

INTERPERSONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS : 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

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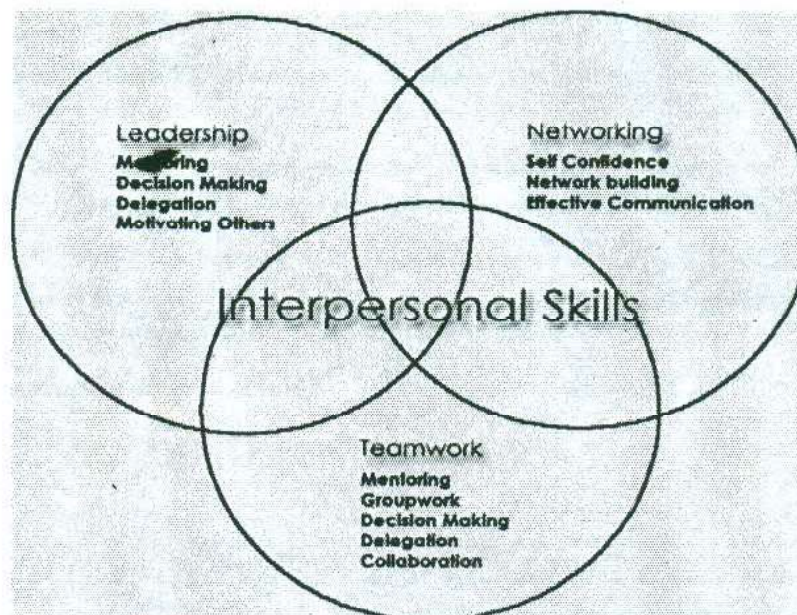
This article defines interpersonal leader skills and examines its role in the workplace. A leader with very effective interpersonal skills will spend half the time getting work done from his team than a leader who does not possess effective interpersonal skills. The article discusses interpersonal Leadership skills in an effective leader. Further, the article examines the application of interpersonal skills. An individual who can successfully navigate the complicity of human interaction is not only able to achieve success in the top in the long run. It is very important to manage relationship at home as in the corporate environment. The article discusses the role of emotional intelligence in good interpersonal skills.

Leadership: The process of successfully influencing 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 skills "are the sum total of your ability to help the group achieve its goals and maintain an effective working relationship among members... Anyone can learn leadership skills. All it takes is practice, practice, practice. ...

Interpersonal skills :

As you open the newspaper and read through the job opportunities, you find that one of the requirements of many jobs is "candidate should have good interpersonal skills". During the interview questions are asked to tap the interpersonal skills of the candidate. For example, 'tell me about a time when you had to work closely with a coworker whom you do to make the relationship work so you could trouble working. What did you do to make the relationship work so you could succeed for your company?' this question is for trying to judge the candidates' interpersonal skills and nothing else. The question arises why these skills have become so popular and why they are referred as survival. The industry has realized the importance of relationship and importance of maintaining the relationships to do a great and booming business. The interpersonal skills are the core skills one requires to survive in the 21st century, where the competition is



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intense and it is very important to “connect with people “for one’s, as well as the organization’s growth.

You may have been used to do things your way, but in an organization it is very important to work with others, understand others and utilize each one’s strengths to the fullest. The term “interpersonal skills” is used to refer to the measure of a person’s ability to function within business organizational through social communication and interactions. Interpersonal skills are how a person relates to another person.

Interpersonal Leadership skills : Figure

As you see in the figure interpersonal skills include Leadership Skills ,networking and teamwork. All these skills are important for an individual to be successful. It is very imperative in the corporate world how you relate to the coworkers .How you are professed by your department head and the co workers plays an important role in you career growth. No matter how hard you work or how many brilliant ideas you produce, if you are not able to bond with the people around you ,every thing is futile. As the work place is nothing but team work employers prefer to employ people who are high on interpersonal skills .

As we see in the diagram leadership, Networking and Team work are considered as main interpersonal skills .Each skill plays a very important role in the progress of an individual’s career graph. Besides these skills the emotional intelligence of the individual is an important factor when one is trying to get along with the coworkers.

Leadership skills help the individual to blend well with the team, at the same time hold the gearshift in the hand. Teamwork is the oxygen of the corporate environment. The organization cannot survive without team work. Networking help the individual to develop contacts as well climb the ladder smoother and faster. Some of the skills that are must for leaders are:

DECISION MAKING SKILLS :

The leader should be able to take quick and fair decisions on the basis of information available.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SKILLS;

A leader must be able to take quick and fair decisions management solutions. As a leader the person should be flexible and should be able to guide his team in ever-changing environment.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS;

The leader should be a good communicator and listener. The leader should also possess good writing skills.

TEAM BUILDING SKILLS;

The leader should be able to create a team from the people available and must know how to motivate them from time to time

CONFLIT MANAGEMENT :

The leader should be able to resolve the conflicts before they break the team. A leader should be able to foresee the conflict and resolve it at the correct time.

Interpersonal Skills-Important Traits of an Effective Leader

It is vital for a leader to possess good interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills mean getting a long and working along with the people around you. A leader with very effective interpersonal skills spends half the time getting work done from his team, then a leader who does not possess effective interpersonal skills

For a leader, it is very significant to understand each one of his team members and the flexible to extract maximum efficiency from them. A leader with high interpersonal skills believes in spending time with the team members, discussing policies and other professional issues. He is also the one who would discuss

the family front with the subordinate. Overall, the leader with high interpersonal skills is a popular leader. He is also a very good mentor. A leader with elevated interpersonal skills rarely has to fight to get his decision through the team members. There are examples where the team has followed the leader blindly. A leader with good interpersonal skills creates trust. Trust is an important element of interpersonal skills. When you are able to connect with the people, the trusting atmosphere is created where the entire team feels comfortable to discuss any issues. The important interpersonal skills for a leader are:

- Effective communication
- Empathy
- Being Trustworthy
- Being Fair

The Application of Interpersonal Skills :

Interpersonal skills are part of soft skills and as we know soft skills are the skills which can be applied day-to-day life. Interpersonal skills help an individual at home, office and at any social interaction. Individual with good interpersonal skills leads an impact on others. We remember one particular teacher even after many years. The reason behind it is the way that particular teacher connected with you. You remember people who are not in touch with you for years, but their humane touch makes them immortal.

Good interpersonal skills help you to connect with people any where on the globe. At office, one gets along with specific colleagues, but there are few members who can get along with everybody and anybody. This is nothing but using your interpersonal skills to the fullest. At the corporate level, interpersonal skills can fetch you many orders. The finance person with effective interpersonal skills will have loyal customers. The HR person with high interpersonal skills will never have a problem implementing a new policy. At work place, what matters more is how you connect with people. Even if you are a hardworking individual, are able to give plenty of brilliant ideas, if you are low on interpersonal skills, nothing will work for you and your personal life will definitely suffer. There are several concrete things that you can do to improve your social skills and become closer to your colleagues. All these tools will ultimately help you succeed in today's working world.

Following are few tips to improve interpersonal relations :

Be Pleasant:

People do not like to see a face which has a frown on it, all the while. Be friendly and upbeat with your coworkers. Be cheerful, be positive, be full of energy. Your personality should exuberate positive energy.

Be appreciative:

Find one positive thing about every one you work with and let them hear it. Be generous with praise and kind words of encouragement. Say thank you when someone helps you. Make colleagues feel welcome when they call or stop by your office.

If you let others know that they are appreciated, they'll want to give you their best.

Be alert and Observant:

Observe what is going on around you. Observe for specific feelings. Acknowledge their happy milestones in life. Be empathetic. Show concern when others are in difficult situation.

Be an Active Listener :

Listening helps people to come closer. When you are listening actively, you demonstrate that you intend to hear and understand another's point of view. The coworkers feel comfortable when they know that you

are being fair to them.

Be People's Persons :

Create an environment that will bring the coworkers together. Avoid talking behind some one's back. Listen to the suggestions given by others and follow it up. Follow up on other people's suggestions or requests. This helps to create trust.

Resolve Conflicts :

Bringing people will also bring in lot of conflicts on various issues. Learn how to be an effective intermediary. Create a free flow of communication to resolve the conflicts. Create an atmosphere which is congenial for building relationships.

Effective Communications :

Be clear and concise in your communication. Avoid any kind of misunderstanding. Verbal expressiveness projects an image of intelligence and maturity, no matter what your age.

Use Humor Effectively :

Use humor as and when required. Use your sense of humor as an effective tool to lower barriers and gain people's affection. This helps to release tension among the coworkers.

Be Empathetic: Understand the situation from the person's point of view. This helps building in trust further.

Be Positive : Do not complain all the while. If you have to verbalize your difficulties take your friend in confidence.

Managing Relationships More Effectively :

An individual who can successfully navigate the complexities of human interactions is not only able to achieve success in the tasks assigned to him. But is also the one who raises to the top in the long run. You find yourself surrounded by people where ever you go. Therefore, it becomes very important to learn to manage relationships at home as well as in the corporate environment. Who have scene many examples where the family members are unable to get along with each other. If you think intensively, you realize that there are not empathetic and or looking at the situations only from their angle. The attitude of the individual place an important role in any relationships. Relationship management at a work place is more challenging as the individuals are from different backgrounds.

Hierarchical factor also place game in corporate relationships. A relationship can have many pressures like Religion, Culture, Maturity, Jealousy, Sex. An individual with good interpersonal skills will be able to handle all of them well. Emotional intelligence is connected to interpersonal skills.

According to EI expert Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence is:

The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves ,for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities;

1. Self-awareness: knowing your emotions, recognizing feelings as the occur, and discriminating between them.

2. Mood management: Handling feelings so they are relevant correct situation and you react appropriately.

3. Self-Motivation: "Gathering Up" your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-

doubt, Inertia, and impulsiveness.

4. Empathy : Recognizing feelings in others and running in to their verbal and non-verbal cues

5. Managing Relationships: Handling interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution and negotiations.

It has been found that emotional health is very important. It gives an individual the confidence, self control and the ability to cooperate. As we relate twenty first century skills, there lot overlapping and we can say that a person who has good Emotional Intelligence will be a person who would possessing good interpersonal skills.

“Emotional intelligence is a master aptitude, a capacity that profoundly affects all other abilities, either facilitating or interfering with them.”
-Daniel Goleman

Emotional Intelligence :

Generally speaking, emotional intelligence makes an individual the social effective. The higher the emotional intelligence, the better the social relations. The person with high Emotional intelligence is less pertinent to engage in problem behaviors. The high EI person has sentimental attachment to his surrounding and therefore has more positive social interactions. .

Besides these main interpersonal skills there are few background skill which are important for an individual for personal growth:

Mentoring: Mentoring means actively helping, supporting and guiding a person or group of persons. The mentoring relationship depends on trust, commitment and mutual respect.

Decision-making Skills: This includes collecting evidence and taking decisions after weighing the pros and cons. This also includes taking the responsibility of the outcomes.

Delegation: This includes distributing authority and responsibilities. It also includes making a decision to ask someone else responsible to take decision.

Collaboration: This includes working together through cooperation and enhancing the quality and production.

Network building skills: This includes creating and maintaining contacts. It also includes acquiring useful information from the people around and using it ethically.

Motivating Skills: This includes creating energy and enthusiasm among the group, marinating positive attitude to reach the goal and to be ready to support the group in all walks of life

It is time for each one of us to realize the importance of interpersonal skills as they work like oxygen for fish in the fish bowl. Any person with high interpersonal skills will be able to survive in any environment as change management become easy with good interpersonal skills. Good interpersonal skills are important in to day's world of work than every before, as the nature of work is different today from what it was few years back. Many writers (Bridges,1994: Cascio,1995: Howard,1995:Ilgen& Hollenbeck,1991) have pointed out that job requirement are expanding, becoming more fluid and less set bureaucratic a stone.

Originating in the quality movement in the 1980s,there has been an increase in the use of self-managed work teams. Another out growth of the quality movement has been an increased focus on servicing customers ,subsequently, today's employees expected to

Possess the personality traits and people skills that will enable them to work well in teams(McIntyre & salas,1995),engage in organizational citizenship behaviors that help coworkers accomplish organizational goals(Broman & Motowidlo,1993),and develop a customer service orientation(Schneider & Bowem,1995).In other words, developing and using your interpersonal skills will be vital to your future success.

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