

New Course Development  
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**Course Title: Basic Team Communication Skills for Project Management**

**New Course:** X      **Department:** Communication Studies

**Credit Hours:** 5      **Lecture Hours:** (52.5 hours)

Is this course required for a degree or certificate: No.

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce and work to enhance the communication skills necessary for team collaboration, leadership, and success in Project Management. Identification and practice of necessary individual and collaborative communication skills such as active listening and dialogue, creation of competent verbal and nonverbal messages, managing conflict, stakeholder coordination, and how these work together as project teams collaborate to successfully achieve their project goals.

Prerequisites: *Completion of ENG 090 with a grade of 2.0 or higher or placement by testing into ENG 100, Co-enrollment or completion of Project Management with grade of 2.0 or higher.*

**RESOURCES USED TO PREPARE THIS COURSE:**

**Material and concepts from:**

- *Communication Skills for Project Managers.* Campbell, M. (2009) American Management Association, New York, NY.
- *Communicating In Small Groups.* Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T. (2012) Allyn & Bacon/Pearson. Boston: MA.
- *Leading Project Team: The Basics of Project Management and Team Leadership.* Cobb, A. (2012) Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- *The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management Third Edition.* Verzuh, E. (2008) John Wiley & Sons Inc. Hoboken: NJ.
- *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* Schein, E. (2010) John Wiley & Sons Inc. Hoboken: NJ.
- *The Magic of Dialogue.* Yankelovich, D. (2001) Touchstone, New York: NY
- *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide* (1996). Cushner, K. and Brislin, R.W. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- *The Diversity Training Activity Book.* Lambert, J. & Myers, S. (2009). AMACOM, New York; NY.
- *Strategic Communication in Business and the Professions, D.O’Hair, Friedrich, G.W., & Dixon, L.D.* (2011). Allyn & Bacon/Pearson. Boston: MA.

## **TEXTBOOKS USED BY STUDENTS:**

Recommend instructor use of various chapters or materials from different texts or media using a Course Packet structure.

## **GENERAL COURSE GOAL:**

Introduce and enhance student communication skills for effective project team engagement.

## **COUSE OUTCOMES:**

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Think reflectively about their own personal communication behavior and the consequences in relationships with others on a team
2. Listen mindfully and provide feedback to another person in at least three ways during a conversation and document the conversation
3. Create an assertive message and use this during team discussion in problem solving
4. Demonstrate different types of dialogue strategies to build rapport and develop professional relationships
5. Describe differences between at least two cultural worldviews and communication behavior commonly demonstrated by persons socialized in these particular cultural worldviews
6. Identify different conflict styles
7. Identify the effects of different communication behaviors on team climate
8. Facilitate and document team meetings and team actions
9. List characteristics of effective problem solving teams
10. Identify barriers to team creativity and demonstrate knowledge of at least one technique for enhancing team creativity
11. Identify different styles of leadership that facilitate team effectiveness at different stages of team development
12. Work as a team to create and execute a presentation applying the appropriate rhetorical strategies for internal or external audience relevance
13. Effectively use presentation aids

## **POSSIBLE METHODS OF ASSESSMENT:**

Reflective essays or journals

Final Team Presentation

Quizzes

Reports

Critical Analysis Report of Team Dynamic

Demonstration

Role Plays

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION MAY INCLUDE:**

Lecture  
Case Studies-group work  
Experiential activities  
Media/Short Clips from films  
Guest Speakers  
Simulations

## **TOPICAL OUTLINE:**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *In the spaces below, develop instructional units and show the topics that support each unit. Note: For each topic, indicate which industry-derived skills are addressed by the topic. To do this you must first choose which skill set you are using. The choices are below. Please place an “x” by the skill set you will use. (Choose only one)*

X Energy Project/Program Management. The Section that this course primarily addresses is G (Communicate). Additional skills noted in sections C (Develop & Implement proposals) and A (Manage People) are addressed as a natural outcome of the development of skills in the topic areas covered. The code number for these skills are also noted. The skill “Multicultural Understanding” is only listed under “Educate & Train” although in the world we live in today the importance of being able to communicate across our differences is key for high performance team success.

**Unit 1:** (5 hours-one week) Intro to Class PM-A14;

- Review project management basics (The Process of Projects)
- Make argument for need to develop comm. skills: “People Sense”
- Review basic communication process

**Unit 2:** (10 hours- two weeks) Learning to Listen and Navigate Meaning PM-G7, PM-G3, PM-F6, PM-G6,

- Definition of Listening. Listening to stakeholders
- What is ‘dialogue’ and why do we need it?
- Verbal and Non verbal messages, Assertive Communication, Disconfirming/Confirming
- Listening actively and mindfully, paraphrasing, clarifying questions, dialogue strategies.
- Building rapport, Forgiveness

**Unit 3** (7.5 hours-1.5 weeks) Cultural Diversity-Cultural Literacy PM-D10, PM-D13, PM-A6, PM-A12

- What is “Cultural Literacy?”
- Shein: Worldviews, Values, Artifacts (communication behavior)
- Cultural expectations around Time, High/Low Context, Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism
- Organizational culture-Strategic Communication

**Unit 4** (5 hours-one week) Conflict in Project Management PM-A5, PM-A6, PM-G7, PM-G9

- Define conflict
- Benefits/Concerns in conflict
- Conflict cycle
- Conflict Styles

**Unit 5** (10 hours-two week) Developing and Working on the Project Team PM-A6, PM-A8, PM-C8, PM-G3, PM-G4

- Being part of a team vs a group
- Multifunctional Teams-Virtual Teams
- Team Dynamics and Climate
- Power, Trust, and Cohesiveness
- Personal work styles
- Meetings, Documentation, and Problem Solving
- Email skills

**Unit 6** (2.5 hours-one day) Leading the Project Team PM-A9, PM-A10, PM-A11, PM-D11, PM-D10, PM-A13

- Leadership
- The role of a leader on a Project Team, the meeting
- Stages of Project with different leadership styles
- Motivating your team
- Coordination
- Feedback/Performance Evaluation

**Unit 7** (10 hours-two weeks) Project Presentations PM-C13, PM-C14, PM-D2, PM-C10, PM-C2

- Identifying the Specific Purpose and Central Idea of a Presentation
- Audience Analysis
- Presentation Aids: Computer, Handouts
- Delivery Skills

## **Course: Basic Team Communication Skills for Project Management**

### **Required Student Materials**

**Text:** Recommend instructor use of various chapters or materials from different texts or media using a Course Packet structure.

- **Supplies: Computer access**

## **Required Instructional Equipment or supplies**

- **Classroom with seating for 28 students max.**
- **“Smart Classroom” or Data Projector with Computer Instructor Work station that can access internet and run media.**

## **Unit 1: (5.0 hours) Intro to Class PM-A14**

### **Learning Objective(s)**

At the completion of this unit the student will be able to:

1. List the stages of Project
2. Understand what we mean when we say “People Sense”
3. Identify the elements of the communication process

### **Topics Covered**

- Review project management basics (The Process of Projects)
- Make argument for need to develop comm. skills: “People Sense”
- Review basic communication process
- Perception

### **Day One**

Reading Assignment

- Read Unit 1
  - Introduction to Project Management
  - Campbell: Chapter 5 (This is one suggested text that places Communication Skills in the Project Management context)

Instructor Lecture

### **Day one**

- The Project
- Elements of Project Management
- Project Management Process
- Review primary steps in process

Group Activity-Project “Meet Up” Discuss what happened.

Planning and Communication segue to day two.

## Day Two

### Instructor Lecture

- Briefly Review previous class
- Communication as ‘soft skills’ in Project Management

### Group Discussion-What are “Soft Skills”?

- The Process of Communication in Project Management
  - Campbell’s 3 steps of all project communication: *Analyze, Plan, Deliver*
    - Stakeholder Analysis
    - Plan your Approach
    - Deliver the Message

Student Activity: Have students research and bring to class a sample project that shows three steps in the process of communication.

## **Unit 2: Competent Communication and Learning to Listen (10 hours) PM-G7, PM-G3, PM-F6, PM-G6**

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Demonstrate different dialogue strategies
2. Create an assertive message
3. Using mindful listening provide feedback to another person and document the conversation

### **TOPICS COVERED:**

- Competent Communication
- Listening to stakeholders
- Dialogue and dialogue strategies
- Verbal and Non verbal messages, Assertive Communication, Disconfirming/Confirming
- Listening actively and mindfully, paraphrasing, clarifying questions
- Building rapport and trust

Reading assignment: Read Unit 2 materials including material that presents the Communication Management Plan. Suggested material keeping in the Project Management context would be chapter 10 from Campbell.

- Competent Communication-both effective and appropriate
  - Effective communication-task orientation
  - Appropriate communication-context
  - With Stakeholders
  - With team members

- What is it to Listen? Listening to stakeholders, listening to our team
- What is ‘dialogue’ and why do we need it?
- Verbal and Non verbal messages, Assertive Communication, Disconfirming/Confirming
- Listening actively and mindfully, paraphrasing, clarifying questions, dialogue strategies.
- Building rapport, Forgiveness

### Day one

- Competent Communication-both effective and appropriate
  - Effective communication-task orientation
  - Appropriate communication-context
  - With Stakeholders-Stakeholder Analysis
  - With team members
  - The Communication Management Plan

Group Discussion: What does ‘competent’ look like? What does it mean to be ‘appropriate’ and ‘effective?’ Show video clip from the T.V. show The Office and discuss observed communication behavior.

### Day two

- Define Listening
- Listening vs Hearing
- Extra Thought Speed
- Considered a powerful skill
  - Barriers to solid listening
  - Listening mindfully
- Listen=Silent
- 5 Tips for becoming a better listener

Activities:

Open with the “class” listening activity along the lines of ‘telephone’ where you tell a brief incident to one person and then have them whisper it to another and so forth until the last person repeats the story out loud. Then discuss what happened to the story. Using the communication model discussed in class earlier, what may have affected how the story transformed? What may have affected how well we heard details from the story? Leave the reasons for this fairly open so you can interact together as you continue class by lecturing on listening behavior. There are many variations of this activity available.

Individual Listening Assessment (instructor can select from any number of assessments go to this site <http://www.listen.org/Assessment> at the National Listening Association for a selection)

### Day three

- What is 'dialogue' and why do we need it?
- Dialogue vs Debate
- Listening actively and mindfully, paraphrasing, clarifying questions
- Yanklovich Dialogue strategies

#### Class Activity:

- In dyads practice individual skills of: Paraphrasing, Clarifying Questions. Create a sheet that has sample sentences of relevant work statements. Have them use either paraphrasing or clarifying questions in response to these statements to practice their listening.
- Dialogue practice: use work situation case to allow them to role play (first have them take a position and debate the situation, then have them switch sides and practice dialogue having them refer to the Individual Listening Skills Sheet as a guide.

For use in discussions for context PMI Case Study Library: <http://www.pmi.org/Business-Solutions/OPM3-Case-Study-Library.aspx>

### Day four

- Verbal Messages
  - Assertive Communication
  - Language considerations
- Nonverbal Communication
  - Review types of nonverbal communication
  - Recognizing the emotion in nonverbal communication
- Disconfirming/Confirming
  - Building rapport
  - Climate

Group Activity: In Dyads have them talk in conversation for five minutes and then stop them and ask them to continue their conversation without either member using any nonverbal behaviors. After another three minutes debrief with them.

Individual Assignment: Have the students write a situation where they were not as assertive and were unable to get their needs met or did not even try although they may have wanted to speak. Have them write out an assertive message addressing the steps to creating an assertive message that we discussed in class.

**Unit 3 (5 hours) Cultural Diversity-Cultural Literacy PM-D10, PM-D13, PM-A6, PM-A12**



## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Describe differences between at least two cultural worldviews and communication behavior commonly demonstrated by persons socialized in these particular cultural worldviews

## **TOPICS COVERED:**

- “Cultural Literacy?”
- Shein: Worldviews, Values, Artifacts (communication behavior)
- Cultural expectations around Time, High/Low Context, Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism
- Organizational culture-Strategic Communication

Read: Unit 3 material

### **Day one**

- Define “Cultural Literacy?”
  - How can this affect our interactions?
  - What does it mean to be culturally literate?
- Shein: Worldviews, Values, Artifacts (communication behavior)
  - Model for exploring and understanding the way that our communication behavior is connected with our values and worldviews
  - Cultural expectations around Time, High/Low Context, Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism

Class Activity:

- Put class in small groups and using a critical incident from the Cushner and Brislin book have them discuss the probable reason for the behavior. There are several critical incidents available so select one that is work relevant. Open the class with the incident as a way to segue into the material.

### **Day two**

- Review material from previous class
- Organizational culture-Strategic Communication

Class Activity:

- Using the material presented on organizational culture, have groups create scenarios where there are possibilities for miscommunication and identify what cultural element may be at the root of the misunderstanding. Have each group work together and then

report back writing on large sheets of paper that will be posted around the room. Have the groups present.

#### **Unit 4 (10 hours) Conflict in Project Management PM-A5, PM-A6**

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify different conflict styles

#### **TOPICS COVERED:**

- What is conflict?
- Benefits/Concerns in conflict
- Conflict cycle
- Conflict Styles
- Steps to resolve your conflicts
- Finding Common Ground

Read: Unit 4 material.

#### **Day one**

- Define conflict
- Roots of conflict
- Benefits/Concerns in conflict
- Conflict cycle

Group Activity: As individuals have students create a list of the emotions that they begin to feel when they sense a conflict beginning to occur (fear, sad, excitement, etc...) and a list of what responses they have seen or experienced when persons are in conflict (crying, disappearing, screaming, getting quiet, etc...) Form small groups and have individuals jointly create a common group list of both of these. Have the groups share these as you begin to lecture on the conflict cycle.

#### **Day two**

- Conflict Styles
- Responding in conflict
  - Communication Behaviors
  - Conflict escalation
  - What we can do to help deescalate and resolve conflict productively in the moment

Group Activity: Continue with the same small groups. Use Exercise 35.1 “Addressing Conflict Resolution” from Lambert & Meyers p. 183.

### Day three

- Issues and Interests in conflict
- Steps to find common ground and resolve the conflict

Assignment: Individual conflict analysis. Have them identify and describe in detail a conflict that they have been engaged in providing details about issues and interests from both person's perspectives. Then have them identify areas of commonality and create messages that identify ways to forge a solution beginning with recognition of common ground using the steps identified in the lecture.

### Day four

#### **Midterm Exam before Team Unit**

**Unit 5 (10 hours-two week) The Project Team PM-A6, PM-A8, PM-C8, PM-G3, PM-G4**

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify the effects of different communication behaviors on team climate
2. Facilitate and document team meetings and team actions
3. List characteristics of effective problem solving teams
4. Identify barriers to team creativity and demonstrate knowledge of at least one technique for enhancing team creativity

#### **TOPICS COVERED:**

- What is a Team?
- Multifunctional and Virtual Teams
- Team Dynamics and Climate
- Power, Trust, and Cohesiveness
- Personal work styles
- Meetings, Documentation, and Problem Solving
- Email skills

Read: Unit 5 material.

### Day one:

- Communication and the Team
  - Clear specific goals
  - Defined responsibilities
  - Coordination
  - Rules for operation
  - Advantages and disadvantages

- What makes an Effective Team

Class Activity: Teams form for remainder of class. Keeps teams to 4-6 members.

Use a team activity to help them build cohesion by working together to reach a common goal (there are many available). They respond well to competing against other teams. Provide some small reward to the winners. Choose from possible fun or challenging activities that have them working together to create something that can be done in a short period of time in class that may enable them to utilize the skills of all team members.

### Day two:

- Review previous day material on effective teams and discuss with additional feedback from activity.
- Team Dynamics and Climate
- Power, Trust, and Cohesiveness
- Personal work styles
  - Myers Briggs Styles
  - Teamwork with the styles-be sure to provide several scenarios to demonstrate what this looks like

Pass out their final Presentation assignment. Give them time to work together in class to create their team rules and guidelines. They will present this final assignment as the final demonstration of their presentation skills so they will remain in these teams through the end of the course. For their final assignment randomly assign a previously written proposal draft for them (with contextual information but you can decide how complete it already is based on class experience) and have them create a polished proposal using visual aids adapting the presentation to a particular audience interest as noted in the second unit (Marketing, Finance, Sales, etc..). Create the assessment for this final project based on both content and presentational skills demonstrated (the skills that they learned in the final unit).

Individual Assignment: Have students go to the website and take the Myers Briggs and review their profile. Have them write a reflection on their impression of the process and whether or not they agree with the results.

### Day three

- Multifunctional Teams
- Virtual Teams
- Meetings, Documentation, and Problem Solving
- Email skills
  - Drawbacks and Benefits
  - Using email appropriately
  - O'Hair, Friedrich, & Dixon-3 Tactics for Appropriate Emails in Conflict

Group Activity: Bring several samples of poorly written email messages. Have the teams analyze and discuss what the concerns are in the emails and what has potential. Have them rewrite to make the emails more appropriate as discussed in class.

**Unit 6 (10 hours-two weeks) Project Presentations PM-C13, PM-C14, PM-D2, PM-C10, PM-C2**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Work as a team to create and execute a presentation applying the appropriate rhetorical strategies for internal or external audience relevance
2. Effectively use presentation aids

**TOPICS COVERED**

- Identifying the Specific Purpose and Central Idea of a Presentation
- Audience Analysis
- Presentation Aids: Computer, Handouts
- Delivery Skills

Reading: Unit 6 Material includes Chapter 13 Campbell to assist in keeping contextual focus on Project Presentations.

**Day one**

- Identifying the Specific Purpose and Central Idea of a Presentation
  - Informative
  - Persuasive/Motivational
- Audience Analysis
  - Tailor your speech to your audience internal or external
  - Expectations of differing organizational work groups

Class Activity: Have them work in their teams and create a persuasive specific purpose statement

**Day two**

- Presentation Aids: Computer, Handouts
- Delivery Skills

**Unit 6 (2.5 hours) Leading the Project Team PM-A9, PM-A10, PM-A11, PM-D11, PM-D10, PM-A13**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify different styles of leadership that facilitate team effectiveness at different stages of team development

## TOPICS COVERED:

- Leadership
- The meeting
- Stages of Project with different leadership styles
- Stakeholder Coordination

### Day one

- Leadership
  - Dimensions of leadership
  - Task and Process
  - Stages of Project with different leadership styles
- The meeting
  - These are a support task so they should be planned
  - Set an agenda and send it out before the meeting if possible
  - Leader conducts meeting and invites others to present their reports
  - Keep it timely
  - Minutes are sent to participants
- Stakeholder Coordination
  - Project success tied to working with stakeholders both internal and external
  - Communication Management Plan is opportunity to manage these dependencies
  - Goal is effective task implementation

Group Activity: Have them work together and create a draft of a Communication Management Plan after reading a sample Project.

## **Unit 7 Presentation Week:**

### Day one

Team Conference/Progress report day

### Day two

Ideally this day should be the following week. If your schedule is a daily schedule adjust it accordingly.

Team Presentation Day

### Day three

Final Reflections