

Assert yourself: learning to be assertive

The guide



video arts™

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Assert yourself: learning to be assertive

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Assertiveness involves you being honest. But only honest about issues that are relevant to what you need or asked for.

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*Copies of these resources are included within this book. They are also available on the enclosed CD-ROM or DVD to allow you to customise them to your specific requirements and to print the required number of copies from the master for the sole purpose of the training envisaged by the programme, and not for any commercial purpose.

Video-based training from Video Arts

Congratulations on choosing **Assert yourself: learning to be assertive** from Video Arts to help develop the skills in your organisation. Video Arts is recognised as the world leader in video-based training, with over 30 years experience in staff development. With more than 250 programmes on video, DVD and CD-ROM/on-line covering all the essential skills of business, you can remain confident that training with Video Arts is the most effective way to improve the skillset of the people within your organisation.



Aggressive behaviour may seem like you are getting what you want but in the long run it achieves very little.

Why train?

Train hard, fight easy - Marshal Zhukov

These days, it is difficult for organisations to become successful and stay that way. The pace of change is faster, competition is tougher, customers are more demanding, innovation is more prized, but harder to achieve.

Part of the response has been to create leaner, flatter, more flexible structures, but structures don't run organisations and create success; people do - intelligent people, energetic people, reliable people and, most of all, people with the right mix of up to date knowledge and skills.

That means people who are trained, not for a lifetime's work, not just once in a while, but as a central, continuing part of their working lives.

Why use video-based training?

Video is familiar. Television is how most people find out what is going on in the world. It is not surprising that this is a medium they are comfortable to learn from when they are being trained.

Video makes demonstration easy. We can show situations being handled badly. We can contrast that with how to handle them well.

Video is flexible. It can be the cornerstone of a course run for a group by a specialist trainer. It can quickly provide simple, clear lessons for a team whenever it is convenient for them. It can bring interest and enlightenment to a self study programme.

Video injects realism. It lets us present those being trained with emotional, as well as rational, problems to solve. Ask a group '*how would you deal with a defensive appraisee?*' and you will get a tidy, textbook answer. Use video to show them with a defensive appraisee and you will get a much more realistic reaction.

Video provides variety. Different people learn in different ways and none of us has an infinite attention span. Video provides us with a powerful means of injecting variety into our training.

Why use Video Arts programmes?

Winston Churchill once said that he loved to learn, but hated being taught.

That is the secret of successful training: how to help people who want to learn. We do it by combining:

- A storehouse of professional knowledge and expertise, developed over thirty years and drawing on some of the best minds in the business
- The highest possible production values, both in the videos we produce and in the support material that goes with them
- The magic ingredient - humour - which can make a delight of the dullest subject

Introduction

There are certain situations at work which many of us handle badly. How to criticise and be criticised, how to react to bad news, how to ask for help and refuse requests when we have to, how to solve problems and negotiate with one another, how to deal with personal attacks or manipulation, even how to give and receive praise - faced with all of these our natural reaction is often either aggressive or submissive.

What we should do in these situations is to assert ourselves - be honest with one another, be clear about our bottom line and stick to it and, above all, communicate as equals. That is easier said than done. Assertive behaviour doesn't come naturally. It requires thought, confidence and even on occasions a certain amount of courage.

Fortunately we can learn how to behave assertively. That's what this programme is about. It will show you the traps that people often fall into when communicating with one another and how to use assertiveness to avoid them.

Of course behaving assertively won't guarantee that we always get what we want. But it gives us a better chance of doing so and, at the same time, maintaining good relationships with our colleagues. What's more, even when we don't succeed, there is satisfaction in knowing that we have given the situation our best shot.



When you do communicate it's important to communicate as equals.

Preparation

Alternative programmes

This guide contains detailed notes for three alternative programmes. Choose the one which best suits your needs and the time you have available. They are:

- **A 90 minute programme.** This short, intensive programme uses excerpts from the video and short discussion sessions to cover the principles of coaching. If you want to run many training sessions for a large number of people in a short period of time this may be the best choice for you
- **A half day programme.** This programme provides sufficient time to use the complete video, to hold longer discussion sessions and to use some simple exercises. It also uses the same set of excerpts from the video to reinforce the principles
- **A one day programme.** This programme covers the same ground as its half day counterpart, with three added benefits. First, those taking part have more time to relate the principles to those in which they would like to assert themselves more effectively and identify actions they will take on returning to work. Second, they are able to practise their assertiveness skills in a safe environment. Third, there is sufficient time to cover situation, such as giving and receiving praise, which are not dealt with on the other two programmes

The target audience

The programmes are designed for all those who work with other people, both within their own organisation and outside it. Which means just about everybody.

The video and the lessons it contains

Watch the video to familiarise yourself with the content. This includes the DVD extras. The running time of the video is approximately 39 minutes (including the DVD extras).

In addition to the complete video, we have also provided you with a series of excerpts. There are two versions of these, one for the 90 minute and half day programmes and the other for the whole day and self-study programmes.

You will find them, in the correct order, on separate videos called "Video excerpts, 90 minute and half day" and "Video excerpts, whole day and self-study" on the VHS tape or DVD, whichever you are using.

In the half day and one day programmes the group watch and discuss the complete video and you then use the excerpts as reinforcement during the sessions covering each of the principles of assertiveness. In the 90 minute programme only the excerpts are used.

The DVD extras

The DVD version of the programme contains a series of five short video 'extras' in which the presenter illustrates and describes how to cope assertively with situations not explicitly dealt with in the main video. Watch each of these and think about their implications for the individuals and the organisation for which you will be providing training using 'Assert yourself!'. Three of these extras are used without the presenter's comments as excerpts on the one day and self-study programmes.

They cover:

- **Body language.** This shows short excerpts from the video, but without the sound. The presenter summarises the differences between aggressive, submissive and assertive body language.
- **Giving and receiving praise.** The characters from the video demonstrate how and how not to do this. The presenter explains the principles.
- **Handling very aggressive behaviour.** The presenter outlines a number of strategies for coping.
- **Handling manipulation.** This is often called 'passive aggressive' behaviour. The presenter uses a short excerpt from the video to explain what this behaviour comprises and how to react.
- **Avoiding the aggressive use of email.** It is much easier to be aggressive, even if unintentionally so, when sitting in front of a screen rather than being face to face with another human being. The presenter demonstrates some of the more common errors.

A self-study programme

There is also a self-study programme on the CD and in this guide. If you are going to lead a group training session this provides you with a useful way of familiarising yourself with the programme.

Group composition

The one day and half day programmes involve a significant amount of discussion and practice. The timings of the sessions on the 90 minute programme are necessarily very tight. For these reasons we suggest that the group for each programme should consist of no more than twelve and no fewer than six delegates.

Preparation

Delegates' preparation

Ask all of those taking part to think about situations which they find difficult to handle when communicating with others, face to face or on the phone, one to one and in groups.

Your preparation

- For the 90 minute programme

Go through the detailed programme notes and MS® PowerPoint® slides provided. Make sure that you are confident about the timings. Watch the complete video and the series of excerpts you will be using.

Though you will not have time to use the DVD extras on this programme, you may find it helpful to watch them in case any of the subjects they cover are raised by the group.

- For the half day programme

Do the same preparation as you would for the 90 minute programme. In addition familiarise yourself with the 'Opening words' exercise in the session 'Be honest about what is relevant'.

- For the one day programme

Do the same preparation as you would for the half day programme. In addition, familiarise yourself with the role play exercise. Note that there is a different series of excerpts for this programme since the one day programme gives you sufficient time to discuss the issues covered in the DVD extras.

- Workbooks

You will find Workbooks on the CD for each of the three programmes. Print a copy of the appropriate version for each person taking part.

- Behaviour vs Personalities

During the training programmes avoid using the terms 'aggressive people', 'submissive people' or 'assertive people' and correct those who do. Aggression, submission and assertiveness are behaviours, not personality traits. There are, of course, people who tend to behave in one particular way, but as individuals we can choose which behaviour to use and, in particular, we can learn how to behave assertively and change our behaviour accordingly.

Outlines of alternative programmes

90 minute programme	
5 mins	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives• Programme
20 mins	What's the difference? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video excerpt• Discussion
20 mins	Be honest about what is relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video excerpts• Discussion
25 mins	Stick to your bottom line <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video excerpts• Discussion
15 mins	Communicate as equals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion• Video excerpt
5 mins	Summary
Total 90mins	

Each of these programmes is described in more detail later in the guide.

Half day programme	
15 mins	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Programme • Tricky situations
50 mins	Assert yourself! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video • Discussion
30 mins	What's the difference? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion
15 mins	Break
50 mins	Be honest about what is relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion • Exercise • Discussion
35 mins	Stick to your bottom line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion
25 mins	Communicate as equals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Video excerpts
15 mins	Action planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
Total 3 ³ / ₄ hours (inc breaks)	

Each of these programmes is described in more detail later in the guide.

1 day programme	
15 mins	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Programme • Tricky situations
20 mins	Choose your words with care! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Discussion
50 mins	Assert yourself! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video • Discussion
15 mins	Break
40 mins	What's the difference? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion
60 mins	Be honest about what is relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion • Exercise • Discussion
60 mins	Lunch
45 mins	Stick to your bottom line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video excerpts • Discussion
65 mins	Communicate as equals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Video excerpts • Discussion
15 mins	Break
80 mins	Role play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role play • Discussion
15 mins	Action planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
Total 7 hours (inc breaks)	