**JUST Training Fiche: Collaboration and Communication Skills**

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| **Title** | Collaboration and Communication Skills | |
| **Keywords** | Group, Relationship, Collaboration, Communication | |
| **Provided by** | Ud’A | |
| **Language** | English | |
| **Objectives** | The objectives of this module are to explain to the learners how to **build relationships with teammates**, to teach them to **create good communication dynamics** with others, and to improve their ability to **understand people and situations** in the context of organisations. | |
| **Learning outcomes** | * Better understanding of teammates and dynamics * Knowing how to face up and overcome a conflict when it arises * Understanding how to work in a group by creating good collaboration and communication | |
| **Training Area** | **Business Etiquette** |  |
| **Digital Skills** |  |
| **Soft Skills** | **X** |
| **Smart Working** |  |
| **Content index** | **Collaboration and Communication Skills**  **Unit 1: Communication and collaboration skills**  Section 1: Collaboration skills  Section 2: Communication Skills  **Unit 2: How to make yourself understood**  Section 1: The Minto Pyramidal Principle: how to be impactful in business communication  Section 2: Structuring the content of your message  **Unit 3: Implementing collaboration and communication skills**  Section 1: Exercise to improve collaboration and communication | |
| **Training content** | **Collaboration and Communication Skills**  **Unit 1: Communication and collaboration skills**   * The two are strongly related * Is about working together toward a common goal with others * Are essential in teamwork and multiple work environments across disciplines and fields * Promote trust, satisfaction and commitment in the work environment (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000). These, in turn, are predictors of a better quality of life in general (Kun & Gadanecz, 2022). * Individual variables such as personality traits can have an impact in this regard but is something that can be learned as well   **Collaboration skills**   * **Persuasion**: changing or influencing the behaviours, beliefs or attitudes of someone or a group towards another idea, person or event. * **Compromise**: making a concession or giving something up in order to reach a happy medium. It can be very easy for some people, while others struggle in this regard. * **Brainstorming**: it is a specific tool of communication to arrange and attract your team to meet and share their ideas. * **Diplomacy**: being able to get your message across and convince people to change without damaging the relationship. * **Flexibility**: effectively adjust to short-term change to successfully deal with unexpected problems or tasks. Adjusting quickly and calmly is key for the flexibility concept. * **Positivity**: it generates health, physical, social and psychological. Is made of positive emotions and is about mutual understanding. It is satisfying for all the parties involved. * **Long-term thinking**: it is about being comfortable in envisioning new directions and consciously working towards the future. * **Reliability**: present truthful and reliable information. * **Debate and mediation in the workplace**: to resolve workplace conflicts or disputes. * **Respect**: to be honest, open and polite, practice kindness and avoid negativity. * **Accountability**: accepting responsibility for the outcome of own choices, including the successes and the failures. * **Delegation**: delivering the task to your team but also monitoring the progress. * **Trust**: a critical element for leaders and non-leaders. It builds loyalty and increases credibility.   **Communication Skills**  **Social Communication & Personal Space**   * Personal space is the dynamic distance and orientation component of interpersonal relations (Gifford, 2007). * Many personal and situational influences interact with preferences for particular interpersonal distances. For example, males have larger personal spaces. * Attraction and cooperation generally lead to smaller interpersonal distance, whereas less positive contexts, such as stigma and unequal status, lead to larger distances. When the physical setting is less spacious, larger interpersonal distances are selected. * Cultural differences in interpersonal distance exist (e.g., Costa, 2010), but other factors often alter cultural preferences.   **Pragmatics of Human Communication**  Properties of communication that are fundamental interpersonal implications (cf. Watzlawick et al. 2011):   * **THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF NOT COMMUNICATING** * **THE CONTENT AND RELATIONSHIP LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION** * **THE PUNCTUATION OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS** * **SYMMETRICAL AND COMPLEMENTARY INTERACTION**   **One can’t not communicate**   * Every behaviour is a form of communication! * Because behaviour does not have a counterpart (there is any anti-behaviour), it is impossible not to communicate. * Even if communication is being avoided (such as the unconscious use of non-verbal or symptom strategy), that is a form of communication. "Symptom strategy" is ascribing our silence to something beyond our control and makes no communication impossible. * Examples of symptom strategies are sleepiness, headaches, and drunkenness. Even facial expressions, digital communication, and being silent can be analysed as communication by a receiver.   **Every Communication has a content and relationship aspect**   * All communication includes, apart from the plain meaning of words, more information. This information is based on how the speaker wants to be understood and how he himself sees his relation to the receiver of information. * Relationship is the command part of the message or how it is non-verbally said. * Content is the report or what is said verbally. * Being able to interpret both of these aspects is essential in understanding something that a communicator said. * The relational aspect of interaction is known as metacommunication. Metacommunication is communication about communication. * Relationship messages are always the most important element in communication.   **The relationship is dependent on the punctuation of the partners’ communication procedures**   * Both the sender and the receiver of information structure the communication flow differently and therefore interpret their own behaviour during communication as merely a reaction to the other’s behaviour (i.e., every partner thinks the other one is the cause of a specific behaviour) * To punctuate a communication means to interpret an ongoing sequence of events by labelling one event as the cause and the following event as the response * In a situation with communication, if one thing happens, something else always happens   she does not take care of herself    **husband**  **wife**  husband neglects her  husband neglects her  So, in this case, a conflict may arise on what is believed to be the cause and what is considered the effect of the mutual behaviours, when instead the interaction is circular!  Therefore, none of the versions of the partners can be considered correct (the husband neglects his wife because she has no self-care and the wife has no self-care because the husband neglects her)!  **Inter-human communication procedures are either symmetric or complementary**   * This axiom focuses on metacommunication with two main components called symmetrical and complementary interchange. * Symmetrical interchange is an interaction based on equal power between communicators. * Complementary interchange is an interaction based on differences in power. * Within these two interchanges, there are three different ways they can be used: one-up, one-down, and one-across. * With one-up communication, one communicator attempts to gain control of the exchange by dominating the overall communication. * A one-down communication has the opposite effect. A communicator attempts to yield control of an interaction or submit to someone. * The final message is a one-across communication. This communication moves to neutralise a situation. * This is also called **transitory** if only one communicator is attempting this style. * When two communicators use the same style of one-up, one-down, or one-across, it is **symmetrical**. * If they are opposing one another, it is **complimentary**. * This axiom allows us to understand how an interaction can be perceived by the styles a communicator is using   **Non Verbal Communication (NVC)**   * Bodily communication, other than words and language   **Categorisation of NVC (i.e., Paralanguage)**  Paralanguage consists of the non-verbal elements that accompany speech. It includes:   * The way we speak (also known as prosodic features) * Volume, pitch, intonation, speed of delivery, articulation, rhythm * The sounds we make other than the language * Laughter, crying, yawning, sighing, screeching, coughing * Filled pauses such as ‘Ummm’, well’ * Unfilled pauses * Physical Appearance (You only have to think of the huge industries associated with the above examples to recognise the cultural significance of physical appearance). It is the body’s capacity to communicate aspects of an individual’s identity which makes us so aware of our physical appearance   **Functions of NVC**  NVC has a particularly important role in establishing and maintaining relationships, otherwise known as an affective function.   * We rely more heavily on NVC in this area of personal communication * Looks, glances, and changes in orientation allow others to know what sort of relationship we want to have * We use NVC to establish a mutually acceptable level of intimacy) * Replacing and regulating language (i.e., the role of NVC in inflecting the meaning of a sentence can be explored by ‘performing’ the following sentence in different ways)   **Communicative Competences**  A competent communicator will:   * Recognise and use different verbal and non-verbal styles as they are suited to different social situations * Recognise the relation between verbal and non-verbal elements in communication * Compensate for possible misinterpretations in communication with others   **Unit 2: How to make yourself understood**  **The Minto Pyramidal Principle: how to be impactful in business communication**  Communication is a serious thing: the way to convey your ideas in any professional setting might make the difference as much as your technical expertise and your knowledge of the field.  Great ideas seem indeed great ideas due to the way they are portrayed.  In the context of this, in the next few slides you will be introduced to a few tips and tricks that will help you in mastering the art of communication and how professionals structure and convey their messages in an impactful and effective way.  We will talk about the Minto Pyramidal Principle, formally pioneered by Barbara Minto – Harvard Business graduate and McKinsey Consultant, from 1963 to 1973.  **The Minto Pyramidal Principle: a matter of efficiency and effectiveness**  It is highly possible that not long after the very beginning of your professional journey, you will find yourself pitching a “crisp” idea to a senior of yours, a potential partner or a potential client.  By default, assume that your interlocutor is very much busy and might not be able (or willing) to give you more than a few minutes of their precious time.  Your best interest is to maximise the quality of the time you have available with your audience without “sacrificing” any of the details leading to your conclusions. The rules are simple:   1. **Start with the answer(s) first**  * Don’t waste time with details * Go straight to the point and make sure that your takeaways are clear from the very beginning * Make a statement and move from there…  1. **Group your supporting arguments**  * Ideally, no more than three, unless strictly necessary to include more * Remember that you want to be as concise and comprehensive as possible at any given time  1. **Structure the supporting ideas**  * Again: preferably, no more than three ideas per each argument * Make sure to validate them through highly reliable and quantitative-driven data * You wish for your arguments to be both robust and reliable   **The Minto Pyramidal Principle: a visual representation**  All in all, the visual break down of your intervention should look like something as follows:  **Source:** [**McKinsey Alumni Centre**](https://www.mckinsey.com/alumni/news-and-events/global-news/alumni-news/barbara-minto-mece-i-invented-it-so-i-get-to-say-how-to-pronounce-it)  Additional tips for the application of Minto’s Principle:   * **TIME ORDER**: If some sort of cause-effect relationship exists between your arguments/support evidence, make sure to highlight the underlying sequence of events. * **STRUCTURAL ORDER**: Break down your discussion into singular thoughts. The more granular you will be, the easier it is for your interlocutor to understand your thought process. * **DEGREE ORDER**: Make sure to disclose your thoughts in order of importance.   **The Minto Pyramid combined with the MECE Principle**  MECE is a systemic problem-solving framework used by top-notch consulting companies to break down very complex and sophisticated problems into their essentials.  Once the problem (the business challenge) is de-structured in its basic components, it becomes much easier to evaluate and assess suitable options that might apply to that given issue. The acronym stands for:  **M**utually  No unit can appear in more than one category…  **E**xclusive  …but all categories combined include all units  **C**ollectively  **E**xhaustive    **Structuring the content of your message**  Impactful and effective communication starts from the very way you design and structure your verbal and written communication.  Mastering the MECE and Minto’s principles is just the cherry on the cake of business communication. Indeed, there are many other easy tricks that you can rely on to be more effective, clear and lean in your day-by-day communication with colleagues, clients and supervisors. These types of recommendations can be divided into two categories:  **CONTENT**  Meaning:   * the concrete information shared by you * how relevant they seem * the clarity of the key message(s)   **FORMATTING**  Meaning:   * the clarity of the information * how free they are from margins of misinterpretations * how self-explanatory is the information within and the docs in support   **Punctual, precise and clear information**  **CONTENT**   1. Every communication should start with a subject. Make sure that your interlocutor is always informed on what you are talking about (i.e., always update the subject of your emails). 2. Disclose every piece of information that might help your interlocutor better understating the context of a given circumstance. 3. Be always very clear and precise when setting up deadlines and people assigned to a specific task. 4. Do not leave margins for free interpretations. 5. Streamline your messages from redundant details.   **FORMATTING**   1. Use simple and accessible language, even more so when dealing with technical issues. 2. Prepare lists/bullet points to make more evident the many different topics addressed by your arguments. 3. Speak slowly and take frequent but brief pauses: it will help you in assessing the impression that you are making on your audience. 4. When approaching your conclusions, make sure to make a concise and comprehensive recap. 5. Come up with an agenda: be sure to be relatable, on-point and reliable.   **Unit 3: Implementing collaboration and communication skills**  **Exercise to improve collaboration and communication**  **Who Am I?**  Let’s pair up, people, please, and describe one part of your own to the other (just a brief presentation of something relevant for you to answer the question “who you are”).  The other in front of you should listen to your description, and then do the same. (time 5 minutes).  Afterwards, the conductor will invite each of you to introduce yourself by pretending to be the other, speaking in the first person.  **Summing up**   * Communication and its management have many forms and modalities * The Minto principle for writing and thinking * MECE framework for systemic problem solving * Non-versal communication is an essential component of communication * Promote trust, satisfaction, collaboration and commitment in the work environment are protective factors toward a better quality of life * Belonging to a group means not only knowing how to relate to others in a strategic way on a communication level but also knowing how to listen to the other and their needs | |
| **Glossary** | **Pragmatics of Communication:** from the Greek "pragma", i.e., "thing", "done". In this context, it indicates communication in its practical aspect, i.e., the influences of communication - in this case, of interpersonal communication - on human behaviours.  **Collaboration:** The etymological conjunction of “cum-laborare” (from the ancient Latin) suggests that it is a matter of "putting side by side" and "uniting" two or more different and separate subjects, whose distinct identities must be safeguarded and valued. The various subjects (e.g., individuals, groups, organisations) should be able to achieve communication of good quality to overcome mutual prejudices and trigger feelings of trust. Collaboration implies an operational dimension that produces reality.  **Non-verbal communication:** It is the type of communication that is done through non-verbal signals, such as looks, facial expressions and gestures. It is an interactive process of information and messages that goes beyond semantic language.  **Work environment:** It refers to all the material conditions and socio-relationships that made up the organisation and its members.  **Personal space:** Personal space is the dynamic distance and orientation component of interpersonal relationships. It does not refer only to the physical component, but it also concerns the invasion by other stimuli, such as noise, sharing of emotions among people, an excessive load of information or the constant interruptions in our moments of solitude or intimacy. | |
| **Self-evaluation (multiple choice queries and answers)** | 1. Which kind of interchange is based on equal power between communicators?   1. **Symmetrical** 2. Complementary 3. Hierarchical   2. Which of these is a function of non-verbal communication?   1. **Establishing relationships** 2. Don't regulate the language 3. None of the above answers are correct   3. A competent communicator… (please complete the sentence)   1. **Compensates for misinterpretations in communication** 2. Only knows how to use persuasion 3. Must give weight to hierarchical roles   4. Which sentence defines the concept of *personal space*?   1. **It is the dynamic distance and orientation element of interpersonal relationships** 2. It defines the boundaries within which it is possible to assert one's own role exclusively 3. It is always defined. It does not vary over time but only defines the relationship between superior and subordinate | |
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| **Resources (videos, reference link)** |  | |