21ST CENTURY

SKILLS

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How today's workplace strategies can bridge the culture and approaches of old organizations with the "new" employees?

The answer might come via the "chaordic" leadership approach, a combination of the words chaos and order, meaning a state in between that adapts the principles and properties of both.

Communication

01.

1. Description of Communication

"

Communication is a skill that you can learn. It's like riding a bicycle or typing. If you're willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.

– Brian Tracy

What is Communication?

The origin of the word "communication" is "communicare" or "communis" which means "to impart", "to participate", "to share" or "to make common."

There are many definitions of communication. According to John Adair, "communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and make himself or herself understood". William Newman and Charles Summer define communication as "an exchange of ideas, facts, opinions or emotions of two or more persons".

What is it about?

Communication is more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. We need to be able to convey our message, and also to listen and make the other person feel understood.

Effective communicator should master a number of skills, including:

- Public speaking
- Storytelling
- Non-verbal communication
- Active listening
- Questioning

Why is it important?

Communication is one of the most important tools in order to maintain and develop long-term relations with co-workers, partners and customers. It is important to know when and how to communicate in order to achieve the desired results.

Effective communication is a key characteristic of an effective leader. Leaders are those that inspire and empower, and communication is the best tool to achieve it.

"You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere."

- Lee Iacocca

Which are the benefits of being an effective communicator?

Being able to communicate effectively has a positive influence on both personal and professional life. Some benefits of effective communication include:

Trust
It would be difficult to build it without good communication. Encouraging discussion, communicating sincerely, honestly and regularly helps build credibility. Trust encourages loyalty, enhances teamwork and collaboration, improves engagement and productivity.

Mitigated conflict
Effective communication helps reduce misunderstandings and tension. Although conflict is almost unavoidable and sometimes even healthy as it helps to raise and address problems, we need effective communication in order to manage it.

Productive teamwork
When co-workers are encouraged to get to know each other and feel empowered to express their ideas in an accepting environment, they are much more likely to function well as a team.

Increased job satisfaction
Good communication means less confusion, less uncertainty, higher morale, and in general a better working environment that leads to feeling better at the workplace, and as a result better performance and stronger loyalty.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

1.

Understand and evaluate your communication skills.

The checklist below can help you in this task. If you are a leader of a team or organisation, consider evaluating its communication as well.

2.

Once you decide which communication skills need improvement, prioritise.

Start with the skill that you feel is the least developed and/or that you feel is the most important in your current situation.

3.

Ask for feedback.

Self-assessment is great but we may have some blind spots. To get another perspective, ask your friends or mentors about your communication strengths and weaknesses.

4.

Take action!

Here are a few ideas on how to develop communication skills:

a. Storytelling.

Good stories are engaging and memorable, and help convey a message better than anything else. In business communication, they are used to pitch business ideas, present products and services, increase employee engagement, etc. When you tell a story, make sure it respects the values of your business, is adapted so that it connects to your audience, and has a good structure with an introduction, core and conclusion.

b. Public speaking.

Are you scared of it? Most people are! While it may be difficult to completely get rid of the fear, it is definitely possible to reduce it. Be prepared – know your material very well. Be realistic – what is the worst that could happen? What is the best thing that could happen? Before going on stage, try calming techniques (belly breathing, singing, feeling the ground under your feet) or turn your fear into excitement!

c. Non-verbal communication.

Often our non-verbal communication speaks louder than the words! Pay attention to non-verbal signals – eye contact, body position and posture, gestures, tone of voice. Open body position (no crossed arms) conveys that you are open to listening. Self-confidence is communicated by standing firmly in one place, keeping the shoulders back and weight balanced on both feet. Be careful if somebody's words do not match non-verbal cues, but consider the context and look at signals as a whole – one gesture may mean nothing. By paying a close attention to other people's unspoken communication, you can improve your own.

d. Active listening.

Often argued to be the most important and most under-developed communication skill, attentive listening helps collect the information you need, establish trust, and reduce misunderstandings. When listening try to be fully present, do not interrupt, ask clarifying questions, use body language that shows you are paying attention. To learn more about Active listening, check out the chapter on this skill.

e. Questioning.

If you want to encourage a discussion and go beyond "yes" and "no" answers, it is important to ask the right kind of questions. Starting questions with "who," "what," "where," "when," "how," or "why" lead to answers that people need to think about, and provide more information. Learn more about the importance of questioning, different types of questions and other tips in the chapter on this skill.

5.

Communicate often.

It's like a muscle – the more you use it, the stronger it gets, and vice versa. If natural communication opportunities are not sufficient, deliberately seek or create them. Tell stories to your children or friends, volunteer to speak at events, practice listening skills in various settings.

6.

Encouragement and motivation are important!

If you are working on your own skills, remember why you are doing it and find ways to reward yourself. For team up-skilling, make sure people have motivation and incentives to learn. Cultivate a learning culture, offer customised learning paths, recognise and reward the efforts to learn, and/or make education a reward in itself - education and training opportunities can be presented as incentives.

7.

Measure impact.

To measure the success of your efforts to improve communication, decide what tool you will use and define your indicators. For example, if your aim is to enhance your communication skills in order to improve internal team communication, job satisfaction, productivity, you could use employee satisfaction surveys – measuring their satisfaction with e.g. 6 or 12 month intervals. Have your efforts to become a better listener or storyteller produce desired results? Alternatively, repeat the self-assessment that you've done before starting on your skills improvement journey, and compare the results.

Case studies

Patagonia – successful communication of business values

The case

This case study teaches us how to use communication for business success.

The challenge

Patagonia mission statement says "Make the best product, cause no unneces-sary harm, and use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environ-mental crisis." Sustainability may be one of your values and business practices, how can you communicate it and enhance your business results? One of the main reasons of Patagonia's success is that they live up to their values, e.g. on Black Friday 2016 they donated 100% of their store and online sales (10 million USD) to local environmental programmes.

The result

The action was well communicated through company's own channels, as well as many online articles, thus increasing exposure, customer loyalty and a high number of new environmentally conscious customers.

Walt Disney – storytelling to create special customer relationships

The case

This case study teaches us the power of storytelling and exploiting a compa-ny's strengths to build customer relationships.

The challenge

Story has always been at the heart of everything Disney did. They realised that a good relationship with the customers was a way to success, and that evok-ing emotions could achieve the desired relationship. Different from most other businesses, they always started with a story/ movie and then created other products around it.

The result

The Walt Disney Company says "we at Disney can maintain our position as a trusted brand that offers high-quality family entertainment with a specific set of values, as long as we are flexible, consider new ways to meet the ever-changing needs of consumers, and most importantly — keep the art of magical storytell-ing at the heart of everything we do". Could your company use storytelling and create related products in a way similar to Disney, or will storytelling enhance your existing products/ services?

 Practice

1. Craft the story of your business

What's the story of your business? What do you tell your employees, customers, partners or investors? Try using the 5-part structure to create a short but memorable story:

- Opening (e.g. "3 years ago…")
- Rising action (e.g. "But one day…")
- Climax (e.g. "Until finally…")
- Falling action/ transformation (e.g. "Because of that…")
- Ending/ conclusion (e.g. "And that is why…")

2. Adapt your message

Think about a specific audience you will be speaking to, and tailor your presentation. Focus on what's important to your audience and you. Make them want to listen! The following questions will help adapt your message:

- Who is your audience?
- Why should they care about what you want to tell them?
- What do they already know about the topic?
- How do they like to receive information?
- What is your desired outcome?

3. Play some games to improve the communication skills of your team:

https://futurumcareers.com/ten-simple-games-to-improve-your-communication-skills

Tips & tricks

How to improve communication of a team

- **Leader sets the tone** – how they communicate affects everybody in the team or organisation. Ask for your team members opinions and ideas and listen attentively, encourage and respect feedback, be visible and available. Show an example on how to communicate company's vision and values both inside and outside the team.

- **Plan bonding time** – from daily 15-minute check-in meetings, to annual retreats – create a set of different get-together activities that works for your team. The daily meeting can also happen in a form of a video call, but when possible include face-to-face events to really get to know each other and develop deeper connections.

- **Offer learning opportunitie**s to improve and practice communication skills. In addition to more formal learning, encourage everyone to speak during the meetings, consider mentoring to pass the experience of senior staff to new members.

How to enhance your own communication skills

- **Think about your audience** when you are deciding on a communication channel and your message. What is your relationship? How do they like to communicate? Would they prefer an email or a meeting?

- **Observe the way you speak to people.** Clear, thoughtful and respectful communication can make a difference in your business.

- **Pay attention to non-verbal signs** – body language, including your own. Only a very small part of our communication is represented by verbal information exchange. The rest is body language, voice tone, energy level.

- **Invest in yourself** - put effort in practicing communication skills – listening, storytelling, pitching - and ask for feedback from your partners and colleagues.

Check out the signs of a good communicator: here.

How to enjoy public speaking

- **Open your mind to the possibility of loving public speaking!** If you believe that you hate public speaking, ask yourself if there is a possibility of doubting that belief.

- **Think of it as telling a good story to a group of people.** Telling stories is what many of us enjoy!

- **When you get to speak in public, approach it with the spirit of gratitude**! Be grateful for the opportunity to help or inspire your audience.

- **Think about how to start and end your speech** – intrigue your audience

- **Pay attention to body language** – stand straight, maintain eye contact, smile

- **Practice speaking clearly and at a medium pace** – not too fast, not too slow

- **Learn proper breathing** – diaphragmatic/belly breathing makes voice sound better, and also reduces anxiety

- **Speak from your heart!** If you are passionate about it, you will like sharing it with others.

- **Embrace your vulnerability and speak your truth** – it's worth it! Being vulnerable takes courage and makes people listen.

- **Be yourself!**

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the communication dimension of your team.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Communication skills			
I have evaluated my communication skills, understand my strengths and weaknesses and know how to work on them.			
I often practice and enjoy public speaking.			
I understand the power of storytelling and use it in public presentations and in communication with my team.			
I know when and how to ask questions.			
I understand and practice active listening.			
I pay attention to the non-verbal signals of other people and know how to interpret them.			
I am well aware of my own body language and use it to reinforce my message.			
Team spirit and communication			
I encourage my team members to share their ideas and feedback.			
There is open communication among my team members.			
Team members take time to listen to others and show empathy.			
Team members trust and respect each other.			
We have regular and sufficient meetings and teambuilding activities.			
Development opportunities			
We have identified and actively pursue learning opportunities to improve the communication skills of the team.			
Our team has established mentoring practices and/or other ways to help new members of the team develop their communication skills.			
Improvement of communication skills is periodically evaluated and rewarded.			

COMMUNICATION

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- How good are your communication skills? Take a quiz
- Virtual Speech – VR courses
- Practice your presentations with the free public speaking app

Useful links
- 7 signs you could be a great public speaker
- 7 Ways to Communicate Better with Your Coworkers

Videos
- The 110 techniques of communication and public speaking. David JP Phillips, TEDxZagreb, February 1, 2019
- How to speak so that people want to listen. Julian Treasure, TED, 2014
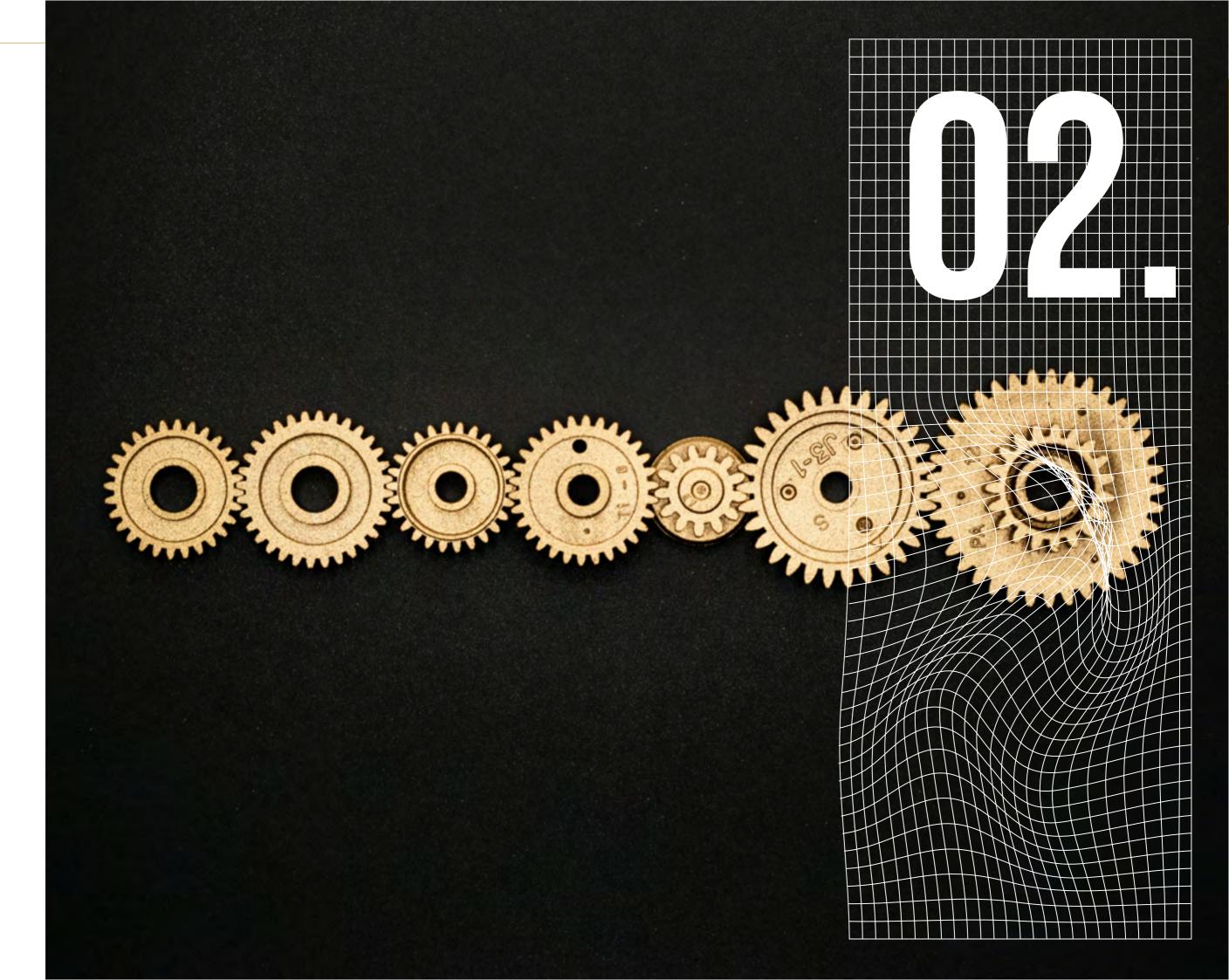
Articles
- Communication Is the Key
- Essential tips for Business Storytelling
- Good Leadership Is About Communicating "Why"

Books
- Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High – Kerry Patterson
- 21 Days of Effective Communication: Everyday Habits and Exercises to Improve Your Communication Skills and Social Intelligence – Ian Tuhovsky
- Building a StoryBrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen – Donald Miller

Teamwork

02.

1. Description of Teamwork

What is Teamwork?

A team is a collection of people working together with a shared purpose. Successful teams have a clearly defined purpose and are usually led by an effective leader. This could be you or another person in your company who is capable of leading a team.

Teamwork is the art of getting your team to work together effectively. Only when all members of your team are pulling in the same direction you can unlock their potential. Good teamwork starts with a shared understanding of the importance of the task.

Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people.

- Steve Jobs

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

- Henry Ford

A challenging business climate needs to be engaged by effective teamwork. It provides an opportunity to come together and establish a common ground for the fulfilment of specific objectives. Empathy, appreciation and encouragement are some of the critical ingredients of effective teamwork.

On individual level, teamwork skills are the qualities and abilities that allow you to work well with others during conversations, projects, meetings or other collaborations. Having teamwork skills is dependent on your ability to communicate well, actively listen and be responsible and honest.

Why is it important?

On individual level you will be required to work alongside others in every industry at every level in your career. Doing so in an empathetic, efficient and responsible manner can help you accomplish career goals, grow your resume and contribute positively to your organization. It can also help you build rapport with others.

For an organisation, teamwork is an effective method to innovate and upgrade operational strategies. A team is a group of people that gathers together to achieve a common goal. The power of one person is small, but if you are integrated into the team, you can maximize the personal value and achieve excellence. Knowing the value of teamwork in your company can help you to effectively manage various policy issues, from learning development to workplace culture.

Which are the benefits of teamwork?

Teambuilding is the first step towards effective teamwork.

This step in itself already generates interesting benefits such as: building trust and mitigating conflicts; reduce stress; improve attitudes; encourage communication and increase collaboration. All these are the basics for effective teamwork.

Teamwork creates synergy.

The common result of a good team is bigger than the sum of each individual's result.

Teamwork improves morale by promoting a sense of ownership.

It allows employees to take greater responsibility for decision making and also allows team members to control more of the work process. The extra responsibility can lead to a more rewarding work environment and lower turnover. Working on a team also gives employees a greater sense of belonging and recognition, which helps them take more pride in their work, and their company.

Teamwork builds trust and enhances relationships.

In workplaces where teamwork isn't consistent, establishing groups helps to build stronger relationships between employees and lets individuals learn to work through a disagreement. Establishing teams, even when they aren't necessary, creates an environment where workers continue to take pride in independent accomplishments while also celebrating the contributions of co-workers.

Teamwork increases the flexibility of the organisation.

Teamwork can help companies to be more flexible. By bringing employees from different parts of a project together into one team, problems or bottlenecks can sometimes be ironed out more easily.

Teamwork fosters creativity and innovation.

Some companies use teams and teamwork to create a work environment which excels at creativity. These companies sometimes base their corporate structure almost entirely around teamwork, where staff are hired into general work areas and then chosen to work on projects that best match their skills and interests. Leaders are appointed, and there is no chain of command or leadership hierarchy.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

In your role as manager or team leader, you are recommended to take the following steps:

1.

Get the right people on board.

First, you need to think, what are the skills and competences you need in your team. Selecting the right team members does not automatically mean selecting the most qualified person, but selecting the optimal mix between the best person (based on qualification and experience) and best fit of the person for the team (in terms of complementarity and added value). Individual traits and characteristics are to be taken into account as well. As said, it is not about bringing the most qualified person on board but making the sum of an individuals work properly.

A team needs members with different strengths, abilities and even weaknesses. Successful teams benefit from the different thinking/acting, relation and action oriented characteristics and attitudes of its members.

2.

Teambuilding.

Once the team members have been identified, the next step towards effective teamwork is building the team. Teambuilding is the process of encouraging members of a group to work well together, for example by having them take part in activities or games. Teambuilding is not focused on individuals. It reveals talents and feelings of individuals and provides an understanding of their relevance to team productivity. The main goal of team-building is to improve productivity and motivation. The benefits of teambuilding programs are so significant that many organisations have incorporated teambuilding strategies into their standard training curriculum. Effective teambuilding means more engaged employees, which is good for company culture and boosting the bottom line. Your team learns how to work together towards team goals.

3.

Define the goals.

Even if the goals or objectives for the team have been set, you should have an open discussion on what these mean and how these more general ones are broken into more specific objectives with the related targets. All the members need to have a common understanding of what the overall strategic goal of the team is and what the operational goals are. Make sure the goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based.

4.

Assign roles and responsibilities.

Once the team has been selected and teambuilding has taken place it is time to start working towards the team's goals. Bearing in mind the team members' personal characteristics, skills and competences.

5.

Monitor & evaluate.

Based upon the operation goals, you as a team will have set specific targets (time, KPIs, etc) which will allow you to measure progress towards the objectives. Make sure that the processes, procedures and tools are properly defined and implemented, and more importantly that all team members understand the importance of using them.

On individual level you can also develop your own teamwork abilities and improve them, this is important as you need teamwork skills as an individual to become an effective team leader or manager. You can take the following steps:

1.

Get honest feedback.

It can be difficult to identify your own areas of improvement. Finding a trusted friend, colleague or mentor that can offer you honest feedback about your teamwork strengths and weaknesses can help you improve them.

2.

Set personal goals.

Using both your own observations and feedback from others to form achievable, relevant and time-constrained goals can help you improve one teamwork skill at a time.

3.

Practice.

It takes time and practice to see improvements in your skill set. Pay close attention to your teamwork interactions throughout the day both in and out of work. Take mindful steps to practice the specific qualities you are trying to build.

4.

Mimic others with strong teamwork skills.

When you see examples of great teamwork, take note and identify why the interaction stood out to you. Apply those qualities in your own interactions when working with others.

TEAMWORK

Case studies

Go Ape Step Up Their Team Building Game

The case

Go Ape is the UK's number one forest adventure found in 31 of the UK's most breath taking locations. Days out at Go Ape are about living life more adventurously, having fun, and spending time with friends.

The challenge

The company needed to engage more effectively with the rising number of corporate enquiries they were receiving.

The result

The company in cooperation with consultant BlueSky decided to implement Team Building days at 10 of their sites. The activities were rolled out to the sales, marketing, and operational teams as part of the onboarding process. These teams enjoyed taking part in the team building programme and the operational teams equally enjoy delivering these to their clients. The games were simple, but extremely effective in getting teams to really think, and get them working together instantly to problem solve. Go Ape plans to roll this programme out to more of their sites across the UK and indicates that the return on investment has been very quick.

DATEV eG has improved teamwork, communication and performance by putting individuals at the centre of its approach

The case

DATEV is a software company and IT service provider for tax consultants, accountants and lawyers, and was established as a co-operative in 1966 and now has over 40,000 members. Since 2005, a growing number of employees have received their own Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile, it is considered by HR and management as important tool in helping improve teamwork, communication and performance.

The challenge

It is vital to the culture of DATEV that this is always on a voluntary basis. However, some employees are sometimes sceptical when faced with the proposal of a Team Management workshop and receiving their own Team Management Profile. They expect psychological tests or vague, unclear.

The result

The HR team starts by explaining the concepts and theory and the positive approach and questions about work preferences. It also highlights that the Team Management Profile acts as a friendly mirror: you look into it and find out that you're OK as you are. The teams are then asked to solve the Marshmallow Challenge. This involves building a tower using twenty strands of spaghetti, string and adhesive tape and placing a marshmallow on the top. As a result of the exercise the teams are often surprised to see how clearly their individual preferences are revealed. As soon as employees have read their Profiles, they are astonished at how accurately they describe their work preferences and understand how it was possible for conflicts to arise in the team in the past. This approach not only generated an improvement in the teamwork but also generated a more positive attitude towards the profile and make a longer term impact as employees were mere open to use the profile as part of their daily teamwork.

Practice

Team roles

Watch this video on Belbin's Team Roles, and try to identify those roles in your team.

Answer the following questions:

- Does your team have thinkers, relation/people oriented or action oriented members?
- Which team roles are important when starting my project?
- Which team roles become more important when getting close to the achievement and realisation of the objectives of my project?

The mission

In this activity, team members have to imagine that they are working for the secret service and have a very important job to do. They are in charge of keeping secret some very important information that is contained within a very fragile container. They must design a method to transport the secret information out of the building and to safety.

The only way to save the information is to **drop the information out of the window to safety.** BUT remember that the secret information is kept safely in a very fragile container, and... the container must not break or crack as the information will leak out.

Activity information

- The container is an egg
- The egg will be dropped from an upstairs window
- The egg cannot crack or break or the secret information will leak out!
- Teams have some materials to help them:
  – newspaper
  – string
  – plastic bags
  – sellotape
  – paper clips
  – paper

Divide the participants into small groups of three to five people and give them the resources. They have 15 minutes to use the resources to develop and create an idea that will be able to drop the egg from the window onto the ground without breaking the egg. Once the time is up, they will have to test the ideas by dropping the egg out of an upstairs window and seeing if it survived, or if it splats on the floor!

Tips & tricks

Teambuilding combines learning and fun

The most successful, memorable team-building events are ones that don't feel like a day at the office. Spending time together, sharing an experience or working towards a common goal allows bonding to happen more organically and far more effectively.

It turns out that happiness and learning are tied very closely together. Trying new things with your staff can generate positive vibes among employees, which in turn benefits the business itself. Choosing something unique and slightly outside of people's comfort zones can encourage them to come together in new ways. Don't come up with 'out of the box' activities like going to the sauna or 'reading toes', since people simply don't want to share such activities with their colleagues.

Teamwork is fostered and nurtured

Teamwork isn't something that we can forcefully impose upon our workers. Instead, good teamwork will naturally occur when there is a healthy workplace culture, where employees are treated as individuals and open communication is celebrated. Adapt to your environment, follow the latest trends and don't stick to management principles that were effective 100 years ago. You need to invest in your personnel in order to create the most satisfying, effective and functional team, which you need to collaborate and function at their maximum level, which leads to optimal results regarding your business performance. Find below a few tips on how to ensure a teamwork climate in the workplace;

1.	Encourage Informal Social Events	6.	Establish Effective Communications
2.	Clarify Roles within the team	7.	Celebrate Individuality
3.	Specify Goals	8.	Get Feedback From Everyone
4.	Reward Excellent Teamwork	9.	Hire Wisely
5.	Don't Micro-manage	10.	Organise team-building events

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess your teamwork skills and your team leadership

Teamwork skills (individual)	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
I'm reliable by doing what I promise to do			
When I have an idea that will help our team, I speak up and share it			
I cheer for other members of my team and find ways to be helpful			
I show respect for my group's leader or coach			
I'm honest and tactful when someone asks for my opinion			
When I make a mistake, I stay optimistic and try to learn from it			
I'm friendly and courteous with competing people and teams			
I listen carefully to others' ideas, even if I don't agree with them			
I have a positive attitude and stay focused on doing my best			
I practice, so I'm prepared to contribute to the group's goals			
I share the spotlight instead of always trying to be the star			
I'm flexible if the group wants to make a change or try doing something in a new way			

Gives yourself 3 points for every time you indicated often, 2 points for sometimes and 1 point for rarely
36-28 points: You're definitely a positive team player. Way to support and encourage your group!
27-20 points: Your cooperative skills are starting to shine through. Keep up the good work.
19-12 points: You've made it through teamwork tryouts. Add some skills to boost your score.

Team leadership	Strongly Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 4	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Delegating work to others comes easy to me					
Communicating clearly with others is easy to me					
I enjoy engaging with other people on an interpersonal level					
I am proactive in offering constructive criticism					
I place a high value on treating others fairly					
Seeking advice from others is something I do often					
Change energizes me					
Problem-solving is one of my strengths					
I am comfortable with being a role model					
Working as part of a team energizes me					
I am comfortable coaching and mentoring others					
Directing the work of others is comfortable for me					
I have the ability to set and accomplish goals					
I enjoy implementing new methods and strategies					

Team leadership	Strongly Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 4	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
I am proactive in providing praise to others					
I am comfortable admitting and correcting my own mistakes					
I have strong conflict management skills					
Diversity and inclusion are important to me					
I enjoy really listening to what others have to say					
When I see problems, I immediately look for possible solutions					

Please note this is a self-assessment based on your own perception of how much you agree with these statements. It is not a true indicator of aptitude, nor does it necessarily reflect how others see you.
What does your score mean?
50+: If your grand total score is 50 or above, this indicates you see yourself as having many of the skills and tendencies necessary to succeed in a leadership role. It may also indicate a leadership role (formal or informal) appeals to you.
49-: If your grand total score 49 or lower, you do not currently perceive yourself as having strengths in key areas skills and abilities associated with success in a leadership role.. This may mean that a leadership role is not particularly appealing to you, or it may simply serve to help you identify areas where improvement may be needed before seeking out a leadership position.
Use this assessment to help you identify your leadership strengths (items with the highest numeric scores) and opportunities for growth (items with the lowest numeric scores). From there, create an action plan.
Answer the following questions:
1. What are your greatest leadership strengths?
2. What are your opportunities for growth as a leader?
3. How can you capitalize on your strengths?
4. What can you do to improve in areas where you have opportunities for growth?

Resources for further reading

Teambuilding activities
- https://www.workamajig.com/blog/team-building-activities
- https://snacknation.com/blog/team-building-activities-for-work/
- https://www.projectmanager.com/training/team-building-activities

Videos
- Good teamwork & bad teamwork
- Teamwork can make a Dreamwork
- 5 Tips For Effective Teamwork
- How to turn a group of strangers into a team

Articles
- http://www.forbes.com/sites/brianscudamore/2016/03/09/why-team-building-is-the-most-important-investment-youll-make/#4f5f6d437f02
- https://www.mnsu.edu/diversity/institute/35-36_why_teambuilding.pdf
- http://www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/benefits-of-teambuilding/
- http://greatresultsteambuilding.net/why-teambuilding/
- https://www.wrike.com/blog/team-building-games/
- http://www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/free-team-building-activities/

Books
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable. Author: Patrick Lencioni
- The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups. Author: Daniel Coyle.
- Revolutionize Teamwork: How to Create and Lead Accountable Teams. Author: Eric Coryell
- Reimagining Collaboration: Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and the Post-COVID World of Work. Author: Phil Simon
- You Are The Team: 6 Simple Ways Teammates Can Go From Good To Great. Author: Michael G. Rogers

Problem-Solving

03.

1. Description of Problem-Solving

What is Problem-Solving?

Problem-solving involves diagnosing the possible causes of a problem and developing an action plan that solves that problem. People use problem-solving skills all the time, both in their personal and professional lives. Effective problem-solving in the workplace often requires following a step-by-step process and using a designated problem-solving framework.

" *We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.*

If I had only one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem, and only five minutes finding the solution.

– Albert Einstein

What is it about?

Problem solving is at the core of human evolution. It is the methods we use to understand what is happening in our environment, identify things we want to change and then figure out the things that need to be done to create the desired outcome. Problem solving is the source of all new inventions, social and cultural evolution, and the basis for market-based economies. It is the basis for continuous improvement, communication and learning.

Why is it important?

Problem-solving is important both to individuals and organizations because it enables us to exert control over our environment:

1. **Fixing things that are broken:** Personal and business environments are full of things, activities, interactions and processes that are broken or not operating in the way they are desired to work. Problem-solving gives us a mechanism for identifying these things, figuring out why they are broken and determining a course of action to fix them.

2. **Addressing risk:** Problem-solving can be applied to the anticipated future events and used to enable action in the present to influence the likelihood of the event occurring and/or alter the impact if the event does occur.

3. **Improving performance:** Problem-solving helps us understand relationships and implement the changes and improvements needed to compete and survive in a continually changing environment.

4. **Seizing opportunity:** Problem solving is also about innovating, creating new things and changing the environment to be more desirable. Problem-solving enables us to identify and exploit opportunities in the environment and exert (some level of) control over the future.

Which are the benefits of being a problem-solver?

Your ability to solve problems effectively comes from experience facing and overcoming obstacles. Each time you solve a problem you get a little better leader:

You learn to anticipate problems

Effective team leaders anticipate problems, knowing that problems are inevitable. Although it is important always to keep a positive attitude, planning for the worst will place you in a position to solve the problems that you encounter.

You learn to accept the truth

There are different ways that people respond to problems. Some refuse to accept the problem, others accept the problem and just put up with it. Effective leaders are those that accept the problem and try to make things better. To be an effective leader you have to face up to the reality of a situation.

You see the Big Picture

It is essential that team leaders must always keep the big picture in mind. As a team leader, you cannot afford to be overwhelmed by emotion nor get so bogged down by details that you lose sight of what is important.

You handle One Thing at a Time

Tackle your problems, one problem at a time. Do not get overwhelmed by the sheer volume of your problems and then try and dabble at problem-solving. If you are facing a lot of problems, fully solve the one you are working on before moving to the next.

You do not give up a major goal when you are down

Effective leaders make major decisions during a positive swing in their leadership and not during dark times. Never give up while you are going through the valley.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

Finding solutions to problems is an essential element of any leader's role. As a result, being a self-assured problem solver is critical to your success. It necessitates a high level of emotional intelligence as well as the ability to deal with unfavorable reactions. Here are some pointers for honing your problem-solving abilities:

2.
Develop empathy.

Active listening is the first step in developing empathy. To genuinely understand someone, you must put yourself in their shoes and try to comprehend their situation.

3.
Don't pose as someone else.

Forgetting key information or opinions isn't the answer. Your research and reasoned analysis should allow you to articulate which strategy is preferable and why.

4.
Improve communication skills.

As previously said, being truthful does not imply being nasty or inconsiderate to others' feelings. To effectively interact with others, one must continually adjust and improve communication abilities.

1.
Improve your attention span.

It's a problem when people can't listen. Paying attention to what's being said can provide vital insights. It's possible that the other person sees something you don't, or values something differently.

5.
Be adaptable and curious.

The ability to adapt to new situations is a great asset while solving problems. Because these skills are rare in other professionals, it's vital to develop them.

6.
Expect the worst.

A problem has implications, and there are various solutions, each with a unique conclusion. Don't dismiss or deny their existence. Choose the choice with the most relevant implications for the scenario.

7.
Choose if you want to find solutions or problems.

An event's termination may be referred to as a solution to a problem produced by it. Even if you cure a problem, it may reoccur. Solving a problem means correcting or seeking to eradicate its source.

8.
Examine the vehicle's interior.

Instead of criticizing others, examine your involvement in the situation. Stop contributing to the situation by understanding and controlling your own emotions and behaviors.

Case studies

Pan-African Banking Institution Drives Digital Transformation with Leadership Development, 35 African countries

The case

One of the largest banking groups in Africa had expanded its footprint through acquisitions. Shifting industry dynamics meant that the group had to move swiftly to integrate businesses and adopt key technologies, and to meet growing customer demands for digital banking services. Acceleration of growth would require building the best banking platform in Africa.

The challenge

While the bank had a Leadership Academy that provided development to managers, traditional approaches to leadership development would no longer meet the organization's needs. The Leadership Academy needed an updated approach that was business-focused, with the ability to provide managers with an agile mindset and upskill them to drive innovation and digital transformation.

The result

With the problem-solving process they followed they came out with out-of-the-box solutions and finally the training effort improved participants' leadership abilities, gave them a deeper understanding of the bank's strategy, and empowered them to execute on the company's digital transformation strategy.

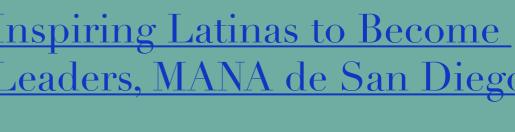## Inspiring Latinas to Become Leaders, MANA de San Diego

The case

A few years ago, MANA de San Diego decided to do more to help Latinas advance in their careers and serve their communities as latinas are underrepresented in business, civic, and government leadership.

The challenge

These women are often the first in their families to pursue upward mobility. They may lack role models and mentors to help them prepare for and navigate their careers. They often put family first and play a supporting role in the background. MANA wanted to empower Latinas to set ambitious goals, communicate more purposefully, achieve more professionally, and become business and community leaders.

The result

With the problem-solving process they followed they created a unique leadership program that is transformational. Latinas come away with the confidence and skills to achieve more ambitious professional goals. Beyond individual successes, MANA focuses on driving social and economic well-being, as empowered Latinas become community leaders.

Practice

Problem solving group activities & games

Problem-solving activity/game	Best for...	What is it?	Further information
Virtual Code Break	Remote teams	Using a smart video conferencing solution, virtual teams compete against each other to complete challenges, answer trivia questions, and solve brain-busters!	Virtual Code Break
Letting Go Game	Small teams	Is a game of meditation and mindfulness training for helping teammates thrive under pressure and reduce stress in the problem-solving process. The tasks of the Letting Go Game boost resiliency, attentiveness, and collaboration.	Letting Go Game
Stranded	In-person teams	Stranded is the perfect scenario-based problem-solving group activity. The doors of the office are locked and obviously your team can't just knock them down or break the windows.	Stranded
What Would You Do?	Distributed teams	Is the hypothetical question game that gets your team talking and brainstorming about what they'd do in a variety of fun, intriguing, and sometimes, whacky scenarios	What would you do?
Crack the case	Remote teams	Crack The Case is a classic WhoDoneIt game that forces employees to depend on their collective wit to stop a deadly murderer dead in his tracks! Remote employees and office commuters can join forces to end this crime spree.	Crack the case

Tips & tricks

Use these ten creative tips to improve problem-solving skills, develop more strategic ways of thinking, and train your brain to do more.

1. **Dance:** Dancing has a positive impact on neural processing and may help to build new cerebral routes to bypass dopamine-depleted brain bottlenecks, according to research published in the journal Neuron. Performing more improvisational dance styles like hip-hop or tap may help you develop divergent thinking (the ability to come up with various solutions to a problem).

2. **Play logic games:** Logic puzzles and games like Rubik's Cube are great for exercising your brain. When playing chess, Sudoku, or other brain-boosting activities, the winning method involves working the problem backward, not forward. Practice logic puzzles and other games to hone your problem-solving skills and strengthen your brain.

3. **Exercise to Music:** Patients in cardiac rehabilitation were examined on their verbal fluency after working out to music or without it. The results showed that those who worked out while listening to music improved significantly more than those who worked out in silence on verbal fluency tests.

4. **Keep an "Idea Journal"** with you at all times so you can jot down essential thoughts, write down personal experiences, do sketches, and explore new ideas.

5. **Practice Yoga:** Studies demonstrate that combining bodily awareness, breathing, and meditation during yoga practice improves cognitive performance.

6. **Follow the Cheerios Effect:** It is the name given by physicists to what happens when the final few cheerios in a bowl cling to each other constantly. Because of surface tension, it happens. Takeaway: If you're feeling stressed out while trying to solve a problem, lean on individuals who are close to you for support. Put your faith in other people, especially those in very different sectors of work. Make a chain of connections.

7. **Brainstorm:** Cooperate with one another to complete the project. In order to better visualize the problem, use Mind Maps, a visual picture of the issue and alternative solutions. Mind Maps help focus the mind, stimulate brain activity and enhance creative thinking. They also produce new ideas for solutions. In mind mapping, your problem should be the central concept. Consider adding "major branches" that include all of the possible causes of the issue. Make use of "sub-branches" to learn more.

8. **Create "Phycological Distance":** It's important to create it in order to achieve this goal. According to the Construal Level Theory (CLT), it's "anything that we don't experience as occurring now, here and to ourselves." You can do this by considering the situation from another person's point of view or by dismissing it as implausible. Increasing the mental distance between ourselves and our problem increases the number of inventive solutions, according to research. Scientists have found this. Increasing our capacity to solve problems occurs when we think more abstractly, which allows us to make unexpected connections between seemingly unrelated topics.

9. **Play Soccer:** A link has been found between our brain's "executive functions" and sports success. When we're engaged in an activity, our brains quickly switch between moving, anticipating, scheming, reacting, and performing. The amount of mental energy required to accomplish all of these tasks at once is huge. When we plan, reason, watch our actions, and solve problems at the same time in our professional lives, this can be compared to this. The conclusion is that if you play fast-moving sports such as soccer, you are retraining your brain to think, process and react faster to situations.

Checklist before I get started

Start with the Action Checklist (2) in order to follow a structured problem-solving process.

Action checklist

1. Define and understand the problem

When notified of a problem, look into what went wrong. Use routine statistics data, progress meetings, recommendation schemes, reports and feedback to pinpoint the issue.

2. Assess the scale of the problem

Determine the problem's urgency. Is it urgent, or can it wait weeks, months, or even years? Consider whether a quick fix ('fix-it') or an optimum solution ('do-it') is required. This will decide the problem's scope and remedy.

3. Gather relevant information

Gather the critical facts by asking the right questions of the right people, namely the what, why, how, where, who, and when?
- What is the problem?
- What is not a problem?
- Where is the problem located?
- Where is the problem not located?
- Why is the problem occurring?
- When is the problem in evidence?
- When is the problem not in evidence?
- Who is affected by it?
- Who is not affected by it?
- What is different about those affected?
- What things are affected by the problem?
- What things are not affected? e.g., machine capacity.

4. Identify the root causes

Asking the right questions will help to identify the cause:
- When did the problem first occur?
- What changed?
- What changes might be relevant?

5. Test the hypothesis

Work out a hypothesis to test exactly what you're looking for and how you'll know whether you're right. Review the data you gathered in steps 1-4 to see if the reason matches up well with how, where, when, and who the issue affects.

6. Involve others

Don't think you have to solve every issue. Determine who is responsible and delegate as needed. This may entail hiring expertise or enlisting help. Hold a brainstorming session to explore all options.

Action checklist

7. Consider the proposed solution(s)

Don't be fooled by quick fixes. There may be several solutions, some more suited than others. It's time to move on from problem analysis to decision-making. Consider the outcomes of your problem-solving decisions.
- Will the proposed solution just push the problem further down the line?
- What could go wrong?
- What impact, if any, will the proposed solution have on other areas?
- And how serious would the consequences be?

Even if 'best' just means 'better than the others', keep in mind that there may not be an optimal option.

8. Test the proposed solution

The idea must be tested. This can be done mentally or physically.
- Mentally test the theory by creating various scenarios and comparing the results.
- Or, if possible, test the solution in a real-world scenario.
- When you are pleased with the solution's performance, create a plan with a time-table of actions, who is responsible for what, and when.

9. Champion your decision

Your recommended solution will likely necessitate resources to implement within the company. Choose a manner of presenting facts that others can understand e.g. SWOT analysis. Promote your concept confidently to make it happen.

10. Monitor the results

A problem is only solved when the solution is successfully implemented. Keep an eye on the findings and reassess the situation to avoid future issues. Keep testing and reviewing its performance to ensure it remains the best option.

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- https://snacknation.com/blog/problem-solving-activities-for-teams/
- https://the-happy-manager.com/article/problem-solving-activity/

Useful links
- https://asq.org/quality-resources/problem-solving
- https://instagantt.com/project-management/what-is-problem-solving-definition-and-examples

Videos
- Making the Connection, Jack ReVelle, ASQ Fellow and author
- Making Ideas Visible: The key to 21st Century Problem Solving

Articles
- One Good Idea: Some Sage Advice
- Diagnostic Quality Problem Solving: A Conceptual Framework And Six Strategies
- Weathering The Storm
- The Right Questions
- Solving the Problem

Books
- Root Cause Analysis: The Core of Problem Solving and Corrective Action
- The Quality Toolbox
- Introduction To 8D Problem Solving: Including Practical Applications and Examples

Critical Thinking

04.

1. Description of Critical Thinking

What is Critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the disciplined mental activity of evaluating arguments or propositions and making judgments that can guide the development of beliefs and taking action[1].

It is based on the ability to judge the credibility of sources, to evaluate arguments, and distinguish among facts and opinions. The Critical Thinking process happens on the base of information and data obtained from various sources. Then, the individual can interpret and synthetize information to take informed decisions and draw conclusions.

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.

- Francis Bacon

What is it about?

The process of critical thinking is characterized by universal values, such as precision, clarity, accuracy, consistence, relevance, rightness, depth, extent and impartiality.

Opinion formation is based on a careful and systematic analysis of other people's opinions and views. The analysis' result is a basis for developing one's own opinions, instead of uncritical acceptance of other people's beliefs and judgements.

As the complexity of the world seems to increase at an accelerating rate, there is a greater tendency to become passive absorber of information. Critical thinking will help you to actively making personal choices about what to accept and what to reject[2].

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1   W. Huitt, "Critical Thinking: An overview," in Revision of papaer presented at the Critical Thinking Conference, Gordon College, Barnedville, GA, 1998.

2   M. N. Browne and S. Keeley, "Asking the right questions: A guide to critical thinking," Prentice Hall, Mahwah, NJ, 1997.

Why is it important?

Critical thinking develops skills of logical thinking, active acquisition of knowledge, reasoning, and interpretation possibilities. Another important element of building the critical thinking is solid learning of rhetoric, logic, and linguistics elements.

Individuals, but also organizations can respond to a change in two ways. The response can be reactive – as a reaction for a specific change, or proactive – preceding a change. Organizations which analyze data coming from the environment in a critical way can successfully apply the proactive approach.

"We discuss the case, the situation and we formulate the problems and together as a multi-disciplinary team we come up with the decision."

- Counselling psychologist, NGO in refugee and immigration – Romania[3]

Which are the benefits of critical thinking?

Developing your Critical Thinking skills is highly beneficial for any field of work. After all, every area needs people that can solve problems effectively by systematically gathering information about an issue, generating further ideas involving a variety of perspectives and evaluating the information using logic.

You can experience advantages such as these by developing critical thinking skills[4].

Critical Thinking strengthens your Leadership Skill

- Critical Thinking enables leaders at every level to understand the impact of their decisions.

- Critical Thinking is exactly what is needed for a leader to lead properly and by example, ensuring the alignment between personal values and organizational goals increasing the accountability for results throughout the organization.

Critical Thinking makes you Open to Change

- Change is an integral part of our lives and contemporary organizations; it is permanent and regards to all subjects.

- Critical thinking involves analyzing problems and finding ideas. Critical thinking allows you to see possibilities in problems. Analyzing data coming from the environment in a critical way, can apply the proactive approach.

Critical Thinking Increases your analytical Skills

- The analytical skills improve the process of assessing the credibility of a source, choice or recognized methods to apply, estimating the risk and applying assessment of precaution needs.

- The skills simplify problems solving and making conclusions, as well as deduction, induction and assessing the rightness.

Critical Thinking Improves Learning Skill

- Critical Thinking encourages you to get familiar with wide range of views about a particular issue. So, you learn about new information, new ideas and personalities with whom you share the same goals.

Critical Thinking enhances the Co-creation skills

- Organizations are aware of numerous potential threats; they are able to define the biggest challenges of economic and social nature. Permanent critical analysis of the internal and external environment allows for conceptualization and current situation assessment.

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3   S. G. o. T. a. I. (SoG-TIM), "Entrepreneurial and Co-creation skills handbook," Erasmus + program, 2016.

4   T.b.s. community, "9benefits of Critical Thinking Explained", https://www.theblacksheep.community/benefits-of-critical-thinking/, 2021

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide[5]

1.

Identify a topic.

The topic/ issue you want to explore. Write key words in the middle of a sheet of paper or a blank document screen.

2.

Ask yourself WHAT.

Starting with the question WHAT will help you to introduce the topic, defying it with your terms and it allows you to identify possible issues.

3.

Use the WHO, WHEN and WHERE Questions.

This will provide context or scene-setting material, which is also useful for an introductory section.

4.

Use the HOW Question.

HOW requires consideration of the way something operates or works (e.g. processes and procedures). This takes you from descriptive to a more analytical thinking.

5.

Use the WHY Question.

Trying to answer the WHY question pushes your analytical skills even further. It gets you to find reasons, explanations or causes. Think about all possible questions connected to "why".

6.

Use the WHAT IF Question.

"What if" questions direct you to the evaluation of information you've gathered – to consider possible implications or results of a particular (even future) action.

7.

Use the SO WHAT Question.

"So what" is the key question for an evaluation. It gets you thinking about values, meaning and significance. It helps you think through, justify your own position, and discuss its implications.

8.

Use the WHAT NEXT Question.

"What next question" leads you to consider and plan for more specific actions that might be necessary.

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5 K. Thng, "Critical Thinking With Case Study," https://www.slideshare.net/KarynThng/critical-thinking-slides.

Case studies[6]

Samsung: Harnessing the Power of the Creative Elite

The case

This case study shows how a conglomerate company use critical thinking to ensure they are primed to incorporate the best practices and yield maximum KPIs.

The challenge

The company must remain on the cutting edge of new scientific approaches and expand their core abilities to maintain project ROI.

The result

Their innovation management strategy entails deploying and experienced creative elite to take the lead with new projects. This group make use of open innovation and corporate tech scouting approaches to create a clear picture of where innovation efforts should be focused. Once the clear picture is gained, Samsung approaches relevant scientific, technological or corporate bodies that can deliver the expertise and resources needed to make it happens.

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6   S. Medley, "Five Outstanding Examples of Innovation in Business," https://www.qmar-kets.net/blog/titans-of-transformation-5-outstanding-examples-of-innovation-in-business/ , 2019.

Theatres using Critical Thinking approach for targeting customers with differentiated ticket prices

The case

This case study examines the ways in which seven theaters from around the United States used critical thinking approach to increase revenues and maintaining affordable prices. They are capitalizing on high-demand shows while keeping programs accessible to all audiences. In order to achieve this balance, theatres vary prices according to several criteria.

The challenge

Theatres offer subscription for several shows in a season. However, subscriptions only cover part of the costs and they have been on the decline since the beginning of the century.

The result

The fall in subscriptions means that theaters must meet an increasing amount of their revenue and audience requirements through single-ticket sales. The groups surveyed use a variety of methods to market single tickets. Some adjust prices according to seat location, anticipated popularity of show, or day and time of performance. Some offer targeted discounts in order to fill seats, maximize revenue, or attract a certain demographic. At the same time as they adjust prices, theaters must be alert to the ways in which discounted tickets affect brand perception.

Practice

Critical Thinking Approaches[7]

At every level of your leadership role, you have access to a variety of approaches that can help you come up with fresh ideas and find solutions to difficulties or barriers. Those that we believe would be most helpful to you have been highlighted, along with the situations in which we believe they would be most helpful. This is by no means a comprehensive list; there are a plethora of alternatives. Whichever one you choose should be based on which situation you find yourself in, or on the problem or query you have.

Critical Thinking Approach	Purpose
Analytical Thinking	Best for gathering and breaking down of information into small bites that help make sense of it.
Ask Basic Questions	Seek simple solutions first. Sometimes an explanation becomes so complex that the original question gets lost. To avoid this, use and continually go back to the basic questions you asked when you set out to solve the problem, e.g. Here are a few key basic question you can ask when approaching any problem: What do you already know? How do you know that? What are you trying to prove, disprove, demonstrated, critique, etc.? What are you overlooking?
Question basic assumptions	When thinking through a problem, always question your basic assumption and critically evaluate your beliefs.
Be aware of your mental process	This process allows you to avoid mental shortcut and to highlight cognitive biases and mental prejudices. Improving the objectiveness of your decisions and solutions
Try reversing things	This is a great solution when you feel stuck into a problem. It may seem obvious that X causes Y. What if Y causes X?
Evaluate the existing evidences	When you are trying to solve a problem, it is always helpful to look at other work that has been done in the same area. There is no reason to start solving a problem from scratch when someone has already laid the groundwork.
Remember to think for yourself	In order to solve complex problems it is useful to listen just our thoughts and forget others' opinions. Don't be overconfident but recognize that thinking for yourself is essential for solving tough problems
No one is thinking critically 100% of the time	You cannot think critically all the time, and that is okay. Critical thinking is a tool that you should deploy when you need to make important decisions or solve difficult problems, but you do not need to think critically about everything.

Let's exercise

1. 7 ways to improve your critical thinking skill

Try these seven exercises to enhance your critical thinking approach. You should never stop questioning your knowledge, although you should always be critic and be able to make the right questions.

2. Getting at the root of problem

In order to find the best solution for a problem, the first step is to explore the issue from every angle. Discover in deep this technique and apply it to your life (and organisation) to get to the root of the problem.

3. Discover the Rationale interface

If you need to understand an argument, assess the pros and cons, evaluate and weight diverse opinions and information. You could use the Rationale interface tool.

7   C. I. Geek, "7 Ways to Improve Your Critical Thinking," https://collegeinfogeek.com/improve-critical-thinking-skills/.

Tips & tricks

As a manager or business owner in order to foster critical thinking, you need to

Put your ego aside

- Having an idea, an opinion is not wrong. The important thing is to be open to new perspectives and being careful not to be hasty in forming opinions. Be able to listen and assess the topic from different angles is what makes you a great leader.

Do not jump to conclusion

- Take your time to evaluate different perspective. You must verify information using several sources and make many questions, in order to clarify each opinion. Remember, there are no stupid questions for a Critical Thinker.

- Be flexible in your thinking, in order not to exclude any idea, even the craziest ones. Every idea has its own pros and cons to take into account.

How to enhance Critical Thinking of your organisation[8]

- **Decide what you think and why you think it.** Write down "I think... because" sentences so that you are able to clarify your ideas, to generate interest for new topics and to expand your horizons.

- **Never stop learning.** Surround yourself with interesting reads, take time for hobbies and leisure. Open up your mind and do different things so that you have the opportunity to see different viewpoints and complexities.

- **Be curious.** Try and look at things like if it were the first time you see them. Think back on how you explored things when you were a child.

- **Seek other views and more evidences.** Has your opinion about some topic changed? Did you disagree about how you thought about this topic in the past? Why? What led you think otherwise? The purpose of these questions is to find other ways of thinking about this topic.

- **Do not be afraid to ask**, ask inspiring questions and address them to everyone, from colleagues to friends and family and even children. Their answers might inspire you and give access to new knowledge.

- **Take your time to distinguish different perspectives**, make a list of pros and cons / likes and dislikes for each perspective. In most cases, there may be arguments that you may like and arguments that you may not agree with within each perspective.

8   S. F. University, "Being a critical thinker: Basic approaches to critical thinking," https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc/learning/thinking/critical-thinking.

49   21stCenturySkills   50

CRITICAL THINKING

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist[9] to assess the Critical Thinking dimension of your team project´s workplace.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Diversity of Styles			
I always rigorously evaluate all important evidence offered			
I actively Provide new data or information for consideration			
I examine evidence and questions accuracy and relevance			
I am able to recognize and describe bias			
I clearly analyze information for accuracy, relevance, and validity			
Distinguish, compare, or contrast diverse points of view and/or alternative conclusions			
I thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyze my own assumptions			
I thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyze others' assumptions			
I carefully evaluate the relevance of contexts when presenting a position			
I address diverse perspectives from a variety of sources to qualify analysis			
I check if any analogies or metaphors are used effectively			
I check if other positions' analysis is accurate and respectful			
Articulate personal insights about complex issues or problems			
I usually Identify and discuss conclusions			
I usually identify and discuss implications and consequences of conclusions			
I always provide convincing replies to objections and rival positions			
Critical Thinking in my Team			
My employees/coworkers have the ability of critical thinking			
My organization promote ways to develop the Critical Thinking Skills			
I have already discovered the organization's areas where Critical Thinking is lacking			
The Co-creation mechanisms of my organization already applied the Critical Thinking Approach			
My organization encourage open innovation and permanent internal and external dialogue			

9   O. M. University, "Critical Thinking @ UM Assessment Checklist," https://irep.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2020/08/Critical-Thinking-at-UM-Assessment-Checklist.pdf.

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/5-tech-tools-to-encourage-critical-thinking/
- https://blog.futurefocusedlearning.net/critical-thinking-tools-blooms-taxonomy
- https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_95.htm

Useful links
- http://www.criticalthinking.org//
- https://tc2.ca/
- https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/25-resources-for-teaching-critical-thinking/

Videos
- 5 tips to improve your critical thinking skill
- How to teach critical thinking
- Logic and Critical thinking

Articles
- https://www.gre.ac.uk/articles/ils/critical-thinking
- https://www.peoplematters.in/site/interstitial?return_to=%2Farticle%2Fcampus-recruitment%2F-what-is-critical-thinking-its-importance-in-your-success-14793

Books
- Calling Bullshit
- Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong about the World--And Why Things Are Better Than You Think
- The art of thinking clearly

Flexibility

05.

1. Description of Flexibility

What is Flexibility?

The word "flexibility" technically means the ability to bend without breaking. Flexibility is willingness and ability to take on new responsibilities. It's not simply a "can do" mindset; it's also a "will do" attitude. To be really flexible, you should adjust your priorities to meet the needs of your organization.

When it comes to how work is done, flexibility is a technique that stresses being able and ready to adapt to changing conditions. Flexibility in higher education benefits both the trainers and their students

Briefly, Flexibility is a Thinking Skill that focuses on a people's capacity to adapt to new conditions, improvise, and change techniques in order to meet a variety of obstacles.

"

The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.

- Albert Einstein

What is it about?

Flexibility is a personality quality that defines a person's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and conceive about issues and tasks in innovative and creative ways. When circumstances or unexpected occurrences force a person to shift their posture, viewpoint, or commitment, this attribute is employed.

Why is it important?

Today, scientists, employers, and public figures believe that "flexible abilities" are required for the execution of various professional tasks, particularly in the field of "person-to-person" communication.

Here are a few reasons why workplace flexibility is important:

- Flexibility in higher education is beneficial since it helps students feel more appreciated while also creating trust and a more creative work environment.

- Students who feel valued at classes are more likely to study to their full capacity.

- It promotes student autonomy by allowing them to pick their own schedules, projects, and study location.

- Students are motivated and morale is boosted by flexibility since it provides them with intriguing incentives.

- Offering a flexible schedule assists students to achieve a better study-life balance and relieves stress.

Which are the benefits of of being flexible?

For a number of reasons, flexibility is essential in your daily life. Being adaptable might prevent both students and teachers from becoming overwhelmed or suffocated by change. In addition, rather than being a passive participant, you will have a greater opportunity to influence their own growth and personal life.

Here are some of the benefits:

Ability to adapt to change

Being flexible in your life helps you to cope with change without suffering negative consequences. If your firm asks you to perform midnight shifts after you've been working 9-5, for example, flexibility permits you to make the transition effortlessly.

Taking care of the unexpected

An unexpected situation might often require flexibility. For example, if you are unwell, you may need to leave school early. In this circumstance, you must reply calmly to the issue. For example, you could be able to work from home so that you can handle all of your tasks at once.

Keeping your job

Over time, teaching and businesses change. Flexibility might help teachers and students grow with the learning experience. For example, if your print publication decides to go digital, flexibility can let you adapt your journalism style while still working for the publisher.

Happiness in life

Another advantage of flexibility is that it allows you to live a more joyful life. Flexibility may help you feel less stressed and open yourself to new experiences, which could be one of the secrets to a happy life or a prosperous profession.

2. Toolkit

2.
Be open-minded.

3.
Develop your skill set.

4.
Be optimistic.

Step by step guide

5.
Stay calm.

6.
Plan ahead.

7.
Have a strong support network.

In today's settings, where uncertainty and change are common, flexibility skill has become an increasingly valued quality.

You can cope with unanticipated obstacles swiftly, calmly, and efficiently if you are adaptable. Flexibility, on the other hand, isn't only about adapting to events as they come. It also entails significant changes in the way we think, work, and act.

You can become more flexible by following these seven steps:

1.
Focus on your core values.

Case studies

Kraft Foods

The case

A food and beverage manufacturing company, Kraft and its subsidiaries employ nearly 109,000 people in over 150 countries. In the U.S Kraft employs 62,000 people in 100 plants; 59% of these employees are hourly workers.

The challenge

Employee dissatisfaction, particularly among hourly workers in manufacturing plants.

The result

A flexible work options program called "Fast Adapts" for hourly employees and production supervisors who work in 24/7 manufacturing facilities. The 2003 employee satisfaction survey revealed improved employee satisfaction with work-life integration.

Texas Instruments

The case

Texas Instruments is a Dallas-based technology company that has manufacturing, design or sales operations in more than 25 countries, with a global workforce of pproximately 35,000 employees, including 19,400 in the Americas. T.I. is ranked 166th on the list of biggest U.S. companies by Fortune magazine in 2005, with $12.6 billion in revenues for FY 2004.

The challenge

Employee desire for flexibility as revealed in needs assessments.

The result

An "ad-hoc" flexible work policy that allows employees to work flexible work schedules, compressed work weeks, and telecommute occasionally. TI reports that it has seen improvements in retention of employees, lower stress and more effective workers as well as greater "bench strength" as a result of its flexible work policy. As team members help cover for each other in times of flexibility, they develop broader and more diverse skills. Flexible work arrangements have allowed the company to better coordinate with overseas operations and business partners.

Practice

Flexibility Techniques

Flexibility entails maintaining a strong sense of identity and purpose while maintaining an open, team-centered mindset. Here are seven methods for achieving this:

Flexibility Technique	Purpose
Help millennials problem-solve.	When millennials are refusing to do a task or complete a request, steer clear of assumptions. Dig deeper with the millennial person to uncover the root cause of the behavior. If the millennial is refusing to do a writing task, for example, it could be that he doesn't know how to start or has trouble with fine motor skills. Demonstrate your flexibility by working with the millennials to find a solution.
Teach flexibility explicitly.	For many millennials, including millennials on the autism spectrum, the benefits of flexibility aren't immediately clear. Shine a bright light on the how and why of flexibility by teaching it out loud during your everyday lessons. When you model flexibility explicitly during daily classroom routines, millennials will see how it applies to their real lives–and how it helps keep problems from becoming insurmountable.
Teach self-advocacy skills.	Show millennials that it's okay to advocate for what they need. Try some gentle prompting to help a millennial uncover and vocalize their needs.
Use a high ratio of praise to corrections.	Aim for 4 praises for every 1 correction. This is a key component of a flexible, supportive community culture: millennials supported through positive words and actions perform better than millennials who experience a steady stream of consequences and corrections.
Reassure millennials who love routines.	Respect millennials' routine instead of asking them to change it.
Give them a heads-up before a change happens.	Most millennials experience high levels of stress during a change in their routine of their daily life environment–and stressed millennials will find it really tough to be flexible. You can help by priming millennials ahead of time for the change. Let them know exactly what's going to happen, and frame it as a great opportunity to "show how flexibility works"
Build collaborative partnerships with millennials and millennial business leaders.	Treat millennials as active partners in their leadership path and listen to what they have to say. Brainstorm options for millennials stuck on a task. Giving millennials a bigger voice in their leadership adventure.
Know yourself.	Reflect on when you tend to become more rigid. Do certain behaviors act as triggers for you. Understanding your own behavior patterns to improve.

Tips & tricks

As a manager or Business owner in order to foster Flexibility you need to

Overcome Resistance to Change

- Expecting your team members to adapt to changing circumstances automatically can be a "big ask."

- So, the next time a big change is on the horizon, encourage your people to be more flexible by clearly explaining why the change is necessary. Spell out its benefits to them and to the organization, and take care not to gloss over any details.

Foster a Sense of Security

- To be flexible, people need to be able to "think on their feet" and act boldly in ways that are new and unfamiliar.

- Give your people the self-confidence to do this by creating an environment in which they feel supported and trusted, and where they can test out new ideas without fear of failure or punishment. And encourage them to share their findings with the rest of the team.

Lead With Purpose

- When people are clear on the goals that they need to reach, and what they need to do to achieve them, shorter-term challenges will have a less disruptive impact. So, be sure to clearly communicate your team's purpose and its shared objectives, and revisit them regularly so that everyone stays on track.

Encourage Creativity

- When people are given the freedom to be creative, they'll likely find it easier to adapt to new ways of working, to find solutions to problems, and to make better decisions when unexpected issues crop up.

- Encourage creativity in your team by leading by example. Suggest new ideas yourself, and invite other people to offer feedback and suggestions. Not only will this encourage a sense of adventure, but it will also drive team collaboration and engagement.

Empathize

- Flexibility isn't just about responding to events quickly. It also involves responding to the different needs of your team members. When there's an urgent problem, you'll likely find that some people jump at the challenge, while others appear to cave under the pressure.

- Don't "write off" these people. Remember just how much you're asking of them. Tap into your emotional intelligence by showing them that you understand and empathize with them about the challenges that they face. Ask if there's anything you can do to help them. Could you provide additional training, for example, or pair them up with a more confident colleague?

How to enhance your Flexibility

- **Focus on your strengths**, do not think your ideas are not good and sabotage yourself.

- **Never stop learning**, surround yourself with interesting reads, take time for hobbies and leisure. Opening up your mind and doing different things will help you to see different viewpoints and complexities.

- **Be curious**, try and look at things like if it were the first time you see time. Think back on how you explored things when you were a child.

- **Share and cooperate with others around you**,

this will open up new knowledge, ideas and solutions you did not consider before.

- **Do not be afraid to ask**, ask inspiring questions and address them to everyone, from colleagues to friends and family and even children. Their answers might inspire you and give access to new knowledge.

- **Respect your biorhythm**, find out which part of the day or week is best for you to reflect, brainstorm and think about new ideas. Put a slot in your agenda for this and make it part of your routine.

Checklist before I get started

Before you start to improve your flexibility skill, you may complete this <u>pre-assessment worksheet</u> to identify areas of concern and brainstorm goals to build your flexibility skills. Read each statement.

Calculate the total score (Strong: 5, Adequate: 3, Needs improvement: 1)

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
I recognize problems and make changes to fix them.			
I'm okay if things change unexpectedly.			
Switching between tasks is easy for me.			
I accept others' ideas even if they're different from my own.			
I can easily adjust to different rules and different expectations.			
I don't mind if things go wrong or if I have to try a different way to solve a problem.			
I'm okay if I can't control things or when others make choices for me.			

Total Score Explanations

Score between 0-10: My flexibility and other executive functioning skills are likely causing challenges in all areas of my life. There are likely significant benefits if I can learn new skills.

Score between 11-20: My flexibility and other executive functioning skills are likely causing challenges in at least one area of my life. There are likely some benefits to learning new skills.

Score between 21+: My flexibility skills are well-developed. If I'm still having challenges, I may have other executive functioning skills to focus on.

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- Salto Toolkit: Understanding My Journey
- Brain training program and web application: Lumosity
- Brain trainer mobile application: Elevateapp
- Tool: Neuroscience Games That Challenge and Strengthen the Parts of Your Brain That Manage Your Cognitive Skills, Mood and Emotions

Useful links
- Blog Post: 13 Benefits of a Flexible Workplace For Employees, Company & Planet
- Science Direct Search Section for Cognitive flexibility
- Indeed Blog Post: How to Be Flexible at Work (With Tips and Examples)

Videos
- 10 Soft Skills, Module 7, Adaptability and Flexibility
- Work Flexibility
- The 5 principles of highly effective teachers: Pierre Pirard at TEDxGhent
- Educating Different Kinds of Minds, Temple Grandin, TEDxCSU
- Essential Soft Skills for Teachers

Articles
- SHS Web of Conference Paper: Opportunities of the university in fostering flexible skills of students
- International Scientific Conference "Personality in Norm and in Pathology Conference Paper: Social Partnership As A Mechanism For Developing Students Flexible Skills
- Journal of Education and Training Studies Paper: From Substance to Skill: Student Perspective on Caring
- Mind Tools Blog Post: Overcoming Resistance to Change
- EU Project Output: Cross-Country Survey On Soft Skills Required By Companies To Medium/High Skilled Migrants: Methodological approach for a common framework of Soft Skills at work report

Books
- Gigged: The End of the Job and the Future of Work by Sarah Kessler
- Reimagining Work: Strategies to Disrupt Talent, Lead Change, and Win with a Flexible Workforce by Rob Biederman, Pat Petitti, and Peter Maglathlin
- The Future is Freelance : Discovering the Power and Possibilities of Flexible Working by Kirsty Hulse
- The Gig Economy: The Complete Guide to Getting Better Work, Taking More Time Off, and Financing the Life You Want by Diane Mulcahy
- The Remote Revolution: How the Location-Independent Workforce Changes the Way We Hire, Connect, and Succeed John Elston
- The Third Option: Why a Woman Doesn't Have to Choose between a Career and Family, but Can Actually Have Both and Succeed by Shannon Miles
- Virtual Culture: The Way We Work Doesn't Work Anymore, a Manifesto by Bryan Miles

FLEXIBILITY

Multi-Disciplinary

Thinking

06.

1. Description of Multi-disciplinary thinking

"

Those who can thrive in this changing global environment will have a broad interest and knowledge outside of their specific disciplines.

- Nanyang Technological University President, Subra Suresh

What is Multi-disciplinary thinking?

Multidisciplinarity is where two or more academic disciplines collaborate for a specific purpose, for instance, when computer scientists, psychologists and sociologists cooperate in the design of human/computer interfaces. Although a multidisciplinary approach uses the skills and knowledge from more than one academic discipline, the use of knowledge from different disciplines remains distinct, even though the differences between the disciplines can be quite subtle.

Humanity's primary turning point has always been multidisciplinary holistic thinking solutions, especially during unusual times. There are several solutions based on the notion of multidisciplinary holistic thinking methods that are relevant to what we perceive as 'quality of life,' whether in education, health, social welfare, security, or other areas.

Humans, on the other hand, have been far too preoccupied with sub-specialized technology and science in the previous half-century. This sort of highly professional, single-minded attitude caused people to focus on what might make them more comfortable rather than what could help them find inventive solutions.

If we look at the multidisciplinary thinking definitions, The <u>UNESCO (2020b)</u> defines the multidisciplinary approach (which is the same as the cross-disciplinary approach), as studying one topic from the viewpoint of more than one discipline and solving a problem using a different disciplinary approach.

What is it about?

Multidisciplinary thinking is an essential facet of the education and business sector in the 21st century, especially as the face of work and demand for skill sets changes. Workforces of the future will demand agile thinkers who can understand the complexities of real-world scenarios and synthesise new knowledge – this is the future that we need to prepare millennials for.

Higher education is constantly changing and looking for innovative educational solutions in order to increase the level of the millennials' knowledge and skills. As an important part of this set of policies, a new process is emerging for the ideation, planning and implementation of multidisciplinary case studies for millennials with the aim of developing their knowledge, meaning learning, skills and abilities that are necessary for a more complete picture of the problems.

Why is it important?

Multidisciplinary thinking encourages millennials to establish connections across various disciplines or subjects offered in a project, idea, classes or in the companies. This integration of different fields of knowledge allows learners to tackle big questions and solve real-world problems that cannot be examined through just one topic of study or business.

Multidisciplinary learning is a wonderful way to totally integrate your education into a comprehensive unit rather than scrambling to draw connections between seemingly unrelated parts. It empowers you to see tangible correlations across subject matters rather than view each in a silo.

Which are the benefits of being a multi-disciplinary thinker?

The benefits of multidisciplinary thinking in education are clear. By melding together subjects, students connect the brightest minds. Having people across disciplines work together creates a harmonious, integrated approach to learning.

Holistic understanding

One of the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach in education is you get a more holistic understanding of the world. Rather than looking at individual departments and their subject matters separately, a multidisciplinary approach integrates parts of each department into the study programs of the other.

Different perspectives

Have you ever been trying to solve a puzzle by yourself and have one section that totally defeats you? You stare at it for hours, but can't figure it out for the life of you. Then, one day, a friend saunters by and picks up that pivotal piece and places it perfectly. Ah, the magic of different perspectives! A multidisciplinary approach is kind of like that. With different professors integrating subject matters, you get Dr. X's perspective on organic chemistry one day, and Dr. Y's the next. It opens the doors to different ideas and ways of understanding.

Real world approach

Multidisciplinary learning isn't just an educational philosophy—it's a tangible way of understanding the world. When you graduate, you'll be working with people from across disciplines IRL, so why should school be different? Being able to compile and collaborate with people from across the spectrum will help you function in the professional world.

Collaboration skills

Hopefully, any education route you take emphasizes the importance of collaboration. However, one of the most important advantages of a multidisciplinary curriculum is the idea of coming together to create a better whole. Being able to communicate effectively with people across disciplines is integral to multidisciplinary learning. You learn the same vocabulary, you understand their values, and you know what motivates them. These skills will help you make connections, solve big problems, and work synergistically with your peers.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

Allen Repko (2009), Director of the Inter-disciplinary Studies Program for the School of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington, has identified four cognitive abilities that illustrate some of the benefits of interdisciplinary thinking. Interdisciplinary thinking is also known as multidisciplinary thinking. Here are the adapted steps for multidisciplinary thinking.

1.

Perspective-taking.

This relates to the ability to understand many points of view on a given issue, as well as an understanding of the differences across disciplines, particularly their approaches to solving problems and their standards of evidence.

2.

Development of structural knowledge.

Declarative knowledge (i.e., factual information) and procedural knowledge (i.e., process-based information) are two types of knowledge that are required to address complicated issues.

3.

Integration of conflicting insights from alternative disciplines.

When concepts from a variety of disciplines are combined to investigate a problem, new insights and predictions frequently emerge. Rather than defaulting to a single disciplinary explanation, the intellectual challenge is to find ways to account for them, which necessitates critical and innovative thought.

4.

Multidisciplinary Understanding.

This requires looking at a problem from a variety of angles and seeing how one potential method affects the others.

Case study

Case Studies of Multidisciplinary Approaches to Integrating Mathematics, Science, & Technology Education

The case

Oklahoma County School District: The Principles of Technology (PT) curriculum was the focus for the Oklahoma CSD project. The faculty team worked together to present a coordinated curriculum where each teacher took responsibility for the specific section of the curriculum that aligned with their particular field of study.

The challenge

It was somewhat of a surprise to the teacher team that there were some students who resisted the multidisciplinary approach to the learning process. It was obvious that a number of students wished to be accountable to only one teacher. This resistance was manifested by the reluctance of some students to transfer knowledge from one subject area to another. The staff identified this hesitation to be based on limitations of students, specifically related to student reading ability and computational skills. Efforts are currently being formulated to address these concerns as the project team plans for future integration activities.

The result

The most successful aspect was the creative use of the teaching staff. By allowing each of the teachers to rotate to the individual classrooms the students were introduced to a coordinated integrative curriculum without the obtrusive restructuring of existing class schedules. Although the coordination efforts were viewed by the instructional staff as a very positive product, it was also perceived as a significant logistical problem which periodically caused confusion for both teachers and students. In addition to the teacher rotation, the creation of the student learning teams was also a very positive experience for most students in this project. Students were able to perceive the importance of working together to solve a common problem as well as exposure to occupational strategies of modern businesses and industries.

Practice

Multi-disciplinary thinking Techniques

Multidisciplinary students stand out to employers because of the rich view of the world that they develop, the wide range of perspectives they will have encountered during their studies, and the combination of subject areas they have studied that could offer more flexible career choices.

Multi-disciplinary thinking Technique	Purpose
Critical thinking	Critical thinking skills are used and developed as millennials look across disciplinary boundaries to consider other viewpoints and also begin to compare and contrast concepts across subject areas.
Self-management	Choosing which subjects to work or being a leader – and why – can be challenging, and requires millennials to think carefully about how to identify their priorities and manage their working choices.
Adaptability	Different subjects may need to be viewed through different lenses which means an individual needs to be able to switch to the appropriate lens at the appropriate time for whichever subject they are looking at. It requires careful self-management to be able to do this.
Analysis and problem solving	By studying and working across different subject boundaries and by studying a wider range of subjects, millennials develop deeper skills of evaluation as they learn a number of different logical and methodical approaches and are able to select the best one to use for particular circumstances.
Communication and literacy	Millennials' written and verbal communication skills are well developed amongst multi-subject millennials as they learn to revert to the appropriate communication style for a particular subject area.
Application of information technology	Using technology across a range of subjects means that millennials can be more practised in displaying and presenting information in a range of ways.
Flexibility	The ability to adapt to different contexts and environments is a strong skill gained from multi-subject study as you will be switching from one subject to another.
Synthesis of ideas	Millennials begin to consolidate learning by combining ideas from many perspectives and consider an alternative way of acquiring knowledge.

Tips & tricks

As a manager or Business owner in order to foster Multidisciplinary thinking you need to

Having a team of people with various skills, experiences and backgrounds is critical when companies want to foster a great, inclusive culture. The so-called "multidisciplinary team" has powers that go beyond just culture; they can also amplify innovation in the workplace. Different people with different profiles, points of view and knowledge are the fuel that can take a company above and beyond as diversity is always enriching.

Business owners need these details if they want to foster the multidisciplinary thinking in their teams:

- A multidisciplinary team conducts its work based on shared principles

- Members of the team will have common denominators as well as individual skills

- When working together, they tend to learn from their peers, who all have a unique set of skills to offer to the group

- In a multidisciplinary team, co-creation and collaboration are extremely important so that all the different skill sets become complementary to each other

How to enhance your your Multidisciplinary thinking

The main goal of higher education and working sectors are to develop knowledge about a certain discipline that can engender in millennials the capacity to analyse information and apply it to real life cases. To improve millennials' understanding and make the learning and improving process more productive and enjoyable, they need to experience the connection between different subjects of the respective curriculum.

The International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) specifies three major types of contemporary approach to enhance: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary.

- **Multidisciplinary learning** is studying or working on a topic from the viewpoint of more than one discipline and solving a problem using a different disciplinary approach.

- **Interdisciplinary learning** is understanding theories that cut across disciplines and highlight the process and meaning rather than combining different discipline contents.

- **Transdisciplinary learning** is removing the boundaries between the core disciplines, integrating them to construct new contexts of real-world themes and introducing a sub-major stream course.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the Multi-disciplinary thinking dimension of your team project´s workplace.

Action checklist

Specify clearly why an interdisciplinary approach is needed, which type of interdisciplinary approach is envisaged and which disciplines should be involved. (Where this has been based on a formal analysis of the problem domain, describe the process briefly.)

Describe how the disciplines involved will be integrated and how this relates to the type of multidisciplinarity involved; demonstrate how the quality of integration will be assured.

Describe the leadership role and management strategy to deliver the desired outcomes.

Summarise the multidisciplinary skills of the researchers involved.

Where relevant, develop a clear plan for the involvement of end users and stakeholders in the project, including contingency plans for recognised pitfalls. Indicate clearly the benefits to stakeholders and the roles of stakeholders in contributing to the project.

Plan a budget and justify with the additional resources if it is needed.

Describe how multidisciplinarity will be reflected in the project outputs and outcomes.

Resources for further reading

Online tools
• Quiz Tool: Skill IT for Youth
• Blog Post: A four-stage model for multidisciplinary learning
• Paper: Interdisciplinary Learning: A cognitive-epistemological foundation

Useful links
• Paper: Design Thinking Methods and Tools for Innovation in Multidisciplinary Teams
• Critical Thinking Resources: Multidisciplinary Resources
• Paper: Creativity and Innovation through Multidisciplinary and Multisectoral Cooperation
• Blog Post: What is interdisciplinary learning?

Videos
• Benefits of Multidisciplinary Thinking, Simonas Bansevičius, TEDxYouth@VIS
• What is the importance of cross-disciplinary thinking? by Ben Michaelis, Author
• Multi-disciplinary perspective for science and technology, Laura Margheri, TEDxBolognaWomen
• Multidisciplinary Creativity, Shama Rahman, TEDxCibeles
• Educating for the Future: The Power of Interdisciplinary Spaces, Theresa Lim, TEDxYouth@SHC

Articles
• American Journal of Economics Paper: The Extent of COVID-19 Pandemic Socio-Economic Impact on Global Poverty. A Global Integrative Multidisciplinary Review
• Phd Thesis: Multidisciplinary Thinking to Increase Sustainability in Engineering: A Case Study in Sanitation

Books
• How the Mind Works
• Conceptual Foundations for Multidisciplinary Thinking
• Interdisciplinary Research
• The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature
• Multidisciplinary Approaches to Educational Research

Creativity

07.

1. Description of Creativity

What is Creativity?

"Creativity is a phenomenon whereby something somehow new and somehow valuable is formed. The created item may be intangible (such as an idea, a scientific theory, a musical composition, or a joke) or a physical object (such as an invention, a printed literary work, or a painting)"
- Wikipedia

The act of bringing new and innovative concepts to life is what we call creativity. Ability to see things from fresh perspectives, discover patterns, and draw connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena are all characteristics of creativity. To be creative, one must first think before acting. You are imaginative but not creative if you have ideas but do not put them into action.

"Creativity is the process of bringing something new into being. Creativity requires passion and commitment. It brings to our awareness what was previously hidden and points to new life. The experience is one of heightened consciousness: ecstasy."
– Rollo May, The Courage to Create

"

Creativity is more than just being different. Anybody can plan weird; that's easy. What's hard is to be as simple as Bach. Making the simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

– Charles Mingus

What is it about?

While many people feel that creativity comes naturally to some people, this is not necessarily true. Individuals differ from one another in terms of their levels of creativity. It may come naturally to some, but anyone can improve their skills at it with the correct resources and methods. Creativity is more than just using your imagination; it's about actually doing something.

Any idea or theory you have will be the subject of extensive investigation by you. If this is a brand-new approach, you should test it out to see if it works. If it's an object, you'll have to create it. The ability to think creatively is a method of thinking. Moreover, it is vital to ask whether creativity can be used effectively in the workplace. Yes, but to get there, someone must be ready to take risks and work through discomfort.

Why is it important?

It's become a "must have" to be creative in the workplace. Due to today's worldwide competition, innovation is more important than ever. The obvious question is: what good does it do a company or organization to be creative? Fresh new ideas and innovation are kept alive in your company via creativity. Streamlining efficiency and productivity go beyond just creating new products or services.

You'll be able to get more significant results if you use creative thinking in your daily work. Everyone in the office can benefit from being creative, regardless of their position.

Employees become less frightened of failure when they concentrate on the larger picture. CEOs value originality above anything else when hiring new employees. There is a strong correlation between creativity and ROI (Return on Investment), and creative people are also self-starters and problem solvers.

"*Companies who are creative are more successful*"

- Tucker Marion,
Associate Professor, Northeastern University
D'Amore-McKim School of Business

Which are the benefits of being creative?

Developing your creative thinking skills is highly beneficial for any field of work. After all, every area needs people that can come up with the best solutions to the everyday problems that arise and creativity is critical to do that.

You can experience advantages such as these by developing creative thinking skills:

Creativity Builds Better Teamwork

- Creativity inspires employees to work with each other. The creative process encourages collaboration. Businesses need to encourage the mindset of continuous learning encouraging employees to seek new information, knowledge and new ways to do things.
- Many unique ideas come from just one person but they are molded by a team to become fully formed.

Creativity Improves the Ability to Attract and Retain Employees

- When creativity is encouraged, employees are more content with their jobs and are committed to remaining loyal to the company.

Creativity Increases Problem-Solving

- With the ability to think creatively and outside of the box, employees are more likely to come up with unique and innovative solutions to obstacles they encounter. This eagerness to solve problems can lead to new ways to accomplish tasks and adds to a more efficiently run business.

Creativity Increases your impact as a leader

- Drive your peers into new experiences.
- Help them make connections that seem unconnected.
- Show the importance of taking a break from daily tasks.
- Put your colleagues in line with their creativity.

Creativity tolerates complexity, chaos, and asymmetry.

- Enjoy the challenge of struggling through chaos toward resolution.

Creativity drives our readiness to take chances grows.

- Accept that failure is an inevitable part of the creative process. The ability to learn from one's errors. Work on the brink of one's abilities.

Creativity assists us in critically examining and evaluating our own thoughts.

- Seek feedback and suggestions. Set aside one's own ego. Ideas should be tested.

Creativity provides us with the incentive to do things for our own sake, rather than for grades or money.

- Catalysis brings pleasure, fulfillment, and a sense of accomplishment to the activity itself.

CREATIVITY

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

1.

Gather new material.

First, you learn. During this stage you focus on 1) learning specific material directly related to your task and 2) learning general material by becoming fascinated with a wide range of concepts.

2.

Thoroughly work over the materials in your mind.

During this stage, you examine what you have learned by looking at the facts from different angles and experimenting with fitting various ideas together.

3.

Be bored.

You have to allow yourself to be bored if you want to be more creative! If you're bored, you daydream which stimulates the brain's imagination network. And research suggests that when you're daydreaming, it sparks creative thinking and can lead to a whole set of new, creative ideas (and new, creative ways of thinking).

4.

Step away from the problem.

Next, you put the problem completely out of your mind and go do something else that excites you and energizes you. Changing something at an unpredictable moment and working on projects will help you to think differently. This will activate the salience network of your brain, making it easier to create new, unpredictable links between your knowledge banks and the environment.

5.

Go for a walk and let your idea return to you.

One of the best things you can do to improve your creativity and inspire new ways of thinking is to go for a walk (especially outdoors). Creative performance has been found to improve by up to 60%, possibly because spending time outdoors will stimulate all three of the brain's imagination networks. At some point, but only after you have stopped thinking about it, your idea will come back to you with a flash of insight and renewed energy.

6.

Try something beyond the comfort zone of creativity.

Try writing a poem if you are a designer. If you're a writer, find a new instrument to learn. The idea is, there are many different ways to be creative, and it will encourage your brain to make new connections and inspire a new kind of creativity when you do something new. Then, in other aspects of your life, the new kind of creativity will make you be more innovative. Switching tasks has been proven to increase creativity, and it's an even greater advantage when you turn between intrinsically innovative tasks.

7.

Shape and develop your idea based on feedback.

For any idea to succeed, you must release it out into the world, submit it to criticism, and adapt it as needed.

Case studies

Smurfit Kappa Quickly Pivots to Virtual Leadership Training and Enhances Skills of Next-Gen Leaders – Ireland and 35 more countries

The case

This case study shows how a global company used creativity in overcoming covid-19 for developing the future leaders within the organization.

The challenge

The company had scheduled the annual summit of the new leaders for the end of 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic marked the beginning of radical changes for in-person events the likes of which had never been seen before. As organizations worldwide cancelled events, and millions of people prepared for self-quarantine, Smurfit Kappa recognized the need to pivot quickly.

The result

With the creative solutions were adopted, they maximized the learning opportunities for Smurfit Kappa's emerging leaders during an uncertain time when face-to-face training wasn't an option, but strong leadership skills were more critical than ever.

BeyondTrust/Building a Culture of Learning and Leadership at Scale with Frontline Leader Impact – Global company (9 countries worldwide)

The case

This case study shows how a global organization used creativity in leadership development that would be the first step in level-setting how all of their managers would lead and found a solution "that was not just virtual, but inclusive, self-paced, and one that would make a lasting impact".

The challenge

After a series of acquisitions, BeyondTrust recognized many people within the organization were put into leadership positions without much prior development – a concept they refer to as "accidental leaders." The organization wanted to build and reinforce a culture of learning as well as instill the foundational competencies required to lead others.

The result

The creative solutions adopted (graduates cooperated with the c-level executives), further pushed their global cross-functional mission and made the entire experience more interesting. The individualized approach has made all the difference and nurtured accountability in their leaders.

Practice

Creativity Techniques

At every level of your leadership role, you have access to a variety of innovative approaches that can help you come up with fresh ideas and find solutions to difficulties or barriers. Those that we believe would be most helpful to you have been highlighted, along with the situations in which we believe they would be most helpful. This is by no means a comprehensive list; there are a plethora of alternatives. Whichever one you choose should be based on which situation you find yourself in, or on the problem or query you have.

Creativity Technique	Purpose
Lateral thinking	Best for creativity "on demand" for defining and solving problems and finding new ways to do things.
Brainstorming	Best for situations in which you need to generate new ideas or new solutions to problems.
Brainwriting	Similar to brainstorming, however better for situations which require more solutions in less time.
Six thinking hats	Best for moments where you need to evaluate the pros and cons, but remain as objective as possible.
Five Ws and H	Best for situations in which you need understand the given problem more precisely in order to be able to define it better and to find a solution
The Insights Game	Best for improving your ability to see the big picture, process more complex problems and challenge your beliefs.
Random words	Best for encouraging your imagination to create different perspectives and new angles on your idea or the problem you are facing.
Storyboarding	Best for planning advertising campaigns, commercials, a proposal or other business presentations intended to convince or compel action.
Mind Mapping	Best and effective technique of structuring information and note-taking.
Brain shifter	Brain shifter is similar to mind mapping, but you should act as if you were someone else. Is used to create new ideas that you never thought about before.

Let's exercise

1. Inspire Your Team with Humility

Follow the lead of famously humble IKEA founder, Ingvar Kamprad. Get out there and chat to your team at every level of the company, particularly the levels you wouldn't usually interact with. You never know what ideas they might have stored.

2. Set up a team experiment

Launch an idea competition in your office. Try asking non-marketing team members to come up with new taglines or customer support staff for ideas on how they think the homepage could be improved. Your next growth hack could be right on your doorstep.

3. Establish Creative Parameters

To prevent decision fatigue and promote creativity, try using a transparent task management tool. With Meister-Task you can keep team members in the loop with project parameters, without crushing creativity by micromanaging.

CREATIVITY

Tips & tricks

As a manager or Business owner in order to foster creativity you need to

Never, ever say No

- Using the word "no" at a brainstorming session or when an employee approaches you with an idea conveys a negative message. Determine how to reroute the notion so that it becomes a "yes". It is all too simple to dismiss an idea because you believe it will not work; nevertheless, silencing the creative thinkers in your company will inhibit creativity and employees will be less inclined to continue to come up with novel and innovative solutions.

Make Your Team more Diverse

- A variety of perspectives, insights and learning styles accelerate the problem-solving process.

- The manner in which your team collaborates is more significant than the ideas generated. Pixar President, Ed Catmull discusses the importance of assembling the correct team and how it is better to focus on how the entire team is functioning collectively together rather than the individual abilities inside the team. Catmull emphasizes the importance of "having the right people and the appropriate chemistry" over "getting the correct idea."

How to enhance your creativity

- **Focus on your strengths**, do not think your ideas are not good and sabotage yourself.

- **Never stop learning**, surround yourself with interesting reads, take time for hobbies and leisure. Opening up your mind and doing different things will help you to see different viewpoints and complexities.

- **Be curious**, try and look at things like if it were the first time you see time. Think back on how you explored things when you were a child.

- **Share and cooperate with others around you**, this will open up new knowledge, ideas and solutions you did not consider before.

- **Do not be afraid to ask**, ask inspiring questions and address them to everyone, from colleagues to friends and family and even children. Their answers might inspire you and give access to new knowledge.

- **Respect your biorhythm**, find out which part of the day or week is best for you to reflect, brainstorm and think about new ideas. Put a slot in your agenda for this and make it part of your routine.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the creativity dimension of your team project´s workplace.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Diversity of Styles			
I am aware of the creative value of diverse thinking styles and try to incorporate this diversity into the team.			
I actively seek out or hire people with diverse backgrounds and thinking styles.			
Our group recognizes the conflict that creative abrasion can cause, but also recognizes its value.			
Your Work Group			
The majority never ignores the minority opinions in my work group.			
I have added someone to my work group specifically because he/she brings a fresh perspective.			
Our work environment supports those who think differently from the majority.			
The thinking styles, skills, and experiences of my work group's members are diverse and balanced.			
I actively look for group members whose thinking styles differ from my own.			
The Psychological Environment			
There are opportunities for people to take on assignments that involve risk and stretch their potential.			
Rewards and/or recognition are given for creative ideas.			
As long as they show they have learned from the experience, group members are not penalized for experimentation and risk taking.			
The Physical Space			
Our workspace includes stimulating objects such as journals, art, and other items that are not directly related to our business.			
I have made changes to our physical workspace to improve communication and creative interaction.			

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
I provide group members with a wide variety of traditional and nontraditional communication tools (e-mail, whiteboards, crayons and paper, etc.).			
Group members are encouraged to design their workspaces to reflect their individuality.			
Bringing in Outsiders or Alternative Perspectives			
Our group makes visits to people outside the division or organization in order to find different perspectives and ideas.			
I have arranged for speakers from other industries to come talk to, or work with my group.			
Our group has benchmarked the functions and characteristics of our products, services, or internal processes against an industry other than our own.			

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- http://www.urenio.org/tools/en/creativity.pdf
- https://daringtolivefully.com/creativity-tools
- https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/creative-games/

Useful links
- https://sumry.me/list/search/why%20is%20creative%20thinking%20important
- https://visitjeromeidaho.com/2019/03/why-is-creativity-important-in-the-workplace/
- https://www.creativityatwork.com/what-is-creativity/
- https://people.math.harvard.edu/~knill/creativity/snowflake.html

Videos
- Creative Leadership: Time for change
- 6 examples of creativity at work
- Creativity tools

Articles
- https://hbr.org/2021/10/4-ways-to-spark-creativity-when-youre-feeling-stressed
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/jasonwingard/2020/05/29/why-companies-need-creative-leaders-in-the-future-of-work/?sh=22eb9e3482ac

Books
- Thinking Fast Slow
- Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming the Obstacles Between Vision & Reality – Scott Belsky
- How We Got to Now: Six Innovations That Made the Modern World – Steven Johnson
- Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative – Austin Kleon

Innovation

08.

1. Description of Innovation

As we grow, we learn something new every day. During the time we face new approaches, new challenges, new technologies ... and new experiences. We tend to make our life easier and more comfortable; we feel that previous approaches are slow, and we want everything fast. That is the engine for innovation.

Innovation is the practical implementation of ideas that result in the introduction of new goods or services or improvement in offering goods or services.

– Wikipedia

What is Innovation?

Innovation is the specific function of entrepreneurship, whether in an existing business, a public service institution, or a new venture started by a lone individual in the family kitchen. It is the means by which the entrepreneur either creates new wealth-producing resources or endows existing resources with enhanced potential for creating wealth.

– Peter Drucker (Wiki)

The words **innovation** and **invention** overlap semantically but are really quite distinct.

- Invention can refer to a type of musical composition, a falsehood, a discovery, or any product of the imagination. The sense of invention most likely to be confused with innovation is "a device, contrivance, or process originated after study and experiment," usually something which has not previously been in existence.

- Innovation, for its part, can refer to something new or to a change made to an existing product, idea, or field. One might say that the first telephone was an invention, the first cellular telephone either an invention or an innovation, and the first smartphone an innovation. – Merriam Webster definition

Innovation is related to, but not the same as, invention: innovation is more apt to involve the practical implementation of an invention (i.e. new / improved ability) to make a meaningful impact in a market or society, and not all innovations require a new invention. But we have to bear in mind also another part of innovation called disruption: "Disruption" describes a process whereby a smaller company with fewer resources is able to successfully challenge established incumbent businesses." from Harvard Business Review article: What Is Disruptive Innovation?

What is it about?

Innovation often takes place through the development of more- effective products, processes, services, technologies, art works or business models that innovators make available to markets, governments, and society.

"Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace"
– Wikipedia

Why is it important?

The importance of innovation in entrepreneurship is another key value for the longevity of a business. Entrepreneurs and businesses began with a need. They saw the need within the community and they came up with a solution. Seizing the opportunity to innovate to make lives more comfortable. And these solutions kept evolving to make it better, easier and more useful.

Entrepreneurs must keep themselves abreast with the current trends and demands. Small businesses see the importance of innovation in entrepreneurship. They were able to compete with large industries and see their value in the economy. Small businesses are important as they are directly involved in the community and therefore, contribute to their financial and economic gain. These small businesses know exactly what the community needs and fulfill them. All things start small.

Innovation is important not just in entrepreneurship. As individuals, we are innovators by adapting well to our needs and creating our own solutions. Entrepreneurs are the same. The innovation in entrepreneurship helped the country by changing with the times and producing new products and services from ones that already existed. And, being innovative has helped us become successful in all our endeavors.

- The importance of innovation

Which are the benefits?

There are several benefits of innovation, mainly continuous innovation. Without innovation, there would not be progress, without progress there is no sustainability.

"Innovation enables problem-solving and provides creative insight that allows you to look at things from a different perspective, regardless of whether you are developing a new product, refreshing strategy or finding an original way to stay ahead of the competition."

- Advantages of innovation

Some of the key practical benefits of innovation are:

- improved productivity
- reduced costs
- increased competitiveness
- improved brand recognition and value
- new partnerships and relationships
- increased turnover and improved profitability

INNOVATION

2. Toolkit

2. **Focus on the solution and try to think of its influence 10x bigger (much bigger) than the existing methods have.**

For example, something will take only 10% of previous time. Or it will allow us to bear 10x bigger objects, with the same size. Or it will be able to generate 10x bigger revenue. If you can easily visualize 10x try 100x or more. The goal is to unattach yourself from fixed ideas.

3.

Work out the solution.

Draw a full picture first. Do not focus on details. The goal is to have a rough solution. So, ignore any problems in the way, except showstoppers. If there is a showstopper, ask yourself what would be a crazy thing to do here? This is again mentioned to help you not to be attached to one journey.

4.

Employ agile methods.

Try to save as many resources as possible, but at the same time iterate solutions often and as much as needed. Brainstorm, execute and again.

Step by step guide

For any kind of innovation there are several steps to follow to get innovative results.

1.

You have to understand what you are going to innovate, and why you want to do that.

That means complete understanding of what problems you are trying to solve. Be careful, making sure to understand the difference between innovation and invention. (Explained in the definition, but basically innovation can be applied to inventions). For any kind of understanding you need to do your research, whether it is a technology research, process research or market research.

There are many ways to innovate. Either you try to come up with new solutions, with implementing inventions or you just change the process. Also, a lot of times the innovation is a pure combination of existing products/services/methods.

According to the Harvard Business Review article: Stop sabotaging your ability to innovate, you should do as follows:

Consult your future self.

People are hardwired to avoid risky choices by magnifying the negative consequences that might ensue. An especially potent magnifier is what's called future regret: We imagine the self-recrimination we'll feel if our venture turns out badly. The desire to avoid that feeling encourages conservatism—but you can counteract it. Instead of focusing on the pain that would accompany a failed effort, imagine how you'll feel years hence if you play it safe and shelve your idea.

Dissect your failure.

The trouble with failure, beyond the obvious, is that it generates negative emotions that impede learning: denial, anger, despair, and self-blame. Innovators are especially prone to those feelings because they identify so closely with their projects. To avoid that pitfall, start by dissecting your failure. Exactly what went wrong, and why? Which premises were false? Which ones held true?

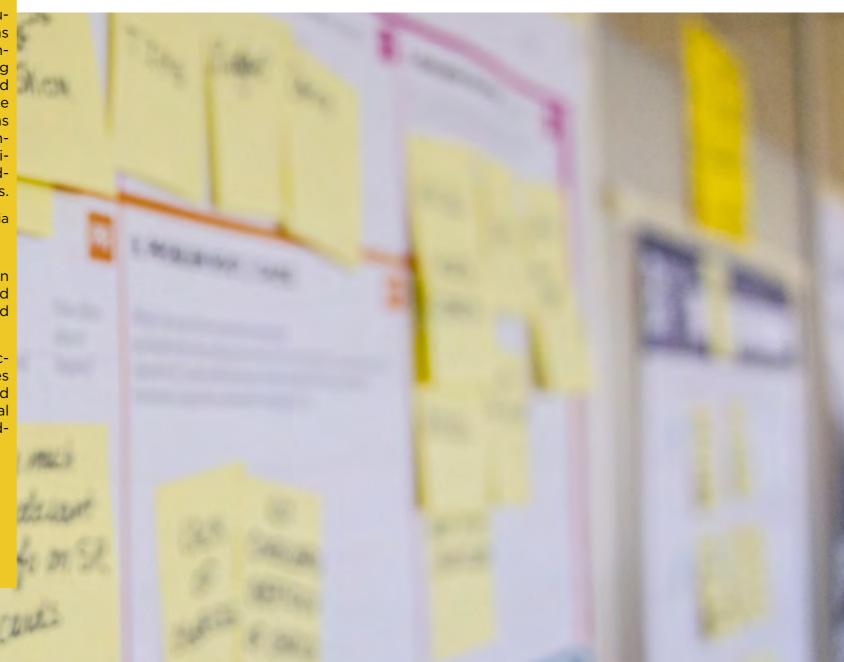# Case study

Cronut
Mixing croissant with donut

One technique for innovating a solution to an identified problem is to actually attempt an experiment with many possible solutions. This technique was famously used by Thomas Edison's laboratory to find a version of the incandescent light bulb economically viable for home use, which involved searching through thousands of possible filament designs before settling on carbonized bamboo. The related technique of A/B testing is often used to help optimize the design of web sites and mobile apps. This is used by major sites such as Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Netflix. Procter & Gamble uses computer-simulated products and online user panels to conduct larger numbers of experiments to guide the design, packaging, and shelf placement of consumer products, and Capital One uses this technique to drive credit card marketing offers.

- Wikipedia

McKinsey article: The eight essentials of innovation says:

"Successful innovators achieve significant multiples for every dollar invested in innovation by accessing the skills and talents of others. In this way, they speed up innovation and uncover new ways to create value for their customers and ecosystem partners.

Smart collaboration with external partners, though, goes beyond merely sourcing new ideas and insights; it can involve sharing costs and finding faster routes to market. Famously, the components of Apple's first iPod were developed almost entirely outside the company; by efficiently managing these external partnerships, Apple was able to move from initial concept to marketable product in only nine months."

Practice

According to the Harvard Business Review article Why the lean startup changes everything, the lean method is a new way to organize a startup and it favors experimentation over elaborate planning, customers' feedback over intuition and iterative design over traditional "big design up front" development. The lean method has three key principles:

First, rather than engaging in months of planning and research, entrepreneurs accept that all they have on day one is a series of untested hypotheses—basically, good guesses. So instead of writing an intricate business plan, founders summarize their hypotheses in a framework called a business model canvas. Essentially, this is a diagram of how a company creates value for itself and its customers. (See the exhibit "Sketch Out Your Hypotheses." in the article)

Second, lean start-ups use a "get out of the building" approach called customer development to test their hypotheses. They go out and ask potential users, purchasers, and partners for feedback on all elements of the business model, including product features, pricing, distribution channels, and affordable customer acquisition strategies. The emphasis is on nimbleness and speed: New ventures rapidly assemble minimum viable products and immediately elicit customer feedback. Then, using customers' input to revise their assumptions, they start the cycle over again, testing redesigned offerings and making further small adjustments (iterations) or more substantive ones (pivots) to ideas that aren't working. (See the exhibit "Listen to Customers." in the article)

Third, lean start-ups practice something called agile development, which originated in the software industry. Agile development works hand-in-hand with customer development. Unlike typical yearlong product development cycles that presuppose knowledge of customers' problems and product needs, agile development eliminates wasted time and resources by developing the product iteratively and incrementally. It's the process by which start-ups create the minimum viable products they test. (See the exhibit "Quick, Responsive Development." in the article)

Tips & tricks

There is only one good piece of advice to give.

FAIL ! AS MANY TIMES AS NEEDED.
A lot of people are afraid of failure. It makes no sense. It is ok to fail. Being as agile as possible allows you to fail many times. Keep the expenses low and be happy for failures. Then try it again a little bit differently.

From Harvard Business Review article: Stop sabotaging your ability to innovate

"Creativity relies on curiosity and openness. Curiosity drives your questioning and sensemaking—the search for patterns, causality, and opportunities, and your efforts to bridge the gap between what you know and what you don't. But unbounded curiosity can lead you astray in two ways. You may get drawn down a rabbit hole and lose sight of your original purpose. Or you may become mired in reflection, trying to plan for every contingency.

Openness to new experiences and ideas inspires you to ask **"What if?"** questions and connect the dots between unrelated concepts or domains. But an excess can cause you to jump from one idea to the next or bombard you with irrelevant details. If you've bogged down in your main endeavour, it can lure you away with the siren call of novelty. To ensure that your creativity remains a useful fuel rather than a dangerous distraction, you can: Recognise the moment of great peril controlling your curiosity is essential when you are shifting from reflection to action; Set limits to your involvement, recognizing a tendency to let your creativity distract you is the first step to harnessing it; or you can enlist a counterweight, finding a partner who can offset your creative exuberance."

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the Multi-disciplinary thinking dimension of your team project´s workplace.

Action checklist

Is this innovation in this area necessary?

Do I really know the most recent innovation of the area I am going to innovate?

What will the innovation bring on the table?

Does innovation create more good than bad? (e.g. the whole process, production and usage of innovation is also bringing some kind of social and/or environmental impact?

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- MindMeister: Create Your Mind Maps Online - On Any Device
- Viima - Make More Innovation Happen
- Idea & Innovation management software Accept Mission
- IdeaScale: Idea Management and Innovation Management Software

Useful links
- 100+ sources that every innovation professional should know
- 5 Methods For Innovation You Should Try with Your Team
- 10 Types of Innovation: The Art of Discovering a Breakthrough Product
- Ten Types of Innovation: 30 new case studies for 2019

Videos
- Charles Leadbeater: The era of open innovation
- The single biggest reason why start-ups succeed
- The prison of your mind | Sean Stephenson | TEDxIronwoodStatePrison

Articles
- Drive Innovation with Better Decision-Making
- 5 Questions to Build Your Company's Capacity for Innovation
- Stop Sabotaging Your Ability to Innovate
- The Innovator's DNA
- Advantages of innovation | nibusinessinfo.co.uk

Books
- The Invincible Company: How to Constantly Reinvent Your Organization with Inspiration From the World's Best Business Models
- Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Customer Choice
- Exponential Organizations: New Organizations Are Ten Times Better, Faster, and Cheaper Than Yours (and What to Do About It)
- Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Lead and Others Don't
- The Lean Enterprise: How Corporations Can Innovate Like Startup

INNOVATION

Being Initiative

09.

1. Description of Being initiative

What is Being initiative?

Being initiative is the ability to be resourceful and to introduce a new course of action. It requires tenacity, resilience, and determination. You should be able to show your capacity to think for yourself and act when necessary.

Initiative is doing the right thing without being told.

– Victor Hugo, French writer

What is it about?

Researchers Michael Frese and Doris Fay define initiative as "*work behavior characterized by its self-starting nature, its proactive approach, and by being persistent in overcoming difficulties that arise in pursuit of a goal.*"

Being iInitiative is an important aspect of developing your young professional talents and is a part of your self-management mindset. Taking initiative involves looking at the big picture and identifying the tasks that can be completed to move things forward.

When you show initiative, you do things without being told; you find out what you need to know; you keep going when things get tough; and you spot and take advantage of opportunities that others pass by. You act, instead of reacting, at work.

Why is it important?

The capacity to be resourceful and work without being told what to do is known as initiative. It needs persistence and determination. People who take initiative show that they are capable of thinking for themselves and acting when necessary. It involves using your mind and being motivated to succeed.

Initiative is a self-management skill, and self-management is one of key life and work skills for Young Professionals. When you are being initiative, you accomplish things without being asked, solve problems that others may not have noticed, and go above and beyond to keep learning and improving. If necessary, you conduct further research, ask questions, and seek assistance.

Being initiative makes you an attractive candidate for jobs and chances since it demonstrates your ability to think for yourself as well as your willingness to learn and improve in your current position.

Which are the benefits of Being initiative?

If displayed appropriately and at the right time, being initiative is equally beneficial for you and for the organization you work for. It's a well-known fact that one should take initiative to 'get noticed', but what exactly stands behind these words? Below are the list of evident and less-than-obvious perks you can get from using your initiative:

You get visibility and recognition.

As you might have learnt from the experience, the most hard-working individual isn't always the one who gets promoted faster than others. Hard work and dedication are not enough to build a career – it's important to make your contribution noticed and show your real value for the company. By showing initiative, you demonstrate genuine interest in fulfilling company needs which can lead to higher salary or promotion in the future (if you're looking for hands-on tips on how to get a bigger paycheck, see here).

You learn new skills.

When your responsibility is basically the same all the time, it's hard to keep learning and growing professionally. Moreover, getting stuck in a role with no professional development leads to professional burnout and continuous workplace stress. Willingness to take on more responsibility or a new project that is completely new for you expands your comfort zone and allows you to learn new hard and soft skills every day. If you're looking to improve your communication skills, problem solving, independence and boost self-esteem, initiative is the right way to do so.

You get extra responsibility.

To continue the previous point, getting extra responsibility allows you to be considered for a promotion. If you are successful performing your usual range of duties and are looking to do more, it means that you are ready for a management role and you can prove it on the practice. Therefore, if you want a promotion, look for an initiative waiting to be implemented or come up with your ideas.

Increased company efficiency.

Looking from the employer's perspective, it's the initiative of individuals that make process improvement, cost reduction and client retention happen. Everyone needs people who can see the opportunities for improvement, resolve problems in a non-standard way and suggest ideas that can potentially lead the company to a breakthrough. That's why creative approach and initiative are one of the top qualities companies look for when they hire graduates (here you can find the guide on landing your first job after graduation).

You boost the worth of your resume.

Any issues of displaying initiative, both effective and ineffective, deserve being mentioned on your resume. Acting on your own initiative assumes that you have leadership abilities, can work independently and identify opportunities. Moreover, it means that you are persistent enough to reach company goals. And if you support the description of projects you led with high-impact resume words, your contribution will sound even more significant on paper. If you don't know how to include the projects you led on your resume, or feel that your resume is not working, consider getting expert help. Our in-house resume writers can create a modern resume for you – check our services and prices.

Whether it comes to introducing new ideas for higher productivity, leading an innovative project or performing the duties of your boss during his absence, thoughtful initiative always pays off. Your task is to do your homework, find the right time and place to display your initiative and be persistent during its realization.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

1.
Have your training plan at hand.

The best initiative comes from understanding how it can benefit the organization – and your training and career, too. Moreover, the research shows that people who have long-term career plans are more willing to take initiative. If you know your professional goals, you are aware of which skills you need to learn and which projects to complete to work your way up. You learn to tie your career needs to the company goals, and come up with really helpful ideas rather than present something which has just crossed your mind. If you don't have a career plan yet, learn the pros and cons of creating it.

2.
Boost your confidence.

In fact, it's impossible to imagine a good initiative coming from a shy, hesitant person. When you present some brand new solution to management, you need to be confident in your words and your ideas. If you lack self-esteem, there are plenty of quick ways to increase it. First, create a list of your past professional accomplishments. Taking a look at how much you have achieved so far will motivate you for even bigger accomplishments. Second, set measurable goals and achieve them so you could see the progress and start perceiving yourself as a 'go-getter'. And third, visualize yourself as a person that exudes confidence and positive vibes.

3.
Have an eye on opportunities.

The ability to see opportunities literally everywhere is a skill, and you can master it. If you can see and use the potential for improvement and growth, you won't get unnoticed with any organization. There's a number of ways you can teach yourself to keep an eye on opportunity.

4.
Be curious.

People who can see opportunities which are in the air share one common trait – they're curious. They're always looking to know how the entire company works, and go above and beyond their direct responsibilities. When you learn how every department of your organization works, what makes your product or service a success and what other employees complain about most, you have a clear picture in your mind and can see what can be improved and how.

5.
Ask questions.

To learn to see potential for improvement, you need to ask yourself the right questions. Use them to access the current situation in the company or your department, identify problems at an early stage or understand the needs of your clients. When you adopt the habit of seeking opportunities everywhere, you'll become an asset for any employer.

6.
Think like the business owner.

If you want to set yourself up for the initiative, watching things from the business owner perspective will help you work your way up. Most employees tend to do exactly what is required from them and what they get money for (unless they're ambitious and want to reach the top of the corporate ladder). However, to be truly beneficial for the business, you need to develop the mindset of the business owner. It assumes seeing your ordinary tasks and the tasks set for your department as the part of a complicated business process which eventually brings money to the business. As you focus on the overall company success, you get more responsible and thoughtful when displaying the initiative, and your suggestions get more helpful.

7.
Come up with well-prepared ideas.

Speaking up the good yet raw ideas is the surefire way to have them stolen by a prompt colleague who might develop them and get all the credit. It isn't the reward you wanted when you learnt to take initiative, is it? Moreover, as we've mentioned above, raw ideas aren't very helpful for your boss as they need further work to bring in ROI. Whenever you feel you've got a great initiative to come up with, do proper homework. Develop your ideas further, think of the amount of work and costs it might involve and the risks it may encounter. For instance, if you'd like to suggest that a sales team could get training to learn the modern selling practices, calculate whether the expected turnover will cover training expenses. When you enter your boss's office with a draft of a business case, you'll be taken more seriously.

8.
Help others.

On many teams, there's a person who lags behind in one area or a newly hired employee who lacks proper onboarding training. In this case, you can take the initiative and explain to them the issues they lack knowledge or experience with, thus increasing the results of work for the entire team and gaining a reputation of a subject matter expert. For instance, if your company implements brand new software or new corporate rules, you can serve as an agent of this change by training others and explaining most complex concepts.

9.
Participate in corporate activities.

If you work for a mid- or large-sized organization, there are always plenty of events around such as team building activities, conferences, training sessions, etc. Therefore, you can offer your candidacy to speak at these events or assist with preparations. Not only will it help you understand the work of other departments and gain new knowledge, but also you'll recommend yourself as a go-getter who is concerned with the life of the company (and your career as well). For instance, you can assist with preparation for the office corporate party.

10.
Participate in brainstorming sessions.

Getting involved in workplace activities is necessary to get noticed. If brainstorming sessions are held, don't be afraid to speak up and share your ideas. Maybe, some of your ideas will be supported and realized. Brainstorming sessions are typically used to find a creative solution for existing problems, but even if you don't invent that solution, being an active participant of likewise activities will help you build a reputation of a person your boss can solely count on.

Case studies

The concept of being initiative in engineering field

The case

Being initiative and the role it plays in the engineering workforce.

The challenge

Testing the hypothesis that being initiative is correlated with "partners assessments, need for achievement, action orientation, problem-focused and passive emotion-focused coping, career planning and executing plans"

The result

The results from the case study confirmed the hypothesis that personal initiative is correlated with partners' assessments, need for achievement, action orientation, problem-focused and passive emotion-focused coping, career planning and executing plans. Other related findings from the study were that entrepreneurs tended to have a very high degree of personal initiative and that unemployed subjects with high degree of personal initiative tended to find jobs more quickly than those with a low degree of personal initiative.

Practice

Being initiative Technique	Purpose
Lecturing	Lecturing is one of the methods that comes first, where the business leaders or teachers of millennials are in the center. It is a method where both of them actively describe topics and the millennials are passive listeners. With this method, lessons, workshop, seminar etc. proceed in the form of report, description and explanation.
Debate	Depending on the situation, debate is a tool that allows all millennials, or a specific portion of the workshops or events to participate in. In this method, members of the group discuss a topic by addressing the various points of view and discuss alternative opinions about being initiative.
Demonstration	In this method the business leaders or teachers of the millennials demonstrate an experiment, test, in front of the learners. And then assists millennials to do so too. Y Gen learn not only by just looking and watching, but also by taking part and participating. This method is usually applied when teaching and communication skills.
Case Study	Case studies require millennials to actively participate while using an analytical perspective to think about real and problematic events. The problematic event may be real or very close to real life.
Performance	In this method, the business leaders or teachers of millennials perform activities such as experiments and demonstrations in front of them, millennials try to learn by looking and watching. This method is usually applied where there are limited facilities and in dealing with dangerous experimental situations.
Questions – Answers	The different types of Questions used (associative, differential, assessment, requesting information, motivating, and brainstorming) although millennials get into more active positions during the process; the method is moderator-centered.
Cooperative Learning	Cooperative Learning is; a kind of learning that is based on millennials working together for a common purpose. Millennials gain experiences such as becoming aware of unity.
Brainstorming	Brainstorming is a group work process that has been regulated to reach solutions for a problem without limitations or evaluation. The purpose of brainstorming is to make it easier for millennials to express themselves and to generate ideas.
The STARRS Method	STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) provides business leaders and teachers of millennials the opportunity to 'Reflect' on their experience and 'Strengthen' it by thinking how they would do things better.

If you are in school:

• Volunteer to lead an assembly, the teacher might already have a topic in mind already or you can use this challenge or one of our other challenges
• Set-up or volunteer for the school council
• Seek out a particular issue for your school, litter, cyber bullying, mental health and build a campaign to support it

If you are in work

• Organise a training session for a subject/skill or process you know will help the team
• Ask if you can support another project, put yourself out there to gain new friends and new skills

If you are in other places

• Organise a trainings for a skill that will help your team
• Organise a share the knowledge event, all of the team players talk about their roles and skills
• Find new opportunities to play, a new league to enter, additional workshops you can undertake
• Volunteer the team to support a community project, teach young or older people.

Let's exercise

Tips & tricks

As a manager or business owner in order to foster Being initiative you need to

- Seeking more responsibilities.

- Tackling challenges/solving problems.

- Training others/sharing knowledge.

- Helping your coworkers.

- Providing regular status updates.

- Building strong working relationships with coworkers.

- Doing things and projects that others avoid.

- Volunteering to work with different teams and departments.

- Stepping in when someone is unavailable or absent.

- Being innovative/improving systems, processes and procedures.

- Resolving interpersonal conflicts at work.

- Offering to mentor others.

- Volunteering for leadership roles.

- Referring to good potential employees.

- Helping in the interviewing and hiring process.

- Brainstorming ideas to improve the company.

- Becoming a good team player.

- Supporting your supervisor or manager efficiently.

- Helping others to see their strengths and qualities.

- Anticipating and preventing problems.

- Dressing to succeed.

- Sharing the credit.

- Maintaining high quality standards.

- Making good decisions and being decisive.

- Doing quality control for finished projects.

How to enhance your Being initiative

It will need a little bit of courage and self-belief to use your initiative talents, and you will need to push yourself a little bit farther. Simply waking up and completing the things that other people haven't gotten around to isn't the best method to demonstrate initiative. To truly have initiative, you should go over and over. Here are four strategies to begin developing and enhance your initiative abilities.

1.   Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Understanding how and why things operate the way they do, or why things are done the way they are, helps you to consider how they may be improved. Also, the more you know about a subject, the better you'll be able to predict what will happen next. Be interested and ask questions about procedures, and consider the big picture. You'll probably just be responsible for one piece of a process, but learning what happens before and after you perform your job can help you come up with new methods to make the next person's work a little simpler.

Never be afraid to think outside the box; seek out others with different responsibilities and interests than you and ask them how they handle problems.

2.   Don't be shy to speak up more.

Make sure you're presenting fresh ideas. Well-thought-out ideas provided at a convenient moment show initiative. You don't want to interrupt the team management in the middle of a conversation, but if you have a new suggestion for how your sports team might score more goals or defend better, there will undoubtedly be a moment to share it!

Take an interest in the issues you're working on, and discuss new articles you've read as well as fascinating, current events. If you're helping a project with social media, talk about previous campaigns that went well and stay up with new applications and channels that are being developed.

Speak out when you have a challenge and inspire others to do the same, take an interest in initiatives and stimulate conversation about how challenges might be handled.

3.   Try to always be organized.

Being initiative might be about pushing yourself to think differently about how things operate and how things are done. You'll be putting yourself forward for new duties and forcing yourself to think differently about how things work and how things are done. To take on new projects or expand your workload, you'll need to be organized. You'll need to double-check that your tasks are in order and that you have the time and ability to accomplish that little bit more or work in a different way.

4.   Be ready to act!

The key to initiative is action; you should ask questions, speak up more, and be organized and prepared, but if you do all of that and still don't take action, you've failed at the last hurdle of initiative. Seeing what needs to be done and then informing everyone about it without taking action might make you appear like a whiner rather than a doer! In teamwork circumstances, there will be one thing you are very excellent at and learn faster than others; why not organize a training session for your team on your main talent, share what you know, and encourage other team members to train on their finest skill as well. If you haven't yet entered the workforce, organizing a training session where the goalkeeper or defenders discuss their talents and training might help the entire team operate better together.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the Being initiative dimension of your team project´s workplace.

Action checklist

Make a habit of asking "what if" instead of accepting the status-quo

Schedule creative brainstorm sessions by yourself or in groups

Challenge yourself to try new things every day for a week

Ask a lot of questions

If you are spending a lot of time doing boring tasks, ask yourself if it really needs to be done. If it does, find ways to make it more efficient. Consider outsourcing some of those tasks.

Do different self-awareness exercises every day for a month. Take personality tests. Journal. Ask your friends and family about your strengths and weaknesses.

Make a list of all the things you've been meaning to do for a while – whether it's something as small as cleaning the house, or something as big as writing a book – and start doing at least one thing from that list straight away.

Find a mentor.

Form a mastermind group.

Join a class to learn something new, even if it has nothing to do with your career.

Make a list of your biggest mistakes. Journal about the lessons you learned from those mistakes.

Speak up. Next time someone asks you for an opinion, or if you are in a meeting, don't hold back. Present your ideas, or say exactly what you think. You have to be comfortable with yourself and your beliefs, to get used to taking an initiative.

If you see something that needs to be done, go do it – even if it's not a part of your responsibility.

Admit your mistakes.

Set goals.

Participate. Make your presence known by taking part in any discussion or activity with enthusiasm.

Take advantage of new opportunities.

Discover your values. Do you know what you stand for? Your core values are an essential part of the life you want to create, so spend some time thinking about them.

Make a list of things around you that are not quite good enough, the ones that you know could be better. Pick one, and brainstorm how you'll make it better. Then, immediately implement the idea.

Make decisions. When something needs to be decided, don't just worry or think about it and pro-long the situation. Do your homework, assess the situation, and then make an informed decision.

Follow the 80/20 rule. Focus your efforts on the things that will deliver high impact results.

Make a conscious effort to give your absolute best to every task at hand.

Be persistent. If you want something, and you know you are right to want it, then keep at it. Don't let the fear of rejection hold you back.

Influence is power. Experiment with different ways to improve your influencing skills.

Send a hand-written "Thank You" card to someone who has helped you.

Action checklist

Approach one person who's good at something you want to improve in, and ask them for help. You could either ask them to be your mentor, or make a mutually beneficial offer where you provide them with something they need in return.

Praise someone publicly for something they did well. If your spouse did something nice for you, thank them or praise their effort in front of others. If your employee took an initiative, went out of their way to do something, or did a really great job, make a point of commenting on it in front of other colleagues.

Praise someone who's in a higher position than you. If your parents did something well, or if your boss did something very helpful, or gave you good guidance, tell them that, and thank them.

Lead by example. If you are trying to get someone else to do something, do it yourself first. Inspire action in others. Don't force it.

Help someone with zero expectation for any reward, or even a thank-you. Help them because it's the right thing to do.

Find an informal leadership position. Organise events in your local community; offer your help with school projects; start a group that brings like-minded people together. You don't need to wait for someone else to tell you that you are a leader. Leaders lead – whether they get paid for it or not.

Find one way that you can improve your communication skills, and practice it every day for a fort-night.

Find out how other people prefer to communicate. Wherever possible, use the medium of their choice.

Bring solutions, not problems. This is a cliché for a reason. No one likes naysayers and whiners. If you see an issue, by all means bring it up. But have something constructive to say as well.

Anticipate your manager's, partner's, children's, friends' needs. Do something for them that they need, without their having to ask you.

Regularly ask people in your life for their feedback on your strengths and weaknesses.

Be honest. Be yourself. Success without authenticity is meaningless.

Be your own best supporter. Learn to present your ideas and plans in a positive and effective man-ner to others.

Volunteer for difficult or weird assignments.

Smile at people. Greet them. Friendliness is the most effective way to create connection.

Minimize negative comments that come out of your mouth.

Give what you want to receive. This is similar to "do to others what you want done to you." If you want respect, give respect to others. If you want opportunities, give the opportunities in your power to people who would benefit from it.

Find a work environment that supports your authenticity. Don't try to fit in a place that is totally wrong for you.

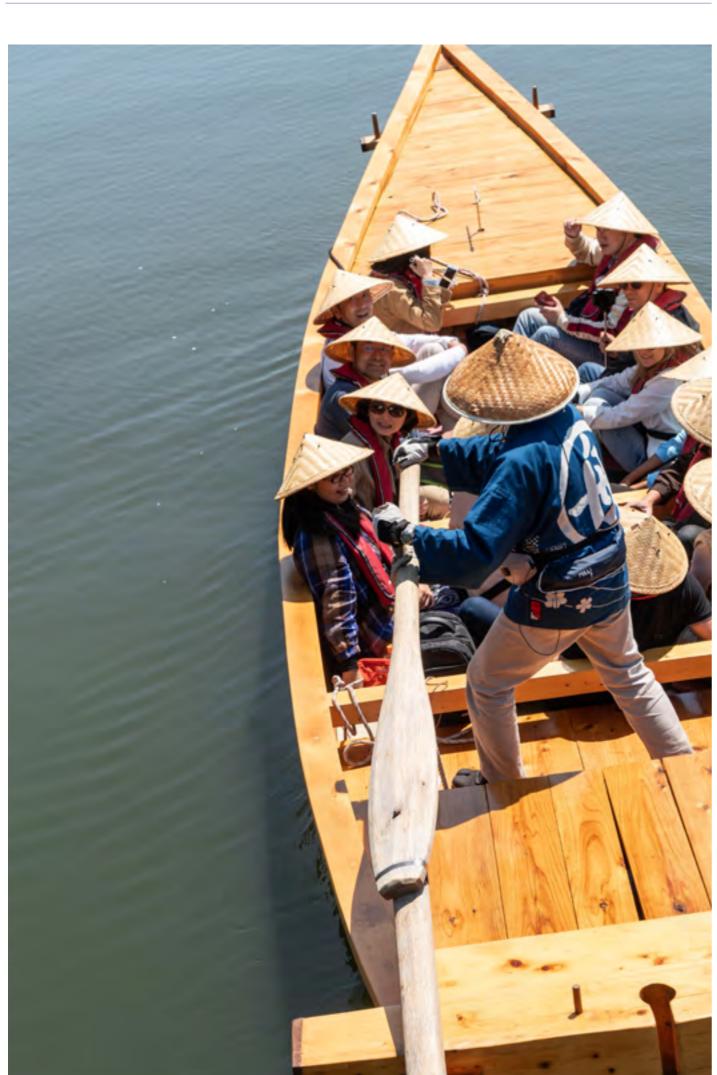Create a plan for where you want to be in five years time.

Actively break-off association with all negative influences in your life. Surround yourself with people who support, motivate or inspire you.

Regularly review your progress on your goals, and adjust your course as required.

Pick one skill that is important/necessary for you but you aren't very good at, and focus on improv-ing it to a high level within 4-6 months.

Simplify your life.

BEING INITIATIVE

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- Document about Concept of career guidance and developing career choices
- Manual about Inclusive Leadership for Trainers

Useful links
- Blog Post about "How To Find And Retain Talent In The Millennial Era"
- The Inclusive Leadership Handbook – Theoretical framework
- EU Project "CATCH 21st Century Skills for changing the approach to university teaching"
- Competence Self Assessment Tool For Youth Workers

Videos
- Let's Address Millennial Mental Wellbeing
- The Power of Taking Initiative and Being More Proactive – How to Take the Initiative
- HR Technology 2021: A Comprehensive Guide To The Market
- The Role of Millennials in The Emerging Story of Our Time | Dr. Seren Dalkiran | TEDxSquareMile
- Career Readiness - Success at Work - Taking the initiative at work

Articles
- Paper: The First Step to Leadership in School Management: Taking Initiative
- Phd Thesis: Millennial Integration: Challenges Millennials Face in the Workplace and What They Can Do About Them
- HBR Blog Post: Millennials Are Actually Workaholics, According to Research
- Insider Blog Post: A CEO shares his best advice for getting promoted quickly when you're in your 20s
- The Wall Street Journey Blog Post: Everyone Agrees: Millennials Have a Lot to Learn at Work
- Communication Studies Thesis: They Work Hard for Their Money: A Narrative Analysis of Millennial Workforce Entry

Books
- Initiative: A Proven Method to Bring Your Passions to Life (and Work)
- 1001 Ways to Take Initiative at Work
- College Dropout: Why Millennials Are Taking the Initiative

Curiosity

10.

1. Description of Curiosity

> " The mind that opens to a new idea never returns to its original size.
>
> - Albert Einstein

What is Curiosity?

Curiosity is a pleasant state of motivation that involves a tendency to recognize and seek out new and stimulating information and experiences.

Curiosity differs from other positive emotions due to the strong desire to explore and persist in the activity that initially stimulated the interest of an individual. Although curiosity and pleasure tend to go hand in hand, sometimes there is a conflict between curiosity and other positive emotions.

This happens because curiosity can lead to the search for new, uncertain and complex activities that are aversive. When curious, the rewards seem to come from the process of integrating various and complex information and experiences rather than simply from the positive effect associated with them.

Why is it important?

1. New realities and possibilities open up

Being curious allows you to see new realities and possibilities that are not normally visible. They are all elements that are present in daily life but remain hidden behind the veil of routine. It therefore takes a curious mind, trained to ask questions to make sure to move that veil and discover new worlds with their new possibilities.

2. Makes the mind active and does not "wither"

Curious people spend their lives asking questions and looking for answers in their minds. They keep their mind moving and active. Although our brain is not a muscle under the histological aspect, it is strengthened through continuous exercise; it is curiosity that keeps the mind in shape, making it stronger day after day.

3. Prepares your mind for new ideas

When one is curious to know something, the mind expects and anticipates new ideas related to that something. Without curiosity, ideas can run away, escape without even realizing it, since the mind is unprepared to recognize them. How many great ideas are you willing to lose without being helped by the desire for knowledge?

Curiosity is a fundamental element of our knowledge, but its biological function, and its mechanisms are still poorly understood. Psychology and neuroscience must work together to scientifically analyze curiosity.

4. It makes our lives exciting

The life of the curious is by no means boring. They do not have a life blinded and tainted by routine. They keep their mind like that of children, new things get their attention, there are always new toys to have fun with. The curious dispel boredom with an adventurous life.

Now that we have understood the strength of being curious, it is enough just to apply some small tips to develop curiosity.

What is it about?

The word curiosity derives from the Latin *cura*, understood as concern: it literally means "to take care of something unknown".

Curiosity is what characterizes a genius. There cannot be an intellectual giant who is not a curious person. If we think of people like Leonardo da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, Guglielmo Marconi or Rita Levi Montalcini, we can only see through their lives that they were all curious.

Eleanor Roosevelt considered it "the most useful gift".

Scientists began questioning curiosity in the 1800s. Initially, psychologists studied how children were attracted to novelty and how family background influenced this attitude.

Pavlov's studies on the behavior of animals in front of unknown objects can also be considered part of this line of studies (source). From a scientific point of view, curiosity is **"a state of mind that pushes you to seek out new and stimulating information and experiences"**.

The more curious people are, the more they are able to:

- recognize the novelties with respect to previous experiences and expectations;
- face the complexity of unknown situations with clarity;
- manage uncertainty, or the imponderability of the results of an action or situation;
- manage the conflict, or the existence of attitudes or interpretations different from one's own.

The 5 dimensions of curiosity

After collecting data from a nationally representative sample of 508 adults, then 403 adults online and then another nationally representative sample of 3,000 adults, US psychologist Todd Kashdan analyzing the work and previous research of other psychologists, has discovered 5 dimensions of curiosity.

1. Sensitivity to deprivation

The first dimension, derived from the work of Berlyne and Loewenstein, is the sensitivity to deprivation, the recognition of a gap in knowledge whose filling offers relief. This kind of curiosity isn't necessarily good, but people who experience it work tirelessly to solve problems.

2. Joyful exploration

The second dimension, influenced by Deci's research, is joyful exploration, being consumed by wonder at the fascinating characteristics of the world. This is a pleasant state; the people in it seem to have a zest for life.

3. Social curiosity

The third dimension, deriving from Renner's research, is social curiosity: speaking, listening and observing others to learn what they think and do. Humans are inherently social animals, and the most effective and efficient way to determine if someone is friend or foe is to obtain information. Some may even snoop, eavesdrop, or gossip to do so.

4. Stress tolerance

The fourth dimension, which is based on the recent work of Paul Silvia, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, is stress tolerance: the willingness to accept and even exploit the anxiety associated with novelty. People lacking this ability see information gaps, experience wonder, and are interested in others, but they are unlikely to step forward and explore.

5. Thrill-seeking

The fifth dimension, inspired by Zuckerman, is the search for thrills: being willing to take physical, social and financial risks to acquire varied, complex and intense experiences. For people with this ability, the anxiety of dealing with novelty is something to be amplified, not to be reduced.

Which are the benefits of being curious?

"Curiosity leads to knowledge", it is often said. And it is true, but also something more.

In fact, curious people not only accumulate an enormous wealth of knowledge, but also know what to do with it at the right time. That is, when faced with a problem they find a solution by combining in an original way the "pieces" collected over time from the most disparate sources.

Looking around and asking questions about what surrounds us is one of the fundamental ingredients of creativity. The ability to focus on something by grasping its different nuances is what makes our idea or our work unique. Above all, it is a mental attitude that rejects passivity and puts everything into question.

Curiosity is a challenge to oneself and to the world, allowing us to embrace the complexity in which we are immersed. It is also a remedy for one's mental well-being, as well as being one of the best antidotes against boredom.

1. Curiosity helps learning

Passionate interest in what is unknown is the engine of learning. In this regard, a study by the University of California shows how curiosity facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge and its memorization. In fact, the brain is rewarded by the information it receives, quenching its thirst for knowledge.

1. **Motivation** plays an important role. The learning process is in fact influenced by the real reason that guides us in gathering information. Studying for a high grade, or recognition from teachers, for example, limits deep understanding of a topic. This would explain why some great geniuses, with rather mediocre report cards, have outclassed the top of the class who remained anonymous after finishing school.

2. Curiosity fosters resilience and mental well-being

Several researches have repeatedly shown how an active mind is among the indicators of lasting health, a lower decline of mental faculties and a good quality of life (understood as having positive feelings, such as optimism and happiness). The scientific literature on the subject is very vast, with a close collaboration between psychologists and neuroscientists. Here are two studies that concern two categories that often struggle with boredom.

The first is aimed at a group of US students, where those who fell into the category of the curious were much more satisfied and involved in the path they were taking. They were able, therefore, to make sense of their days and they drew continuous motivations to continue their studies.

The second research, conducted by Chinese researchers, explores the behavior of those who work in companies. A portrait of the curious person emerges: proactive, healthier than average, more resistant to stress and mental fatigue.

3. Curiosity fuels open-mindedness

How does a greater openness of mind develop? The answer is quite simple: with curiosity.

To be curious, you need to have a sincere interest in something and then ask questions. To oneself and to others, nourishing a critical sense that rejects a priori what is given as true and absolute.

It also takes courage, because we often silence our doubts so as not to expose ourselves and live without hassle. On the contrary, curious people are always looking for answers. They do not stop at a no and are ready to revise their opinions, expanding them with points of view they had not considered.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

Albert Einstein did not think he was a special person, just a curious enthusiast. You won't find a great scientist, artist, creative, innovative entrepreneur who isn't hungry for answers and knowledge. The driving force behind their success is curiosity, which pushes them away from the ordinary.

Creative thinking needs curiosity, and here are some tips for cultivating it.

1.

Read (a lot).

Reading books and magazines, trying to grasp their deeper meaning, opens up a world of possibilities. It is a very cheap, yet effective way to meet people, places and ideas that we do not know. While it is true that reading is important, it is also true that to stimulate curiosity you have to vary your readings (by changing literary genre, newspaper, topic, etc.). To do this, I recommend to visit a library, explore the shelves of all sections and be inspired.

"Those who do not read at 70 will have lived only one life: their own. The reader will have lived 5,000 years: there was when Cain killed Abel, when Renzo married Lucia, when Leopardi admired the infinite … because reading is an immortality backwards."

- Umberto Eco

2.

Observe and ask questions.

It has already been mentioned, but it is worth repeating. Questions are the soul of curiosity. They light up our brains and have the power to restructure our thoughts. To ask good questions, however, one must pay attention and be good observers. Only in this way will we go to the heart of the problem or situation we are evaluating.

"*A wise man learns more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer.*"

- Bruce Lee

3.

Travel.

By setting out on a journey, you have the opportunity to cross cities and landscapes never seen before, making experiences that break our daily routine. Even better if you manage to immerse yourself in a new environment for a fairly long period of time (at least a few days). Likewise, it is important to meet the locals and talk to them. About what? Everything and nothing. Often abroad they are very open and they are always happy to chat with a traveler.

"*The only rule of travel is: do not return the way you left. Come back different.*"

- Anne Carson

4.

Change habits.

Routine is one of the curiosity killers. Habits are a fixed pattern that repeats itself over time, a kind of autopilot that we don't pay particular attention to. By doing the same things again, we end up taking them for granted, forgetting what it means to be amazed. To give the routine a little shake up, it often takes very little: change bars, practice a hobby, listen to a new radio station, take different routes to get to work and so on.

"*Habit and routine have an incredible power to waste and destroy.*"

- Henri-Marie de Lubac

5.

Have fun.

Curiosity is an effective remedy for boredom, but boredom also has a right to exist. It can be a space to reflect, but also a clue that what we are doing is not for us. Since you now know the importance of questions, make it a very simple one: "Do I like what I'm doing?". Curiosity enriches your life if it indulges a sincere desire for something. Otherwise it becomes yet another task on the to-do list. Look for something that you like, that you enjoy, it doesn't matter what it is.

"*The time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time and certain things that are not necessary can be essential.*"

- Abraham Maslow

CURIOSITY

Case study

They seek efficiency to the detriment of exploration

In the early 1900s, Henry Ford focused all his efforts on one goal: reducing production costs to create a car for the masses. By 1908, he had realised that vision with the introduction of the Model T. Demand grew so high that by 1921 the company was producing 56% of all passenger cars in the United States – a remarkable success made possible primarily by the firm's efficiency-centered model of work. But in the late 1920s, as the US economy rose to new heights, consumers started wanting greater variety in their cars. While Ford remained fixated on improving the Model T, competitors such as General Motors started producing an array of models and soon captured the main share of the market. Owing to its single-minded focus on efficiency, Ford stopped experimenting and innovating and fell behind.

Practice

Curiosity Techniques

Research suggests that experiencing novelty is an important factor in both health and happiness. The opportunities for novelty exist practically everywhere, but to discover them and make the most of them we need to develop our "musculature of curiosity" through a more regular and intense use. Here are some simple ways to start expanding your curiosity capacity:

When	Instructions
Upon awakening	Look with "new eyes". Choose to see some things in your home, partner, or family that you may have overlooked before.
When you speak	Strive to remain open to everything that happens, without taking for granted, categorizing, judging or reacting. Ask more questions and listen carefully.
While driving	Instead of dealing with a commute, try to actively anticipate what the drivers around you are likely to do. Be careful what awaits you and what is on the horizon.
When you work	Look for opportunities to challenge and apply yourself in ways that pique your interest and produce great results. Ask questions like: what's interesting here? How can I make it more fun?
During training	Instead of following the movements, focus your attention on the complexities and sensations of your movement and on any sight, sound and smell that is in your range of action.

Start by dedicating five minutes each day to practicing curiosity. After a week, add a little more time to your workout: while you cook, eat, clean, bathe, pay your bills, sit on the porch and so on.

Tips & tricks

As a manager or Business owner in order to foster Curiosity you need to

Empower employees at all levels through ownership

• It's been shown that big companies in mature industries, even when they realize the value of curiosity, struggle with nurturing it within their employees. One way to counter this type of situation is by creating a non-traditional workplace structure focused around empowering workers of all levels. On the whole, you want all of your employees to feel like "mini CEOs." This type of empowerment allows for full ownership of a project and emboldens employees to fight for their ideas. By rewarding those who speak up and giving credit to leaders of all levels, personal growth through curiosity becomes a far more attainable idea. It also paves the way for new voices in the company to bring forth fresh ideas.

Encourage outside hobbies

• When we're exposed to the same ideas and activities day in and day out, it is difficult to maintain a creative mindset. This is where hobbies outside of work play an important role in employee performance. A recent San Francisco State University study of workers found that those who engaged in "creative pursuits" -- anything from playing video games to writing short stories -- had improved job performance and specifically out-performed their hobby-less coworkers when it came to creative problem-solving.

• However, with many jobs veering off of the traditional "9-to-5" schedule and with the line between "work life" and "home life" more blurry than ever before, it's important for businesses to take an active role in encouraging their employees' side passions. Whether during a designated sharing time at company meetings or by encouraging your team to take advantage of all of their vacation days, a continued conversation regarding life outside of the office and support for such endeavors will allow your employees to be more curious in their work. Many companies found a balance by encouraging employees to bring their personal passions into the office with a series of informative show and tells: e.g. employees give presentations as varied as a tutorial on how to tie nautical knots to a (somewhat murky) recollection of variations in whiskey based on a recent trip to Ireland.

Open Up the office

• One of the keys to breeding an environment of curiosity is to provide employees with exposure to as many different ideas as possible through cross-team communication. One of the most popular ways to build this type of communication across the company is by physically opening up the office, allowing people to interact with parts of the organization they may not normally come into direct contact with. If opening up the physical space isn't possible, businesses can also turn to new communication channels such as Slack, which allow for workplace bonding and discussion across not only workplace boundaries but also physical distances, bringing offices from around the country (and the world) together like never before. In companies with several different offices, it's helpful to maintain all-hands-on-deck meetings or even to install visual live-streams into each office to contribute to that connection.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the Curiosity dimension to challenge your attitude and sharpen your curiosity.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Diversity of Styles			
Do you have specific habits for getting curious when you notice you're not curious about something important?			
Do you, in every situation, endeavour to have an accurate map of the territory?			
Do you regularly acknowledge and accept the possible worlds/ realities/ possibilities that may exist?			
Do you regularly ask, "What are the causes of my beliefs? Why do I think this? What's the source?"			
Do you regularly ask, "What would I expect to see differently if x was or was not the case?"			
Do you regularly ask, when unexpected things happen, "Why didn't I expect x to happen?"			
When you sit down to think, or to look something up, do you regularly ask, "What am I chasing? Why am I doing this? Am I asking myself questions about this?"			
Do you frequently stop to consider what information will be most valuable to achieving your goals?			
Do you frequently ask, "What do I most want to accomplish?"			
Do you focus your curiosity on the information you need to achieve your goals? E.g. "What do I need to know in order to achieve that thing? What is most likely to help me learn this and figure it out?"			
Do you stop reading when a source becomes irrelevant?			
Do you actively seek out more useful information? E.g. "What are the best sources? Where is the best information?"			
Do you gravitate to inquiries that seem most promising of producing shifts in belief?			
Do you gravitate to inquiries that are least like the ones you've tried before?			
Do you ever call topics or ideas boring, shallow, crazy, beneath you, or confusing (or other words that close off thought)?			

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Do you notice when conflicting emotions cut off your curiosity?			
Do you, in every social interaction, ask what that person can teach you?			
Do you, in every situation where you receive feedback, treat it as potentially valuable?			

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- https://eyes.nasa.gov/curiosity/
- https://curious.com/

Videos
- CURIOSITY
- Curiosity Is a Superpower — If You Have the Courage to Use It | Big Think
- Curiosity Is Your Super Power | Spencer Harrison & Jon Cohen | TEDxLosGatos
- Curiosity Saves the Cat | Tara Connor | TEDxKids@SMU
- The Power of Curiosity
- How to spark your curiosity, scientifically | Nadya Mason

Articles
- https://psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/personality/curiosity/
- https://hbr.org/2018/09/the-business-case-for-curiosity
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/04/03/how-to-instill-curiosity-in-the-workplace/?sh=28a8e65642e2
- https://www.buildinganddecor.co.za/the-business-case-for-curiosity/
- https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/going-beyond-intelligence/201606/bedtime-checklist-creative-curious-imaginative-kids

Books
- Tools for Igniting Curiosity
- Curious: The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends On It
- The New Science of Curiosity
- Curious Advantage
- The Design and Engineering of Curiosity

Self-Confidence

11.

1. Description of Self-Confidence

What is Self-confidence?

Self Confidence is "*the belief that you can do things well and that other people respect you*" - Cambridge Dictionary - as well as "*the confidence in one self and in one's power and ability*" - Merriam-Webster

Confidence is a state of being; the individual is sure that a hypothesis or prediction is correct or that a chosen course of action is the best of more effective. The word confidence comes from a Latin word "fidere" that means "to trust", therefore, having self-confidence is having trust in one's self[1].

"

Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her.

- Lao Tzu

What is it about?

The concept of self-confidence is commonly used as self-assurance in one's personal judgement, ability, power, etc. It increases from experiences of having satisfactory completed particular activities. It is connected but different from self-esteem, which is an evaluation of one's own worth, whereas self-confidence is more specifically trust in one's ability to achieve some goal. Arrogance or hubris, in comparison, is the state of having unmerited confidence, to believe something or someone is capable or correct when it is not[1].

In the workplace, self-confidence enables you to be proactive, assertive and focused. It means understanding the value you offer, effectively communicating and present yourself, which then results in getting noticed for the right reasons and increasing your income. You can learn and train self-confidence in order to achieve better results at your workplace and in life[2].

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1   Wikipedia, "Self-Confidence".
2   Young goes SEND Program, "Session 6 Growing Self-confidence".

Why is it important?

You will not get far without confidence. Even with a great idea, a great product or knowledge to share with the world your value is almost sure to go unseen and your potential unmet without self-confidence. It is crucial to your success in all aspects of life; self-confidence may be one of the most important tools to have in your success toolbox.

A big part of your success comes from your perception of success. Self-confidence will help you to feel good about yourself and the things that you have accomplished. Having confidence will enable you to learn from failure and to feel success comes your way[3].

"Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and, above all, confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained."

- Marie Curie,
Nobel Prize in Physics 1903

Which are the benefits of being Self-confident?

Self-confidence is important in every aspect of life. When it comes to work, companies are searching for people who believe in their abilities to reach goals and to get the job done. Running one's own business also requires high level of self-confidence.

You can experience advantages such as these by developing self-confidence[3]:

Self-confidence allows you to make powerful decisions

• When making decision about difficult assignments, about your business or simply when stepping out of your comfort zone, you need to feel assured that you are making the right choice.

• Having self-confidence helps you in knowing that you are making good decisions, it allows you to trust your instincts and avoid self-doubt and fear.

Self-confidence makes you feel more successful

• Success is an attitude. Training the ability to have a positive outlook and see success will help you overcome obstacles, feel better about yourself and the things you will have accomplished.

Self-confidence will help you to embrace failure

• An ancient Chinese proverb says, "Failure is the mother of success". You will face failures in different aspects of your life, not every goal will be achieved and not every decision you make will be a good one. Having self-confidence will help you to embrace these failures as part of the path toward success.

Self-confidence will increase your impression on others

• People can perceive your confidence. Maybe, you will have to sell a product or a service or an idea to others. Why should someone else believe in you if you do not believe in yourself?

• When you think you are the best person to get the job done and you believe in your ability to do it, others will believe in you too.

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3   L. Jeffs, Why Do Entrepreneurs Need Confidence?, 2021.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide[4]

1.

Look at what you have already achieved.

Make a list of all the things you are proud of in your life. Keep that list very close and whenever you do something you are proud of just add to it. When you lose confidence, pull out that list and use it to remind yourself of all the awesome stuff you have done.

2.

Think about the things that you are good at.

The first step to build your self-confidence is to recognize what you are good at and trying to build on those things. What are yours?

3.

Set some goals.

When creating the list, identify also the steps you need to take to achieve them. You should not pick big goals only. List even very simple ones like planning to go out for a walk. Aiming for something small, easy to accomplish and tick off from a list will help you to gain confidence in your ability to get stuff done.

4.

Talk yourself up.

Telling yourself that you are not good at something will not help you feel confident in yourself. Treat yourself the same way you would treat your best friend.

5.

Get a Hobby.

It is important to find something that you are passionate about, whether it is a sport, photography or knitting. When you are interested or passionate about something, you will more likely to be motivated and to build skills quickly. Commit yourself to it and have fun.

6.

Persistence is key.

Being persistence makes all the difference. When learning something new, only a few will really persist and keep going after repeated failures. Confident people will look back at these and see them as learning experiences.

7.

If you feel stuck, search for help.

If negativity is taking the lead, try to talk with someone near you. It can help you to see your problems from another angle and to cheer yourself up.

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4   Mindtools, How to build your self-confidence.

Case study

Unlocking self-confidence of young women to inspire and achieve equality and justice[5]

The case

Unlocking self-confidence in young women is extremely important to achieve equality and justice. In some cases, it can be challenging due to the culture and social organization of a country, although it creates several positive outcomes.

The challenge

Emilienne, 23, is a young university student from the Northern Province of Rwanda. She was lacking confidence and she wanted to withdraw from school.

The result

During a 2-days intensive training, she discovered her values and strengths and set the goals to see herself as a leader. Moreover, she organized a meeting with her female classmates and successfully inspired them to participate more in class. She has taken on a bigger role in her family decisions. By building up her confidence, Emilienne has improved the quality of her education, her involvement in the family's decision-making and her engagement in her community. She will inspire many other women in the future.

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5   M. Madeira, «The (Business) case for Confidence: Why unlocking Women's Self-confidence should be a Major Development priority,», 2018.

The influence of self-confidence among University Students[6]

The case

Self-confidence towards the studied subject is very important in order for students to succeed in their field of study. There is some relationship between self-confidence and the students' achievement.

The challenge

A study performed at the University of Malaysia Malacca (UTeM) tried to understand the students' attitudes towards the level of self-confidence and self-efficacy in mathematics during theirs class sessions at the Faculty of Engineering Technology (FTK).

The result

After investigating 332 second-year students in several fields of studies at FTK, in the second semester the students received a questionnaire consisting of statements of their attitudes towards self-confidence in mathematics. The study highlights that most of students had a positive self-confidence in mathematics and it partially affects their results in studies.

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6   K. Hamzah, I. Wain, R. Said, N. Miswan, N. Zainal e A. Ahmad, «Self-Confidence in Mathematics: A case study on Engineering Technology Students in FTK, UTeM,» International Education and Research, vol. 2, n. 11, pp. 10-13, 2014.

Practice

Self-confidence Advices

In every moment of your life, you could feel your self-confidence got away from you. This list of techniques will help you to gain it again. Those that we believe would be most helpful to you have been highlighted, along with the situations in which we believe they would be most helpful.

This is by no means a comprehensive list; there is a plethora of alternatives. Whichever one you choose should be based on which situation you find yourself in, or on the problem or query you have[7].

Advice	Purpose
Kill Negative Thoughts	Learning to be aware of your self-talk, the thoughts you have about yourself and what you are doing. Negative thoughts are like bugs and you have to learn to recognize and replace them with positive ones.
Get to know Yourself	When going into battle, the wisest general learns to know the enemy very well. In the same way, it is impossible to fight and overcome a negative self-image without knowing it very deeply. Start to dig within yourself and you will come out with greater confidence.
Act Positive	More than simply think positive, you have to put yourself into action. It is the key to developing self-confidence. When you start acting positive, you change yourself, one action at a time.
Get Prepared	It is hard to be confident in yourself if you do not think you will do well at something. Beat that feeling by preparing yourself as much as possible.
Know your Principles and live them	What are the principles upon which your life is built? Not knowing them and your life will feel directionless. Try to find your principles and live them every day.
Change a small Habits	Not a big one, like quitting smoking. Just a small one, like writing things down or waking up 10 minutes earlier. Something small that you know you can do. Do it for a month. When you have accomplished it, you will feel like a million bucks.
Focus on Solutions	Focus on solutions. If you are a complainer, or focus on problems, change your focus now. Focusing on solutions instead of problems is one of the best things you can do for your confidence and your career.
Do something you have been procrastinating on	What is on your to do list that has been sitting there forever? Do it first thing in the morning and get it out of the way. You will feel great about yourself.
Clear Your Desk	This might seem like a small, simple thing. If your desk starts to get messy, and the world around you is in chaos, clearing off your desk is a way of getting a little piece of your life under control.

Tips & tricks

As a manager or Business owner, in order to enhance your self-confidence you need to:

Sometimes it is better to be silent and listen

Guess what? Being a good manager does not require you to be on stage all day every day, and you do not need to have all the answers. You can be a great listener, so build on that strength. The best managers ask open-ended questions, listen carefully and enlist their teams to identify and implement solutions that allow everyone to be successful[8].

Stop comparing yourself to others

Whether you compare how you look to your friends on social media or you compare your salary to your peer's income, comparisons are not healthy. When you notice you are drawing comparisons, remind yourself that doing so is not helpful. Everyone is running his or her own race and life is not a competition [9].

How to enhance your self-confidence[10]

- **Attend professional development training.** When you increase your skill level or develop a specific skill further you rely on, like learning a new coding language if you work in IT, you can improve the way you perform in your job. This can result in increasing your confidence.

- **Learn new skills.** Similar to developing your current skills, learning entirely new skills or continuing your education can have a lasting impact on your overall confidence. When you learn a new skill, you can apply it to your job, and this can help increase your productivity, ability to stay organized and enable you to take on new tasks more confidently.

- **Dress for success.** Improve your work appearance to match what is required in the office. For instance, you might have a "business casual" dress code, but instead of wearing denim jeans, try a pair of casual slacks.

- **Leave your comfort zone.** This confidence-boosting strategy can be tough to apply but it can be one of the most effective ways to gain more confidence. For instance, maybe you have always dreaded giving presentations in front of large audience. You could step outside of your comfort zone by volunteering to give the next presentation or co-host with a teammate.

- **Emulate confident peers.** Consider the successful people you know or find someone who appears confident in their role and observe their behaviour. You can incorporate some strategies you notice to help you develop your own confidence.

- **Set goals for yourself.** Setting short-term and long-term career goals can influence the way you perceive your strengths and success. Consider setting a goal for yourself to develop an overall capability or new skill. Further, measure your success by targeting small objectives to help you reach your result.

8   E. P. o. Forbes, «15 Tips To Build Confidence As An Introverted New Manager,» Forbes, 2021.
9   A. Morin, «6 Ways to Build Your Self-Confidence,» Very Well Mind, pp., 2021.
10   I. E. Team, «10 Ways To Boost Your Confidence in the Workplace,» Indeed, pp., 2021.

Let's exercise

1. 3 tips to build your self-confidence

Amy Adkins explains several factors affecting your own vision of yourself and she gives you few practical tips to boost your self-confidence.

2. Change perspective to change your life

CeCe Olisa, co-founder of the CurvyCon (a company selling curvy outfits), explains that it is possible to change your life by change your perspective on the perceived obstacles. Have you ever tried to do so?

3. Learn how to be confident with your body

How do you want to be seen by others? How to present yourself in a self-confident and not arrogant way? According to Stefan Verra, everyone can change his or her body language in three simple steps that will have an enormous impact on the others.

7   L. Babauta, «25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self-Confidence,» Zen Habits.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist[11,12] to assess the self-confidence dimension of your team project´s workplace.

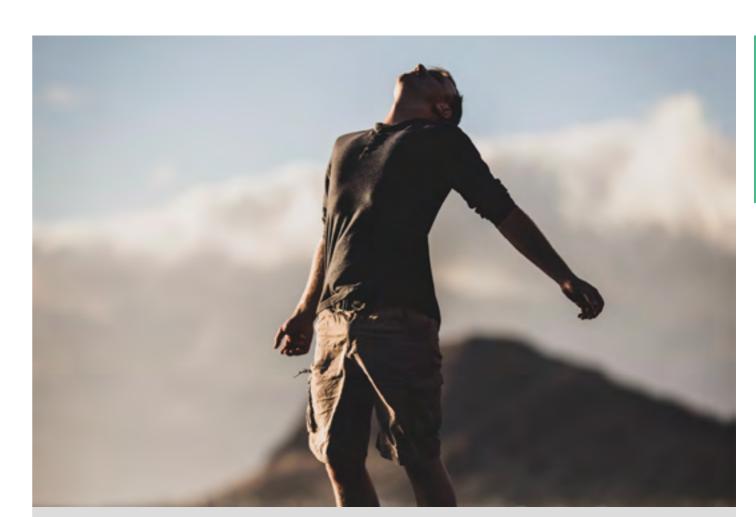| Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Knowledge & skills			
I am ready to learn new skills when it is required			
I am aware of the skills that I already know and I am pretty confident using them			
Every day I try my best to increase my competences			
Goals and Record			
My team is setting goals that we can achieve			
We always record every wins of the team, even the smallest ones			
Our work environment encourages people to try new things			
Our team never judge someone for a failure.			
In our work environment we analyze our failure in order to learn from them			
The values of the team			
Every member of our team knows the value of the team			
Our team defend and sustain these values every day			
The team's value are discussed and questioned to improve them			
Positive thinking			
Our work environment encourage positive thinking			
Our team try to avoid negative thinking and to focus on solutions instead of problems			
Our team sustain positive thinking (I can, I am able to..) discourses			
Our work environment is optimistic			
Environment within the team members			
Our group of work is open to new contact and we share them easily.			
We encourage dialogues among the team members to compare different perspectives			
Our team avoids to make comparison among its member, instead highlight every strengths of the members			
Our team encourages individuals to fight their fears to improve			

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11   Young goes SEND Program, «Session 6 Growing Self-confidence».
12   W. James, The Principles of Psychology, United States, 1890.

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- https://www.mindtools.com/selfconf.html
- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.excelatlife.cbtdiary&hl=en
- https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/build-confidence-andrew-johnson/id307751682
- https://mindfitapp.com/

Useful links
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-confidence
- https://www.life-with-confidence.com/
- https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-esteem/about-self-esteem/#.WcPaIa2ZOGg

Videos
- Confidence for everybody
- Boosting your self-confidence
- Self-Confidence course

Articles
- https://zenhabits.net/25-killer-actions-to-boost-your-self-confidence/
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2021/06/08/15-tips-to-build-confidence-as-an-introverted-new-manager/

Books
- Confidence: Build Unbreakable, Unstoppable, Powerful Confidence: Boost Your Self-Confidence
- Self Confidence: How To Overcome Shyness, Worry And Boost Your Self Esteem (Motivational Self Esteem & Family Relationships Self Help Guide
- Self-Confidence: How to Develop Self Confidence and Overcome Anxiety, Fear, & Self-Doubt
- Self Confidence: 20 Powerful Ways to Increase Self-Confidence, Boost Self-Esteem, and Feel Unstoppable!

Self-Discipline

12.

1. Description of Self-Discipline

Why is it important?

YSelf-discipline is useful. If you want to achieve something, you will have to have a certain discipline to perform certain actions. Suppose you are going to study or you want to achieve something in sports. Then you have to study, practice or train.

Discipline is also important in companies and organisations. There must be order and structure. Processes must be monitored. In some professions it is even vital. Consider hygiene measures in the operating room. You can't mess with that, right? The regulations must also be implemented in accordance with the agreement.

Those who possess the quality of discipline are very suitable for this. On the one hand, he/she will easily submit to certain rules, and on the other, he/she is also very capable of keeping order and ensuring that things run as agreed.

If you want to be successful, you must also have discipline. A top athlete will have to show discipline to complete the training every day. Entrepreneurs also need to have a certain amount of discipline and perseverance if they are to be successful.

In short: you cannot do without a certain amount of discipline.

> " The key is taking responsibility and initiative, deciding what your life is about and prioritizing your life around the most important things.
>
> - Stephen Covey

What is Self-Discipline?

"Self-discipline is about creating new habits of thought, action, and speech toward improving oneself and reaching institutional goals. This is an alternative to viewing discipline as a means to obtain more information."

- Wikipedia

The meaning of self-discipline is then:

- **force yourself to do or refrain from doing something**

- **self-control: obedience to yourself to keep appointments**

- **inciting or motivating yourself to something (the disciplined performance of a task or action) or being able to abstain from something**

What is it about?

Self-discipline is not an innate character trait. At most, a character trait, such as a strong will, can help build self-discipline. Self-discipline can, however, be taught, but one has to work on it oneself. People are often inclined to make things easy for themselves, but if you give in too often, you will usually get into trouble. Not being able to resist various temptations and having to bear the consequences of that is not always fun. Perseverance is also a form of self-discipline. For example, if you have too little of that, you may have problems studying. However, all this can be prevented by building up self-discipline.

What are the characteristics of self-discipline?

Self-discipline is a rigorous method characterized by:

- positive thinking, focusing on the benefits of one's goals;

- progression by step, by setting accessible objectives to increase as you go;

- make lists of tasks to be done;

- reward yourself when a goal is reached;

- repeat until it becomes a habit;

The purpose of this personal development technique is to limit one's efforts to reach one's goal. It is not about punishing yourself for failure, but on the contrary, showing leniency and objectivity towards yourself. Self-discipline allows you to return to your initial motivation, in the event of difficulties or abandonment.

It is generally practiced alone, and sometimes with supports, such as a notebook for example in which the stages can be written, and the objectives set. It is then a matter of repeating day after day the actions and thoughts that allow one to progress gradually towards the project. Helping a partner can also be effective in increasing self-confidence, and solidarity.

Which are the benefits of self-discipline?

Self discipline has many benefits:

- Creates Higher Efficiency in Achieving Projects and Goals

- Improves your Time Management

- Reduces Frustrations and Feelings of Failure

- Builds Self-Confidence

SELF-DISCIPLINE

2. Toolkit

2.

Visualize your goal.

Create a clear picture in your head of the goals you want to achieve. A simple example: If you can't get out of bed at 8:00 AM, close your eyes for a moment and visualize how you start the day. Make it as real as possible. Feel your feet touch the ground, see how you search the closet for a clean shirt and taste the taste of coffee in your mouth. It is important to imagine which steps are needed to achieve your goal, and not just focus on the end result. Why is visualization effective? When you rehearse something in your head, the resistance to actually doing it decreases.

Step by step guide

3.

Make a plan of action.

Okay, you've thought enough, and it's time for an action plan. It might be useful to create a table. This can be done on paper, but also on your laptop. In the leftmost column write the following points: action, start time, potential problems, strategy to overcome potential problems, and progression. Behind these boxes you fill in the information that goes with it.

4.

Prepare to take action.

Before you really take action, you can do some preliminary work. Decide when you want to start. Do you want to go to the gym again tomorrow? Then get your sports clothes ready and go to bed on time.

5.

Anticipate potential problems.

Achieving a goal often involves trial and error. Sometimes it works, other times it doesn't. What you can do is come up with a strategy to deal with this. First, think about what is going to be difficult for you. Maybe this is the weekly drink at work, or the snooze button on your alarm clock.

1.

Think about why you want more self-discipline

First things first. Ask yourself why you want to develop self-discipline. For example, is there a specific goal you want to achieve, and do you feel that there are obstacles that stand in the way of achieving this goal?

6.

Keep track of your progress

You can keep track of how things are going in the table you created earlier. Write down what went well in the past week and what didn't. Also ask yourself what you can learn from past experiences.

Case studies

SELF-DISCIPLINE

The Marshmallow Test

This test was conducted in 1960s by psychologist and researcher Walter Mischel, who did a study on school kids to test their self-control. Here is how the test was conducted:

A group of preschoolers were made to sit in the room. The researcher offered each of them a marshmallow. But before they could gulp that sweet candy, the researchers gave the kids two simple choices:

1. The child can eat one marshmallow immediately.

2. Or he can wait for the researcher to come back after twenty minutes and get two marshmallows instead of one.

It seems like a rational choice to wait just twenty minutes and then get two marshmallows instead of one. Simple mathematics, isn't it?

After giving this choice, the researcher went out of this room, leaving children with their marshmallows, but he started watching the kids from a one-way glass window to see how the children would react in this situation.

As you would have already guessed by now, children are children. Some of them couldn't wait and instantly swallowed their marshmallow and were very happy. But there were few others, who behaved more rationally. These children calculated: two marshmallows merely by a wait of twenty minutes. They resorted to focusing on other things to divert their attention from the one marshmallow lying in front of them in order to resist their temptations.

But this research did not end here.

Researchers continued to follow these preschoolers not for years, but for decades. In a 2011 study, they tracked the 59 subjects, now in their forties, who participated in the marshmallow test as children.

The researchers tested the subjects' strength of willpower with a laboratory task known to demonstrate self-control in adults. It was noted that the children who were able to resist their temptations and had delayed the need of instant gratification were able to score higher SAT scores, get better grades, were more focussed, and were way more successful as compared to those who failed in the marshmallow test.

You can see how inculcating self-discipline from an early age helps to create a better future in adults in almost all areas of their lives.

Additionally, the researchers tested the brain activity in the subjects by use of function magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technique. When presented with tempting stimuli, individuals with low self-control showed brain patterns that differed from those with high self-control.

The researchers found that the prefrontal cortex, a region that controls executive functions, such as making choices, was more active in subjects with higher self-control. And the ventral striatum, a region that processes desires and rewards, showed boosted activity in those with lower self-control.

Get One Dollar Now or Two Dollars Next Week

This study was conducted at the University of Pennsylvania by psychologists Angela Duckworth and Martin Seligmen on a few eighth grade students. During the test, the students were given the option of receiving one dollar immediately or waiting a week to get two dollars the next week.

This was again a test of how the students can delay their instant gratification and control their temptation for a larger reward in future. The researchers noted that the students who demonstrated more self-discipline had performed much better in their studies, got good grades, got admission to highly ranked universities, as compared to their counterparts who had lesser self-control.

In this study, the researchers also concluded that self-control was more important than the IQ of the students in getting into good schools or getting better jobs.

Practice

Self-Discipline Advices

Learning how to build self-discipline skills can allow you to cease bad habits, accomplish long-term and short-term goals, and change your life completely.

Think of it as investing in yourself. Here, we've outlined seven steps to build your self-discipline and work toward the better life you deserve. Well... if you work for it:

Technique	Purpose
Countdown, then take action	When you're feeling particularly unmotivated, count down from ten, then force yourself to do whatever it is you're doing. A quick countdown can help shift you into the right mental space to get motivated. Sometimes all we need is a little push to take that next step—that's how self-discipline begins.
Put your goals where you can see them every day	Writing a goal down makes it all the more real. Hang it up somewhere you will see it often and inspire yourself — at your work desk, in your bedroom, in your car, etc. Write the goal in your yearly planner. Put it on your kitchen calendar. You can also set actual calendar reminders on your phone to go off once a week or so. But be nice to yourself. Don't scare or shame yourself into your goals; rather, be happy, positive, and encouraging. Increase self-discipline by adding motivational quotes from people you admire. Not sure you have the right goals? Spend some time going over your goals to make sure they align with the things you truly want for yourself.
Remind yourself why you started	Keep your end-goal in mind without allowing yourself to forget where you started. Constantly remind yourself — especially when it gets hard — how and why you set this goal and what you will have achieved when you're done. Visualize yourself having taken complete control of your life and accomplishing whatever specific goal you've set. Set reminders on your phone to tell yourself how far you've come and how proud you are. Affirmations are also a great way to keep yourself focused on your why.
Set small goals first	Try not to overwhelm yourself by setting the bar too high. Build your confidence by setting and achieving a small goal before you go for a big one. For example, if your ultimate goal is to run five miles without stopping, set an initial goal of running a quarter mile without stopping. Be patient with yourself and try not to get frustrated with the process. Accomplishing those small goals first can give you the motivation you need to keep going.
Practice prioritizing	Decide which tasks are worth dedicating the most effort to, then organize your day to totally crush them. If you set a study plan, you're less likely to procrastinate on the less-than-savory tasks. Put things you don't necessarily love at the top of your priorities, and you'll be relieved they're done instead of putting them off another day.
Know your weaknesses	Then, proactively combat them. Determine how you might slip up and how you can prevent that from happening. If you know you need to run a 5K this Saturday but your friend is having a barbeque on Friday night, it might be best to skip it. If you know you need to get to work an hour earlier but you're a bit of a night owl, invest in some Melatonin. You have the tools to fight back against your own demons. You just need to hunt them down.
Get friends to hold you accountable	You are less likely to cheat on your goals if someone you admire is watching. Have your hero (or just your BFF) set a goal alongside you. You can cheer each other on. And when the going gets tough, you can be there to give each other that extra push.

Self-discipline quotes to keep you motivated

We all need a "pick me up" as we work on our self-discipline and achieving our goals. And so here are some great self-discipline quotes to help you stay motivated.

"Just because you're struggling with self-discipline doesn't mean you have to raise the white flag and declare your self-improvement efforts a complete failure. Instead, work to increase the chances that you'll stick to your healthier habits - even when you don't feel like it."

\- Amy Morin

"The ability to discipline yourself to delay gratification in the short term in order to enjoy greater rewards in the long term is the indispensable prerequisite for success."

\- Brian Tracy

"Beautiful gems can emerge from dirt. Struggle can teach you self-discipline and resilience."

\- Dipa Sanatani

"The pain of self-discipline will never be as great as the pain of regret."

\- Anonymous

"Self-discipline is the magic power that makes you virtually unstoppable."

\- Anonymous

"Without any self-sacrifice, how can there be a success?"

\- Lailah Gifty Akita

"All successes begin with self-discipline. It starts with you."

\- Dwayne Johnson

"Self-discipline is the only power which can keep you energized even in the toughest of the circumstances."

\- Sukant Ratnakar

"Success doesn't just happen. You have to be intentional about it, and that takes discipline."

– John C. Maxwell

"We do today what they won't, so tomorrow we can accomplish what they can't."

\- Dwayne Johnson

"Don't ever stop believing in your own personal transformation. It is still happening even on the days you may not realize it or feel like it."

\- Lalah Delia

"Self-discipline is nothing but self-consciousness."

\- Pearl Zhu

"Success begins with self-discipline."

\- Sunday Adelaja

Tips & tricks

As a business leader, you probably understand just how hard it can be to create an environment of discipline. On the one hand, you want to encourage your workers to be disciplined and to always take care of their tasks with the diligence they deserve. However, on the other hand, you don't want to come across as a draconian and demanding employer who is too strict to even breathe around.

Lead from the front

- As the business owner, you are the head of the workplace, and so it is only proper that you lead in whatever you would like your workforce to do. Many people hesitate to be leaders in their own workplaces because they think the office will somehow organically sort itself out. However, employees don't want to be left to figure everything out on their own. They need some kind of leadership, whether they are a team of professional essay writers or software engineers, and it needs to be strong.

- Being a leader doesn't mean you should tell people what to do all the time or shout at them. Instead, you should encourage them to work and achieve the full potential that they could possibly achieve. It's about giving them guidance when they reach a stumbling block and they are not quite sure what the way forward is. As a leader, you are meant to resolve disputes among your employees while gently pulling them all in the same direction.

Get rid of distractions

- Sometimes, the cause of indiscipline in the workplace is simply a lack of focus. People are getting distracted and it is hindering them from placing their focus on what matters. As a leader, you should endeavor to remove anything in the workplace that will prove to be a detrimental distraction to work.

- These distractions could be anything, really. It could have to do with technology, and the employees getting hooked on their devices, or it could have to do with the layout of the office.

- Take social media, for example. It can be a serious attention sucker, getting people distracted so that they end up doing none of the meaningful work that they are actually meant to do.

- Again, there is a balancing act here. Banning social media sites altogether may be a good idea in some extreme circumstances, but it isn't the only viable solution. Try to talk to your employees and find out what policies would work best with them to reduce distraction. If blocking social media sites helps, and they seem enthusiastic about the idea, then you can definitely try it. If not, then you can explore options together.

Create a pleasant working environment

- Once you've removed the distractions from the working environment, the next step is to improve it so it becomes a place where people love to work in every day, rather than hate. You want your employees looking forward to arriving at work every day, and for them to feel energized when they get to the workplace.

- If whenever your employees walk into the office they feel like they would rather be someplace else, you can bet their productivity levels will be abysmally low. It will be very hard to foster discipline in such an environment. To change that, consider changing the environment in the office in a way that brightens it up.

- You could, for example, encourage more teamwork and collaboration in the office so people find work more fun. It may seem like something small, but it could have a significant positive impact on the way your office operates. Whatever changes you make, ensure you include the employees in the process so you can get accurate feedback on what's working and what's not..

Consider the age demographics of your employees

- Most business leaders rarely consider this when they're thinking about their workforce. The kind of approach you would use to foster self-discipline in a young workforce is wildly different from what you might use on an older workforce. You need a custom approach that's tailored to the specific demographics of your workforce.

- You should consider the age and general personality of your workforce as you craft policies to foster discipline among them. Some employees respond better to a more relaxed approach full of gentle encouragement. Others need you to be firmer with your approach. The one thing you should avoid doing is applying a uniform approach to everyone.

Have clarity in your rules

- If you want your rules to be followed by your workforce, then make them crystal clear. Figure out exactly what rules you want to be followed by your employees first. The fewer the rules the better. A few clear rules will always outperform millions of obscure ones.

- The best thing is to be able to fit your rules on a single page. You can then print them out, laminate them, and display them in an open place for everyone to see.

Give everyone three strikes

- You need to put consequences in place for those who don't play by the rules. If there aren't any consequences, nobody is going to take the rules seriously. Have a "three strikes" rule, where an employee will be given a certain number of warnings before disciplinary action is taken. This makes it clear to your employees where their limits lie, and they will think twice before they flippantly flout the rules.

Leave your employees alone

- This may sound counter to what we've been talking about so far, but it works if done well. The last thing your employees want is to have someone breathing down their necks the whole time they're at work. They will feel under pressure and won't do any meaningful work. Give everyone space and independence they need to work efficiently, and you'll be surprised at what they can achieve.

Communicate with your employees

- Finally, don't forget that the most important aspect of your relationship with your employees is one with open communication. Employees should feel like they can tell you anything, and that their concerns will be listened to.

- Communication is very healthy in a business and should not be underestimated. It can actually make a difference to your bottom line. Make sure your employees are willing to listen to you, and that you're willing to listen to them as well.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess your Self Discipline and rock your day!

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Medium**	**Low**
Getting ready			
Am I self-aware of my needs?			
Are my goals and objectives clear?			
Are all my activities in the calendar?			
Have I informed All people on the purpose, goals and expected results of our work together?			
Am I positive that I can make it?			
What can possibly go wrong?			
How couldI shift my plan if needed?			
Who shall I rely upon in case things change?			
Have I included brakes and time to socialize?			
Am I ready to empower others throughout the process?			
Have I got rid of distractions?			

Resources for further reading

Online tools
- Top Tracker
- Wunderlist

Videos
- Marcus Aurelius – How To Build Self Discipline (Stoicism)
- SELF DISCIPLINE - Best Motivational Speech Video (Featuring Will Smith)
- How Discipline Leads To Happiness
- The secret to self control | Jonathan Bricker | TEDxRainier
- How to Be More DISCIPLINED - 6 Ways to Master Self Control
- Jordan Peterson's Method for Self Discipline

Articles
- https://www.hrfuture.net/talent-management/culture/8-ways-to-create-an-environment-of-self-discipline-at-the-workplace/
- https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/self-discipline.htm
- https://medium.com/@sombathla/3-case-studies-that-shows-how-self-discipline-is-the-engine-for-success-ad088d7944bd
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2020/08/25/8-powerful-ways-to-cultivate-extreme-self-discipline/
- https://www.nirandfar.com/self-discipline-articles/
- https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/305350
- https://marliescohen.com/16-tips-to-use-self-discipline-to-be-more-productive/

Books
- No Excuses!: The Power Of Self Discipline by Brian Tracy

Questioning

13.

1. Description of Questioning

What is Questioning?

The simple definition of "questioning" is "the action of asking questions". At the same time, it can be defined as a competence that involves creative and critical thinking processes to link what is known and what is unknown in order to improve knowledge.

Questioning is a process that helps collect more information – whether our aim is to learn, to solve a problem, to make a decision or to understand each other.

"
If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.

– Albert Einstein

What is it about?

Questioning can be used in different settings and can help to:

- Clarify something, and thus reduce a chance of misunderstandings,
- Express an interest in another person – get to know them better, show empathy, create rapport, explore their ideas, feelings, beliefs,
- Improve the understanding of a problem, discover its root cause, and offer a better solution,
- Test knowledge, e.g. in an exam,
- Encourage thinking, explore other perspectives.

In addition to helping to collect information, a good question may have the power to generate curiosity, stimulate conversation, encourage creativity and provoke transformation.

Being able to ask purposeful, impactful, challenging and sensitive questions is a learnt skill.

Why is it important?

Questioning is an important part of the communication and leadership processes. By asking questions, you may show vulnerability, enhance trust and encourage others to ask for help when needed.

The best leaders are not the ones that think they have all the answers, but those that understand the power of inquiry to find real answers and innovative solutions.

"A beautiful question is an ambitious yet actionable question that can begin to shift the way we perceive or think about something—and that might serve as a catalyst to bring about change."

- Warren Berger
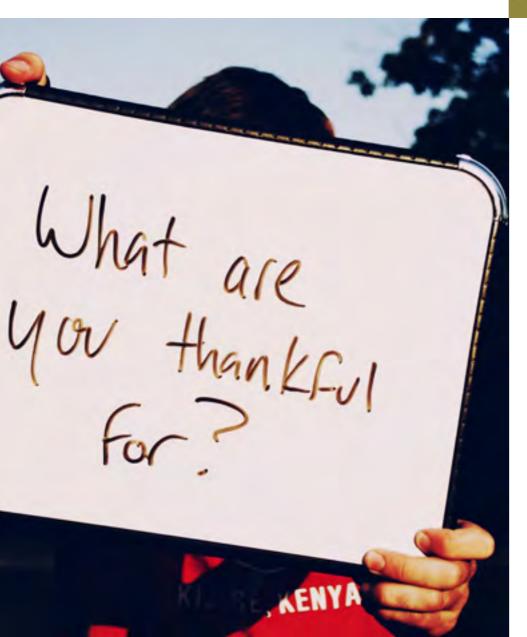
Which are the benefits of questioning?

Questioning offers a number of benefits:

- It encourages conversation and helps collect information;
- It supports learning and idea generation;
- It shows respect to others as we ask for their opinions and ideas. In return, it generates respect to us;
- It helps uncover challenges and resolve them;
- It increases engagement – good questions energise team members and help come up with their own ideas and solutions – which motivates to implement them;
- Right questions may lead to inspiration and "aha" moments;
- It improves teamwork as people recognise their collective knowledge and build trust and accountability.

If you have good questioning skills, you will know what kind of questions to ask and how to ask them in different situations. By asking better questions, you will come to better solutions, which will result in improved outcomes for your business.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

1.

Prepare

Before going to a meeting or starting a conversation, think of a set of questions you would like to ask. Think how to formulate them well, so that they help achieve your goals.

2.

Learn and use different types of questions.

The answers you get depend on the questions you ask:

a. Closed questions – also called polar questions – those that can be answered by "yes", "no" or "maybe" – are good for getting a quick answer, concluding a discussion or testing your understanding. "So, if I do xxx, zzz will happen?" A wrongly placed closed question can end a conversation.

b. Open-ended questions are those that keep people talking. They often start with 5Ws and H or Rudyard Kipling's "six honest serving men" - "Who", "What", "Where", "When", "Why" and "How". If you ask your colleague "Why are you interested in this project", they cannot just answer "yes" or "no". There are all kinds of open questions that encourage a conver-

sation, creative discussion, allow to gather more information, e.g. "Give me an example of…", "Tell us about your journey", etc.

c. Factual questions are similar to closed-ended questions as they can be answered with a short phrase and don't lead to a longer conversation. For example, "What's his name?" or "What time does the meeting start?" As the name has it, this kind of questions allow to collect the facts.

d. Leading questions – "Don't you agree…?", "Don't you want keep working on this project you've invested so much in?" – are not really useful (unless you are trying to make somebody confess of a crime). They help to get the answer you want but make the other person feel they don't have

a choice. If you ask a leading question, try correcting it by adding a second or oposite option.

e. Funnel questions involve asking for more and more details, starting with general questions that are often closed, and then adding more open-ended questions. Funnel technique is often used by detectives, but can also be applied to help a person feel more comfortable, as the conversation starts with simple questions and gradually progresses into details.

f. Rhetorical questions are asked to engage the listener or getting people to agree with your point of view. "Isn't this a great office space? Wouldn't you love to have this view?"

3.

Good questioning should be followed by active listening

– to make sure you understand the answers and to encourage the conversation.

4.

Be careful with the "why" questions.

"Why" may make the other person feel awkward, threatened, provoked, asked to justify their actions, and put them in a defensive state. Try to rephrase the question so that the other person feels more comfortable, e.g. "Tell me more about…".

5.

Take time to practice your questioning skills.

Become conscious about how you formulate your questions. Start using more open questions and see how it affects a conversation. Notice your colleague's questioning skills. Just by paying attention and putting some effort you will notice a difference.

Case study

Saving a question

The case

This case study shows that in business, questions that are saved/ left unasked may result in problems or even big losses.

The challenge

Asking the right questions at the right time. A senior executive, instead of asking meaningful questions about a risky investment, asks a younger colleague in anger "What kind of idiot are you?!"

The result

The answers depend on the questions you ask! The answer to the above question was "A highly paid one", and the project proceeded without expected results. If good questions were asked, different answers would have been received, saving the company a lot of money.

Practice

Create 1 question of each type related to the performance of your team. Notice how the type of question influences the answer.

1. Closed question

2. Open question

3. Leading question

4. Rhetorical question

Use 5W and H technique to write the questions that will help you to create a short article about a recent event in your company. Has asking these questions helped you shape a story?

What...

Who...

Where...

When...

How...

Why...

Tips & tricks

QUESTIONING

How to become better at questioning

- **Stay curious** – it will make you ask questions to check out what other people think, what ideas they may have.

- **Keep the conversation open** – ask open questions, encourage dialogue, avoid making conclusions based on assumptions.

- **Take your time** – be comfortable with silence, embrace it as an opportunity to pause and formulate your thoughts.

- **Ask follow-up questions** – clarify, try to understand the reasons and the assumptions behind each idea, solution or decision.

- **Listen after you ask a question.** Show that you are interested and listen attentively to encourage the other person to share information.

- **Focus on learning instead of judging**. Ask questions to get to the details and root causes of the problems that may emerge in a conversation**.**

How to develop a questioning culture

- **Lead by example** – ask a lot of questions yourself, listen attentively and respond respectfully.

- **Make it clear** - make sure your team members know that "asking questions is a good thing". Repeat it and reinforce the message as often as necessary.

- **Instead of or in addition to brainstorming, try "question-storming" sessions:** have your team generate many questions about the problem you are facing. This process brings you to the right questions, which tend to lead to the right solutions.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the questioning dimension of your team.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Questioning skills			
I regularly ask for my team member's opinions, ideas and feedback.			
Before going to a meeting, I take time to prepare my questions.			
I use different types of questions and understand which types are most appropriate in different situations.			
After asking and answering questions, I take time to reflect on the new ideas I've heard, what I've learnt and what further clarifying questions I could ask.			
I often ask questions that empower and increase engagement.			
I know when it is appropriate to ask the "Why" question and how to rephrase it when necessary.			
Questioning culture			
I recognize that questioning is important for learning and encourage it.			
My team members are willing to admit if they don't know something.			
Questions are not just allowed, they are encouraged.			
We emphasize the process of asking questions and searching for answers rather than finding the "right" answers.			
We have an open communication culture and an atmosphere where you can challenge everything.			
Questioning culture is one of the biggest strengths of our organisation.			
Development opportunities			
I pay attention to the quality of questions I ask and the results they produce, and keep working on improving my questioning skills.			
I help team members to develop the skills needed to ask good questions.			
My team members are encouraged to seek opportunities to develop questioning skills.			
We accept and reward curiosity, risk taking, challenging the status quo.			

Resources for further reading

Online tools
•   What's Your Inquiry Quotient? Take a quiz

Useful links
•   The surprising power of questions
•   How to Win Anyone over with Rockstar Communication Skills: 4 Tips for Asking Questions like You Care

Videos
•   Questioning Techniques. MindToolsVideos, June 2018
•   The Power of Effective Questioning. Litmos Heroes, December 2014

Articles
•   How great leaders ask great questions
•   Good leadership is about asking good questions

Books
•   Ask Powerful Questions: Create Conversations That Matter – Will Wise
•   Coaching Questions: A Coach's Guide to Powerful Asking Skills – Tony Stoltzfus
•   The Book of Beautiful Questions: The Powerful Questions That Will Help You Decide, Create, Connect, and Lead - Warren Berger

Enthusiasm

14.

1. Description of Enthusiasm

What is Enthusiasm?

Enthusiasm can be defined as "a feeling of energetic interest in a particular subject or activity and an eagerness to be involved in it"

- Cambridge English Dictionary

The word enthusiasm originates from the Greek ἐνθουσιασμός from ἐν (en, "in") and θεός (theós, "god") and οὐσία (ousía, "essence"), meaning "inspired by god's essence"

- Wikipedia

Socrates taught that the inspiration of poets is a form of enthusiasm.

> *There is a real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment.*
>
> – Norman Vincent Peale

What is it about?

"*Enthusiasm is a state of mind that inspires and arouses one to put action into the task at hand. Enthusiasm bears the same relationship to a human being that steam does to the locomotive – it is the vital moving force that impels action*"

- Napoleon Hill

Enthusiasm is the energy, the fuel that helps us achieve the desired results.

Can enthusiasm be referred to as a skill? Yes! We tend to think that excitement and enthusiasm come as a result of doing something, because of an external stimulus. However, enthusiasm can be created from the inside. It can be a conscious choice to be excited, positive, enthusiastic. It's an ability that can be cultivated. Some people are more enthusiastic than others by nature, but the more we work on being an enthusiastic person, the more positive and joyful we become.

Why is it important?

Being enthusiastic can have a positive effect on our health, relationships, work and general wellbeing. When we are enthusiastic, we are more confident, more focused, it's easier to cope with obstacles and challenges, we enjoy the things we do more, we are more likable and appreciated by our friends, colleagues and superiors.

Whatever goals or dreams we have in life, enthusiasm increases the odds of achieving them.

Which are the benefits of enthusiasm?

Enthusiasm offers a number of benefits:

It is a great intrinsic motivator.

Unlike money, recognition and other external motivators, enthusiasm drives our actions just because we like what we do, find it meaningful or want to become better at it.

It captures attention.

When you are enthusiastic, people want to be with you, listen to you, learn from you, or buy what you are trying to sell.

It is contagious.

People have a tendency of mirroring - assuming the traits of those in their company. When you are enthusiastic, you inspire those around you!

It may help progress your career.

It is important to show enthusiasm when trying to get a job or get into a team – it shows you are interested and likely to be motivated and productive, as well as an inspiring team member.

It makes life and work more fun!

"*Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait. The grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your ideas*"

- Henry Ford

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

1.
Find a purpose.

Why do you want to be more enthusiastic? What do you want to be more enthusiastic about?

2.
Connect with yourself.

Who are you? What do you like? What do you value? What do you really want? How can you be enthusiastic if you are just trying to meet the expectations of other people? Start by finding your inner voice and let it guide you. Believe in yourself!

3.
Accept responsibility.

Your inner state and attitude is up to you! You decide if you want to be enthusiastic, and you make it happen.

4.
Visualise yourself acting with enthusiasm.

Put effort and imagine it as real as possible. Feel the energy and excitement. Practice it for a few minutes every day.

5.
Make a plan on how you will harness the enthusiasm and start implementing it.

Whatever your first step is – discovering the purpose of your work, re-discovering your passions, learning to notice positive things – decide and begin! You will get more power, inspiration and motivation if you start acting.

6.
Get into flow.

Flow happens when our skills match the difficulty of a task. When in flow, we may get so absorbed in an activity that we forget time, space and everything else. It's a great feeling that increases engagement and results in high productivity. Set realistic goals and make them more ambitious gradually to keep the excitement.

7.
Have a break.

Even if you really like doing something and get excited about it, do not wear yourself down! Find a balance between action and pause. After a break, you will have more energy and inspiration to continue.

8.
Consciously bring your attention to the present.

Worrying too much about the future or thinking about what went wrong yesterday makes it more difficult to see what's happening right now. Bring your attention to the present moment – take a few deep breaths or focus on a sound close to you, and find something to appreciate.

9.
Focus on the positive aspects.

You can always look at things from different perspectives. You don't have to ignore the problems, just remember to focus on the positive aspects.

10.
Practice being enthusiastic.

Simple things can make a difference – greet a friend with more excitement, notice the beauty of this particular sunrise, start every morning by smiling and telling yourself "Another good day!" Practice creates habits, and a habit of being enthusiastic is a good one!

Case studies

Enthusiasm about company's products translates into success

The case

This case study shows that when you are enthusiastic about a product of your company, and share it with your customers, it can positively influence the success of the product.

The challenge

What is the difference between a presentation of any car salesman and the one of Steve Jobs? Does telling how great your product is help boost sales or does it just sound like brainwashing?

The result

When you are genuine and really believe that your product is amazing, people will get infected by your enthusiasm, like in these examples of Apple and other companies.

Happiness at work

The case

This case study shows that happiness at work really counts. Talented employees leave jobs that do not make them happy. High pay is not enough, people want to feel happy and enthusiastic about what they do every day. On the other hand, the most successful companies can often be proud of having happy employees.

The challenge

In 2011 Eric Yuan left a highly paid job because he didn't feel happy, and he didn't see customers being happy about company's products either. He decided to create his own product that he could be proud of, and started Zoom. How does a company achieve having happy employees? How can it be measured?

The result

In 2020, for a second year in a row Zoom was the top company with the happiest employees based on employee surveys. Ranking was based on worker responses to questions about their happiness at work on a day-to-day basis, including:

• Is your work environment positive or negative?

• Are you typically excited about going to work each day?

• Do you look forward to interacting with your coworkers?

In their comments, Zoom employees said "Our leaders lead by example", "They are passionate and dedicated to their various roles in the organization, which motivates those they lead to do more."

![Practice icon]

Practice

Make time for doing what you love.

Make a list of everything you love to do, and choose one activity. Can you find 15-30 minutes to do it every day or several times a week? If it makes you happy, and you do it regularly, the excitement will flow to other areas of your life too.

Cultivate positive attitude.

Next week keep a log and write 20 good things that happen to you each day. What can you be grateful for? Reflect on how you felt during the week and at the end of it, and how you interacted with others.

Tips & tricks

How to be more enthusiastic

- **Find purpose in what you do** – how does your work help others, makes them or the world better, safer or happier?
- **Use your talents** – find what you are good at and how you can use it at work, or find a work that matches your talents. Doing what we enjoy doing makes us happy and it shows.
- **Keep evolving and improving yourself** – and see how every day and every challenge is a new opportunity.
- **Slow down** and notice the details or synchronicities that had to happen to lead to your current situation or experience.

- **Avoid assumptions**, keep an open mind, consciously question and listen attentively. Not everything is as it seems and it's fascinating!
- **Support your mental attitude** – make sure you are not tired by getting enough sleep, exercise and eating healthy.
- **Surround yourself with people that are enthusiastic** – avoid energy drainers – to get infected by the positive attitude and energy.

How to develop and support enthusiasm in a team

- **Be proud** – feeling proud of something you do or achieve and sharing it with others creates a lasting enthusiasm and encourages people to follow your example.
- **Focus on work/life balance** – make your team members feel that you care about their wellbeing by offering flexible work time, healthcare or childcare options, or other incentives that can improve their overall quality of life.
- **Surprise** – offer your employee an afternoon off, a surprise bonus, or a small gift – nice gestures help create a positive atmosphere.

- **Initiate** or offer to help your colleague with a new project - being proactive exhibits your energy and dedication.
- **Use positive language** in communication with your superiors, peers and clients.
- **Celebrate accomplishments** – it's important to notice, celebrate, award success – it creates excitement and increases engagement.

Checklist before I get started

Use this checklist to assess the enthusiasm dimension of your team.

Dimension	Rating		
	Strong	**Adequate**	**Needs improvement**
Being enthusiastic			
I love my job and feel excited about it.			
I tend to focus on the positive aspects of any situation.			
I have passions and hobbies that I get engaged in regularly.			
I stive for excellence and aim to exceed expectations by giving my best.			
I take care of myself by getting enough sleep, exercise and eating healthy.			
I consider myself an enthusiastic person.			
Team culture			
My team members feel energetic, inspired and passionate about their work.			
We feel proud about our team and our company's mission and vision.			
We have a positive work environment.			
Most of my team members are positive, happy people.			
We encourage work-life balance and strive to improve quality of life.			
We acknowledge and celebrate our accomplishments.			
Development opportunities			
We use enthusiasm surveys or other tools to regularly measure enthusiasm of the team members.			
We take actions to increase the level of enthusiasm of the team.			
The company offers opportunities for personal and professional growth.			
We encourage and reward enthusiasm, proactiveness and dedication.			

Resources for further reading

Online tools
• Self-motivation quiz

Useful links
• How an Enthusiastic Approach to Life Can Drive Success in Your Work and Relationships
• 70 Examples of Passions You Can Pursue in Your Life and Career

Videos
• How to Manufacture Fascination and Engineer Enthusiasm. Jason Goldberg, TEDxRaleigh, 2016
• Intentional Enthusiasm: How to accelerate personal greatness. Sonny Melendrez, TEDxSanAntonio, 2018

Articles
• Enthusiasm – The Sixth Key to a Successful Future
• How a 'growth mindset' can lead to success

Books
• Row the Boat: A Never-Give-Up Approach to Lead with Enthusiasm and Optimism and Improve Your Team and Culture - Jon Gordon
• Enthusiasm Makes the Difference - Norman Vincent Peale

Active Listening

1. Description of Active Listening

> "
>
> *The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply.*
>
> — unknown
>
> *If we were supposed to talk more than list, we would have two tongues and one ear.*
>
> — Mark Twain

What is Active Listening?

Hearing (like taste, touch, vision) is one of our natural senses. We always hear something, it does not necessarily require special attention. Listening, however, requires focus and attention. Listening is intentional (indeed, like telling) and to a single 'message' (e.g. a story, music).

We could also state that we are born with hearing but that we develop listening by learning in (social) contexts. Our listening skills and competences (or the lack) are already developed during our early years (e.g. family). Some say that listening can even have a survival value: by listening to the experiences of others we are also learning. It 'pays' to listen.

It sometimes gets mixed up with "empathic listening" which is paying attention to another person with empathy i.e. emotional identification, compassion, feeling, insight. Indeed sometimes the line between active and empathic listening is very thin,

and in real-life conversations both can occur.

Empathic listening allows you to develop and enhance relationships with a stronger understanding of what is being conveyed, both intellectually and emotionally, it is a step further than active listening, as the aim is to put yourself in another's shoes.

What is it about?

Active listening is all about really being able to listen to one another. It is:

- Neutral and non-judgmental
- Patient (periods of silence are not "filled")
- Verbal and nonverbal feedback to show signs of listening (e.g., smiling, eye contact, leaning in, mirroring)
- Ask questions
- Reflecting back what is said
- Asking for clarification
- Summarizing

Why is it important?

Active listening is the basis of effective communication, making sure you actually hear and understand what is being said. It solves conflicts.

Can you remember a conversation with someone in which you could later hardly remember what it is they said to you? How did that happen? Were you perhaps too busy thinking about what you were about to say next, rather than actually listening?

- **Being a good communicator is not just about what you say and how you say it.** It also involves being a good listener. When you know the other person is really listening to you, the level of attention makes you

feel valued, safe, understood, and important. On the contrary, when the other person is not really listening, you feel ignored and diminished.

- **Listening is equally important in business communication.** By listening effectively, you get more information, increase others' trust in you, you can reduce conflict, better understand how to motivate others, and inspire a higher level of commitment in the people you manage. Active listening is very important in negotiations as you have to explore and understand the position of another person.

Which are the benefits of teamwork?

Build connections.

Active listening helps others feel comfortable sharing information with you. When you demonstrate your ability to sincerely listen to what others have to say, people will be more interested in communicating with you on a regular basis. In a business setting, this can help open up opportunities to collaborate with others, get work done quickly or start new projects.

Build trust.

Active listening can help you to build trust, being it with friends, family, peers, employees, clients or suppliers. If people know they can speak to you without being interrupted, judged or interjected, they will more likely confide in you. In this way others will feel comfortable sharing information with you which helps to develop trusted and long term relationships and compromises.

Solve problems or disagreements.

Actively listening to others will help you detect challenges and difficulties others are facing, or to identify problems within teams and organisations. Listening and repeating what the other person is saying not only helps you to formulate the problem better, in the case of a disagreement or dispute it can help you develop your counter-arguments and find gaps in the arguments or logic exposed by the other person. This can create more space for compromise.

Negotiate better.

In negotiations, active listening gives you a chance to analyse exactly what the other party is saying in order to carefully consider and judge them. This will help you to understand them better and reach a better deal. When neither party is truly listening, these discussions can become formulaic with the same questions being asked over and over. However, by listening actively and crafting open-ended questions you can move the discussion on.

Avoid missing out on information.

An active listener is more engaged with the person they are communicating with and as such are normally more able to recall specific details or bits of information. It limits the chance of missing out on crucial information. For instance in the workplace it can reduce errors, as instructions are better retained and understood.
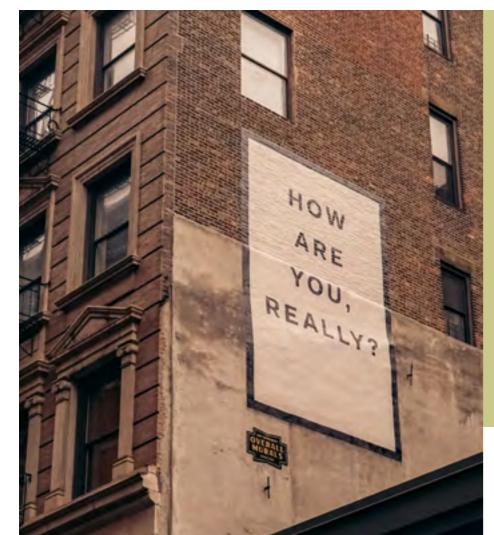
Increase productivity/competitiveness.

In a business environment it can help to retain employees, clients and suppliers. A person who feels heard and listened will have the tendency to be more content and less likely to be looking for opportunities elsewhere. For example, in the case of employees if they feel they matter and their concerns and ideas are heard, productivity tends to increase.

2. Toolkit

Step by step guide

2.

Do really listen.

Don't think about similar experiences that you should tell next, and avoid adding on your own colour to the conversation.

3.

Allow for periods of silence,

and take advantage to reflect on what was said, and to focus on the non-verbal communication that takes place during moments of silence. Not only allow these moments to reflect on what was said, they also allow the person speaking to reflect on what they are about to say.

4.

From time to time, repeat the other person's words or paraphrase it back to them.

Saying things like "what I am hearing is…" gives the other person an opportunity to ensure they are telling you everything they need to. It also shows that you care enough to ask a question to make sure you understand. Do not interrupt unless you need clarification on a particular point, however ask the question politely.

5.

Encourage but only if needed.

Sometimes the person you are talking to has a hard time telling you what they want to communicate, you can provide some light encouragement. Be careful not to rush it. You can use short sentences such as "and then" or "what happened after" or "how did John respond to that".

1.

Stay focused. Keep natural eye contact, don't judge and be patient.

Keep regular eye contact with the person you are communicating with, this way you are forced to pay attention to the person in front of you. Not only will you be able to pick up on non-verbal cues better, there is also less risk of getting distracted.

6.

When the other person finishes speaking, you can probe for more information on those aspects for which you need it.

Use open questions to understand the situation better, for instance you could ask them how a particular situation made them feel, or what they feel would be the best way to handle a situation.

Case studies

Don't let personality traits get in the way

The case

The company 1-800-GOT-JUNK?, which was started in 1989, had $60 million in revenue and employed over 200 people at its head office. This was a promising position for the growing venture, but dissension soon broke out on the leadership team over how to grow. The VP of Finance kept warning to spend in a few key ways. He cautioned the management team about the growth, but no one ever really listened.

The challenge

The VP was a quiet, introvert person, with a subservient manner of speaking. In contrast, the CEO and COO were both dominant and expressive. Looking back, they said: "Because he wasn't right in our face about it, pushing us, we let his words go in one ear and out the other." As a result, the VP's warnings went unheeded and the company expanded too fast and ran out of cash. They faced significant financial trouble, which made it harder to weather the economic downturn in 2009.

The result

Luckily the company survived, and the COO was able to change his ways. The experience taught him to spot the disappointment in someone's face when they speak yet don't feel heard. "It's important to look for it, to know if I've been truly listening to them or simply placating them," he says. "And as a leadership team, we learned that we had to listen and pay attention to everyone, regardless of their communication style."

Helping Leaders Form Deeper Connections by Building Active Listening & Feedback Skills

The case

Based on operational performance and financial results, Copa Airlines is one of the world's best-performing airlines. But Copa leaders aren't resting on their laurels. Copa serves a large market, the Americas, where air travel is projected to grow faster than the global average.

The challenge

Not only has the company grown rapidly for nearly 2 decades, but in recent years, its workforce has shifted to a younger demographic. Employee engagement at Copa is generally high. However, one of its 2 culture-based KPIs — Copa's Leadership Index — wasn't at optimal levels. Historically, Copa's leaders have focused on business goals. Now the airline's leaders would be asked to better connect with the people they lead, helping the airline continue its strong performance.

The result

In cooperation with the consultancy an opportunity for a high return on training time by focusing on developing 2 vital skills: active listening and providing feedback was spotted. Those 2 skills would cover about 80% of the desired new leadership behaviors. A scalable solution was developed consisting in: a half-day workshop that trained leaders in the Situation – Behavior – Impact (SBI)™ feedback method, which helps people provide useful feedback on positive and negative behaviors. Leaders also received training in active listening, learning to concentrate on what's being said, fully understand it, respond, and remember. This deeper listening involves understanding facts plus emotions and values, helping leaders better navigate critical conversations.

Practice

How to know if you are a good listener?

Ask yourself a few questions (and respond to yourself in an honest way):

- Do you have a strong empathy and really try to understand a different viewpoint?
- Do you ask follow-up questions?
- How do you react to criticism?
- Do you use your body language to support the speaker?

- Do you watch their body language to really get their message?
- Do you know where you have to improve as a listener?

Let's exercise

As active listening is difficult to practice alone, here are some exercises which can be done in small groups.

Exercise 1   In a group of 2 or 3 persons, each member takes turns to listen for 5 minutes to one of the other group members who will speak on a stretch for 5 minutes without being interrupted. No other person from the group can speak during this time.

At the end of the listening time, the members who listened have to paraphrase whatever he/she listened to for the 5 minutes. After the listener finishes, the person who was speaking corrects, clarifies and confirms if what the listener is saying was right or not.

Through this exercise, the reflective skills and paraphrasing skills of the listeners are improved.

Exercise 2   As well as improving your listening, this exercise helps you to develop the skill of asking questions and requesting information to clarify your understanding.

1. Choose a volunteer and take a pen and paper.

2. Ask your partner to choose from a set of images, but not let you see the image they choose.

3. Take five minutes to ask as many questions as you wish about the image. Your partner can answer them and describe the image.

4. Draw the image, based on what you've heard.

5. After five minutes, stop and compare what you've drawn with the actual image. What went right? What went wrong?

Tips & tricks

1. If you expect a conversation, **REDUCE DISTRACTIONS** – choose a quiet space, turn off the sound of your mobile phone or other devices

2. Active listening means being **FULLY PRESENT**. It means offering the person communicating with you your full and undivided attention.

3. Demonstrate active listening by making **EYE CONTACT** with the speaker.

4. Communicate your listening mode and empathy with **BODY LANGUAGE**, e.g. gently covering your mouth, smiling, nodding your head to affirm that you are paying attention. Watch the body language and voice of the person communicating – do they sound tired, enthusiastic or confused?

5. **DO NOT INTERRUPT** the person communicating or change the subject without responding or adding to what they have said.

6. It often helps to **REPEAT** what you've heard so that you know you're paying attention and they know it too.

7. Ask **OPEN QUESTIONS** to learn more and show you that you were really listening.

Try doing some listening exercises with your friends or colleagues, to better understand what bad and good listening is.

Being self-aware about your listening skills is the first step to make them better. Even if it feels a little artificial in the beginning, with practice good listening will become natural. Once you start to act like a good listener, you will come to believe you are a good listener and eventually you will become one.

REMEMBER: Active listening skills can only be taught and acquired by experimenting them, so practice what you preach and use active listening in all your engagements with others.

Checklist before I get started

In an attempt to make us better listeners (or active listeners) in that sense, Senova (2017) offers a very useful 'channelled' checklist when it comes to tuning into you active/empathic listening:

Channel	Check & ask yourself
Channel 0 **Tuned out** (you are not present)	"Am I actually listening? Would I be able to answer a question if someone asked me one right now?"
Channel 1 **Self** (judgemental, listening to self)	"Am I just waiting for them to stop talking so I can say my important bit? Am I practising what I'm about to say next, instead of listening intently to what is being said now?"
Channel 2 **Agreement** (familiar, listening for similarity)	"Am I listening for what is similar to what I already know, or am I focused on whether or not they agree with what I've just said? Am I looking for allies in this situation?"
Channel 3 **Critical** (factual, listening for evidence)	"Am I listening for proof that what they are saying is right? Am I looking for evidence to back up their story / work?"
Channel 4 **Empathic** (connected, listening from the speaker's / teller's perspective)	"Am I listening from a place that has no other motive but to connect with their perspective? Do I understand what it feels like to have that perspective?"
Channel 5 **Generative** (insight, listening from possibility)	"Am I using my empathy and insight into their context and motivation to help achieve the best outcome? Have I taken a position of possibility, to ensure that we are able to generate a meaningful alternative?"

Resources for further reading

Videos
- How to actively listen to others
- 5 ways to listen better
- Communication Skills: Empathetic Listening
- How To Improve Your Listening Skills

Articles
- Listening as a lifelong learning skill- what, why, and how
- https://www.edutopia.org/article/value-active-listening
- https://hbr.org/2016/07/what-great-listeners-actually-do
- https://positivepsychology.com/active-listening/
- https://fs.blog/2017/07/active-listening/

Books
- I Hear You: The Surprisingly Simple Skill Behind Extraordinary Relationships, Author: Michael S. Sorensen.
- Active Listening Techniques: 30 Practical Tools to Hone Your Communication Skills. Author: Nixaly Leonardo
- The Lost Art of Listening. Author: Michael P. Nichols (available also as audio book).
- This Human. Author: Melis Senova.

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