

# Collaborative Communication Techniques

(Code: CCT)

Evolution-U Language & Communication Business Suite

Two Days - Advanced



*The Evolution-U Language & Communication Business Suite offers customisation of content flow using existing modules across our complete offering of engaging soft skills trainings, providing **usable tools for better & measurable performance** praised by our clients*

## Course Outline

This two day training provides a comprehensive set of communication tools for increasing collaboration across internal stakeholders. In situations where interpersonal dealings are challenging, collaborative communication techniques can be adopted to promote a 'one-team' mindset, where team interests are recognised as being aligned, and joint business success is seen as the goal.

Such situations are common where departmental silos, differing priorities and personality clashes result in losses in efficiency and productivity to the cost of the organisation. The techniques introduced in this training are based on leading research from top academics and practitioners in the fields of communication theory. The delivery is business focused requiring participants to fully engage and apply the principles taught to real life situations.

## Learning Objectives

By taking this course, participants will;

- develop a communication structure that promotes collaboration and open flow of information, including situations where high stakes outcomes, business critical content, emotional content, conflicting non-verbal indicators, and judgement and bias are or risk being present;
- learn the 'Critical Communication Methodology' to help avoid conflict, promote understanding, and generate acceptance;
- learn how to make it 'safe' to bring up sensitive or disagreeable material, gather information, promote collaboration and influence the outcome;
- learn the three basic skills of a trusted advisor and the 11 key principles in relationship building.
- become proficient in the trust equation developing a strong understanding of the structure of trust, how to identify areas of improvement, and how to maximise their individual trust scores.
- become aware of and learn how to use linguistic patterns that can be used to improve influence in business and personal situations;
- recognise the three types of conversation that exist in any negotiation or conflicting position and develop a framework to deal with each and remain in dialogue;
- understand how to adopt a "Learning Perspective" becoming aware of common communication traps with difficult people that result in poor outcomes;
- Participate in multiple case studies, role plays and breakout sessions to discuss, apply and debate the principles introduced.

Course delivery consists of trainer led presentation with video support, group breakouts, exercises and case studies. Open class discussion is encouraged to allow participants to learn from experience and best practise of others.

## Course Content

### Day 1: IMPROVING STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

#### Case Study: The Target Focused Performer

The training starts with a case study to give a scenario and context for the theory that will be taught during the day. A general discussion on how to address the challenges posed in the case study and common challenges that impede collective teamwork and a “One-Team” mindset form a foundation of reference points against which the theory for the remainder of the training will be tested.

#### The Critical Communication Model

The root cause of many failures to collaborate lie in how people behave when they enter a communication which has any of the following three elements present; high stakes, difference of opinions and/or emotional content. Despite the importance of dealing with such critical communications, we often back away from them because we fear we'll make matters worse, and collaboration suffers as a consequence. Research shows that strong relationships, careers, organizations, and communities all draw from the same source of power; the ability to talk openly about high-stakes, emotional, controversial topics. In this session, the Critical Communications Model is introduced and sets the framework for the remainder of the training.

#### The Pool of Shared Meaning

The Shared Pool of Meaning is a crucial concept in the process of building collaboration. Each of us enters dialogue with our own view, opinions, feelings and experiences which comprise our 'mental set'. Our unique mental set of makes up our personal pool of meaning. This pool forms a filter through which we run interactions. It not only informs us, but influences our every action. As others enter the conversation, different pools of meaning may collide. This section discussed how the skilled at dialogue make it safe to add meaning to the shared pool so that we are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, and make better choices.

#### Reframing our Stories

When we observe an action, we add meaning to it; we make immediate and unconscious assumptions at the underlying motive driving the behavior. In effect, we tell ourselves a story about the observation and in turn we then respond with an emotion. This intermediate step between what others do and how we feel is why, when faced with the exact same situation, ten people may have ten different emotional responses. Using this understanding, a methodology is taught for understanding the stories we tell ourselves so we can analyse our 'Path to Action'; the process by which our stories create our emotions. If we can find a way to control the stories we tell, by rethinking or retelling them, we can master our emotions and, thereby collaborate effectively. Class exercises and case studies are used to build the theory in this session.

#### Discussing Sensitive Topics

This section introduces a six-step framework for how to speak our minds without making people defensive, pushing too hard, backing off too soon, or regretting that we spoke. The framework promotes openness and trust, allowing us to be persuasive without being abrasive and promote collaboration. Strong communicators realise the only limit to how strongly they can express their opinion is their willingness to be equally vigorous in encouraging others to challenge it, and by inviting discussion deeper understanding and relationships are formed. This section uses extensive video support and video based exercises to help participant develop the skills necessary to use the six-step structure for discussing sensitive topics.

#### Role Plays: Applying the Critical Communication Model

Participants are coached in three different role play scenarios as initiator, respondent and coach during which they learn to apply the tools taught during the training.

#### Case Study Revisited & Pre-Work Review

We complete day 1 by returning to the case study with which we opened the session and also by having participants review their course pre-work in the light of the theory introduced so far. Theory is only as good as its' application and a critical part of the training is bridging this gap by discussing relevant scenarios in light of the theory and its application. Participants are challenged to apply the principles taught and develop a new 'best communication practices' model for improved internal collaboration with stakeholders.

### Day 2: THE COLLABORATION MINDSET

#### Hierarchy of Ideas

The Hierarchy of Ideas is a powerful linguistic technique for controlling the level of language and understanding how best to deliver information to stakeholders based on their personality preference for receiving data. The theory of the Hierarchy of Idea's is relatively straight forward; agreement is easier to achieve in the abstract, however many stakeholders require detailed information rather than abstract. The concept is introduced by the trainer, demonstration given and group exercises performed followed by discussion on how to apply the technique in business situations.

#### Trust & Influence as a Route to Collaboration

This section analyses the basic skills required to generate trust and be able to influence without authority. Areas covered include (i) Earning Trust & Trust Insights, (ii) Giving Advice Effectively & Socratic Learning, and (iii) 11 key principles in building relationships. The objective is to give participants the required tools for developing valued, long term stakeholder relationships.

#### The Structure of Trust

Based on market leading research by Trusted Advisor Associates, this section introduces the Trust Equation and challenges participants to maximise their trust value with stakeholders, thus improving the ability to influence, the quality of interactions. Learning the trust equation supports the training objective of developing a “One-Team” mindset and will support participants in their roles as advocates of a collaborative approach to stakeholder communications.

### **Case Study & Pre-Work Revisited Part 2**

We revisit the case study and pre-work and apply the principles covered in Day 2 morning session for additional insight and strategic application to further develop the 'best communication practices' model for improved internal collaboration with stakeholders.

### **Understanding Difficult Conversations**

Research shows that there is an underlying structure present in difficult conversations and negotiations, and that the thoughts and feelings present at these times fall into three categories irrespective of the type of communication we are dealing with. Understanding this underlying structure and being aware of the common mistakes we make when falling into each of these three conversation categories is important if we are to develop a collaborative approach to our communications and model the desired level of stakeholder interaction.

### **The Learning Perspective**

In heated situations, common reactions include arguing, blaming, defensive positioning, inaccurate assumptions, misunderstanding of intent and devaluing the other sides interests – none of which promote collaboration. Fortunately, each of these mistaken paths can be addressed by developing an understanding of the underlying triggers that typically cause each of them. By taking the lead and applying principles which are designed to increase awareness of when information flow is breaking down, it is possible to retain a learning perspective thus promoting a better understanding of how to achieve alignment of interests and return to a one team mentality.

### **Breakout: Cultural Variations**

A breakout session is dedicated to discussing the issue of cultural variations in communication style and how the techniques taught in the training can be applied through differing cultural lenses. While instructor facilitated, this session is designed to generate discussion between participants on how cultural awareness can improve stakeholder collaboration.

### **Role Play: Managing Difficult Conversations**

In this final role play, participants will split into groups of either two or four and role play a scenario where many of the variables which can cause communication breakdowns and inefficient team dynamics such as strong disagreement, emotional content and lack of trust, are present. The objective is to utilize as many of the skills taught during the course as possible while also reviewing the content.

## **Who Should Take This Course**

Business Owners, Management, Sales, PR & Marketing Executives, Human Resources Executives, any and all Customer-facing Staff, anyone dealing with Sales, Negotiation or Mediation, or needing to influence or persuade people on a regular basis will benefit for learning and mastering the techniques introduced in these courses, with immediate results.

**This training course is fully certified by Evolution-U.**

**For more information & reservations please contact Jessica  
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