



# TriMetrix®HD Interpersonal Skills

# Interpersonal Skills

*Effectively communicating, building rapport and relating well to all kinds of people.*

## Why is this skill important?

No matter how hard you work or how many brilliant ideas you may have, if you can't connect with the people who work around you, your professional life will suffer. How you are perceived by your manager and coworkers plays a large role in things as minor as your day-to-day happiness at the office and as major as the future of your career.

Increasing your sociability and being relaxed and available for others will take you a long way in being accepted as a valuable, approachable resource. In order to have good Interpersonal Skills, you must learn how to present yourself as polite, knowledgeable and assertive.

Having strong Interpersonal Skills increases productivity in the organization. In informal situations, it allows communication to be easy and comfortable. People with good Interpersonal Skills can generally control the feelings that emerge in difficult situations and respond appropriately, instead of being overwhelmed by emotion. This capacity involves strong gut intuition and success in using it without being prejudiced or biased.

People who have good Interpersonal Skills are sensitive to other people, and they don't prejudge others either positively or negatively. Rather, they perceive each person individually and base their opinions and assessments of that individual on sensitive, realistic observations and instincts about that person.

A person who doesn't have intuitive Interpersonal Skills can still make good judgments concerning others, but more data and time to make these decisions is usually required. Without this supportive data, decisions may feel rushed.

Poor Interpersonal Skills can lead to overestimating or underestimating others, misunderstanding what you hear from others, and perceiving yourself as a bad judge of character.

## What are skills associated with Interpersonal Skills?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Interpersonal Skills:

- Strives for self-awareness.
- Demonstrates sincere interest in others.
- Treats all people with respect, courtesy and consideration.
- Respects differences in the attitudes and perspectives of others.
- Listens, observes and strives to gain an understanding of others.
- Communicates effectively.
- Is sensitive to diverse issues.
- Develops and maintains relationships with many different kinds of people, regardless of cultural differences.

## How do you develop your own skills in Interpersonal Skills?

- Listen and pay attention both to what other people say and what other people do.
- Be tolerant of others and their unique points of view. It is critical to establishing rewarding interpersonal relationships. Recognize that others' viewpoints are as important to them as yours are to you!
- Smile often. Maintain a positive, cheerful attitude about work and about life. The positive energy you radiate will draw others to you.
- Be appreciative. Find one positive thing about everyone you work with and let them hear it. Be generous with praise and kind words of encouragement.
- Pay attention to others. Observe what is going on in other people's lives. Acknowledge their happy milestones and express concern and sympathy for difficult situations.
- Bring people together. Create an environment that encourages others to work together. Treat everyone equally and don't play favorites. If folks see you as someone solid and fair, they will grow to trust you.
- Resolve conflicts. Take a step beyond simply bringing people together and become someone who resolves conflicts when they arise. By taking on a leadership role, you will garner respect and admiration from those around you.
- Communicate clearly. Pay close attention to what you say and how you say it. A clear and effective communicator avoids misunderstandings with coworkers, colleagues and associates.
- Humor others. Don't be afraid to be funny or clever. Most people are drawn to a person that can make them laugh. Use your sense of humor as an effective tool to lower barriers and gain people's affection. However, never use humor at someone else's expense.

- Share personal anecdotes and information about your likes, dislikes and interests. You can't expect other people to share information if you don't.
- Constantly monitor the other person's reactions to ensure that your message is on target and being received in the way you want it to be perceived.
- Focus on other people's needs, wants and motivations.
- Be willing to accept constructive feedback about yourself.
- Use what you learn about people discreetly. Don't draw too much attention to what you think you know about others, as it may make them uncomfortable or even angry. Instead, use your insight quietly to improve your relationship with the person, make the work environment better and communicate more effectively.
- Be friendly and use appropriate non-verbal communication. Make eye contact, have a serious expression, and speak clearly and firmly.
- Be sure your verbal and non-verbal language are consistent.
- Don't just rely on your own observations. Implement a personality inventory or interest and skills assessment program. See if you and your team can interface better once you understand more about one another.
- Look for patterns in people's behavior and use that information to help you interact with them in future situations.
- Involve other people in the process of planning and developing your goals and adapt your approach to appeal to the wants or needs of those people.
- Be optimistic and positive about eventual outcomes. Celebrate small successes and reward people for their cooperation.

# Interpersonal Skills

## Activities

### Activity 1: Improving Existing Relationships

Create a list of people with whom you work regularly. Fill in the chart below, evaluating your relationship with each person (on a scale of 1-5 in which 1 is the best and 5 is the worst) and setting goals toward improving your relationships with these individuals. Make sure you list something positive you can do for everyone including people you already get along very well with.

Person's Name	Quality of Relationship (1-5 scale)	Goals for Improving Relationship	Due Date

## Activity 2: Ask for Honest Feedback

Ask several people you trust at different levels of your organization, for example, management, peers or employees, for their feedback on your leadership style.

List the individuals from whom you hope to receive feedback:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Make an appointment with each person to talk formally. Use the following questions as a guide to your discussion. Remember to be open and not defensive.

- How would you describe my leadership style?
- What do I do well in my role as a leader?
- What do others do better? How could I improve my skills?
- Am I people oriented?
- Are there any specific situations you thought I handled particularly well?
- Are there any specific situations you thought I could have handled better? What did you think I should have done?
- Do I seem assertive but not overbearing, or am I too forceful in stating my desires and plans?

## Activity 3: Review of Your Skills

Ask someone you trust to observe you as you present a new idea or project to others. Have the person take notes and give you feedback on how you handled the following:

- Presenting yourself
- Presenting your ideas
- Sounding enthusiastic and positive about your plans
- Persuading others that your idea would benefit them or those they serve
- Politely fielding questions and managing disagreement
- Being assertive but not aggressive
- Other areas observed during your attempt to persuade someone of the merits of your idea or plan

Make a point of observing people in your organization who are particularly good at gaining support and agreement from others.

1. What technique does each person use to persuade people?
2. How do they present themselves?
3. How do they present their ideas?
4. How do they handle disagreements and conflict?
5. What do you like best about how they present new ideas or programs?

