team Decisions Using Anonymous Contributions**

Another approach to group decision-making, particularly for significant decisions where team dynamics are contentious, is based on anonymous contributions. In this scenario, a facilitator



will gather input from individuals separately. They will then compile the input in a standard, anonymous format and share it for feedback. This format is particularly helpful where highly impactful decisions need to be made with input from experts who do not get along. Decisions of this calibre may be decisions about public policy changes, or decisions that may directly affect thousands of people's welfare. Where the ideal scenario of

constructive communication fails this approach may be effective. Within the garment sector, it may be used at the national level when debating contentious changes to the worker salary scale.

- **Risk Analysis**

When making significant decisions or thinking through your options (and their possible consequences) for solving complex problems, understanding risk is critical.



Risk analysis is a way to assess the potential problems associated with different choices. It may be used when planning projects, assessing workplace safety issues, preparing for events, or planning for major changes.

Risk analysis involves 1) identifying threats, 2) estimating the level of risk associated with each threat, and then 3) determining an appropriate risk management approach.

1) **Identify threats** – Threats may be related to operations, reputation, finances, natural hazards, technology, structural issues or other factors. For example, not having adequate emergency exits is a threat to worker safety. Also, verbal abuse in the workplace is a threat to a company's reputation.



2) **Calculate risk estimate** – For each threat, estimate the probability of an event occurring. Then, multiply this by the financial cost of fixing things if the threat were to occur. The result is the financial value of each identified threat (or risk).



For example, if a fire were to occur, and workers could not exit the building, this would be catastrophic. Verbal abuse might be common and appear to be a minimal threat to the company's reputation. At the same time, it may have other unintended consequences such as demotivation and inhibition among lower level workers. Further, because gender dynamics are often interwoven with verbal abuse. If male supervisors tend to shout, be

aggressive or intimidate female workers, this is considered to be a form of gender-based violence. The effects of this on the company's reputation may not be clear right now, but they may be felt strongly in the future if the abuse is documented and shared.

- 3) **Manage risk** – Consider costs and decide to either avoid, share, accept or control the risk. Do not spend more money trying to manage the risk than its estimated value. For ensuring the availability of emergency exits, the cost of putting them in would need to be compared with the costs of injury and death if there were a fire or earthquake.



When analysing risks in connection with significant decisions or complex problems, be sure to uncover all aspects of different risks considering not only costs, but also ethics, health, gender issues, the natural environment, and people's safety. For example, when considering the financial risks associated with workers having precarious access to

healthcare services (e.g., absenteeism due to illness or turnover as a result of pregnancy), it may be financially beneficial to facilitate access to healthcare (including sexual and reproductive health services) for workers.

Discussion questions: Can you think of any risks related to your work area? What is the likelihood of that risk to happen? What would be the consequences? (Loss of life, injury, reduction in life expectancy, damage, financial loss, loss of reputation, ...). What does your company do to mitigate this risk? Do you think more could be done?

Vroom-Yetton Model

The Vroom-Yetton Model provides leaders with a process for determining which decision-making strategy to use depending on the situation at hand. This model was published in the 1973 book "Leadership and Decision Making" by Victor Vroom and Philip Yetton. It takes decision-makers through a series of steps that ultimately lead them to a strategic approach that is best for the type of decision that needs to be made.

To apply this model, you need to determine how important the quality of your decision is, its impact on your team members, and how much time is available to gather and analyse information. These key factors are further described below.

- **Decision quality** - To assess the level of quality needed in the decision, you need to determine how critical it is for a good decision to be made, and what the possible effects of a poor decision would be. If there is a strong need for a high-quality decision, then more time and resources should go into ensuring it is well thought through.



- **Team involvement** - If the decision is likely to have a significant impact on your team members, it is a good idea to involve them in the decision process.



- **Time constraints** - If ample time is available, this is an opportunity to use it to investigate options and assess risks in order to improve the quality of decision.



The Vroom-Yetton model involves answering a series of questions, following the flow chart below based on your answers, and arriving at a decision strategy to use.

The decision strategies are coded as follows:

Autocratic (A1)

Decide using information that is already available

Autocratic (A2)

Gather specific information from team and then make decision

Consultative (C1)

Consult with individual team members, and then decision

Consultative (C2)

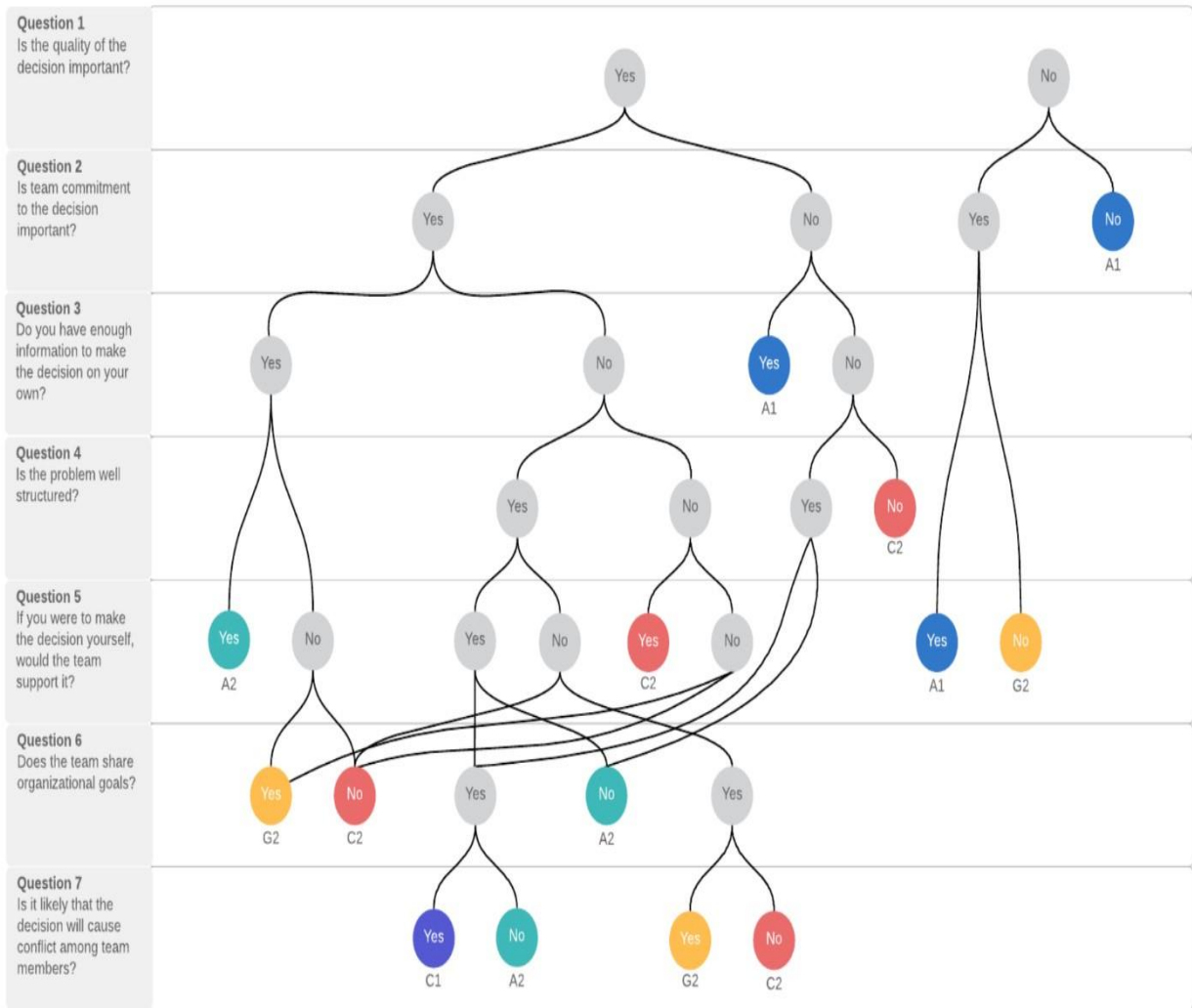
Gather team input through group discussion, then make decision yourself

Collaborative (G2)

Facilitate a team process to come to a consensus decision

The questions, listed in the figure below, are:

1. Is the quality of the decision important?
2. Is team commitment to the decision important?
3. Do you have enough information to make the decision on your own?
4. Is the problem well structured?
5. If you were to make the decision yourself, would the team support it?
6. Does the team share organizational goals?
7. Is it likely that the decision will cause conflict among team members?



Leadership styles

Autocratic (A1)
The leader makes a decision based on information that is readily available.

Autocratic (A2)
The leader collects information from team members, and then makes the decision alone based on the information collected. The decision may or may not be shared with the group.

Consultative (C1)
The leader consults with team members individually, asking for their ideas and suggestions. The team does not meet together. The leader makes a decision based on individual input.

Consultative (C2)
The team meets together and the leader seeks opinions and suggestions. The leader makes the decision alone based on the input from the group.

Collaborative (G2)
The team meets together to discuss and brainstorm. The team collectively makes the decision. The leader ensures that everybody agrees on the decision.

You may apply this model to assess what type of decision-making approach to use, depending on the circumstances of the decision.

- **Analytical Tools for Problem Solving**

In this section you will learn about various ways to approach problem solving. The Soft Systems Methodology is an approach that is recommended for tackling very complex problems. Root Cause Analysis and the 5 Whys are different ways of identifying the causes of problems. SWOT and Porters Five Forces are tools for analysing issues in order to inform a course of action or possible solution. Both of them can be applied to simple or moderately complex problems as well as large, strategic challenges. Finally, an activity called an After-Action Review is a structured way of reflecting back immediately following an action in order to improve how things are done in the future.

- **Soft Systems Methodology**

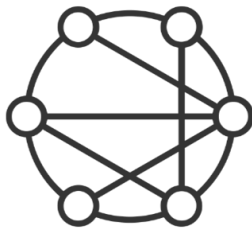
When presented with really tough issues, it can feel like a situation is impossible to fix. A multitude of factors and perspectives to consider at best can be confusing, and at worst can be totally overwhelming—even paralyzing. Soft Systems Methodology helps you imagine a problem as if it were an interconnected web of different parts. Each part plays a role in the problem and should be looked at separately. At the same time, the overall product produced, or result, of the interconnected web of issues is the system that you are trying to understand and improve.



As an example, let's briefly attempt to consider gender issues in a workplace setting from a soft systems perspective. Doing so would mean examining men's and women's socialisation growing up, current attitudes toward gender equality, historical experience of men and women working side-by-side doing the same tasks, national laws and policies, company policies, attitudes of leadership and managers, and workers perceptions of gender dynamics.

In Soft Systems Methodology, an issue is described as a problematical situation, rather than a problem. This is done to ensure it is looked at in its full complexity. Carrying out a Soft Systems approach to a problem is not a linear process. The activities described here do not need to be followed in a step-wise process.

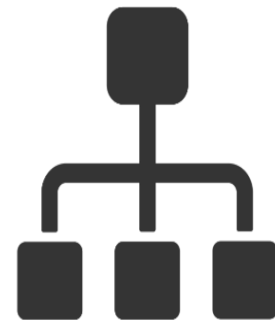
- o **Create a “rich picture” of the situation**



Creating a rich picture of the situation is intended to enable a thorough understanding of the various relevant factors, including their layers and nuances. To do this, map out all the individuals, groups, organizations, political forces, cultural norms and relationships that play a role. This may be done in the form of a mind map or any other type of visual diagram that you choose. The perspectives of each of the factors identified in relation to the problem should be reflected in the diagram. Be sure to include in the diagram an entity that represents a “client” who wants an improvement in the situation, a “practitioner” who is carrying out the soft systems analysis, and all the stakeholders who would be affected by an improvement in the situation. The main goal of this exercise is to include as much relevant information as possible on a large piece of paper.

- o **Develop purposeful activity models for each element**

Each factor (or element) identified within the rich picture; a purposeful activity model should be developed. This involves analysing each factor thoroughly and describing the actions and behaviours being carried out by that individual, group, political force etc. In addition to the actions/behaviours, the intentions or reasons for these actions, based on the worldview of that person or entity should be described.



Further, aspects of the activity that may be concretely monitored (i.e., serve as indicators of change) as the issue changes over time should be identified. These aspects should be able to reflect whether and how any changes introduced are producing their intended effect, a sense of the costs versus benefits of the desired change, and how the change is contributing to the larger desired outcome. This complete purposeful activity model is described as a “root definition” of each activity.

- o **Discuss**

Each element, and its root definition, should be discussed. In the discussion, reflect on how well each description reflects reality, and how all the indicators of change identified can be monitored.



- o **Define “Actions to Improve”**

The individual or group conducting the Soft Systems analysis should then come up with actions they think will improve the situation. Actions should clearly contribute to the

desired change (short-term and long-term) and their benefits should be greater than their costs.

While laid out here in a step-wise fashion, people who are experienced with Soft Systems Analysis usually carry it out in a repeated, ongoing manner. They use the approach flexibly to help them understand and solve problems as they go about addressing different issues.



- **Root Cause Analysis**

A root cause is an underlying cause contributing to a problem. Often when examining problems, we only see and address their symptoms rather than their underlying causes.

From a gender perspective, when examining why fewer women are in supervisory roles as compared to men, the causes of this problem may present as women lacking confidence, skill, or ambition. Diagnosing the problem based on these identified “symptoms” leads to solutions mainly focused training women to change their attitudes and behaviours to be able to interact more competently with their male colleagues. However, this approach ignores critical elements to gender equality in the workplace, in particular biases among leaders and managers.

Conducting a root cause analysis is about finding ways to move from addressing the symptoms of a problem to addressing its underlying causes instead. The idea is to dig deep into an issue to identify physical, human and organizational causes of problems. From a gender perspective, a root cause analysis would lead to solutions that involve changing men’s attitudes and behaviours as well as women’s.

Root Cause Analysis has five steps.

Step 1: Identify the problem and its symptoms.

Step 2: Collect data to develop a picture of the nature and history of the problem. Gather input from your team and fully analyse the problem.

Step 3: Identify possible causal factors. Don’t stop at the first one or two that are identified. Make sure to dig deep and identify as many causal factors as you can think of.

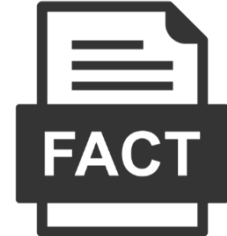
Step 4: Identify the root causes within each causal factor. For each factor, try to pinpoint the true underlying reason the problem occurred.

Step 5: Recommend and implement solutions. Be sure to make it clear to team members who is responsible for what.

5 Whys

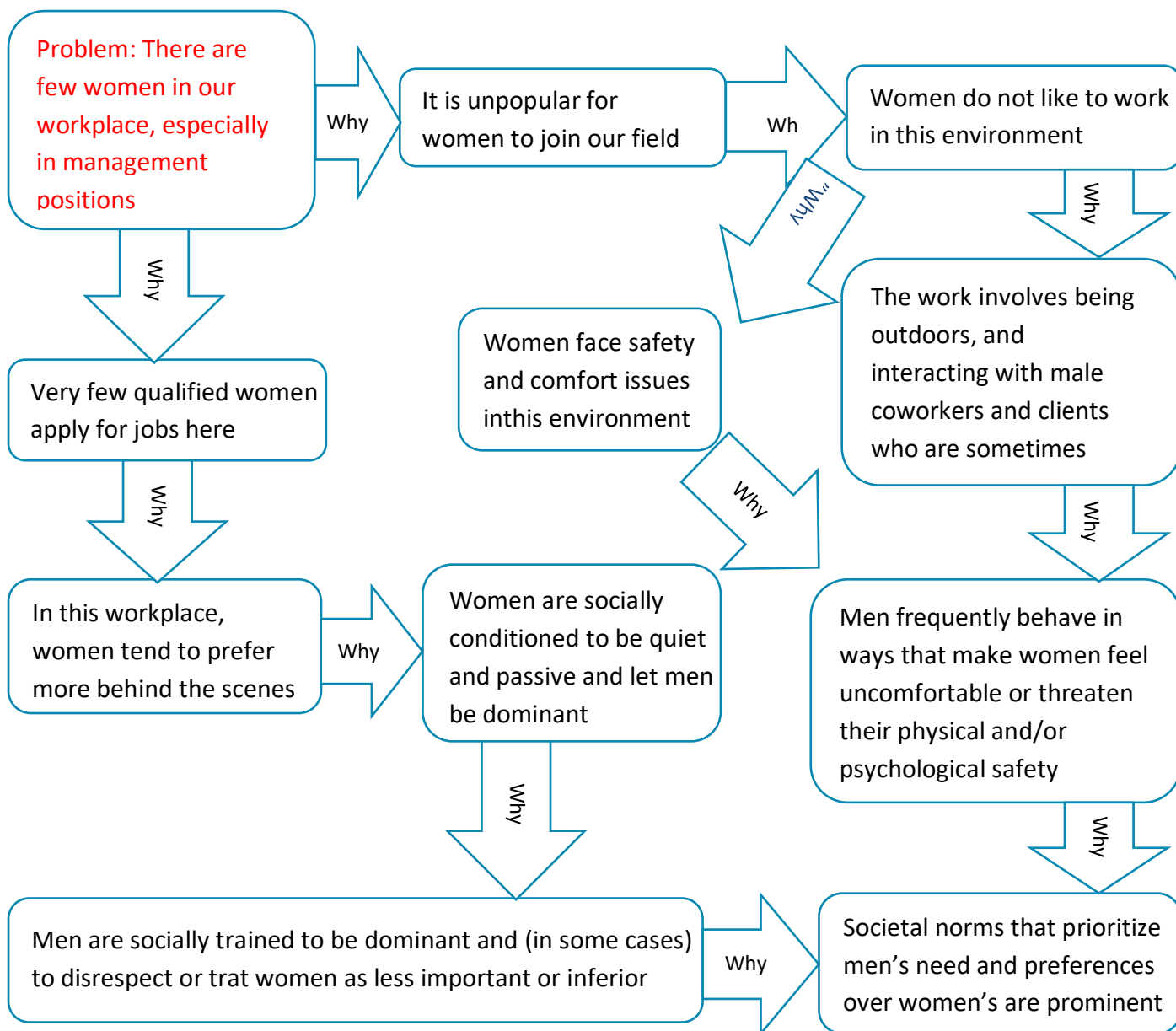
The 5 Whys method is an even simpler way of quickly getting to the underlying cause or causes of a problem. Rather than the three-dimensional Soft Systems Methodology or the complex branches that might be generated in a Root Cause Analysis, the 5 Whys approach is linear and one dimensional.

Given this, it is most useful for relatively simple or moderately difficult problems. Essentially, it consists of asking why something is happening (or happened) five times in a row, to quickly dig into a problem's underlying causes. Answers to "why" questions must be facts, or actual events that occurred, as opposed to ideas or guesses. This distinguishes it from Root Cause Analysis in which *possible* causal factors are identified.



For each answer to a "why" question, four more "why" questions must follow, so many branches can quickly be generated. Below is a simple example of the 5 Whys method being used for a moderately difficult problem. Once you are unable to produce any further answers, then you have arrived at the root cause of the problem. Based on your organizations or team's capabilities and position relative to the underlying causes identified, identify those

that you, your team, or your organization can have the greatest impact on. Then, analyse possible courses of action to address the problem. In this model, an organization would likely be able to have the greatest impact in the areas that are circled.



INFORMATION SHEET 5-2

SWOT Analysis

Learning Objectives:

After learning this information sheet trainee must be able to:

- SWOT Analysis
- Porter's Five Forces

- **SWOT Analysis**

In English, SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. As you saw in the 10 Minute School Case Solving video series, the purpose of a SWOT analysis is to identify and capitalize on your strengths and opportunities. SWOT analysis may be applied to a range of situations, from making a good decision about a business opportunity to choosing the best solution to a workplace challenge. It can also be used as a strategy tool to help you distinguish your organization's advantages over others, and to reduce threats to your organization's viability.

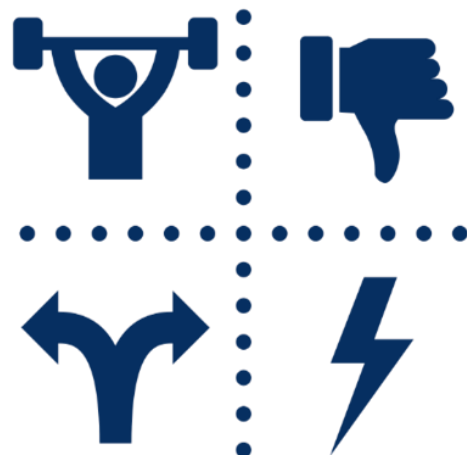


To conduct a SWOT analysis, first list out the strengths and weaknesses of a possible course of action that you are considering. Or, if you are examining a more strategic organization-level issue, your position within a larger business context.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors—to come up with them, you have to look into your team's dynamics or into your organization more broadly.

To do this, you may try to find answers to questions such as:

Strengths: What are your advantages? What does your team do particularly well? What special resources are you able to draw from?



Weaknesses: What do people see as your weaknesses? What do you think are your weaknesses? What do you think makes sense to avoid? Where do you have gaps in your skills and/or knowledge? Where do you lack key relationships?

Opportunities and threats are more external factors that can influence the outcomes of your actions.

To identify them, ask questions such as:

Opportunities: What trends have you observed? What interpersonal relationships exist that could be helpful? What technology opportunities exist? What social changes are you seeing? What new market trends are occurring? Are there any relevant/helpful government regulations?

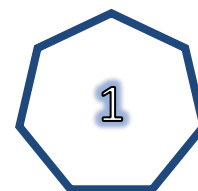
Threats: What obstacles exist? What competitive advantage do external parties have? What is your team not prepared for? What financial challenges exist?

- **Porter's Five Forces**

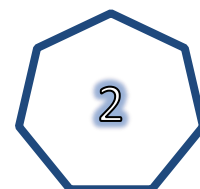
As is described in the 10 Minute School Case Solving video series, Porter's Five Forces is an analysis tool to help you assess your business's competitive position within the larger market. Specifically, it helps you understand the different factors influencing your business's profitability, and adjust your strategy accordingly. The advantage of the tool is that it helps shift your focus from being primarily on your competitors, to being on the general business environment more broadly.

The five forces are described below, with examples included from the garment sector:

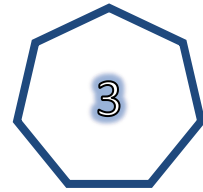
Supplier power □ The ability of suppliers to drive up prices of raw materials and other inputs required to create your product/s. In the garment sector, this would be things like thread, fabrics, dyes, machinery, building materials (for factories) etc.



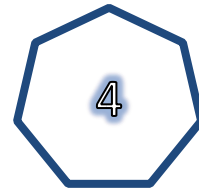
Buyer power □ The ability of the entities that buy your company's products to drive down the prices you can set for your products. Buyers in the garment sector are retail brands that sell clothing, bedding, tablecloths etc. directly to customers in department stores and clothing boutiques.



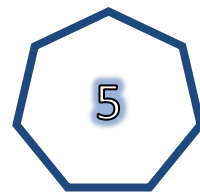
Competitive rivalry □ This refers to the strength of the competition in your industry. Another way of describing competitive rivalry is that it is made up of other entities that are offering the same product within the same market. If there are many successful competitors, your ability to generate profit is more difficult. Within the garment sector, if you work for a garment factory, competitive rivalry would exist between your factory and other factories making similar clothing or textile items.



Threat of substitution □ This refers to the likelihood of either customers or buyers finding a different way of obtaining the product that you provide. In the garment sector, this may be a situation in which customers from other countries begin preferring to purchase clothing made in their own countries, rather than abroad. Or, it could be retail brands shifting their offices to an African country instead of Bangladesh.

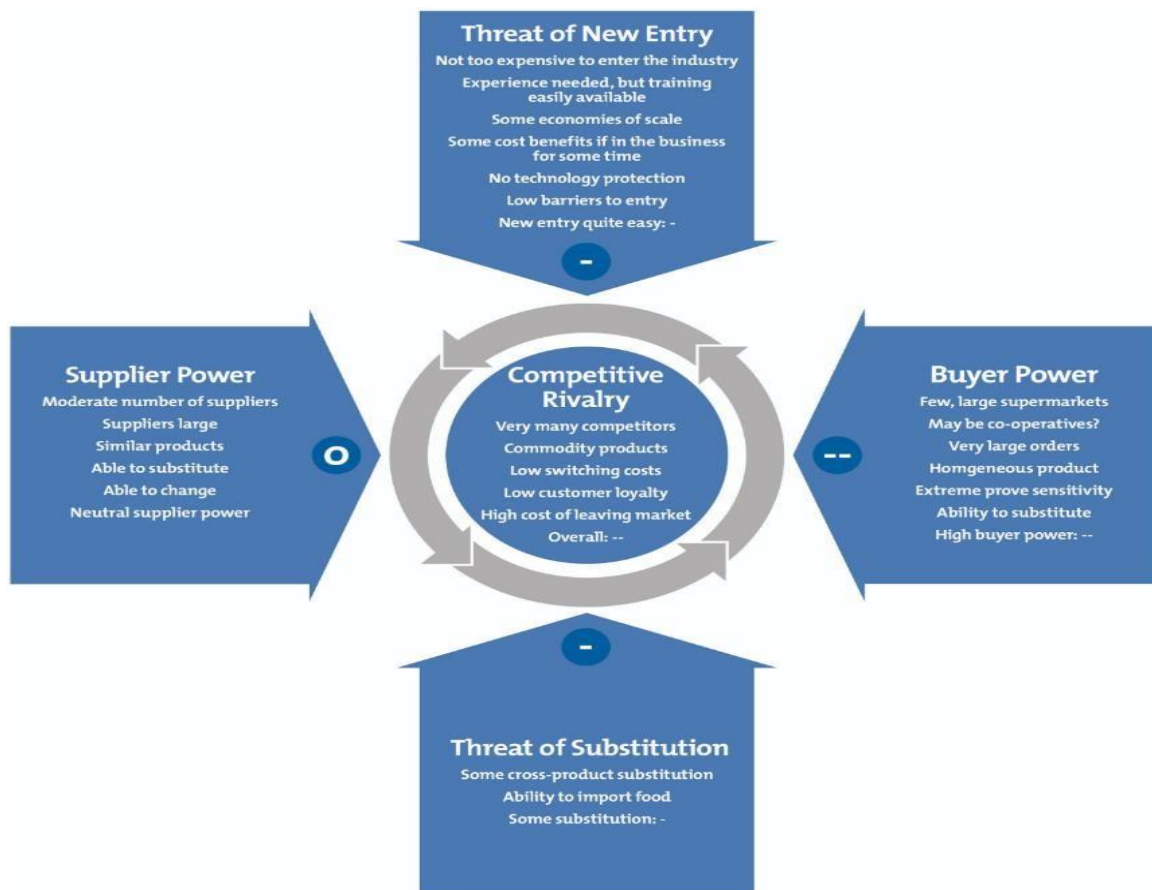


Threat of new entry □ This refers to how easy it is for competitors to enter your market and drive your prices down. From the perspective of a garment factory, this would be how easy it is for new factories to be established that would compete for the same contracts with buyers that you have.



To complete a Porter's Five Forces analysis, brainstorm a list of relevant factors and issues within your industry related to each of the above listed items. Next, mark the strength and direction influence (in your favour or not in your favour) that you perceive within each of the force areas. An easy way of doing this is to use a single "+" sign for a force that's moderately in your favour, or a "-" sign for a force that's moderately against you. Use "++" for a force that's strongly in your favour, or "--" for one that's strongly against. For a neutral force, you can use "o."

The following example diagram illustrates a completed analysis of Porter's Five Forces for an individual trying to decide whether to leave his current job and become a farmer



In this analysis, buyer power, the threat of new entry, and competitive rivalry have a fairly strong negative influence. These factors may thus limit this person's opportunities for profit as a farmer. S/he should be aware of these risks and make decisions with them in mind. Perhaps more profit could be found in a sub-sector that is relatively protected from some of these forces. Or perhaps it would be wise to consider a new industry altogether.

- **After Action Review**

An After-Action Review process is a way of instilling behaviours that support ongoing reflection and quality improvement in how work is carried out.

The basic idea is to avoid waiting until an entire project is completed to reflect back on what worked and what didn't. Instead, regularly reflect on what happened and what can be learned from minor or routine activities. This is used as a tool for ongoing learning and improvement.

After Action Reviews can be held following an activity as simple as a group discussion or meeting. They are also very useful after safety incidents, situations where ethical dilemmas are dealt with, when mistakes are made, or following any other type of challenging situation.

The basic premise of an After-Action Review is that a discussion is held where participation is encouraged and blame is not permitted. This helps people feel free to share their thoughts, issues and feedback, and identify areas where things could be done differently (and ideally better) in the future.



The basic framework for the discussion is: What happened? What was supposed to happen? What was the difference between what happened and what was supposed to happen? Why? What worked well? What didn't? What would you do differently next time?

Discussion questions: Have you ever used any of these tools in your work? If so, how were they helpful (or not helpful)? Could the way you've used these tools in the past be improved? For any of these tools that you have never used, which ones of the tools are you most interested in using? For what problem would you like to use this tool? Can you explain why?

SELF-CHECK 5.1

Circle the correct answer.

1. The following are examples of problem-solving tools
 - a. Soft Systems Methodology, Root Cause Analysis, 5 Whys
 - b. Whys, SWOT analysis, Vroom-Yetton Model
 - c. Vroom-Yetton Model, Porter's Five Forces, Root Cause Analysis

2. Decision-making can come with pitfalls, one of which is confirmation bias. What does that mean?
 - a. When team members avoid sharing ideas or concerns in order to go along with the group.
 - b. Relying on evidence that support only your opinion and reject the ones that doesn't.
 - c. When you are overconfident about the decision and haven't looked at any evidence.

3. The Porter's Five Forces is an analysis tool to help you assess the business's competitive position within the larger market. Which of the following answers is stating the correct forces?
 - a. Threat of new entry, team involvement, threat of substitution
 - b. Team involvement, supplier power, threat of new entry
 - c. Buyer power, supplier power, competitive rivalry

4. Which statement is incorrect about ethics?
 - a. Ethics is law.
 - b. Ethics are personal values that influence behaviour.
 - c. Ethics influence workplace decisions by forming basic common standards for the treatment of others in how work gets done.

5. The autocratic decision-making strategy can be employed for workplace decision-making. This strategy is characterized by:
 - a. Quick decision-making, consensus among team members is necessary, can lead to disengagement among staff.
 - b. Minimal or no input from team members necessary, quick decisionmaking, can lead to disengagement among staff.
 - c. Extensive input from team members necessary, can lead to disengagement among staff, quick decision-making.

6. One of the problem-solving tools is an After-Action Review. Circle the correct statement on the After-Action Review.
 - a. The basic idea of After-Action Review is to reflect back on what worked and didn't work only once the project is completed.

- b. After Action Review is a way of instilling behaviours that support ongoing reflection and quality improvement in how work is carried out.
 - c. After Action Review does not allow for group discussions.
7. Which of the below answers are common pitfalls in decision-making?
- a. Group think, procrastination, weighing alternatives
 - b. Weighing alternative, ignoring failure, overconfidence
 - c. Procrastination, ignoring failure, lack of thorough analysis

Keys to Self-Checks

Answer Key for Self-Check 1-1.1

- A. New, Unique, Useful
- B. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9
- C. 1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. False, 5. False, 6. True, 7. True, 8. False, 9. False, 10. True

Answer Key for Self-Check 1-2.1

- A. When we analyze, we ... break down complex subjects.
People's feelings or behaviors ... are examples of complex subjects.
The goal of analysis is to ... better understand complex subjects.
- D. b
- E. a, b, e, f, i

Self-Check 2-1.1

1. True; 2. False; 3. True; 4. False; 5. False; 6. False; 7. True; 8. False

Self-Check 2-2.1

- 1. a, b, c, d
- 2. a, b, c
- 3. c
- 4. a
- 5. a
- 6. a, c, d

Self-Check 3-1.1

- 1. a, b, d
- 2. a, c
- 3. a, b, c
- 4. a, b, c, e
- 5. a, d
- 6. a, d, e
- 7. a, b, c, d

Self-Check 3-2.1

Refer back to the chapter of the Seven Stage Communication Process

Self-Check 4-1.1

1. True; 2. False; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False; 6. False; 7. False; 8. True; 9. False

Self-Check 5-1

1. a; 2. b; 3. c; 4. a; 5. b; 6. b; 7. c

Developed by
Egnr. Md Abdur Razzaque
Specialist-1
National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)

Review Workshop of Competency Based Learning Material (CBLM)

The Competency Based Learning Material (CBLM) of Applying Creative and Critical Thinking Skills for Effective Communication, Negotiation and Leadership for National Skills Certificate in Competency Based Training and Assessment, Level-5 is reviewed by NSDA on 15 May 2023.

List of Members

Sl No	Name and Address	Position in the committee
1.	Md. Anisuzzaman, Instructor (Computer), Rajshahi TTC, Mobile: 01714422225, Email: mazaman84@gmail.com	Member
2.	Mr. Ananda Falia, Instructor (Food), Gopalganj Polytechnic Institute. Cell phone no: 01716754858, email:faliazoom@gmail.com	Member
3.	Mr. Uttam Kumar Das, Instructor, BKTTC, Dhaka. Cell phone no: 01716220932, email:uttamkumardas13@gmail.com	Member
4.	Md. Fazlul Haque, Instructor, Faridpur TTC Mobile: 01715-107077, Email: fhaque.ttc@gmail.com	Member
5.	Shamsul Alam, Chief Instructor (Computer), Tangail Polytechnic Institute, Mobile: 01711-577545 Email: s.alamreal1786@gmail.com	Member
6.	Engr. Md. Abdur Razzaque, Specialist-1, NSDA, Dhaka. Mobile: +88 01743 734313, E-mail: razzaque159@gmail.com	Member

REFERENCES:

Life Skills

Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLM)

Introductory, Intermediate and Advance

National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework

National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)