



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

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1 THE OBJECTIVE – WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

In this session, you will learn:

- About the importance of good communication and cooperation in the workplace;
- About the rules and skills of effective communication and cooperation in the workplace;
- How to use communication and cooperation skills to improve your workplace success through practical exercises and examples.

2 WHY COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION ARE IMPORTANT

Communication and cooperation help you share creative ideas with other people and find ways to make them a reality. **Communication and cooperation are closely connected.**

Communication helps you better understand others and be understood by them. Cooperation brings together talents, skills and knowledge needed to finish a task. If you use them together in the workplace, you will:

- Better understand people and situations;
- Share information and creative ideas effectively;
- Build and maintain personal and professional relationships;
- Resolve problems at work, build trust and respect of co-workers;
- Bring together talents and skills needed to finish a task;
- Have better work efficiency and result.

On the other hand, bad communication and cooperation leads to:

- Misunderstandings and conflicts among co-workers;
- Inefficient work management causing burnout and stress;
- Low creativity and motivation;
- Poor work efficiency and overall results.

2.1 What types of communication do we know

There are several types of communication. They differ according to in which way the information is conveyed and in which situations you use them.

- **Verbal** – Any communication where talking and listening is used. It is quick and easy and it encourages personal contacts and cooperation.
- **Non-verbal** – Any communication where written words or images are used. It allows you to present large amounts of information quickly, creating a permanent record.
- **Formal** – Any communication that has official value for an organization and uses established official channels. It is usually written. It is used to communicate rules, division of tasks etc.
- **Informal** – Any communication that has no official value and communication channels. It can also be called “gossip” or “grapevine” communication.
- **Horizontal** – Any communication between individuals or groups at the same level. It can be verbal or non-verbal. It allows faster collaboration and sharing of ideas.
- **Vertical** – Any communication between you and your superior. It allows connection between workers and management, everybody is informed about important decisions.

EXERCISE

Think about the following questions:

- Which type of communication do you use the most?
- Have you ever benefited from cooperation in your professional or personal life?

3 THE RULES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication is an exchange of information and ideas. For communication, we require:

- **Sender** – Person giving information by talking or writing;
- **Message** – Information and ideas exchanged between sender and receiver;
- **Receiver** – Person receiving information by listening or reading.

Communication is effective if other understand it, so your main goal as a sender must be to be correctly understood by the receivers. In other words, you can have the best message but it will be ineffective if the receivers will not understand it as you intended them to.

How can you do this? By following **the seven Cs of effective communication.**

- **Clear** – Clear communication is easy to understand.
Tips: Be clear about the purpose of the message, minimize the number of topics, and do not make people read “between the lines”.
- **Concise** – Concise communication is brief and focused.
Tips: Make the message short and to the point, use as few sentences as possible, avoid “filler” words, avoid repeating yourself.
- **Concrete** – Concrete communication gives receivers a clear picture of your message.
Tips: Focus on the purpose of the message, provide right amount of details, clearly present the topic of the message.
- **Correct** – Correct communication is free of errors.
Tips: Use correct grammar and spelling, use correct terms, check your message for errors
- **Coherent** – Coherent message is logical. All points are connected to the main topic.
Tips: Follow the main topic from start to finish, keep the same tone from start to finish.
- **Complete** – Complete message gives the receiver all needed information and, if necessary, tells them what must be done.
Tips: Include all necessary information like names, dates and places, if necessary, give instructions about what needs to be done.
- **Courteous** – Courteous communication is friendly, honest and open.
Tips: Keep the receiver’s position in mind, be emphatic to receiver’s needs, and avoid insults.

The seven Cs of effective communication are “the golden” rules that will improve the quality and effectiveness of your communication. However, there are other skills that you must learn and use, together with the seven Cs, to become an even more efficient communicator.

4 ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You must be aware that **communication is a two-way process**, equally dependent on sender and receiver. It is equally important to be able to create and send information as it is to be able to receive and understand it. Communication, as any skill, can be learned and improved. To be better communicators, learn and practice these essential skills.

4.1 Active listening and giving feedback

Active listening allows you to hear and understand what the other person is saying to you.

You must listen closely, ask additional questions to clarify and paraphrase to make sure that you understand them. Then you **must give them feedback** to show them that you understand and care about what they are telling you.

You should always accept and look for feedback from others. **You must try to implement what you learned from the feedback.**

Praise is also a form of feedback. Saying something like “good work” or “thank you for your help” to a co-worker will greatly increase their motivation.

EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE LISTENING AND GIVING FEEDBACK:

First, show your interest using body language:

- Look directly at the person you are talking to and maintain eye contact. Lean forward and have an open posture, do not cross your arms and legs.

Listen carefully and give feedback by:

- **Building trust** by saying for example “Tell me what the problem is and how I can help”.
- **Showing concern** by saying for example, “I wish to help you. I understand you have some problems at this time”.
- **Giving brief affirmation** by saying something like “Of course, thank you for telling me”.
- **Paraphrasing to show understanding** by saying for example “So, you are concerned about your ability to complete the project on time because of family obligations?”.
- **Asking open and specific questions for clarification**, for example “I see that some changes are needed, what kind of help do you need?” (Open) and “And with this help, are you certain you will finish on time?”.

4.2 Empathy

Empathy means understanding and sharing the feelings of other people. It is very important to show that you understand them, **even if you do not agree with them**. Saying, for example, “I understand what you are saying”, will show them that you are listening to them and respect their position.

EXERCISE

To become more empathic, focus on someone and do the following:

- Think about someone close to you, family member or a friend.
- Try to determine what their emotional state has been lately.
- Try to determine why they are sad, happy, stressed.
- Ask yourself, “Do I have any effect on their emotions?”.
- Ask yourself, “what I can say or do to make their situation better?”.

4.3 Open-mindedness

You must be prepared to listen to and understand other people’s points of view. Engaging in a dialogue, even with people with whom you disagree, will result in a more honest and productive communication.

4.4 Using non-verbal Communication

More than 50 % of all communication is non-verbal. Body language, hand gestures, eye contact and tone of voice help convey the meaning of your words.

People will communicate with you more openly if your body language and tone are relaxed and if you establish appropriate eye contact. You must also learn to read non-verbal signals from others to understand how they are feeling.

- **Facial expressions** – By smiling or frowning, you show feelings such as happiness or sadness.

Tips: Relax your face, match facial expression with your words, and nod if you agree.

- **Body posture** – Your posture expresses your confidence and fee. For example, straight posture shows confidence, while slumped shoulders can mean low energy or sadness.

Tips: Relax upper body, shoulders straight, keep hands by your side when standing.

- **Gestures and body language** – You can communicate by moving parts of the body, especially hands and head. You wave to attract attention or bite your nails when nervous.

Tips: Do not point at people with your finger, keep hands out of pockets, bend your head to show that you are listening.

- **Touch** – For example, your handshake can tell a lot about you. Strong handshake shows confidence. Tap on the back can mean encouragement.

Tips: Have firm handshake, in formal setting do not scratch your nose or play with your hair.

- **Space** – Space between people shows the level of closeness or intimacy between them.

Tips: Maintain proper space, depending on the situation and relationship with the other person. The general rule is: 0,5 meters or less – intimate space; 0,5 – 1,5 meters – personal space; 1,5 – 2 meters – social space.

- **Eye contact** – By maintaining eye contact while talking to a person you show interest. Avoiding eye contact can show lack of interest or dishonesty.

Tips: Keep a relaxed expression, establish eye contact, do not stare.

- **Paralanguage** – Paralanguage is the tone, speed and volume of your voice. It can change the meaning of communication. For example, speaking very fast may show excitement or nervousness, speaking very slow can mean tiredness or attempt to make a point.

Tips: Use proper tone, volume and moderate speed of talking.

4.5 Using silence in communication

By making a silent pause, you **allow others to speak or ask questions**. During a presentation, a silent pause **underlines key points and gives the audience time to take in the information**. Silence will also **prevent you from saying something you do not want to**.

EXERCISE

Think about and answer the questions:

- Which of the seven Cs of efficient communication are you best at and which must you improve the most?
- In your opinion, how important is active listening in communication?
- How aware are you of your non-verbal communication?
- Which rule of efficient communication are you best at, which must you improve the most?

5 COOPERATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Sometimes only one person is not enough to finish a task. Then collaboration or **teamwork** is needed. Teamwork is one of the best ways to get things done as it brings many benefits to the company and individual members of a team.

EFFECTS OF TEAM WORK	
FOR TEAM MEMBERS	FOR TEAM MEMBERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It promotes faster learning among team members.• It promotes sharing of skills among team members.• It reduces burnout by reducing workload.• It promotes creativity.• It leads to better solutions to problems.• It improves relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It allows a more efficient use of time and resources.• It improves productivity.• It fosters creative solutions and innovations.• It increases a common sense of identity and belonging.

Positive effects of teamwork are only possible if the team is working well together. A group of people working together is not necessarily a team. What do you need to create a good team?

5.1 The common goal

To be motivated, team members must know what they are doing and why they are doing it. It should also be clear to everyone what are the steps needed to complete the job.

5.2 Tolerance and empathy

It is normal to have different opinions among co-workers. Sometimes you see their ideas as completely wrong and they make you react with anger or some other negative emotion.

The right thing to do in such situations is to **find a compromise**. You can do this by looking at the differences in the right way and **learn from disagreements**. You should **accept different opinions as something positive**. Each person can bring something useful to the team.

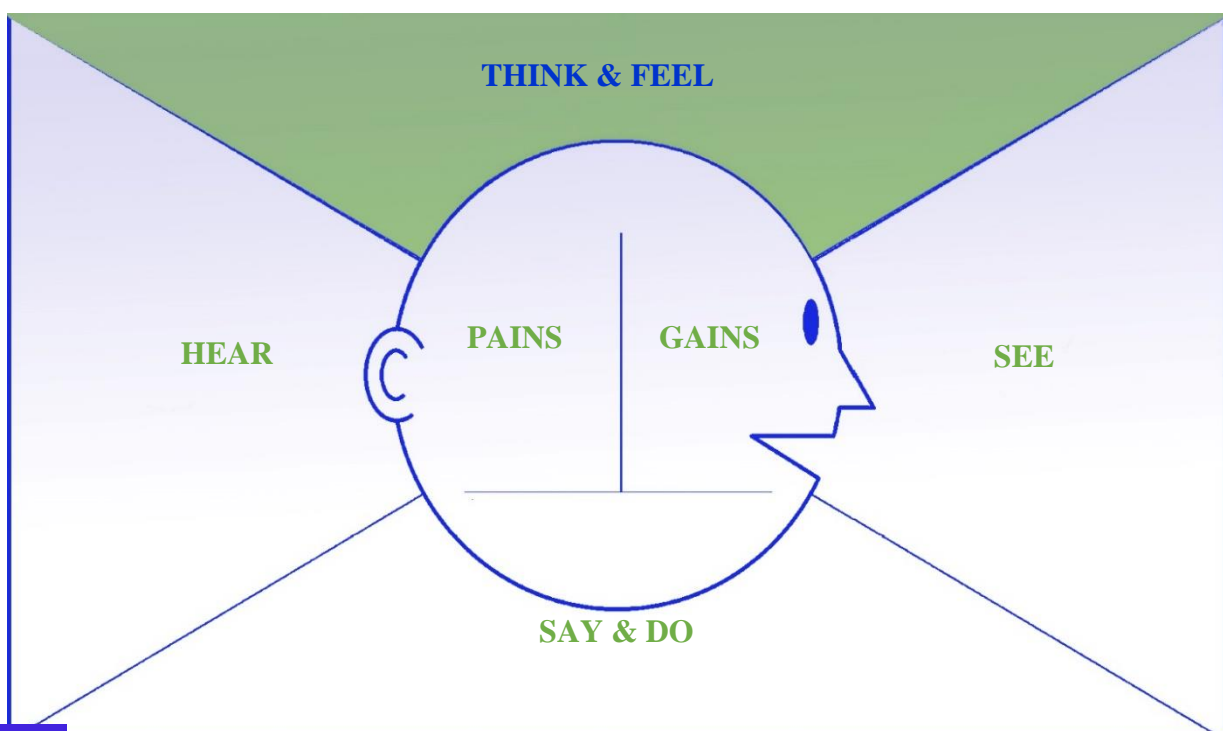
EXERCISE

Empathy map canvas method:

Empathy map is a simple method that helps teams develop empathy for other people's needs by allowing them to look at the world from other people's point of view. It is very useful for improving workplace cooperation and relationships, customer relations and more.

To make an empathy map canvas, take a large sheet of paper, divide it into sections with a big empty head in the middle. The head represents the person you wish to understand and each section represents a part of their external and internal world.

The team must fill in each section by empathizing and doing research about the person.



To complete the task, the team must do the following:

1. Start with the THINK & FEEL area. Research and think about what the person is thinking and feeling about a particular subject or situation. Try to figure out what positive or negative thoughts they have and how this makes them feel. Try to put yourself in their place and see things from their perspective.
2. Next, focus on what the person SAY & DO. Research and try to figure out their attitudes, behaviours and actions regarding the subject or situation. When you have this information, compare it to the information in the THINK & FEEL area to gain better insight and understanding of the person you are trying to understand.
3. Then focus on the HEAR part. What the person is hearing about the subject or situation from family, friends, co-workers, traditional media, social media etc. Think also about their environment. Is it noisy, quiet, crowded? How all this is affecting the way they think and act?
4. Now, think about what they SEE regarding the subject or situation. What are the effects of the subject or situation that they can see around them? What does their environment look like? Try to put yourself in their shoes and understand how what they see is affecting their thoughts and decisions.
5. Now move inside their head and try to figure out what PAIN they face daily while trying to achieve their goals. What situational and emotional pains did you find through your research and discussion?
6. Lastly, ask yourself what they GAIN from achieving their goals? What are the positive emotional and material results they gain?

Summarize and share the results. Take some time to think about the process. Ask team members to describe their experience. Ask them if their perspective has changed in any way.

Gather the main findings. Make photos of your empathy map canvas and share it with co-workers or hang it on the wall so others can see it and think about it.

You can change the questions and sections to fit your needs and available information. Do not worry about putting each question in the right category. This is not so important. The most important is to empathize with the person you are trying to understand.

5.3 Gratitude

People work better if you show them gratitude for the help they give you. You should show gratitude to your co-workers when they do something positive or helpful. You must remember not to exaggerate with praise. When showing gratitude, you must do it sincerely and timely.

5.4 Efficient communication

Successful teams communicate a lot using various types of communication to share ideas and help each other. It is not necessary to agree always but efficient communication will help you solve disagreements and turn them into positive learning experiences for all.

EXERCISE

Think about and answer the questions:

Do you feel more comfortable working alone or as part of a team?

Do you think you have what it takes to be a good team leader?

How do you react when people disagree with you?

Think about a situation when somebody expressed gratitude and praise for something you did. How did it affect your motivation?

6 EFFECTIVE PERSONAL PRESENTATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Good communication and relationships will help you be successful at work. But in order to be hired or get a promotion, you must also know how to present yourself during a job interview and how to negotiate. **The purpose of personal presentation is to promote yourself**, to present a complete picture of yourself as someone the company really needs. So, what are the elements of personal presentation?

- **Self-esteem and confidence**

Self-esteem is how you see and value yourself. It means having faith in your abilities.

To improve your self-esteem and self-confidence you should:

- Think about your positive attributes and personal value.

- Try not to be affected by opinions others have about you.
- Appear self-confident.

It is good to practice how to appear self-confident even if you are not. If you appear confident, others will see you as confident and you will likely become more confident because of it.

- **Personal appearance and non-verbal communication**

People usually judge us by the way we dress and look. It is therefore wise to take time and think about the message you are sending with your appearance.

Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures, tone and pitch of your voice, the way you move. It conveys much more than words can. It is conscious and unconscious.

- **Verbal communication and behaviour**

What you say, how you say it and how you behave affects how others perceive you. It is very important to choose the right words for the situation and the audience.

Behaviour includes such things as politeness and being on time. By being polite and punctual, you show you value others and their time. It is an essential part of personal presentation.

6.1 How to write a job application letter and resume

When applying for a job you usually have to write a job application letter and a resume. This is very important, as it is the first thing the employer will see. How to write a good job application letter and resume? Here are some tips:

- **Always write a new application letter** – Do not use an old letter that you have from before. Write a new one for each job. This will make you think about why you want the job and why you are the best candidate. It will make the letter more attractive to the employer.
- **Find the right tone** – Do not use very formal and robotic language. Be natural and polite. Use the hiring person first and last name like “Dear Mr. John Smith”. Do not use general greetings such as “dear Sir or Madam”. Include your name and contact information.
- **Explain what you can do for the company** – Be clear about how your skills and personal characteristics can benefit the company. List your skills and experience that are relevant

for the job. Do not be shy about your abilities, you can even brag a little if you are very good at something that is useful for the job. However, do not exaggerate or lie about it.

- **Keep the letter short and focused** – Do not write more than one page. Even half a page can be enough.
- **Adjust the resume to the job** – A resume is a summary of your work experiences, skills, and achievements. It should be not more than two pages long.
Read the job application carefully and find out what is required for the job. If the key word is for example “sales”, list your experiences, skills and education in this area and use terms connected to sales.
Include only the most relevant information and put the most important things at the beginning. Use the reverse-chronological format of the resume.
- **Use active language** – In the resume use active powerful words such as “I completed”, or “I achieved”. Be brief and concise.
- **Use a professional font** – Make the letter and the resume easy to read. Use a clean and easy to read font like Arial or Times New Roman. Use font size 11 or 12.
- **Make corrections** – Put the letter and the resume away for a day and then read them again with fresh eyes. You will probably find some things you need to change. Also, do not forget to check the spelling and grammar to make them error-free. If possible, ask a friend or a family member to read them and give you their opinion.

6.2 How to prepare for a job interview

An interview is a two-way process. **It is equally important to find out if you want the job, as it is if they want you.** Therefore, you must present yourself as you are, without pretending.

It is very important to prepare before a job interview. What should you do?

- Research the company – Look at their website to learn about their values and the work they do. Try to understand how the job you are applying for fits into the company.
- Think about what you bring to the company – Think about how you fit the work requirements and try to find some examples of your skills and previous jobs that show you are the right person for the job.
- Prepare some questions and answers – Prepare a list of work-related questions such as “Will I be working alone or as part of a team?” or “What will my daily duties be?”. Try not to sound as if you wish to avoid work. It is also a good idea to prepare answers for standard interview questions. Below are some examples.

COMMON QUESTIONS	HOW TO GIVE A GOOD ANSWER
Tell me about yourself.	Tell them why you are good for the job. Do not give too much or too little personal information. You can describe your hobbies, your education and motivation; maybe add some fun facts about yourself.
Why should we hire you?	Explain why you are the best candidate. Present your qualifications. Be confident and concise in your answers.
What is your greatest strength?	Focus on your qualities and attributes that make you the best candidate for the job. Explain why you are different from other candidates.
What is your greatest weakness?	Answer by focusing on your positive qualities and skills. Mention some skills that you have improved.
Why do you want to leave (or have left) your current job?	Focus on your future goals at your new job. Avoid mentioning any bad experiences at your previous job.
What are your salary expectations?	Be reasonable and open to negotiations.
Why do you want this job?	Show them that you know what the company does and that you are interested in this line of work. Be specific about what you like about the job.

How do you handle stress and pressure?	Do not say that you do not feel stress. It is better to explain how you deal with stress when it occurs by describing some stressful situations you were in before.
Describe a difficult work situation or project and how you overcame it?	As with stress, give some examples of a situation you were in and how you handled it. Do not exaggerate and lie.
What are your goals for the future?	Assure them that your goals are in line with the company's vision and that you are there to stay.

Employers prefer candidates who can give more than one-word answers and show they are capable of active listening and understanding ideas. The interview can show the employer how the candidate will interact with co-workers and supervisors resolve conflicts etc.

To be successful you also must know how to behave during a job interview. Knowing the do's and don'ts of a job interview can mean the difference between success and failure.

THINGS TO DO AT A JOB INTERVIEW	THINGS NOT TO DO AT A JOB INTERVIEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrive early. There may be many candidates so do not keep them waiting ● Dress appropriately. Usually a suit is appropriate. Remember that people judge you based on your appearance. ● Act appropriately. Follow the interviewer's signals. Do not offer a handshake if you are not offered one first. ● Interact with the interviewer. Make eye contact, smile and listen actively. ● Provide strong and meaningful answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not be late. ● Do not leave your cell phone on. ● Do not look at your watch. ● Do not eat snacks. ● Do not exaggerate and lie when answering questions. ● Do not share a lot of personal information. ● Do not be nervous or display negative body language. ● Do not ask about the salary and other benefits too early. ● Do not be desperate to get the job. ● Do not criticize your previous employer.

6.3 How to negotiate your salary

Negotiating your salary is a normal part of the hiring process. Through your salary, the company is showing you how much they value you and your work.

So, how to negotiate to get a salary you deserve? Here are some tips:

- **Find out what you are worth** – Prior to the negotiation, find out what a person in your position and with your experience is realistically paid. Remember also that salaries can vary depending on the industry and your location.
- **Show them how valuable you are** – Do not simply demand a higher salary. Explain why you are valuable to the company and should get a higher salary.
Before an interview, think about your strengths and prepare some examples how the company benefits from your abilities. Rehearse your presentation a few times with another person to gain more confidence.
Present any certificates of skills and qualifications that show you are good at your job. Be honest. Do not lie about your abilities and qualifications.
- **Be prepared for some resistance** – Even if you clearly deserve a higher salary your employer will probably not give it to you immediately. Be ready to answer some questions like “Tell me why do you think you deserve it?”.
- **Be reasonable** – Remember there is probably a limit to how much they can offer you. Be flexible and lower your demands to find a compromise. Take into account also other benefits like extra vacation days and flexible work hours. Do not negotiate for too long. If after a few discussions, they do not meet your demands, accept their offer and wait for a better opportunity in the future or politely decline the job.
- **Get everything in writing** – After you reach an agreement, ask for a written document containing your salary, any special agreements, and a description of your work responsibilities. Both you and your employer must sign the document.

EXERCISE

Think about and answer the questions:

- Do you agree that people usually judge you based on how you dress and look? Have you ever been judged based on this?
- How many job application letters have you written and how many job interviews have you been invited to? Can you guess what the reason was?
- How well do you prepare for a job interview? Is there something in your preparation that you can improve?

7 CONCLUSION

Good communication and cooperation are essential for individual and group success in the workplace and in daily life. Both skills are closely connected and you should regularly practice to improve them.

Communication is effective if other people understand it correctly. Using the seven Cs of effective communication will improve the quality of your communication. Using also essential communication skills such as active listening, giving feedback, and empathy will make you truly great communicators. It is very important to be aware of and practice non-verbal communication as it represents more than 50 % of your entire communication.

Research and preparation will greatly increase your chances of being hired for a job. Using the seven Cs of communication and other communication skills will help you present yourself successfully during a job interview. It is important to know what skills you bring to the company and be able to present this clearly to your future employer.

Negotiating a better salary is a normal part of the hiring process. To be successful you must clearly present why you deserve it. You must also be reasonable and ready to compromise. After you reach an agreement, demand the terms of the agreement in writing.

Teamwork has many positive effects on everybody involved, it reduces stress and burnout and increases creativity and productivity. Good teams communicate a lot, learn from each other and express gratitude to co-workers when they do something positive or helpful.

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