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AIU Interpersonal Skills

An in-depth glimpse into the various facet of the use of Interpersonal Skills in an organization, everyday one on one communication, overall basic setting and communication environment.

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### *Interpersonal Skills*

Before any definition can be formulated there is always an underlying mystery concerning the connotation of any particular word or phrase. The understanding for the comprehension of the meaning of interpersonal skills is no different. What do interpersonal skills mean? Or how do we as individuals apply it to our every day life? Through out this paper I will explore the fundamental uses and the impact of this particular skill and emphasize on its importance in our daily activities.

*Wikipedia* an online dictionary explains the meaning of Interpersonal Skills as follows; **Interpersonal skills** “refer to mental and communicative algorithms applied during social communications and interactions in order to reach certain effects or results. The term 'interpersonal skills' is used often in business contexts to refer to the measure of a person's ability to operate within business organizations through social communication and interactions. As an illustration, it is generally understood that communicating respect for other people or professionals within the workplace will enable one to reduce conflict and increase participation or assistance in obtaining information or completing tasks.”

“For instance, in order to interrupt someone that is currently preoccupied with a task in order to obtain information needed immediately, it is recommended that a professional utilize a deferential approach with language such as, "Excuse me, are you busy? I have an urgent matter to discuss with you if you have the time at the moment." This allows the receiving professional to make their own judgment regarding the importance of their current task versus entering into a discussion with their colleague. While it is generally understood that interrupting someone with an "urgent" request will often take priority, allowing the receiver of the message to

independently judges the request and agrees to further interaction will likely result in a higher quality interaction. Following these kinds of heuristics to achieve better professional results generally results in a professional in being ranked as one with 'Good Interpersonal Skills'. Often these evaluations occur in formal and informal settings.”

Individuals interacting with each other basically sum up the whole aspect of interpersonal skills as one on one communication. As time goes by we tend to improve our interpersonal skills and the manner in which we interact with our peers. Certain individuals in our social circle has some how managed to master the art of communication. These individuals tend to connect with other people effortlessly while some of us struggle to form complete sentence. The truth is some individuals are simply gifted, or should I say blessed with natural “people skills”, and the gift of gab. They tend to maneuver their self into any social setting or environment and never seem to feel out of place.

**Figure 1.1: Depicts a couple and their relationship and employees communicating with each other in an organizational setting.**



The most successful relationships are the ones where the line of communication between each individual is at a point where it is easy to carry on a constructive conversation and be comfortable with that particular individual.



One of the articles that I read from **Impact Factory** titled Interpersonal Skills Training which allows me to gain more insight into interpersonal skills states as follows, “Strangely interpersonal skills are one of those things that you'll only really notice when someone doesn't have them! And you'll certainly notice it when yours have deserted you. That'll be the moments when you get wrong-footed, tongue-tied, or embarrassed. When you're in new or awkward situations or when you imagine that there are rules of behavior that everyone else seems to know but you. It is quite possible, with a little effort, for everyone to develop really effective interpersonal skills. You can learn how to deal with the feelings that arise in difficult situations instead of being overwhelmed by them. Nobody lives a feeling free life. Everyone has moments where they feel less than capable.”

There are different methods by which one can develop his/her interpersonal skills some of which includes as follows;

**Interpersonal Skills**

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Networking</b>
Mentoring	Monitoring	Self Confidence
Decision Making	Group work	Network building
Delegation	Decision Making	Effective Communication
Motivating Others	Collaboration	

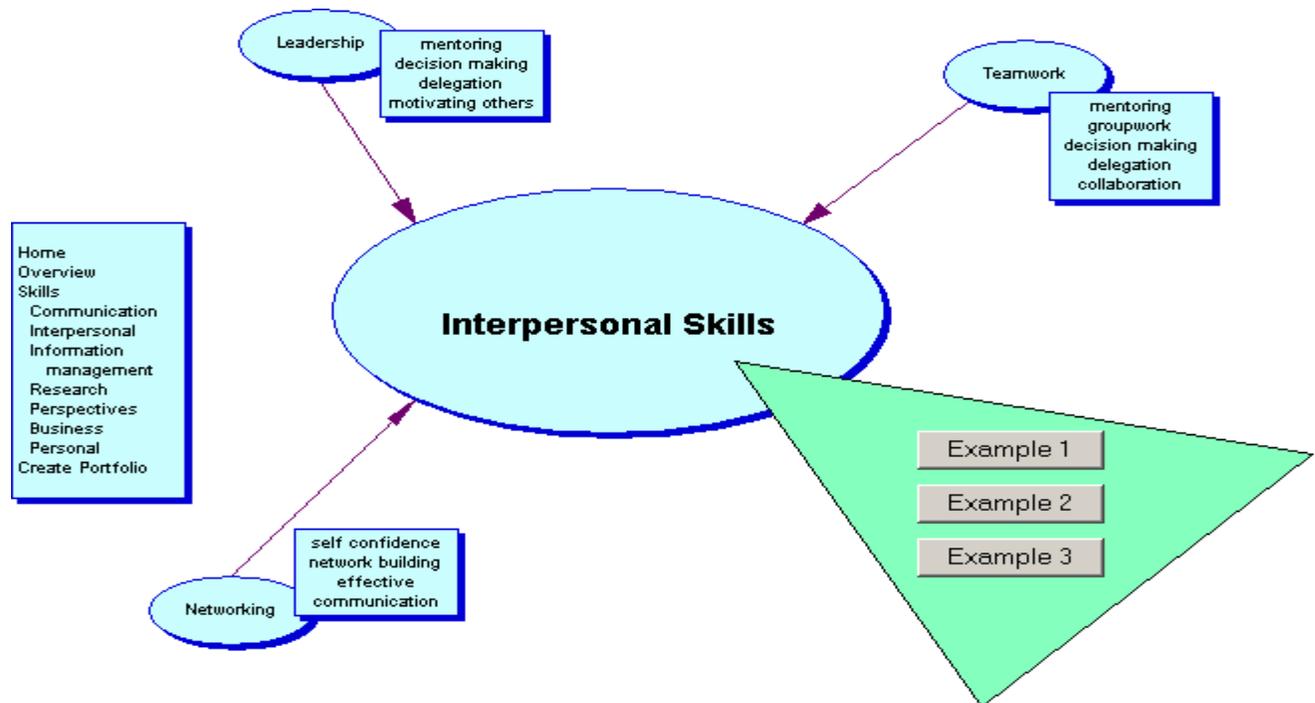
An article written by Life-Long Learning indicates as follows; “In reference to leadership, it’s the process of successfully influence the activities of a group towards the achievement of a common goal. A leader has the ability to influence others through qualities such as personal charisma, expertise, command of language, and the creation of mutual respect. As well as requiring strong Communication Skills and Personal Skills, leadership uses the Background skills of mentoring, decision making, delegation and motivating others.”

The second aspect is networking which is the “ability to actively seek, identify and create effective contacts with others, and to maintain those contacts for mutual benefit. In addition to strong Communication Skills and Personal Skills, networking uses the background skills of network building and motivating others.”

The third and final aspect involves Teamwork, “Teamwork involves working with others in a group towards a common goal. This requires cooperating with others, being responsive to others’, taking a collaborative approach to learning, and taking a responsibility for developing and achieving group goals. Teamwork uses the Back ground Skills of Collaboration, mentoring, decision making and delegation.”

**Figure 2.1: Depicts the scope of Interpersonal skills and the various components listed**

**above in details.**



An article published by *Learning point Associates* on the web note as follows,

“**Interpersonal skills** include the ability to read and manage the emotions, motivations, and behaviors of oneself and others during social interactions or in a social-interactive context.”

Although we discuss the use of interpersonal skills in an everyday environment, let's take a look at this skill type from another angle based on students and their standards of interaction. The authors of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* indicate as follows in reference to students who indicate strong signs of Interpersonal Skills;

**Students Who Have Interpersonal Skills:**

- ✚ Are aware of and able to manage their own emotions, strengths, and limits during both face-to-face and virtual interactions.

- ✚ Are able to manage their behavior during social interactions.
- ✚ Are able to align their goals to the goals of others during collaborative activities.
- ✚ Understand and positively manage the emotions of others in both face-to-face and virtual environments; empathize with others; are sensitive to the needs of others and to the forces that shape the way that others feel and behave; enhance the strengths and abilities of others.
- ✚ Manage conflict effectively by devising win-win solutions; constructively influence the behavior of others; use effective communication and persuasive strategies; listen well.

One of the most important elements in any leadership position is having the ability to communicate with your employees and subordinates. An effective manager would possess all the necessary skills required to manage properly, some of which would include interpersonal skills, technical skills and communication skills among many others. Most companies or business organizations have realized the high tech methods of communication and they are aware that with technology rapidly influencing their work place interaction among employees seems to be non-existent. The question is why you would reach over to talk to Becky when you can simply send her an email? Every aspect of business is becoming electronic and lines of communication are diminishing.

In the article entitled *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* the writers addressed certain aspects in relation to organizational environment and the impact of technology in reference to interpersonal skills.

***“Many have wondered how it happens that persons with high IQs don't always land the top***

*jobs. The answer often lies in interpersonal skills. In fact, emotional intelligence—the capacity to manage emotions well—is twice as important to success in the workplace as IQ and expertise (Goleman, 1998). The teamwork necessitated by the complexity of today's workplace has placed increased importance on a worker's interpersonal skills. Such teaming often brings together individuals from diverse groups who may not share common norms, values, or vocabularies, but who do offer unique expertise, insights, and perspectives. Interpersonal skills in the Digital Age are somewhat more complex than they have been in the past. E-mail, voice mail, audio conferencing and videoconferencing, and the myriad of other technologies that enable individuals to communicate with each other not only increase the ways in which individuals can interact, but also require a heightened sensitivity to the nuances of interpersonal interactions. This idea is particularly true in the worlds of virtual learning and virtual communication, where one cannot yet use hand gestures, facial expressions, or body language to fully express ideas. The challenge to students is to perfect interpersonal skills not only in face-to-face interactions but in virtual interactions as well.”*

**Figure 3.1:** Depicts an example of how Organizations try to enhance their employees People Skills.



Having Interpersonal Skills is a fundamental part of any business establishment. Many establishments try their best to improve their employee's communication skills some of them are tremendously successful while other attempts failed miserably. This article quoted in the next few lines were taken from **Impact Factory** and it describes certain scenarios in Interpersonal skills and the whole aspect of communication and Miss-communication:

*“Any work that tries to help people become better communicators, has to start from the view that miscommunication is normal. Just using the spoken word, look at the process that we go through to pass a simple idea from one person to another. First I have a thought, which I frame using my view of the world. I translate that thought into language; I then translate that language into a series of sound waves using my vocal cords.*

*These sound waves travel through the air until they hit your eardrum, you then translate those sounds into recognizable symbols (words) which you interpret using a similar, but not identical language into an idea which you frame using your view of the world. That it happens at all is a miracle. That it often happens so poorly is hardly surprising. So you see if we start with the idea that miss-communication is normal, and then we stand a far greater chance of making communication work.*

*The usual case is that most people assume that they make themselves clear and are easy to understand so if there's a problem, it's with the other guy, not us. Sort of like driving a car: we're always the good, safe, careful driver; it's the other guy who's at fault. Given the fact that the act of communicating is such a complex procedure with all sorts of hidden traps to get you into trouble, it's rather a miracle that communication happens at all! Think of how many times you've said, or heard others say:*

*"But I thought you meant...." or*

*"I assumed you were talking about...."*

*or*

*"No, you've completely misunderstood what I was saying."*

*These little phrases come out of our mouths daily.*

*We're so used to saying them we don't think about the wider implications: that it sometimes requires really hard work to make ourselves clear and to get ourselves understood by others.*

*Even the words on this page: we're assuming that you're reading and interpreting them with the same meaning as they were written. We can't be completely sure of that though.*

*What we can do is to take responsibility for making our words as clear as possible.*

*Communicating when it really matters - with colleagues, at meetings, during disagreements, at negotiations - requires skill, thoughtfulness and an ability to take responsibility for others' understanding. Communication is not something that should be left to chance."*

Miss Communication can be damaging to any organization or any conversation held between two individuals. It's always wise to ask questions and be informed of the conversation being held around you as the listener and also the one who on most occasions is required to give a feedback.

**Figure 4.1** Depicts colleagues discussing certain aspects of business, notice that each of the individuals at the table is fixated at the person who seems to be speaking at the head of the table.

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**"Beasley, you're a good communicator,  
look down the table and make eye contact for me!"**

It has occurred to me that effective communication takes a lot of time and concentration. It is easy for anyone to carry on a conversation, but in the end it comes down to the person to whom they are addressing to channel the information in a proper manner so that the conversation makes sense to their ear.

Lately I have found myself hearing bits and pieces of information. There was a time when nothing would get past me, but lately I have been having problems in listening to what others have to say. I also find myself unable to have a constructive conversation with anyone; I would stutter or mumble things that I never caught myself doing before. I am aware that the less I communicate with my peers the less my interpersonal skills develop, and to be quite honest I need interpersonal skills that particular skill in my line of work.

Being a recruiter takes a lot of work, being on the phone on a continuous basis is just part of my job. The main aspect of my job is explaining to potential students the benefits that my institution offer and why it would be beneficial for them to enroll at my college. However; with the absence of interpersonal skills I would have a difficult time in engaging my potential

students in conversation and keep them interested in what we have to offer. Communication takes hard work and dedication and when executed correctly it could make a whole lot of difference in the sense of pass or fail or win or lose.

In an article written by *Dennis Rivers* titled “*The Seven Challenges*” he indicated the following, “Because conversations are the bringing together of both persons’ contributions, when you initiate a positive change in your way of talking and listening, you can single-handedly begin to change the quality of all your conversations. The actions described in this work-book are seven examples of “being the change you want to see” (a saying I recently saw attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, the great teacher of nonviolence).”

“A brief summary of each challenge is given in the paragraph that follows, along with some of the lifelong issues of personal development that are woven through each one.

- ❖ **Challenge 1: Listen more carefully and responsively.** Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don’t agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view.
- ❖ **Challenge 2: Explain your conversational intent and invite consent.** You can help your conversation when your partners cooperate with you and reduce possible misunderstandings by starting important conversations with a stated invitation to join you in the specific kind of conversation you want to have.
- ❖ **Challenge 3: Express yourself more clearly and completely.** Slow down and give your listeners more information about what you are expressing by using a wide range of “I-statements.” One way to help get more of your listener’s empathy is to express more of the five basic dimensions of your experience.

- ❖ **Challenge 4: Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests.** In order to get more cooperation from others, whenever possible ask for what you want by using specific, action-orientated, positive language rather than by using generalizations, Why's," "don'ts" or "somebody should's."
- ❖ **Challenge 5:** Ask questions more "open-ended" and more creatively. "Open-ended": In order to coordinate our life and work with the lives and work of other people, we all need to know more of what other people are feeling and thinking, wanting and planning.
- ❖ **Challenge 6: Express more appreciation.** To build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude. Because life continually requires us to attend to problems and breakdowns, it gets very easy to see in life only what is broken and needs fixing. But satisfying relationships requires us to notice and respond to what is delightful, excellent, enjoyable, to work well done, to food well cooked, e.t.c
- ❖ **Challenge 7: Make better communication an important part of your everyday life.** In order to have your new communication skills available in a wide variety of situations, you will need to practice them in as wide a variety of situations, as possible, until, like driving or bicycling, they become "second nature." The seventh challenge is to practice your evolving communication skills in everyday life, solving problems together, giving emotional support to the important people in your life, and enjoying how you are becoming a positive influence in your world.

With the whole aspect of team work in mind and cooperation's seem to be more involved in people working in teams there are many new developments in the field of improving the interpersonal skills among employees in a team setting format. Most people find it difficult to work in teams and others take pleasure in their day-to-day activity.

While doing research I stumbled across this article presented by Harvard Business school in which an article was done titled "[Leveraging your Team's interpersonal skills](#)" written by Butler and Waldrop that states the following, "Most *executives assume they know who their "people" are: They're the team players, the ones who know what's going on in their colleague's personal lives, the ones who can smooth over interpersonal conflicts. They're usually found in human resources or sales*".

Authors Butler and Waldrop also indicate that "there are four dimensions in relational work-because when you match employees' interests and skills to their responsibilities, everybody gains. The relational examples are as follows:

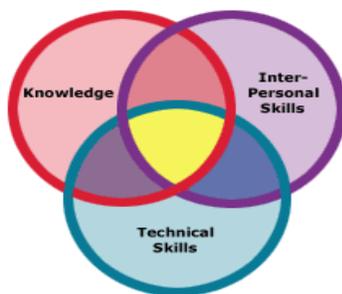
- ✚ **Influence:** Professionals who earn a high score in this dimension enjoy developing and extending their sphere of interpersonal influence. They take pleasure in persuasion, negotiation, and the power of holding valuable information and ideas. This dimension of relational work is all about changing the point of view or the behavior of others.
- ✚ **Interpersonal Facilitation:** This is the dimension many people think of when they think people person. Individuals with high scores, there are keenly attuned to the interpersonal aspects of a work situation. They intuitively focus on others'

experience and usually work quietly behind the scenes to keep their colleagues committed and engaged so that projects don't get derailed.

✚ **Relational Creativity**: At its core, this dimension is about forging connections with groups of people through visual and verbal imagery. This is the relational work being done when an advertising account team conceives of a campaign, when a marketing brand manager develops a strategy to reach a particular consumer segment, when a marketing brand manager develops a strategy to reach a particular consumer segment, when a speechwriter crafts the president's next address, and when a senior manager develops a motivational theme that will focus and inspire her employees.

✚ **Team Leadership**: Individuals who score high in this dimension need to see and interact with other people very frequently to feel satisfied. Conversely, the more time they spend in front of a computer screen, the worse they feel-and perform. Professionals with a high level of interest in team leadership love managing high-energy teams in busy service environments and enjoy working both with the team and with the customer. Their ideal job might be overseeing a busy resort or a retail store.

**Figures 4.1: Depicts the important factors of Interpersonal Skills.**



This particular exhibit indicates the different levels in interpersonal communication that are contributing factors that aide in the comprehension of how important this skill is to all levels of organizations, employees, and ordinary individuals.

**Interpersonal Skills**



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Interpersonal Skills will always be a fundamental aspect of our communication process. The different positions or levels that were in society dose not excuse us from utilizing this remarkable skill. Whether we are pastors, teachers, nurses, doctors or government official's we all need to understand how this particular skill can enhance our communication levels and improve our lives drastically.

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