Supervisor Academy Month Two

Effective Communication

Month Two: Keys to Effective Communication

Our communication styles are often our first impression as supervisors. As we discuss different approaches to managing employee issues we must review the basics of our communication strategies when managing disagreement and coaching employees.

Month 2: Keys to Effective Communication

Week 1: Coaching and Counseling
- Live Virtual Training

Week 2: Communication Strategies
- Online

Week 3: Managing Disagreement
- Online

Week 4: Interpersonal Skills or Providing Effective Feedback
- Online

Remember to register online for the section of the live session and you would like to attend.

Month Two
Week One: Coaching and Counseling

Coaching and counseling can be applied to understanding peers and superiors, but the skills are most effective when applied to your employees.

- Retention is important to you.
- You are aware of internal policy and procedures to help guide your supervision of employees.
- There is opportunity with short and long term employees.

Week One: Coaching and Counseling
Coaching and counseling are skills that can be learned through practice, persistence, and patience.

Distinguish Between Coaching and Counseling – When you can identify situations that need your time and energy, and decide whether to coach or to counsel you are more likely to be effective.

1. Determine when to coach or counsel.
2. Coach to improve performance.
3. Counsel to address personal problems.

Initiate the Process– Thoughtfully initiated interventions generally receive the best outcomes. Feedback must be appropriate and effective, and compassion must be present.

4. Focus on action while coaching.
5. Offer empathetic support in counseling.
6. Provide effective feedback.
7. Take advantage of informal opportunities.

Ensure a Constructive Outcome - Coaching and counseling are an ongoing process. To be most effective, feedback must be continuous. Continuing from conducting formal coaching and counseling sessions to the next step of ensuring that the feedback stimulates improvement.

8. Act as a positive role model.
9. Take disciplinary action.
10. Continue on the path to improvement.

Work Situations That May Require Coaching or Counseling

When you notice there is a potential performance issue, the sooner the intervention the better. The timing of your intervention may also determine the need for coaching versus counseling an employee. Each situation will vary in organizations and with individuals but in general:

Work situations that may require coaching:	Work situations that may require counseling:
Orientation and training of a new employee	Reorganizations
Teaching of a new job skill	Layoffs—counseling for those who are laid off and those who are not
The employee isn't meeting commitments.	Decreases in salary, status, or responsibility
The employee is having interpersonal problems with peers.	Salary freezes
Simple corrections to performance are required.	The employee is faced with other career opportunities.
Goals or business conditions have changed.	The employee is faced with no growth opportunities inside the organization.
You are new and the group doesn't know your vision, style, role, or goals.	The employee is unhappy with you as boss.
The employee is having many conflicts with customers.	The employee is unhappy with work assignments.
The employee needs help setting priorities.	The employee has conflicts with peers.
A follow-up session is needed.	The employee feels stressed or burned out or has experienced a loss.
The employee displays poor judgment on the job.	The employee feels insecure about skills or ability to do the job.
The employee needs reinforcement for good performance.	The employee is quitting to take a new job.
The employee wants to become a peak performer.	The employee has been promoted and is unsure of herself.
Performance reviews are due.	The employee shares personal problems requiring support.
The employee needs preparation to meet his or her future career goals.	The employee has personal problems that are affecting performance.
The employee needs preparation for more challenging work assignments.	The employee is experiencing failure.
The employee needs self-confidence developed by learning new skills.	The employee does not feel effectively utilized.
Power or control battles are affecting team cohesion.	The employee has very inflated views of his skills and talents.
The employee has not had a performance review in two years.	The employee is very critical of others.
The employee has a difficult time focusing and meeting deadlines.	The employee is a perfectionist and can't meet deadlines.
The employee is good at formulating ideas, but poor at implementation.	The employee feels insecure and is unable to be assertive.
The employee is disruptive at meetings and wastes time.	The employee has alienated others on the team by avoiding tough tasks.
Other:	Other:

Reasons for a Discussion

Many managers confuse coaching sessions with performance appraisal sessions. They are quite alike, but the reason for the discussion is different. In either instance, you need to make clear the reasons for your discussion so you are working towards the same goals.

1. Put the employee at ease and state the purpose of the meeting–to discuss how they are doing on the job so they can grow professionally.

   - Glad we got a chance to speak today, I am hoping to use this time to talk about what is going well as well as some opportunities we have for professional growth.

2. Engage the employee in the discussion by asking open-ended questions about each goal and/or competency.

   - Where have you seen this work best? Where are some areas it is less effective?

3. Practice active listening skills by showing interest in the employee's point of view. Be prepared to change your point of view based on new facts presented by the employee that you may have overlooked.

   - I hear you saying... is that correct? That's an interesting perspective, I can see what you mean.

4. Discuss strengths and then growth areas for each of the employee's goals and/or competencies. Recognize and reinforce achievements.

   - This was quite an achievement, your hard work was appreciated. Sometimes ...works best with that type of project, we have some training available, would you be willing to try it? Use a SWOT Analysis or other visual tool.

5. Express criticism directly and constructively. Discuss problem areas. Emphasize two or three priority areas where improvement is most necessary. Describe how these changes could have greater impact on the employee, team, customer, manager, or business.

   - I understand your thought process, we still need to see these areas perform at a higher level. Your work connects back to several other departments and we can help you hone this skill a bit more, it will end up saving time later in the process, which would be a huge help.

6. Seek the employee's opinion on ways they can improve in growth areas.

   - I would love to hear some about how you would like to see this improve, how do you typically approach adding more learning onto a skill?

7. Ask the employee how you can help them improve in these growth areas.

   - What resources, training or support can I offer you during this process?

8. Stay focused on the specifics of the process.

9. End on an upbeat note. Thank the employee for the contribution to the business.

10. Set a later time to discuss unrelated issues that arise and goals for the next period.

Providing Effective Feedback

Choose the right time.
The difference between criticism and advice is a difference in timing. Most criticism can be reframed as advice before the desired performance is necessary. Advice improves performance and the relationship when the manager provides direction, structure, and advice before a task is required, rather than after.

Maintain the Relationship
Feedback should build relationships, not destroy them. Avoid blaming or emotive language. Ask yourself what the employee will get out of the information.
Try writing examples of a critical and an effective sentence of feedback.

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Address the Behavior
Focus on behavior the receiver can do something about, and make your feedback specific as related to behavior.
Avoid labels and judgments by describing rather than evaluating behavior. Also define the impact of the behavior on you, the unit, the team, and the company.

Analyze Your Word Choices
The type of language you use as you coach or counsel is very important, as it portrays your attitude towards the employee and the situation. You want to be relaxed and friendly. Think of it as a conversation, not simply talking to the employee. What are some words you want to use more?

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What words do you want to stop using?

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Stay Focused
When feedback is mixed, the impact is diluted. The employee ends up confused and not knowing what to do. He may not leave the discussion with a clear understanding of what to do differently.
What type of feedback are you giving or receiving?

- Silence
- Criticism (negative)
- Advice
- Reinforcement (positive)

Check for Understanding
Ask open-ended questions to determine how well the employee has understood you. At the same time, be sure that you understand your employee. Say things like, "So what you're saying is?" or "…. seems to be the trouble. Is that correct?" Be specific, and solicit feedback from your employee rather than always imposing it.
How do you prefer to be asked for understanding?

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Potential Pitfalls in Coaching

The following are all pitfalls involved in conducting a coaching session. Which pitfalls have you noticed in yourself as you've conducted coaching sessions? Notice which pitfalls you checked, and any others you may have discovered, and make an extra effort to avoid these as you coach your employees.

Potential Pitfalls	Have I done this?	Often?	How can I avoid it in the future?
Exhibiting personal bias toward the employee or problem			
Being inflexible about possible solutions			
Losing control due to the employee's hostile reaction			
Becoming defensive and hostile when questioned for specific examples			
Not soliciting the employee's suggestions or solutions			
Not listening to the employee's view of the problem			
Failing to document evolving performance problems			
Not holding the employee accountable in follow-up meetings			
Failing to reinforce improved performance			
Empathy Pitfalls			
Having opinions about the employee's choices and judging the employee's decisions according to your own values			
Telling the employee what they should to do			
Downplaying the employee's problem or pain by using clichés			
Moving into a problem-solving mode from the start, rather than listening to the employee's feelings			
Identifying too strongly with the employee's problem or feelings, losing objectivity			
Rescuing the employee by taking the responsibility for making decisions away from them			

Empathizing with the employee can be a very sticky situation. You want to do it in the right way and be sincere about it. But remember, there are certain pitfalls you should avoid as you counsel an employee and empathize with them. Which traps have you noticed yourself fall into as you've conducted coaching meetings?

Month Two
Week Two:
Communication Strategies

For the majority of everyday, we are communicating with others. It is important to recognize how effective or ineffective that can be.
- **Understand communication and what it entails.**
- **Recognize your barriers to communication and how to navigate them.**
- **Adapt as you go depending on what the situation calls for.**

Week Two: Communication Strategies
It is important to make time for regular review of our communication style and strategies. It is very likely that we have fallen into a routine or developed a habit that could be working better for us. So, timely check ins keep us from getting complacent and losing important opportunities, to get our messages across well.

Also keep in mind that the more you review and understand your own communication, the better you will be able to coach employees to improve communication individually or as a group.

Training Objectives:
- ☐ **Understand what communication is**
- ☐ **Identify ways that communication can happen**
- ☐ **Identify barriers to communication and how to overcome them**
- ☐ **Develop non-verbal and paraverbal communication skills**
- ☐ **Use the STAR method to speak on the spot**
- ☐ **Listen actively and effectively**
- ☐ **Ask good questions**
- ☐ **Use appreciative inquiry as a communication tool**
- ☐ **Adeptly converse and network with others**
- ☐ **Identify and mitigate precipitating factors**
- ☐ **Establish common ground with others**
- ☐ **Use "I" messages**

What is Communication?

You may be familiar with the 4 main areas of communication, but ask yourself, "what results am I getting?" If you are not getting your messages across clearly, or often find yourself in conflict, it is worth reviewing your communication in these 4 main areas.

Our Messages are 55% Non Verbal, 38% Para Verbal and 7% Verbal. – The Mehrabian Study

Verbal

What words are you choosing?
Are they understood?
Do you tailor your words to individuals and groups?
Do you use jargon?

Paraverbal

How are you saying things?
What is your tone?
What is your volume?
How fast are you speaking?
Are these influenced by frustration/worry?

Non Verbal

What is your face doing while you are speaking?
What are you doing with your hands and arms?
What is your posture like?
Do you use hand gestures?

Written

Hand or electronically written communication.
What words are you choosing?
Does your writing look organized?
Are you over using jargon or familiar language?

STAR Acronym

It is a universally recognized communication technique designed to enable you to provide a meaningful and complete answer to questions asking for examples.

> **S** - Situation
> **T** - Task
> **A** - Action
> **R** - Result

S = Situation (Where, Who, When)

First, state what the situation is. Try to make this no longer than one sentence.
If you are having trouble, ask yourself, **"Where?", "Who?", and, "When?"**. This will provide a base for message so it can be clear and concise.

Example: "On Tuesday, I was in a director's meeting at the main plant."

T = Task (State the task)

Next, briefly state what your task was. Again, this should be no longer than one sentence.
Use the question, **"What?"** to frame your sentence, and add the **"Why?"** if appropriate.

Example: "I was asked to present last year's sales figures to the group."

A = Action (What resolved the problem?)

Now, state what you did to resolve the problem in one sentence.
Use the question, **"How?"** to frame this part of the statement. The Action part will provide a solid description and state the precise actions that will resolve any issues.

Example: "I pulled out my laptop, fired up PowerPoint, and presented my slide show."

R = Result (What was the result?)

Last, state what the result was. This will often use a combination of the six roots. Again, a precise short description of the results that come about from your previous steps will finish on a strong definite note.

Example: "Everyone was wowed by my prep work, and by our great figures!"

Consider where this technique might serve you or your employees?

- Process Review/Improvement
- Policy Confusion
- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

Where can you see yourself applying it?
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Common Barriers to Communication

There are many potential barriers to communication happening effectively. Some are more in our control than others, but we can certainly be aware of common issues and takes steps to minimize the disruption.

Language

Actually speaking a different language
Work jargon acting as a "different" language
Word choices
The use of "triggering" language
Tone

Cultural

Same words = different meanings
Not asking questions, less likely to identify misunderstandings
Preparation beforehand, being thoughtful about who you are talking to

Time and Place

Time zones
Convenient scheduling
Utilizing additional electronic tools to sync up
Time outside of the office
Time pressure

Other…

What types of confusion in communication do you see most often?
Where does it occur?
When does it occur?
Is there confusion over policy?

7 Ways to Listen Better

Hearing happens naturally. Generally our body does the work by interpreting the sounds that we hear into words. Listening, however, is far more difficult. Listening is the process of looking at the words and the other factors around the words, and then interpreting the entire message.

Let's start out slowly. Here are seven things that you can do to start becoming a better listener right now. Pick a few of them and write them in your action plan.

1. When you're listening, listen. Don't talk on the phone, text message, clean off your desk, or do anything else.

2. Avoid interruptions. If you think of something that needs to be done, make a mental or written note of it and forget about it until the conversation is over.

3. Aim to spend at least 90% of your time listening and less than 10% of your time talking.

4. When you do talk, make sure it's related to what the other person is saying. Questions to clarify, expand, and probe for more information will be key tools.

5. Do not offer advice unless the other person asks you for it. If you are not sure what they want, ask!

6. Make sure the physical environment is conducive to listening. Try to reduce noise and distractions. ("Would you mind stepping into my office where I can hear you better?" is a great line to use.) If possible, be seated comfortably. Be close enough to the person so that you can hear them, but not too close to make them uncomfortable.

7. If it is a conversation where you are required to take notes, try not to let the note-taking disturb the flow of the conversation. If you need a moment to catch up, choose an appropriate moment to ask for a break.

Probing Questions

In addition to the basic open and closed questions, there is also a toolbox of probing questions that we can use. These questions can be open or closed, but each type serves a specific purpose.

Types of Probing Questions	Define	Example
Clarification	By probing for clarification, you invite the other person to share more information so that you can fully understand their message. Clarification questions often look like this:	"Please tell me more about..." "What did you mean by..." "What does ... look like?" (Any of the five senses can be used here)
Completeness and Correctness	These types of questions can help you ensure you have the full, true story. Having all the facts, in turn, can protect you from assuming and jumping to conclusions, two fatal barriers to communication.	"What else happened after that?" "Did that end the ..."
Determining Relavance	This category will help you determine how or if a particular point is related to the conversation at hand. It can also help you get the speaker back on track from a tangent.	"How is that like..." "How does that relate to..."
Drilling Down	Use these types of questions to nail down vague statements. Use questions that get more details or information.	"Describe..." "What do you mean by...?" "Could you please give an example?"
Summarizing	These questions are framed more like a statement. They pull together all the relevant points. They can be used to confirm to the listener that you heard what was said, and to give them an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings. Be careful to avoid repeating the speaker's words back to them like a parrot. Remember, paraphrasing means repeating what you think the speaker said in your own words.	"So you picked out a product that wouldn't fit the mold and then had to go back and change the product?"

Month Two
Week Three:
Managing Disagreement

For this session, we explore managing disagreements in the workplace that have the potential to for a positive outcome, we are assuming that:

- **Disagreements have the potential for being productive.**
- **Strategies taught in this course can be applied to changes, not just disagreements.**
- **You desire a mutually beneficial resolution to disagreements.**
- **You are dealing with disagreements that have not escalated to a potentially violence place.**

Week Three: Managing Disagreement

Handling disagreement constructively is central to personal satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Improved skill at managing interpersonal differences will enrich your work, your relationships, and your career.

Understand the Principles and Styles- As you manage disagreement, keep in mind that there are certain underlying principles that honor the legitimate interests of all involved persons and ensure the most productive outcome.

1. Follow the guiding principles.
2. Support your position with a firm style.
3. Create equality with a neutral style.
4. Build trust with a flexible style.

Apply the Four-Phase Process- In this process you should anticipate disagreement before it boils into heated conflict, plan an appropriate strategy, prepare to set your strategy in motion, take action, and monitor the results.

5. Explore.
6. Plan.
7. Prepare
8. Implement

Refine your Skills - With the knowledge you now have, you could go on and manage disagreements quite constructively. At the same time, the styles and the process are only effective if you carry them out correctly. If you are going to manage a disagreement, do it well by refining your conflict resolution skills. Forgetting to refine your skills may be detrimental to the outcome of your discussion(s).

9. Apply the styles strategically.
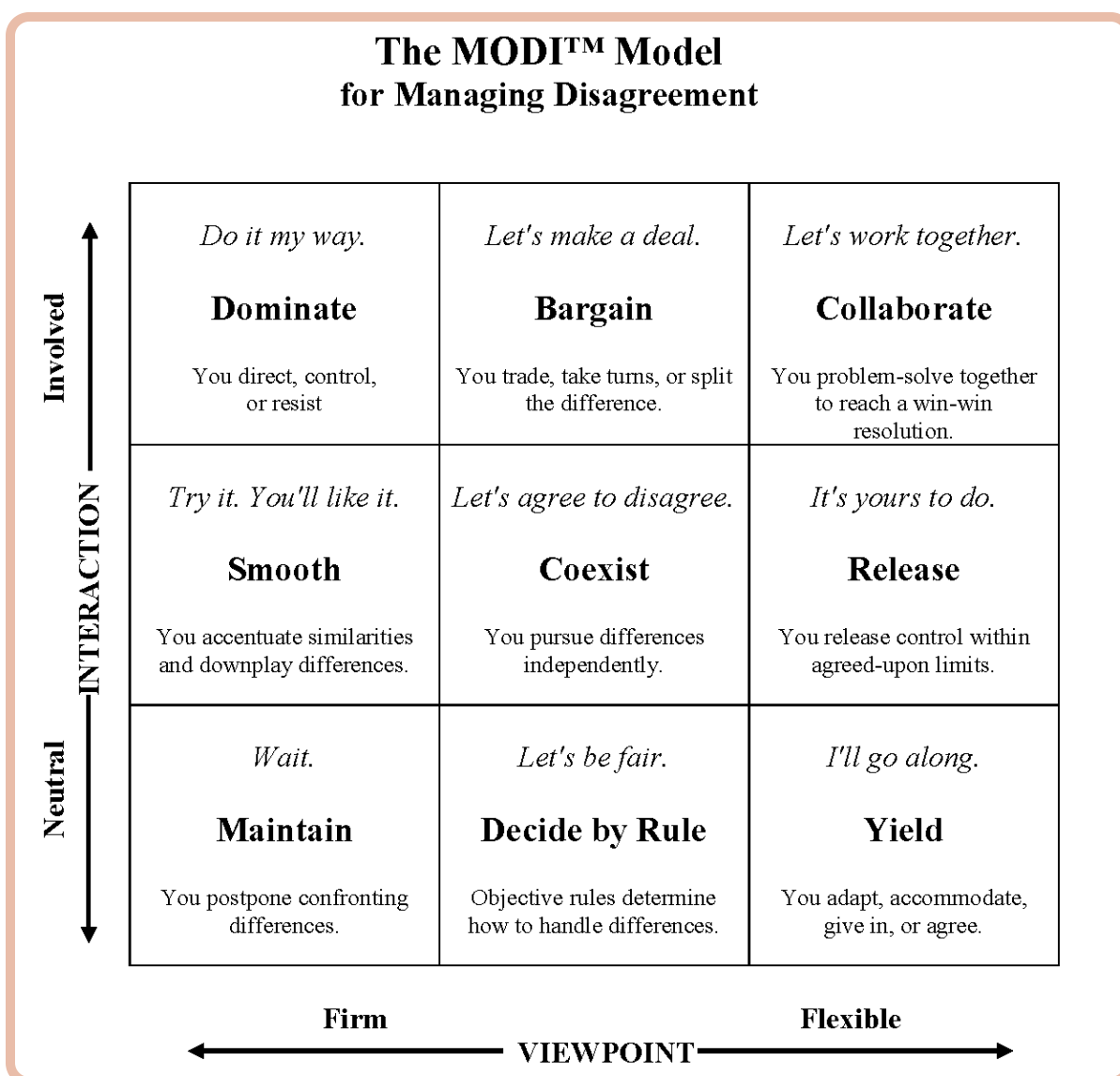10. Fine-tine your plan.

The MODI Model
for Managing Disagreement

When MODI was developed, executives, who were regarded by their co-workers as skillful in managing disagreement, were interviewed. They were asked: When your views on work-related issues differ from the views of others who also are importantly involved, how do you prepare to handle such situations?

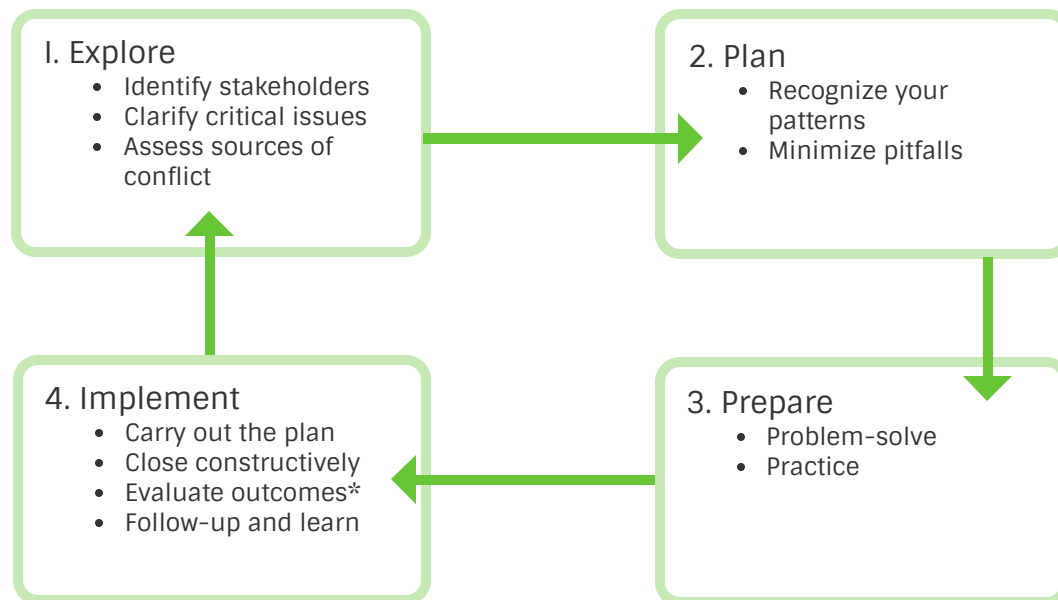During these interviews, two concerns emerged as themes:
- How flexible do I want to be as I express my viewpoint? and
- How involved do I want my interaction to be with others who disagree?

After the two dimensions-viewpoint flexibility and interaction intensity-were identified, a survey of the literature of management, political science, social psychology, negotiation, and organizational behavior revealed nine approaches that formed the model

The MODI™ Model
for Managing Disagreement

	Firm ← VIEWPOINT → Flexible		
Involved	*Do it my way.* **Dominate** You direct, control, or resist	*Let's make a deal.* **Bargain** You trade, take turns, or split the difference.	*Let's work together.* **Collaborate** You problem-solve together to reach a win-win resolution.
INTERACTION	*Try it. You'll like it.* **Smooth** You accentuate similarities and downplay differences.	*Let's agree to disagree.* **Coexist** You pursue differences independently.	*It's yours to do.* **Release** You release control within agreed-upon limits.
Neutral	*Wait.* **Maintain** You postpone confronting differences.	*Let's be fair.* **Decide by Rule** Objective rules determine how to handle differences.	*I'll go along.* **Yield** You adapt, accommodate, give in, or agree.

The Four-Phase Process

As valuable as the guiding principles and strategic approaches are, you also need a systematic process for dealing with disagreement. In this process, you should anticipate disagreement before it boils into heated conflict, plan an appropriate strategy, prepare to set your strategy in motion, take action, and monitor the results.

I. Explore
- Identify stakeholders
- Clarify critical issues
- Assess sources of conflict

2. Plan
- Recognize your patterns
- Minimize pitfalls

3. Prepare
- Problem-solve
- Practice

4. Implement
- Carry out the plan
- Close constructively
- Evaluate outcomes*
- Follow-up and learn

*Evaluation

Criteria	Question
1. Technical	Is the resolution you've come up with technically sound?
2. Economic	Is the solution more cost-effective than the old system?
3. Social-Psychological	Will resolution of differences help morale?
4. Ethical-Legal	Is the solution legal, moral, and fair?
5. Political	Will the resolution be supported by those in positions of power?

Recognize Your Patterns

The following assessment can be used to help you recognize which styles you prefer or tend to use. Rank each item in column A and each item in column B. Add the two rankings from each row to get a row total. Finally, insert these totals into the table on the next page to see which style corresponds to each row.

	A - Rank the following in order of what you are most likely to say during a disagreement. (9 is most likely, 1 is least likely.)	Ranking	B - Rank the following in order of what you are most likely to say during a disagreement. (9 is most likely, 1 is least likely.)	Ranking	Row Total
1	"Let's see, I will throw in the CD player if you buy this stereo system right now."		You complete a certain task for someone if they promise to do the same thing for you in the near future.		
2	"Well, let's just accept the fact that we're not going to agree on the best way to encourage employee safety."		You drop the disagreement and decide to each go your separate way, doing your own thing.		
3	"I know we can come up with something we both feel good about. Let's keep brainstorming until we can agree on what we should do to reward the employees."		You continue a meeting over multiple days because you are determined to find a resolution that all parties can support.		
4	"I'm sorry, Mary, but the company policy says 'no employee may carry vacation days over to the next year.'"		Your first inclination is to turn to the employee handbook or company policy to solve a problem.		
5	"Tanya, I've been doing this for a long time, so you really should do it the way I've learned works best. Now watch again."		You aren't content unless others agree that your idea is the one that will work best.		
6	"Well, let's just wait it out and see what happens."		You avoid taking action because you want to find out more information that might provide insight into the disagreement.		
7	"José, I see you think this would be a better way to handle payroll. Go ahead and do it your new way, and I'll check with you later to see how it went."		You decide that your new employee is fully capable of handling a certain task on his own, even if you'd do it differently. You leave it completely up to him and trust that he can handle it.		
8	"Let me prove to you that this new candy machine will, in fact, be great for your company. Just imagine the number of new customers it'll bring in, not to mention the extra revenue."		You avoid talking about the drawbacks of your ideas and focus solely on the benefits.		
9	"Well, I guess I don't have much of a choice, do I? Let's go ahead and do it your way."		You agree to conform to the other party's ideas and adapt or accommodate as necessary.		

Recognize Your Patterns

Insert your totals from the previous page into the table to see which style corresponds to each row.

Row	Total	Style
1		Bargain
2		Coexist
3		Collaborate
4		Decide by Rule
5		Dominate
6		Maintain
7		Release
8		Smooth
9		Yield

The row with the highest score indicates the style you prefer or have a tendency to use. It is also possible that two or more styles are used about the same.

Reflection Questions:
Do you notice any patterns?
Do you have a tendency to choose a firm approach (Maintain, Smooth, Dominate)?
A neutral approach (Decide by Rule, Coexist, Bargain)?
Or maybe a flexible approach (Yield, Release, Collaborate)?
Which styles received the lowest rankings?

Month Two
Week Four:
Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills, known as people skills, or soft skills, are related to the way you communicate and interact with others. In this course, we assume:

- Improved listening and verbal skills yield better results and relationships
- Understanding the use of facts and emotions in communication is a key element of management.
- You understand the potential power of your impact on those you interact with.

Week Four: Interpersonal Skills

As we review communication strategies for the workplace, it is important to remember how and where all these skills will come into play. Remember that you can practice interpersonal skills in the work environment and outside at the office. Stay open to understanding yourself, notice when you get the best results, and ask those you trust for feedback on you interpersonal skill sets.

Training Objectives:

- **Understand the difference between hearing and listening**
- **Know some ways to improve the verbal skills of asking questions and communicating with power.**
- **Understand what non-verbal communication is and how it can enhance interpersonal relationships.**
- **Identify the skills needed in starting a conversation, moving a conversation along, and progressing to higher levels of conversation.**
- **Identify ways of creating a powerful introduction, remembering names, and managing situations when you've forgotten someone's name.**
- **Understand how seeing the other side, building bridges, and giving in without giving up can improve skills in influencing other people.**
- **Understand how the use of facts and emotions can help bring people to your side.**
- **Identify ways of sharing one's opinions constructively.**
- **Learn tips in preparing for a negotiation, opening a negotiation, bargaining, and closing a negotiation.**
- **Learn tips in making an impact through powerful first impressions, situation assessment, and being zealous without being offensive.**

General Tips to Keep In Mind

Where would you like to see improvement?

Whether in yourself or in your employees, where do skills need to be practiced? How often do you reassess your effectiveness in the basics of communication and interpersonal skills? Are you open to hearing constructive feedback about your interpersonal skills?

Listening vs. Hearing – Most people can hear, but few can really listen.
Hearing is the biological process or perceiving sounds. Sound waves are picked up by our ears and delivered to our brains.

Listening goes beyond noticing and identifying sounds. Listening asks you to really understand what is being said, with deliberate attention and thoughtful consideration. Practice by:
- putting away distractions, allowing for continued eye contact, and engaging body language
- giving yourself permission to not think of your response

Asking Questions
Ask
- **Don't be afraid to ask**

Ask open ended questions
- What about today's presentation did you find most engaging?

Ask purposeful questions
- Noting our purpose helps us better frame the message.

Communicating with Power
Stick to the point
- Be concise, lose filler words, get the main issue across.

Tailor your communication
- Note your phrasing and what language choice is most apt for the situation.

Emphasize key ideas
- Know what your key points are in advance and how you will memorably get them across.

It's How You Say It
Tone of voice
- use of changing pitch to convey a message

Stress and Emphasis
- Changing which words or syllables you put emphasis on can change its meaning.

Pace and Rhythm
- The speed of speech and the appropriate use of pauses can affect the clarity and effectiveness

Volume
- Ability to vary how loudly and softly you speak

Pronunciation and Enunciation

Body Language
Observe yourself to see what you do. Look in a mirror or record yourself speaking. Ask friends and peers for feedback.
- **Eye contact / attention**
- **Facial expressions**
- **Hand movements**
- **Posture**
- **Emotion associated movements**
- **Physical contact / closeness**

Practice, practice, practice.

SWEAP
Connections

Starting a Conversation

Many people are interested in initiating friendships and productive business networks, but they don't know how to start. Indeed, going up to a stranger and making an introduction can be incredibly anxiety-provoking for some people. The same goes with finding something to talk about with someone you already know, but are not familiar with.

Area	Think About...	Tip
Understand what holds you back	Is it shyness? Fear of rejection? Difficulty in dealing with persons in authority? Awareness can help you manage your anxieties better, and give you more control over how you handle yourself during social situations.	Ask yourself those questions and think through what information or pre-planning would make you more comfortable.
Know what you have to offer	It starts with a sincere belief that you have something to contribute to a discussion, and that people would find it a pleasant experience to get to know you. If you have this self-assurance, you can be more at ease and more natural around other people.	Remind yourself of the positive qualities you bring to a room or conversation. Take deep breaths and make positive statements out loud.
Be interested about people	Genuine curiosity and openness makes starting a conversation less threatening; it grants incentive to approach people.	Challenge yourself to learn a new fact about someone you speak to each day or at each event.
Cultivate the attitude that meeting people is an enriching experience	Many find that you can actually learn a lot about yourself, about life, and about various subject matters, just by simply engaging in constant conversation.	Set the tone before you go. Tell yourself you will have a good time, you will learn and you will do well.
Create an arsenal of conversation starters	The first few tries can feel awkward. While you're still practicing, you can use some language you are comfortable with.	Jot down your favorite things to share about yourself, questions you like to ask others, other relevant information for the time.
Introduce yourself	The most straightforward way to start a conversation is to offer your name and your hand. You're sending the other person an invitation into conversation. If you can make the introduction with a smile, better.	Practice your greeting in a mirror, on a recording, or with a peer to get a sense of how you come across.
Comment on something in your immediate surroundings.	Things that you both can relate with are good conversation starters, as long as it does not alienate anyone.	Maybe the location, or the event you both are attending. Example: "It's really crowded tonight, isn't it?"
Comment on something the other person or people would find interesting.	Find alternate options for connection with the person as you learn about them and their interests.	If you're talking with someone interested in music, you may mention an upcoming show you heard about. Example: "I just heard that they are considering hosting Riverfest again this year."
Relax.	"Be yourself" is generally good advice for handling social situations. Conversations are more comfortable and engaging if participants simply relax, and let their personalities do the talking.	Practice deep breathing, mindfulness or other calming techniques as you prepare. Don't pressure yourself with certain expectations, just learn about you.

Disagreeing Constructively

There is nothing wrong with disagreement. No two people are completely similar therefore it's inevitable that they would disagree on at least one issue. There's also nothing wrong in having a position and defending it.   To make the most of a disagreement, you have to keep it constructive. The following are some of the elements of a constructive disagreement:

Solution-Focus

The disagreement aims to find a workable compromise at the end of the discussion.

Mutual Respect

Even if the two parties do not agree with one another, courtesy is always a priority.

Win-Win Solution

Constructive disagreement is not geared towards getting the "one-up" on the other person. The premium is always on finding a solution that has benefits for both parties.

Reasonable Concessions

More often than not, a win-win solution means you won't get your way completely. Some degree of sacrifice is necessary to meet the other person halfway. In constructive disagreement, parties are open to making reasonable concessions for the negotiation to move forward.

Learning-Focused

Parties in constructive disagreement see conflicts as opportunities to get feedback on how well a system works, so that necessary changes can be made. They also see it as a challenge to be flexible and creative in coming up with solutions for everyone's gain.

Accepting Criticism Positively

Many people do not give criticism in a tactful manner. Nevertheless, you should accept criticism so you can learn from your mistakes..

Criticism can make people feel incompetent, angry and just plain awful. How do you, personally, respond to criticism? Do you make excuses or lash back with criticism?

1. **Anticipate.** Accept the fact that everyone makes mistakes and that you'll probably be criticized for yours. That way, criticism won't come as a surprise.

2. **Ask questions**. Many times, people who criticize are letting off steam and may be exaggerating the problem. This is especially true when the criticism contains the words "always" and "never." Therefore, it's important to pinpoint the criticism by asking questions like these: "What part of the report didn't you like?" "What aspect of my attitude makes life at work difficult for you? Could you give me an example?" Asking questions accomplishes two things: It gives you specific information on how you can improve, and it teaches people they'll have to be specific when they criticize you.

3. **Agree with something**. When faced with criticism, most people focus on the part of the negative feedback that may not be true and ignore the rest. This doesn't solve any problems, and you don't learn anything. When you agree with one part of the criticism, you become open to learning. An easy way to agree is to say something like this: "You might be right; my report doesn't have all the details." You don't have to agree with everything; even agreeing with one small aspect of the criticism will create an atmosphere of teamwork, The focus then can become how you'll work together to solve a problem, which will lessen your feeling of being attacked.

4. **Analyze**. Finally, take a break and evaluate what you've heard. You need time to process the information, determine if it's a valid criticism and decide what you'll do to solve the problem or correct the mistake. If this is a complaint you've heard repeatedly, you should think about what you can learn from the situation so it doesn't happen again.

Recognize the benefits of having a plan for accepting criticism. As a supervisor, you must be approachable and able to model this skill effectively. Think through how you react to criticism and come up with some planned phrases you can incorporate the next time you need to accept difficult feedback.

Managing Disagreement Checklist

Like any skill, you should regularly review how you are doing, for yourself and for your employees. Review this checklist and make notes to help you put your working knowledge immediately into action.

UNDERSTAND the Principles and Styles

- ☐ Preserve the dignity and respect of all stakeholders.
- ☐ Listen with empathy to others' views.
- ☐ Find common ground without forcing change.
- ☐ Honor diversity, including your own perspective.
- ☐ Convert styles to strategic approaches.
- ☐ Maintain to postpone confronting differences.
- ☐ Smooth to accentuate similarities and downplay differences.
- ☐ Dominate if you want to direct, control, or resist.
- ☐ Decide by rule to provide an objective way for handling differences.
- ☐ Coexist if you want to pursue differences independently.
- ☐ Bargain to trade, take turns, or split the difference.
- ☐ Yield if you can easily adapt, accommodate, give in, or agree.
- ☐ Release control within agreed-upon limits, allowing the other party to take over.
- ☐ Collaborate to problem-solve together to reach a win-win resolution.

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APPLY the Four-phase Process

- ☐ Identify the stakeholders affected by the disagreement and/or its resolution.
- ☐ Clarify the critical issues involved in the disagreement.
- ☐ Assess the different sources of conflict.
- ☐ Recognize patterns you typically fall into when managing disagreement.
- ☐ Minimize pitfalls, and be open to using a variety of strategic approaches.
- ☐ Problem-solve the situation, and choose an appropriate strategic approach.
- ☐ Practice different strategic approaches using role-play.
- ☐ Carry out the plan for solving the conflict.
- ☐ Close the discussion constructively.
- ☐ Evaluate the outcomes of your resolution.
- ☐ Follow-up and learn.

REFINE Your Skills

- ☐ Avoid combining strategies that lead to deadlock.
- ☐ Utilize strategies that break deadlocks.
- ☐ Build implementation skills when collaborating and bargaining.
- ☐ Blend strategic approaches that work together well.

Month Two
Week Four:
Providing Effective Feedback

This module will be helpful in improving both formal and informal feedback activities already in practice, assuming that:

- You understand that feedback is important and you want to improve your skill.
- You have a desire to use feedback as a motivating, learning opportunity.
- Feedback should be a give-and-take relationship.

Week Four: Providing Effective Feedback

Feedback is a process by which effective performance is reinforced and less-than-desirable performance is corrected. In general, feedback as a leadership tool is under-appreciated and underutilized. When applied appropriately, it's a critical skill that can greatly enhance both performance and morale within an organization.

Appreciate the Value of Feedback- A critical aspect of your role as a leader is to provide feedback to the employees who work with you and for you. Many leaders underestimate feedback's value and the power it has to build positive attitudes and improve performance.

1. Understand the role of feedback.
2. Be sensitive to your position.
3. Acknowledge the core intent.

Apply the Right Techniques - Think about the feedback that you received, the coaching situations, the emotional connections, and the communication spoken and unspoken that occurred between you. What do you want to bring to your feedback?

4. Develop supportive relationships.
5. Use specific communication skills.
6. Use descriptive feedback.

Foster a Nurturing Climate - Developing a nurturing climate for feedback takes just as much careful and personal attention as tending to a garden. It may take some time to become comfortable living and working in an open, multidirectional feedback environment.

7. Explore the learning opportunities.
8. Convey improvement ideas.
9. Check for understanding.
10. Continue the feedback.

The Feedback Cycle

Feedback is a continuous cycle that you are participating in at all times. Whether you are consciously and actively giving or receiving feedback, in any given moment, your non-verbal behavior and process of communication is sending messages in the background. Which of these pieces of the cycle are you least active in?

Feedback Cycle

Reinforce the Feedback

Welcome - Receive

Clarify and Restate

Give Feedback

Check Understanding
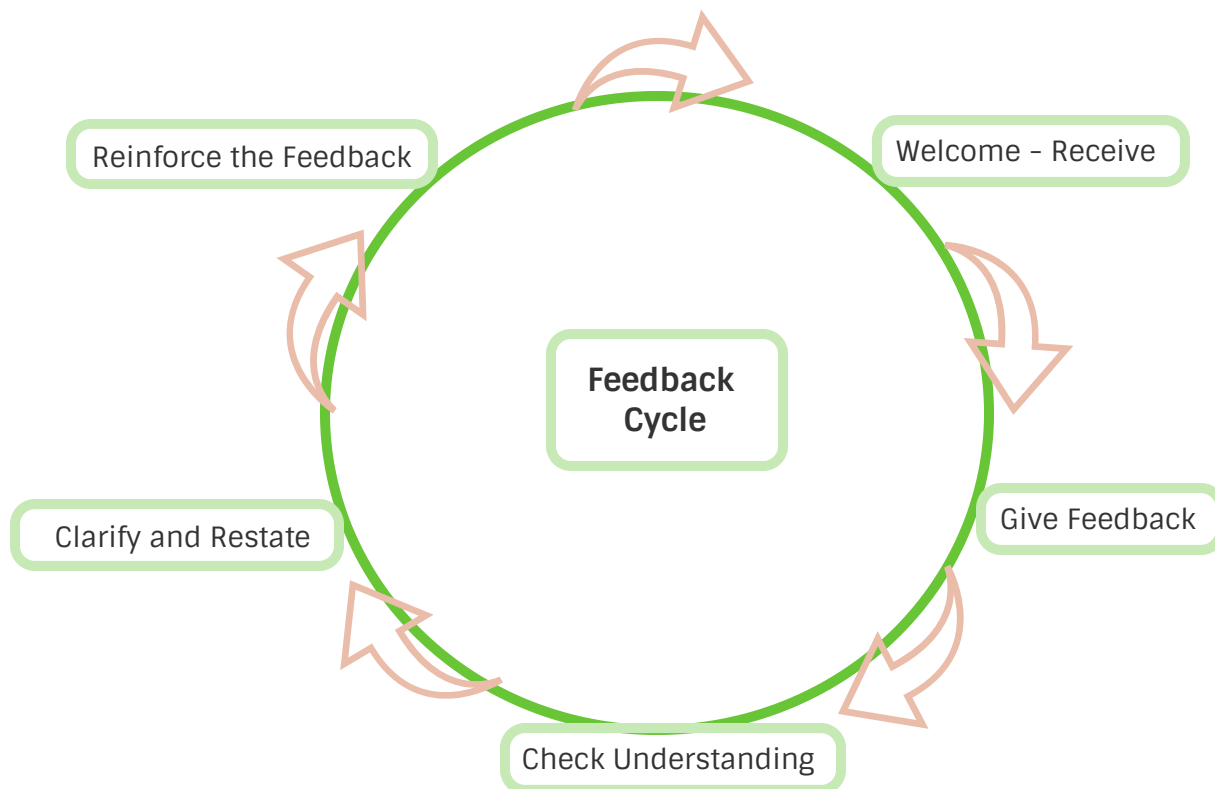
Take a moment before each feedback session to focus on the goals of the feedback. Validate and recognize each of these dynamics before starting the feedback session and ask yourself the following questions.
Question
What is my present emotion?
What is the long-term goal I want to achieve by giving this feedback?
What is the vision of the organization? How is my feedback going to help this individual reach that goal?
What behavior am I trying to correct or promote?
What assumptions about the individual am I bringing to the meeting?
Am I reacting to an accurate perception of this individual?

Psychological Barriers

Psychological Barriers can make the feedback relationship dysfunctional. These barriers can be from either party and include:

Psychological Barriers	What it Means	How to Overcome It	Supports Needed
Preconceived ideas about the other person or the action expected	Our communication with others is often based on our experience with the person or the situation. Meaning, we may begin with assumptions and expectations that aren't necessarily accurate.	**Patience is best used in this case. Hold off making judgements until you have heard the complete request. Most of our preconceived judgements are usually changed over time.**	
Emotional blocks	Anger, hostility, sadness, happiness, and depression are all emotional blocks that can get in the way of constructive feedback.	**Wait until your emotional distraction subsides. Time is your best ally in this situation. If you can't wait, take a deep breath, count to ten, then focus on the present moment.**	
Past experiences	Sometimes there have been events that happened between the parties involved that took place before the feedback relationship began. These events often determine the tone of the feedback relationship.	**This can have devastating consequences in the feedback process. This is probably a time when a different person should give the feedback. If that cannot be done, focus on the problem(s) at hand and shelve the other issues. This is a sign of professionalism and dedication to the task.**	
Preoccupation	Do you find that your mind wanders? Are you tired, day dreaming, distracted or under stress?	**Wait. Postpone your feedback until you can give it your complete, undivided attention. Without focused attention, you are sending a very negative message. You may appear to be nonchalant and aloof, and your message will fall on deaf ears.**	
Hidden agendas	A need or desire that has not been expressed openly or discerned by either party is a hidden agenda.	**Talk about it. Get the hidden agenda out in the open. There is nothing wrong with having agendas, but when agendas are hidden and become subversive, they do the most harm and distort feedback.**	
Authority and power	In some cases, when the power gap between the two parties is too wide, feedback is not often welcome or encouraged.	**Ask someone else—closer in power structure—to give the feedback. It will likely be heeded, and be less intimidating, if the receiver acknowledges him or her as a valid delivery person.**	

Remember: The more stressful the situation, the less communication that is taking place. By eliminating psychological barriers, you CAN reduce the stress.

Questions and Phrases that Solicit Responses

When providing feedback, you should ask the receiver to respond to the information you have conveyed. How this is accomplished is important; however, you do not want to generate an argument or create defensiveness. Whether your feedback is positive and reinforcing, or constructive and corrective, you should ask questions such as:

What do you think?

How do you feel about what I have told you?

Can you give me any more information about how you managed to do this?

Is there anything I need to understand? Have I misunderstood anything?

As you move through the feedback cycle, it is important to think about the types of questions and phrases you will use in advance. You want to have a variety of engaging, appropriate, open ended options to solicit helpful responses from peers and employees. Consider some of the following, circle the ones you can see yourself using most.

Tell me about…	Give me some ideas about…
What would you do in this case…?	If this happens again, what should be done…?
How would you have handled this…?	Do you think this is the way to go…?
When did this happen before…	Send me some new thoughts about this…
What changes do you see coming…?	Why wasn't this done in the past…?
How could it be improved…?	How are you feeling about this…?
Who would you ask about this…?	Write down some ideas for me…
Where should I go with this…?	Think about a new way to solve this…

Feedback Success Model Checklist

Take a moment to think about how you give AND receive feedback, read through the checklists below to help decide what areas you could improve on.

When giving feedback I...
- ☐ Discuss what I heard and observed.
- ☐ Make my feedback specific.
- ☐ Keep it focused and relevant.
- ☐ Do not use judgmental "you" statements.
- ☐ Make sure the feedback can be accomplished.
- ☐ State the specific actions I expect to take place.
- ☐ Set aside enough time to hear the responses.
- ☐ Give feedback with a supportive caring attitude.
- ☐ Reinforce positive behavior with praise.
- ☐ Gather information through open-ended questioning.
- ☐ Balance positive and negative feedback.

When receiving feedback I. . .
- ☐ Ask for and encourage continuous feedback.
- ☐ Receive it graciously.
- ☐ Thank the person for the feedback.
- ☐ Keep an open mind and stay impartial.
- ☐ Ask for clarification and further suggestions.
- ☐ Don't react with anger or hostility.
- ☐ Listen and observe carefully.
- ☐ Indicate how I will respond to the feedback, and determine what action I will take.

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