

Communication Skills

We tailor all our courses to reflect the needs of the delegates on the day. The course content may include many of the exercises listed below, and any additional material that the trainers feel is relevant.

Introduction

We will share Impact Factory's underlying principles, how we work and explain how we intend everyone gets the most value out of the communication skills course.

Everything we do is participative and interactive. There will be work in pairs, small group work, games, processes and exercises designed to stimulate, challenge and develop people's knowledge and skills. They are also fun!

What else would you like out of a communications skills course? A chance for our delegates to add anything they would like from the programme. The Communication Skills Course will be adapted and changed as we go along to better fit their needs.

Communications dynamic - how it works

This is an introduction to the dynamics of face-to-face communication skills - looking at what affects the participants and how they might take more charge of situations.

It gives an overview of how communication works at its best, identifying where it can go wrong. We 'unpick' all the elements that go into effective communication and explain to people how they can be more in charge of the communication dynamic.

The day will be based around this key aim, with delegates being given the opportunity to practice and experience each section.

Vocal Tone and Communication

We have a range of exercises which experiment with the effects of variations of tone.

Each person will have the chance to identify their usual default style and also consider how their tone affects the way that they may be perceived.

From there we will practice ways to turn up and down different aspects of our natural communications style. In unpicking how to achieve the tone you choose, participants can see how they can do so consistently.

How Words Communicate

We have fun looking at ways to deliberately mangle our message and bury its meaning under waffle, padding and jargon. The premise being that if we know how to make our communications worse, we can also see how to make them clearer.

From here, we may get to share one of our best communication skills exercises which offers everyone a failsafe way to deliver a clear key message.

Impact of Body Language on Communication

We have a variety of exercises to demonstrate the power and control the listener has, through body language and attitude. Making ourselves consciously aware of our options means that we can remain on a front foot when it comes to communicating effectively. From looking at the effect of our listening skills, to creating the first and the lasting impression we choose, we will offer a range of communications tools and techniques that can really make a difference.

What does your History have to do with Communication Skills?

What makes us who we are inside and outside of work? What is our history or our form with particular sorts of people, particular subjects in particular scenarios?

We will chew over those challenging situations and interactions that trip us up. Over the course of the communication skills day, we will practice some do-able and positive approaches which may help us next time. In particular, we will look at how to ensure that our history only gets in the way if we want it to.

We will be looking for those small changes to our words, tone and body language that might make a big difference next time.

How Head Stuff affects Communication Skills

What makes us who we are inside and outside of work and how does that impact on the sense we make of others and they of us? When was the last time you got something wrong? When were you last misunderstood?

Mis-communication seems to happen most when we base what we do on assumptions, perceptions and misconceptions rather than upon objective fact. After exploring why and how it happens, we will look at what you can do about it.

Communication by Eye Contact

One of our most vital communication skills is eye contact and its effect on the communications dynamic. Back to assumptions again, but what do we make of those who avoid looking at us directly or else those who seem to hold our gaze too long?

We will discover what happens when we deny or intensify our eye contact in difficult communications. Our intention will be to uncover what the most effective ways might be to approach the situation next time.

What does the Environment Communicate?

Being aware that non-verbal factors may either help or hinder effective communication is vitally important. How far do those more subtle or not so subtle details swing things one way or the other?

As well as the physical environment generally and the effect of rearranging the furniture or opening a window, we will consider those other things that can make a difference. How does a family photo, symbols of status or the provision of simple or expensive refreshments affect a meeting, an interview or a difficult interaction?

In reality, there may be things about the environment that we can't necessarily change, like the choice of space, the colour of the walls or the temperature. During the communication skills course, we'll play with the room and our participants will experience the effects of the physical changes they make.

Of equal importance is the effect of breaking natural physical boundaries, we will investigate how they too affect our communication skills far more than we might realise.

Geography and Communication

What is the effect of being on your territory or theirs? We will look at how the familiarity of a place and where we are geographically can dictate who dances to whose tune. Certainly culture, in its widest sense, influences how our behaviour and words are perceived.

Being attentive to what is likely to cause a ripple means that we can be deliberate in our intentions. It's obvious, but successful communicators are sensitive to the culture and geography of a place and can predict the effect of their words and behaviour.

Communication Cycle

We will invite everyone to visualise how they believe communication works... or doesn't!

In sharing our visions we will also see how complicated it all is and justify why we need to spend so long unpicking how it works. Remember we believe that mis-communication is normal for that very reason, its complex.

Communication Skills and Timing

How does it help or hinder us? When are the best and worst times for you? What about for those you want to speak with?

We will have some fun looking at what happens when we don't consider if it's the right time to have that conversation.

Difficult Communication Situations

Throughout the day participants will have applied some of our exercises to their real-life experiences. Where we have extra time we might also look to recreate communications when they were unsatisfied with the outcome.

The idea is that we will draw upon any of the tools and techniques covered over the course of the day.

Working to Your Communication Strengths

Everyone will give a brief description of what they already do that they know works about them. They will then have a chance to reflect upon how others see them through the feedback of others.

Communication Skills Course Support

The final exercise of the Communication Skills Course is for each delegate to devise a personal Plan of Action, identifying their personal take-out of the programme, where they know they will practise and areas for their development.

Finally, we have people identify what will stop them putting this into practise and what support they need to help themselves put the communication skills coursework into practise.

They also have access to a course web page containing

- Handouts used during the course
- New supportive material
- Impact Factory PDF documents
- Recommended reading
- Links to our favourite videos
- Photos of the day