

MANAGING YOURSELF

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Most people think they are efficient; but unless they know how to manage their time, it's unlikely they will ever be fully effective. Poor time management can also have a knock-on effect on your colleagues and the team you work with. This session is designed to help delegates address these common issues.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Workplace Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Prioritising your time
- Time management & interruptions
- Time management tips

VIDEO 1 – PRIORITISING YOUR TIME

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

None of us can 'make' time, but we can learn how to manage it well. We'll see how prioritising the most important tasks first and planning ahead by anticipating problems can free up more of your day. And reduce the stress not only in your life, but for the people you work with too!

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss what techniques they use to prioritise their time?

There many theories and models that can help you prioritise your time. Introduce the group to one of the best known models - the Stephen Covey Urgent/Important matrix, where you can place tasks into the following areas:

Urgent and Important – these tasks require immediate attention. Do urgent tasks first and get them out of the way.

Important but not urgent – these tasks impact your larger goals and need careful attention. For important tasks, you need to set aside more time and protect yourself from interruptions. Here you can plan ahead, anticipate problems and prepare for the things to come.

Not important but urgent – these tasks are interruptions in your daily work like calls and emails that need to be addressed. Set aside a time to get these tasks done.

Not important and not urgent - irrelevant calls etc yield little return and don't take priority, but you still need to find some time to get them done. You could perhaps schedule these in at the end of the day or week.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Prioritise urgent versus important tasks.
- Plan ahead with deadlines.
- Anticipate problems.

VIDEO 2 – TIME MANAGEMENT & INTERRUPTIONS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Managing your time well also means learning to deal with people and their demands. Being assertive about your time means you spend less time dealing with other people's emergencies. Don't freeze up with anxiety; sometimes, politely saying 'no' may just be the best way of dealing with it.

THINK (10 minutes)

Ask the group to discuss the best way to deal with interruptions?

Record their answers and suggest the following additions;

- Multi-tasking usually means that your attention is divided.
- Repeatedly switching between different tasks breaks your concentration and makes it difficult to pick up from where you left off. It can also result in errors and poorly thought out decisions.
- The law of focus says that "you'll get a lot more done if you focus completely on one task at a time".
- Don't allow people to distract you.
- Be ruthless with time, gracious with people. Your colleagues can also be a great source of support when you need it.
- Be assertive – that means communicating your needs clearly, calmly and with respect.
- If you're very busy, keep the socialising for breaks.
- Be prepared to delegate.
- Say 'no' to jobs that aren't yours.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Deal with interruptions decisively.
- Act assertively.
- Limit phone time.
- See others as a source of support.

VIDEO 3 – TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

The key to improving your working life and that of the people you work with is to manage your time by getting organised. Start with your immediate work space first and work your way into other areas. Getting organised is a skill you can learn – it's not a talent bestowed upon a lucky few!

THINK (allow 10 minutes)

Ask the group if they ever feel overwhelmed by their to-do lists? As them to discuss and record how they might improve their management of time and include the following in your summary;

- Keep a properly organised desk.
- Maintain a proper filing system.
- Create a daily to-do list and stick to it.
- Prioritise.
- Estimate how long each task will take; tackle one task at a time, the biggest first.
- Batch smaller tasks together so that they can be done quickly.
- Give yourself private time if you need to.
- Set aside blocks of time to complete each big task.
- Turn off all distractions like email alerts and focus.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Cut the clutter.
- Do one task at a time.
- Tackle difficult tasks first.
- Be time conscious.

MANAGING YOURSELF – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

MEETINGS

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This session will help your delegates run efficient, effective and productive meetings: face-to-face and online.

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LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Show you understand
- Work to a joint solution
- Planning virtual meetings
- Running virtual meetings

VIDEO 1 – SHOW YOU UNDERSTAND

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Hearing and listening are two very different skills. The problem is of course that many of us can hear well, but can't necessarily listen as well. Most of us are too busy thinking about what we're going to say next or are so stuck on our own solutions that we don't listen to what others have to say. Like most things, the art of listening, truly listening, is a skill that can be learned.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

How do you show your employees that you're really listening to them?

Responses should include:

Pay attention

- Look at them directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid distractions like phones, email, or other colleagues.
- Recognise that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly. "Listen" to the speaker's body language.

Show you're listening

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.

Empathise

- Put yourself in their shoes. Try to feel what they're feeling. This isn't easy, but it's a generous thing to do.

Give feedback

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is", and "Sounds like you are saying", are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask open questions to clarify certain points: "What do you mean when you say..."
- Summarize comments.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Listen actively.
- Show empathy.

VIDEO 2 – WORK TO A JOINT SOLUTION

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

An important part of preparing for a meeting is thinking in advance about how to handle objections. People are bound to raise objections, it's human nature. The only sure way to counter these objections is to have facts and research to back up your case.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Being human, it's often difficult to accept objections from people. Ask the group to discuss the best way to handle them during meetings?

Emphasise to the group that no matter how well you present your case, there will be some objections. Objections don't have to be negative; you just have to adjust your view point to see the bigger, more positive picture:

- Objections allow others to contribute to the issue and raise any concerns which could affect decision-making.
- When you see objections as legitimate contributions, rather than inconveniences, you can take a much more positive attitude toward them.
- Everyone's point of view matters; encourage discussion to arrive at better solutions.
- Don't get aggressive when you don't agree with someone else's point of view, respect their right to an opinion.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Be assertive, not aggressive.
- Ask for other people's ideas and build on them.
- Offer your ideas.
- Construct the solution for everyone's needs.

VIDEO 3 – PLANNING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

What every manager wants are more efficient, effective and productive meetings. This is possible if you plan your meetings in advance; inform those attending about the meeting; prepare for your meeting and structure and control the discussions in your meeting.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

We've all been to a poorly-planned meeting? What's the best way to plan them?

Responses could include;

- Think about what's being discussed and why - the objective of the discussion.
- Make sure the right people have been contacted and can attend the meeting.
- Make sure all the necessary information has been sent in advance of the meeting.
- Put urgent items at, or near the top of the agenda.
- Allow enough time for the discussion of important items.
- Look for logical connections between items and arrange them logically.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Plan.
- Inform.
- Prepare.

VIDEO 4 – RUNNING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Running an effective meeting is more than sending out a notice that your team is to meet at a particular time and place. Effective meetings need structure and order. Without these elements they can go on forever, never really accomplishing anything.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about the best way to stop meetings go round and round in circles without ever accomplishing anything?

Reinforce the point that you can stop meetings going round in circles by structuring the discussion. To do this:

- Produce the evidence that will form the basis of the discussion. Then circulate the document to everyone attending the meeting. It's important you do this before the meeting so that everyone has time to digest the information and come up with points for discussion.
- Debate the evidence. Listen to the arguments. Encourage open discussion.
- Then come to a conclusion that everyone is happy with.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Structure and control.
- Summarise.
- Encourage further dialogue.

MEETINGS – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

NEGOTIATING

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will help you to negotiate agreements that satisfy both parties.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Workplace Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

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REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

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ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Pitching high
- Don't agree to separate parts
- Getting a fair deal

VIDEO 1 – PITCHING HIGH

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

You don't have to sport a poker face in order to negotiate well. These are skills that can be learnt. The focus of the negotiation should be a mutually beneficial deal where both parties walk away feeling they got something they wanted. However being on guard and noticing subtle shifts in the balance of power - and knowing how to deal with these - will mean fewer concessions on your part.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about the last time they came away from a meeting feeling hard done by. What's the best way to negotiate?

Responses could include:

- The fundamental rule when taking up your opening position in negotiations is to pitch as high as you can. Always assume the other side will try to knock you down. Remember – the rule of negotiation states that what goes down never comes back up!
- Pitching high means you have something to negotiate with. And you can always trade down later, but you can't ever trade up.
- Don't ever give anything away without getting something in return. In other words – trade, don't concede. If you do ever need to concede – make sure the concession is seen as something that's as highly priced and credible. Remember, this is a relationship you want to continue.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Pitch high.
- Trade; don't concede.

VIDEO 2 – DON'T AGREE TO SEPARATE PARTS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Many people fail to get the balance right during negotiations and, once they've negotiated down, they can never come back up again. Plus, once they're on the downward spiral, they find themselves agreeing to separate parts before they know the full facts.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group if they have ever agreed to separate parts of a deal and later regretted it? What's best to deal with someone who is pushing for this type of deal?

Responses should include;

- Never agree to separate parts of a deal until you can see the whole picture and know the full facts.
- Use words like 'if', 'when' and 'potentially' to give yourself some room to manoeuvre.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Don't agree to anything unless you know the list of requirements
- Don't agree to separate parts.

VIDEO 3 – GETTING A FAIR DEAL

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Your objective must be a 'fair deal' for both sides, not a victory for you. A fair deal is a successful one and could lay the foundations for a long-term relationship.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Have you ever had a negotiation break down? What might you have done differently to bring the deal back onto the table?

Responses could include;

- Always stay neutral, once emotions take over negotiations will fall apart – never show emotions, it's an instant deal breaker.
- Avoid threats and ultimatums. Ignore any manipulation techniques. Your objective is a win-win situation – a good deal for both sides. If you find yourself in a situation where things start going downhill,

Remember:

- Ask yourself: are we really stuck?
- Be imaginative.
- Ask 'What if?' questions.
- Don't panic, and don't give up.
- Ask the other side for ideas.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Avoid threats and ultimatums.
- Ask 'What if?' questions.
- A fair deal for both sides.

NEGOTIATING – ACTION PLAN

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Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will help you improve your presentation skills.

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FEATURED VIDEOS

- Preparing to present
- Structuring a presentation
- Presentation tips

VIDEO 1 – PREPARING TO PRESENT

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Preparation is the single most important part of a successful presentation. Not only will good preparation ensure that you have thought carefully about the messages that you want to communicate, but it will also boost your confidence.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

A lot of people naturally feel nervous before giving a presentation. Ask the group to consider what techniques might help you feel more confident?

Responses could include:

- Getting into the right frame of mind can help you dispel any fear you have about giving a presentation.
- First ask yourself why you're giving the presentation. See the presentation as an opportunity, not a chore. It's a chance to market yourself!

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Know your audience.
- Know what you want to say.

VIDEO 2 – STRUCTURING A PRESENTATION

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Aim to give a clear, well-structured delivery. Know exactly what you want to say and the order in which you want to say it. Use a framework for clarity and structure.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about a good and a bad presentation they've attended. What made them good or bad? How do you think they could have been better?

Record their answers and suggest that using the POP model can help you structure a good presentation.

Position – set the scene by stating the current position: why are you giving the presentation?

Options – be objective when stating the pros and cons for each option.

Proposal – draw it together, make your recommendations.

Conclusions - justify the proposal.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Position.
- Options.
- Proposal.

VIDEO 3 – PRESENTATION TIPS

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

You might have written that winning presentation, but audiences are different and they have different objectives in mind when listening to you. Tailor your presentation to each audience.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Think about two presentations you have given or been to. Were the audiences different? How can you tailor your presentation to suit different audiences?

Record the group responses and suggest that no two audiences are the same, but you can tailor your presentation by:

- Recognising their objectives.
- Selecting your arguments carefully to meet their objectives.
- Use appropriate humour.

Using your natural voice:

- Speak steadily.
- Talk to the audience.
- Use eye contact.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Tailor your presentation to the audience.

PRESENTATION SKILLS – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will help you use your behaviour to influence the behaviour of other people.

You will also gain an understanding of the key behaviours to look out for in others when reacting to change.

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FEATURED VIDEOS

- The power of behaviour
- You can choose how to behave
- Use behaviour to help an interaction
- The four stages of change

VIDEO 1 – THE POWER OF BEHAVIOUR

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Generally, people mirror the good and bad behaviours of others. If you're friendly and cooperative with people, they'll be friendly and cooperative in return. Behaviour breeds behaviour.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

We're all human beings and there are times at work where we might worry about losing our temper. How do you control your emotions during heated debates with colleagues?

Losing your temper at work or in any situation can have serious consequences. Professionally, you risk losing your credibility and respect from colleagues. On a personal level, you risk losing relationships. Responses could include:

- You always have a choice how to behave in any situation. Adjust your behaviour to the situation or person you're dealing with.
- To avoid losing your temper, use empathy and show you're listening and care about what they have to say.
- Although it can be difficult at times, be helpful instead of angry - you'll find you'll get a positive response.
- Remember, people generally mirror and respond to behaviour so making adjustments in your behaviour will have a positive outcome. Most importantly, you have a choice and there is power in that choice.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Behaviour breeds behaviour.
- Being helpful gets a positive response.

VIDEO 2 – YOU CAN CHOOSE HOW TO BEHAVE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Most people dread dealing with angry or emotional people, especially in a professional context. That's why many of us cope so badly. But, we can take control of our emotions. Your behaviour is a choice you make.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think of the most difficult customer they've ever had to deal with. How could they have dealt with them more effectively?

How you chose to behave impacts every relationship you have – professionally and personally. You can either hinder these relationships or demonstrate helpful behaviours. Responses could include;

Hindering behaviours

- Leaning away with hands clenched, arms and legs crossed.
- Looking at the other person for less than 50% of the time.
- Listening silently, with no continuity noises.
- Interrupting.
- Not using the other person's name.
- Not asking questions.
- Sticking rigidly to saying things that are routine or standard.
- Refusing to acknowledge the other person's point of view or ever agreeing with them.
- Picking holes in the other person's ideas.
- Being defensive and never admitting that you got something wrong.
- Demonstrating visual and verbal behaviours that contradict each other.

Helpful behaviours

- Leaning forward with hands open, arms and legs uncrossed.
- Looking at the other person for approximately 60% of the time.
- When listening, smile, nod and make 'I'm listening' noises such as 'um', 'yes' and 'really'.
- Using the other person's name early on in the conversation.
- Asking the other person open questions.
- Showing empathy by saying that you understand how the other person feels and can see things from their point of view.
- When in agreement with the other person, openly saying so and explaining why.
- Building on the other person's ideas.
- Being non-judgemental towards the other person.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- You can choose your behaviour.
- How you choose will affect every transaction.

VIDEO 3 – USE BEHAVIOUR TO HELP AN INTERACTION

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Your behaviour is something you can choose to change. Acknowledging people by using simple, polite and positive gestures can quickly turn a situation around and get people on board.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

We've all experienced that sinking feeling when conversations with colleagues go very wrong. How can you adjust your behaviour to help a situation get back on track or get off to a good start?

Responses could include;

- To get the best out of people and ensure cooperation, now and in the future, acknowledge them.
- Use the human touch. We all respond well when people are friendly, interested, and warm toward us. Show them that what they've said matters to you.
- Smile, nod and make 'I'm listening' noises such as 'um', 'yes' and 'really'
- Using the other person's name early on in the conversation - show them you know who they are.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Verbally - greet people / use their names.
- Visually - attentive looks / gestures.

VIDEO 4 – THE FOUR STAGES OF CHANGE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

This clip will help you understand the different reactions to change.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about a time when they've faced a big change, at work or at home. What was their initial reaction?

Remind the group that there are four classic stages of change:

- **Reject it.** 'This isn't happening', 'I can't do that', 'It will never work'
- **Resist it.** This is a more rational stage, but it's still very negative. We look for reasons to justify our initial, knee-jerk denial. "It'll cost too much. We haven't got the skills. We don't have the equipment."
- **Accept it.** We begin to see that the situation is not as black and white as we had originally thought. Interesting possibilities start to appear. We are able to take a more realistic view of the benefits, as well as the drawbacks, of the change. "This might work. I suppose that would be better than we've got now."
- **Embrace it.** The bright side of change comes to dominate. We see the problems change creates as challenges rather than obstacles. We stop thinking about what we have lost as a result of the change and focus on what we have gained, and will continue to gain in the future. The good old days and the good old ways are seen for what they are – old and not so good after all.

Remember, when your team is faced with the challenges change brings with it, remember that it's your job to help them:

- Believe in their own abilities and in the importance of their work.
- Believe that they can influence what happens when they are faced with change.
- Help them see that where others see problems, they can see opportunities.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Reject.
- Resist.
- Accept.
- Embrace.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR – ACTION PLAN

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BODY LANGUAGE & ASSERTIVENESS

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will help you improve your face-to-face communication skills through effective body language and assertiveness.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Workplace Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

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REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

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FEATURED VIDEOS

- Body language
- Assertive versus aggressive
- Assertive tips

VIDEO 1 – BODY LANGUAGE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

A large part of your job depends upon good communications skills. Some of this may be written communication such as emails and reports, but the majority of it will be face-to-face. A good understanding of body language can help you deal more effectively with colleagues, customers and suppliers.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about how to use body language to help people feel at ease with you.

Responses could include:

- Think about seating, make sure you're not hidden in anyway – remove any obstacles between you and your colleagues or audience.
- Maintain good eye contact as much as you can.
- When addressing important issues, spread your palms up to encourage a positive reaction.
- Use postural echo; that is copying their posture, to create rapport, but be careful not to make this too obvious!
- If someone is looking around obviously disinterested in what you have to say, direct their attention back to you by asking questions.

REMEMBER (2 minutes recap)

DON'T

- Adopt 'status' positions.
- Fold arms defensively.
- Use closed hand gestures.
- Build barriers.

DO

- Use friendly eye-contact.
- Use open hand gestures.
- Echo posture.

VIDEO 2 – ASSERTIVE VERSUS AGGRESSIVE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Assertive behaviour doesn't come naturally to most of us. It requires thought, confidence, and on some occasions, a certain amount of courage. But we can learn how to be assertive. 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, maintains good relationships with our colleagues.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

If you're not a naturally assertive person, what can you do to put yourself in an assertive frame of mind?

Explain to the group that in any situation, behaving assertively begins by thinking positively about how we are going to behave. To do this, think:

- "I'm clear about the issues."
- "I know what I want."
- "I'm going to find out what his or her position is."
- "He or she can be very abrasive, but I'm not going to get into an argument!"

REMEMBER (2 minutes recap)

- Submissive.
- Aggressive.
- Assertive.

VIDEO 3 – ASSERTIVE TIPS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Being assertive is about being honest about what you need, want, feel or believe in a way that's respectful of the views of others. However, many people find it difficult to get the balance right between assertiveness and aggression; especially when they feel their position is under threat. But it's a skill that can be learned, and it's invaluable in the workplace.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

What's the best way to deal assertively with someone who becomes aggressive as a response to criticism?

The first principle of assertiveness is to be honest. That may seem obvious, particularly as no one wants to have the reputation of being dishonest. But, a common sign that people are behaving submissively is when they say:

- "I agree" (when they **don't**)
- "That's a good idea" (when it **isn't**)
- "That went well" (when it **didn't**)

The second key principle of assertiveness is to stick to your bottom line. Decide what is and is not negotiable and stick to it!

- Acknowledge what the other person has said.
- Stick to the original issue.
- Ask relevant questions.
- Use logic, never threats or manipulation.
- Don't reject the person, reject the request.
- Repeat yourself if you need to.

The third principle of assertiveness is communicating as equals:

- Ask relevant questions. Listen to one another.
- Use open, positive body language.
- Test your understanding of the other person's position.
- Suggest solutions and build on each other's suggestions.
- Summarise the agreement to avoid misunderstandings.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Be honest.
- Stick to the bottom line.
- Negotiate as equals.

BODY LANGUAGE & ASSERTIVENESS – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

COMMUNICATING IN WRITING

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will help you write reports and use email productively.

A good report takes minutes to read, holds its value for months and can be made available globally to countless people within any organisation. It can also demonstrate the writer's knowledge of the subject and quality of thinking.

To use email effectively you need to manage your inbox and apply the principles of good communication.

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LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Structuring a report
- Formatting a report
- Email etiquette

VIDEO 1 – STRUCTURING A REPORT

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Most people see report writing as a daunting task but you don't need to be a budding author to write a readable report. Structuring and formatting a report so that people find it easy to read is a skill we can all learn.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about the best way to structure a report so that it's readable?

Being clear about what the report is actually for will help you structure it:

- Gather information and select the relevant points – you don't need to include all the information in the report, so be clear about what the main points are.
- Give the report a logical order: a beginning, middle and an end. And keep it to the point.
- Think about who wants the report and why they want it. Knowing your objectives before you start will help you get a clear picture before you begin.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- List objectives.
- Organise the points.
- Structure the document.

VIDEO 2 – FORMATTING A REPORT

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

It's easy to get carried away and add lots of jargon to a. You might think it will make you look intelligent, but it's more likely no one will read it. Reports have to be readable for your entire audience, not just the few who might be technical whiz kids!

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

How can you strike a balance between making a report readable, whilst including the technical information that's required?

Suggest the following points to the group,

- Above anything else, your report should be readable. This doesn't have to mean dumbing it down; just using shorter words, sentences and paragraphs can make it an easier read.
- Make your report more readable by applying headings, sub headings and using wide space text consistently.
- Include the more technical information in the appendices and add a glossary if you think it needs one.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Avoid jargon: use plain English.
- Make it readable.
- Package the report attractively.

VIDEO 3 – EMAIL ETIQUETTE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Email can be a major distraction at work. Repeatedly checking email interrupts your work and loses focus. Once you've been side-tracked, it takes time and effort to switch gears and get back to what you were doing.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group how they manage the constant barrage of emails?

Suggest the following tips;

- Turn off email alerts during busy times and especially during meetings!
- Set aside specific times during the day to check your email.
- Instead of reading messages several times, deal with each message just once...act on it, file it, delete it or tag it for future action.
- When sending emails, keep them short and simple and write specific subject lines.
- Keep your inbox tidy by classifying emails into different folders.
- Avoid group emails and keep work email for work.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Turn off alerts.
- Make time for emails.
- Organise messages.
- Answer promptly and check before sending.
- Use relevant subject lines.
- Prune emails regularly.
- Use out-of-office.

COMMUNICATING IN WRITING – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

COMMUNICATING ON THE PHONE

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course aims to give you the skills to use the telephone effectively in a business context.

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LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Phone greetings
- Phone skills
- Closing the phone call

VIDEO 1 – PHONE GREETINGS

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

The telephone can be a very powerful communication tool and yet we often overlook its strengths and weaknesses because we are so familiar with it.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think back to a bad call they've experienced with a colleague or customer. What was it that made the call so uncomfortable? How can we improve the way we deal with customers or colleagues over the phone?

Suggest the following points to the group;

Keep it simple

- The greeting you use to answer the phone can set the tone for the whole conversation so keep it simple and professional.
- Good morning/afternoon/evening is a great start, and it's a good idea to say the name of your company too. That way, your callers can be sure that they've reached the right place.

Be positive and polite

- The person you're talking with on the other end of the call doesn't have the contextual benefit of seeing your body language.
- Voice tone can also sometimes be lost through the phone line, so it's important to make sure you speak clearly, positively and politely.
- Smiling really does make a big difference to the sound of our voice.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Answer the call in three rings.
- Put a smile in your voice.
- Introduce yourself.
- Ask if it is convenient.

VIDEO 2 – PHONE SKILLS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

A customer's first impression of you is formed during their first few seconds of contact over the phone, or in person. It's key to engage them, be polite and show you understand and are clearly listening to them.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Think back to a time when you've dealt with a customer or colleague complaining over the telephone. How could you have improved the way you dealt with the call? Suggest the following steps to the group,

Actively listen

- Let them talk through their problems and get it all out of their system.
- As they talk, make indications that you are listening such as "uh huh", "really?", etc.
- Use their name as much as you can.

Allow the client to express their opinions

- Allow them to communicate their feelings however they choose to, without passing judgement.

Be empathetic

- Make sure the customer knows that you understand their frustration and acknowledge any mistakes that have been made.
- Recognise the customer's feelings about the mistakes - that is, how it must have felt to be the customer in this situation.

Know when to ask open or closed questions

- Asking open questions such as how, what and where, signals to the caller that you are taking them seriously.
- Asking closed questions will help you nail down an agreement or establish facts.

Record and repeat

- Ask about the facts and details of the matter at hand to make sure the situation is clear in your own head.
- Show the customer you understand and have taken note of their complaints by repeating what they have said.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Use the caller's name.
- Use active listening.
- Record and repeat information.

VIDEO 3 – CLOSING THE PHONE CALL

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Always end what started off as a bad call with a customer on a positive note, with a clear resolution to the problem and a clear plan you both agree on.

THINK (allow 10 minutes)

Have the group ever ended a call with a supplier, customer or colleague not really having a firm plan in place? How do you leave the caller reassured that a resolution has been made?

Gain agreement on your resolution

- Make sure your client understands what has been done at the end of the call. Even if the issue is not totally resolved, gain agreement on the resolution that was reached.
- Example 1 (total resolution): "So just to confirm, I have walked you through reinstalling your application and now everything works - correct?"
- Example 2 (pending resolution): "So just to confirm, we have decided that your toaster is in need of a repair under warranty and I am sending you a box to ship it back to us - correct?"

Follow up

- Call the customer back to make sure the agreed plan was carried out.
- Check the customer has everything they need from you.

Write a clear, concise report

- Document every major point of the call. It's not important to note every single word uttered, but keep a record of anything that may assist others who deal with the customer in the future.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Agree actions and follow them up.
- Volunteer useful information.
- What happens next?

COMMUNICATING ON THE PHONE – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

DEALING WITH STRESS

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

It is estimated that one third of absence from work is stress related. Other industrial countries report similar findings. Stress represents a very large financial cost to organisations and an equally large personal cost to individuals in the form of physical and behavioural symptoms. This session is all about limiting the factors at work that can lead to damaging stress.

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THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

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ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Stress & exercise
- Stress & prioritisation
- Stress & delegation

VIDEO 1 – STRESS & EXERCISE

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

Pressure is a part of simply being alive; it's positive and drives us towards our goals. However, when the amount of pressure we are experiencing rises above what we believe we can cope with, it can easily turn to stress and that can be a very bad thing.

There is no "answer to a pressure or stress-free life". When pressure spills into stress its effects can be debilitating and potentially life threatening. There are no quick fixes and no pills to take; it's down to you. Look at yourself and how you live your life. Eating a healthy diet, taking regular exercise, and taking time out for yourself can help you battle stress.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss how they deal with stress? Suggest the following points to the group;

- Identify the sources of stress in your life. True sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook stress-inducing thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
- There is no one size fits all solution to stress, but a good start is to focus on what makes you feel calm. This might be a session in the gym for some, a long walk for others or knitting...we're all different. Find something that helps calm your mind. Do something you enjoy every day and make the time to do it.

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health:

Exercise regularly

Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week.

Eat a healthy diet

Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.

Reduce caffeine and sugar

Reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate and sugary snacks in your diet will help you feel more relaxed and sleep better.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs

Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand; deal with problems head on and with a clear mind.

Get enough sleep

Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Exercise regularly.

VIDEO 2 – STRESS & PRIORITISATION

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

When your priorities aren't right, you can cause stress in the workplace. You can reduce your own stress by managing your time and prioritising your workload.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about what you can do to reduce stress in yourself and those around you?

Suggest the following method to the group, in order to learn to prioritise your time. Decide on which tasks are important, urgent, non-important and non-urgent. Use the scaling and important versus urgent models to help:

Scaling from “1-10”

- Prioritizing tasks via a scale from 1 - very important to 10 - unimportant can help you to create a simple to-do-list with the most important tasks at the top of it.
- The advantage is that such a scaled list can be created in short amounts of time, but it also lacks precision.

Important versus urgent

- Important items are activities that help you and your team achieve goals. These will include projects and tasks that contribute to you and your team's success.
- Urgent activities demand immediate attention.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Scale from 1-10.
- Categorise as urgent versus important.

VIDEO 3 – STRESS & DELEGATION

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Believing that you can do your workload better and faster with fewer mistakes without help from anyone else is not only arrogant, but leads to a vicious cycle of too little time and too much to do. Giving your team tasks to help you with your workload will reduce your stress and show that you trust your employees.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Do you often find yourself overwhelmed at work? What's the best way to delegate some of your work to trusted people in your team?

Suggest to the group that they can decide what to delegate and when. Know when you should ask your team to perform certain tasks and make decisions. Once you know which tasks are appropriate to delegate, it's much easier to decide to whom – and how – to delegate.

Base your decisions on:

- **Time** – Give yourself enough time to delegate (through instruction and support). And enough time to make corrections if needed.
- **Availability** – Find people with the necessary skills and expertise to complete the job successfully.
- **Criticality** – Is the work critical to the success of the project or the organisation? High profile tasks that have a low tolerance for mistakes are often better done yourself.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Communicate, don't isolate yourself.
- Delegate.

DEALING WITH STRESS – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

FINANCE & BUDGETS

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Any business needs a thought through set of plans to be successful. There are long term strategic marketing plans, short-term sales plans, production plans...and so on. The critical financial plan is the budget. Even though it is based on forecasts and sophisticated assumptions, it is a commitment. When you make a budget, you commit yourself to a plan or standard of performance upon which lots of other commitments depend.

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REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Constructing a budget
- Coordinating a budget
- Controlling a budget

VIDEO 1 – CONSTRUCTING A BUDGET

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

When you prepare a budget, you work out all the sources of revenue and all the areas of costs; decide what you think you can sell, for how much and what it will cost you to do so. You'll need judgement and consultation. Budgets are based on assumptions and guesses. What other people think is as important as what you think. Good budgeting is as much about the proper handling of people as it is about the proper handling of numbers.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss the best approach to take when constructing a budget.

Suggest to the group that there are 5 important 'don'ts' when constructing budgets;

1. Don't just add x% to last year's figures to arrive at this year's. Circumstances may have changed and past performance is just one guide amongst several.
2. Don't indulge in wishful thinking. "We sold 100 this year, but only 80 last. We'll sell 120 next year to make up." The vital question is what evidence is there? You need more to go on than faith.
3. Don't be deliberately pessimistic, either because you're lazy or you want an easy time, or because you want to be able to show off later and say "Look, I beat my budget".
4. Don't deliberately pad your budget, generating unnecessary expenditure this year because you fear future cut backs.
5. Don't use budgets as political weapons for building empires, taking on excess staff or resources simply to promote the status and importance of your own department.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Set standards.
- Forecast sales / count costs.
- Be realistic.

VIDEO 2 – COORDINATING A BUDGET

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

It would be pointless if each division or department in an organisation simply went off and calculated its own costs, wrote its own mini-budget and then someone lumped them all together to make the master. Budgets have to fit together which demands co-ordination.

THINK (10 minutes)

What's the best way to figure out your limiting factor?

You need to start with your major limiting factor. Think about what yours might be:

- How many can we sell?
- How many can we make?
- What will cash flow allow?

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Consult and co-ordinate with all departments.
- Establish limiting factors.

VIDEO 3 – CONTROLLING A BUDGET

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Having set the standards and got a co-ordinated plan, you have to measure actual performance against it. This is known as 'variance analysis'. A variance is the difference between budgeted and actual performance; a deviation from the standard. It could be positive or negative. Either way, it will have consequences for the budget as a whole and so action must be taken to allow for its effects.

THINK (allow 10 minutes)

Ask the group to discuss what general aspects of controlling budgets they find most difficult?

Ask them to think about the 3 critical steps to controlling budgets;

- First you must **review** actual performance. The frequency with which you need to do this depends on how quickly you need to know about variances in order to do something about them.
- Don't keep secrets about variances – **react** and share the details. If the budget has been properly co-ordinated it can become risky not to keep other people informed.
- **Revise** - take control action as appropriate to either get the budget back onto its original course, or revise the original budget commitments to take account of the new facts.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Review.
- React.
- Revise.

FINANCE & BUDGETS – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.

MANAGING PROJECTS & PROCESSES

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course you will learn about managing projects and controlling quality.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Workplace Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

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THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Defining a project
- Planning a project
- Implementing a project
- Controlling quality

VIDEO 1 – DEFINING A PROJECT

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

One of the pitfalls managers often fall into when defining a project is failing to get their team involved. You employed your team because of their expertise so they're likely to help you spot opportunities and highlight problems you might not have thought of. Plus, if give them a sense of involvement they're more likely to get on board.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about a project they've been involved in. Were they well-defined from the beginning?

If they were, some of the responses should include:

- Define the purpose of the project and select the project team at the outset.
- Check you have the skills and experience in the team to deliver the result you need.
- Bring the whole team together. Share the purpose of the project with everyone. They'll be able to spot problems you might not have thought of and come up with new ideas.
- Making sure the whole team contributes will help them feel committed and involved.
- Put it all down in writing: including the decisions you've made and the risks you've identified.

REMEMBER – (2 minutes to reiterate key learnings)

- Define the project and team.
- Check you have the necessary skills.
- Put it on paper.

VIDEO 2 – PLANNING A PROJECT

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

The success of a project depends on how well it is planned. As a project manager, you're responsible for planning, but you don't have to do this in isolation; your team can help.

THINK (10 minutes)

Ask the group to think of a project they were involved with in the past. How did they (or the project manager) plan the project?

Summarise the responses and set out the following tips;

- Allocate resources for each task – consider the resources in terms of budget, time and people.
- Define the role of each team member – everyone should be clear about their role.
- Define responsibilities – ensure that all responsibilities are clear and agreed.
- Set milestones – important deadlines throughout the project should be marked as milestones.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Write a project plan.
- Allocate resources.
- Set roles and responsibilities.
- Set milestones.

VIDEO 3 – IMPLEMENTING A PROJECT

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

Implementing the project is about monitoring the project as it runs. Involving the whole team can help you keep control as they take ownership of their own progress.

THINK (allow 10 minutes)

Think of a project you've been involved in managing. Once it was up and running, how did you keep it on track?

Responses could include;

Establish good monitoring systems – make sure everyone uses these systems so that everyone knows what everyone else is doing.

- Ensure team members keep each other informed of progress.
- Encourage the team to come forward with any difficulties they're facing – make sure everyone is comfortable about being honest about problems. This will help you deal with them before they escalate.
- If things do go wrong, don't blame people – find solutions you and your team can work with.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Keep everyone informed.
- Don't hide problems.
- Don't blame – correct.

VIDEO 4 – CONTROLLING QUALITY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Quality is one of the most important factors in the success of any organisation. It's essential, not optional, and it's something that, as customers, we all expect from our suppliers. So why is it we often get stuck when we try to deliver total quality to our customers?

THINK (10 minutes)

Think of a time when you've had to deal with a dissatisfied customer. How can quality be improved upon? What are the key benefits?

Summarise the discussion with the following points;

- Remember, an organisation depends on its customers to stay in business. If customers are given 100% quality they are satisfied, sometimes even delighted. They become loyal customers and encourage friends, family and colleagues to become customers as well. That adds up to success and a winning position in the marketplace.
- What about you personally? Apart from the pride and pleasure in working for a winning organisation, there is pride and pleasure in doing a good job – providing a quality service or creating a quality product. And there are other benefits: for example, better working relationships and a greater feeling of involvement.
- Think of the very practical benefits for the organisation too. It costs less to prevent errors than it does to repair the damage later. When everyone is turning out 100% quality (not making errors), productivity increases.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

- Define quality.
- Control quality.
- Communicate quality.

MANAGING PROJECTS & PROCESSES – ACTION PLAN

Remind the group of the key learning points from this session.

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each member of the group to identify one specific action they will take to apply what they have learned when they return to work.

Ask for two or three examples. Bring the session to a close.