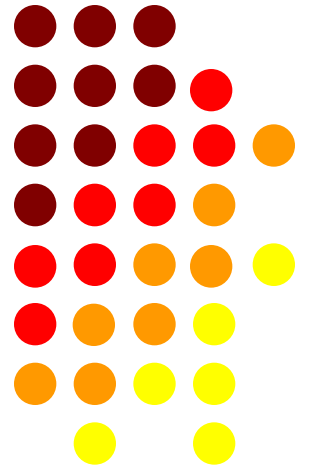


Unit V



Work-place Skills



Lecture – 27

Leadership Qualities, Impact



❑ Leadership qualities

Leadership is the act of motivating other people towards a common goal. People that have leadership skills showcase a strong personality and interpersonal skills to lead others in their direction.

▪ What is leadership in the workplace?

Leadership in the workplace refers to the ability of an individual to manage and supervise a company and its fellow employees. It also refers to the ability to positively influence others to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. This will result in success for the company as a whole. When leaders effectively lead their company, it is more likely they will impact the decisions, actions and overall attitude of others in a positive manner. When there is good morale and a positive working environment, the company is set up for success.



To be an effective leader, we should have a strong sense of who we are as a person and be confident in our abilities to lead not only the company at large but our employees individually, too.

- **What are leadership qualities?**

Leadership qualities are a set of traits that a leader has that helps them to succeed in their role. Leadership qualities can range from interpersonal skills—such as compassion and empathy or organizational skills—like vision and grit. These qualities can either come naturally or be learned over time.

Important qualities for leadership in the workplace

Displaying leadership involves having a variety of skills and qualities that help us perform our job with ease. The various skills a leader should possess include both hard and soft skills.



Here are some important qualities all leaders should possess in the workplace:

1. Good communication: As with most roles, it is important that leaders are good communicators. In many ways, they are the voice of the company, so being able to effectively communicate with their team and employees is vital in their position.

2. Empathy: Leaders need to display a great deal of empathy. This involves understanding others' wants, needs and concerns. Not only will this create a harmonious working relationship, but displaying empathy will earn trust and respect from our colleagues and employees.



3. Positivity: Positivity can go a long way in boosting morale and promoting a healthy work environment in general. Leaders should have a good attitude and stay positive throughout their everyday tasks. When employees see them being positive, they are more likely to be positive themselves. Leaders should aim to inspire others through their positive outlook.

4. Confidence: As a leader, it is important to have belief in our abilities. When we display a reasonable amount of confidence, we can help motivate others as well as give them hope for the company's future.

5. Vision: In order to make a company profitable, it is important for leaders to have a good vision. This means they have the motivation and ability to think beyond the present and plan for the future strategically.



6. Responsibility: Since leaders have a variety of tasks they will need to complete, it is important that they are responsible in the workplace. This means prioritizing their duties and staying focused on what needs to get done for the company.

7. Transparency: Leaders should also be transparent about the company's state, its goals and more. This means being open, honest and effectively communicating with others in the organization. The more transparent we are as a leader, the more our employees will trust us going forward.

8. Motivating: As a leader, we will be responsible for not only leading our team but empowering them to perform to the best of their ability.



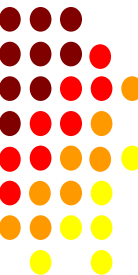
9. Delegation: It is important that we are able to effectively delegate and manage our team of employees.

10. Humility: Leaders should be modest about their motivations and actions. It is important for employees to see that their superiors can make mistakes, too.

▪ **How to improve our leadership skills in the workplace**

To become a better leader, we should sharpen our skills regularly. In some instances, this can help us advance in our career, as well. Here are some ways to improve our leadership skills in the workplace:

1. Understand our strengths: It is important to differentiate our strengths from our weaknesses. As we determine what our strengths are, we will be able to play them up to our advantage.



For example, if we know we are a good negotiator, we will be able to focus on tasks where these skills will be most used.

2. Be a visionary

Having some semblance of a vision as to the future of our company is a must for all leaders. As we look to improve our skills, it is important to always be looking at both our short- and long-term goals for the company. Having a clear vision will not only motivate us but our employees, too. Having a set goal will also help us stay focused on the matters at hand and will give us the strength to see our vision through to fruition.

3. Practice active listening

Consider practicing our active listening skills as we look to improve as a leader.



This involves being more attentive to what our colleagues and employees have to say. Focus on their every word, listen to their concerns and respond appropriately. This not only shows that we are engaged but also that we care.

4. Stay focused

The majority of leaders face several responsibilities. Often, these duties are highly important and need to be done within a certain timeframe. In order to be more efficient, practice staying focused. This will help us get things done more efficiently and will help our company's success overall.

5. Get feedback

One great way to improve our leadership skills is to get feedback from our employees. Consider asking them how we can be a better leader for them or what we can do differently in their eyes.



This will not only show them that we care what they think, but it will give us a good insight as to how we are perceived and what actions we should take to become a better leader for our company.

6. Help others

Lastly, helping others in our organization will help improve our leadership skills, too. This is because through assisting others with their needs, we will be able to empathize with them, see their struggles or successes and build a relationship and trust with them, as well. Being available to help others when they need it is a great way to improve our communication skills and general leadership skills.



- **Why are leadership skills important?**

Effective leaders are essential to any organisation. They can help build strong teams within a business and ensure projects, initiatives or other work functions are performed successfully. Because the skills of a leader involve multiple interpersonal and communication skills, anyone can exercise and hone their leadership abilities.

Most people have seen the results of both effective and ineffective leaders on the job. Good leaders increase employee engagement, support a positive environment and help remove obstacles for their team. Good leadership is also contagious, inspiring colleagues to apply positive leadership traits in their own work. Leaders inspire others to follow a certain path in life.



These leadership traits and skills are important because human nature requires that certain people need to take charge and help others. Without leaders, it's very difficult to manage large groups of people, set unified goals, and make progress. So, Leadership qualities are important because they help a leader to motivate and empower their followers and reach their goals. Without strong leadership qualities, a leader may lose the support of their followers.

- **What are examples of leadership?**

Leadership can be found in many forms, including managing a work team, leading an organization, running a business, running a campaign, coaching a sports team, managing volunteers or even setting and managing progress towards personal goals.



- **How do we develop leadership qualities?**

Practice is the best way to develop leadership qualities. Though it may seem counterintuitive, using a leadership skill and then failing will help the most. By learning from the failure and adapting to ensure it does not happen again, we will learn how to harness the power of each leadership skill. A great way to build leadership skills is to become an active member of committees, organizations, sports teams or clubs that relate to things we are passionate about.



❑ Impact of Leadership qualities

Leaders who can effectively build trust, keep staff informed, and communicate a vision for the future create a positive work environment that people want to be a part of it. Good leadership gives everyone in the company the confidence that they are under the guidance of someone who is credible and knowledgeable. Leadership inspires people to try new concepts and venture into unknown territories that will develop both their personal and professional skills. Good communication, empathy, and positivity impact the workplace. Developing leadership qualities and skills can make the difference between a company's failure and success. The impact of good leadership can be observed on various results related to our team, the skills we develop, and the knowledge we hone. Being able to influence others as a leader is essential for a thriving organization or company.



By developing leadership skills, we will be able to impact our team members positively. As a skilled leader, we will affect how team members operate and contribute to long-term success.

Lastly, leadership is related to the power of influence and how it is utilized. Some are born leaders, and others become good ones by following the excellent leadership qualities listed above. Leadership is more than a position. One might be a manager, team leader, or chief, but they will become great leaders only when they showcase the above qualities. Remember that it is all about vision, empathy, ability to motivate, inspire, and encourage others to give their very best for the company they are working for and the whole team.



Lecture – 28

Communication Skills for Leaders: Listening and Responding



❑ **Communication skills for Leaders: Listening and Responding**

Communication in the workplace is one of the signs of a high performance culture. Workplace communication is important for the growth and success of an employee. It allows employees to share their inputs and feel that their ideas are being valued. Communication skills in leadership are important as they enable us to take responsibility for our team and convey our message in clear, unambiguous terms. With excellent communication, we can set the tone for our workplace and make it easier for our team members to understand our work expectations. It may also help us create an atmosphere where they feel comfortable expressing themselves and getting feedback.



If we are leading a team with multiple employees or multiple teams working on diverse projects, leadership communication skills become even more crucial. We can ensure that the teams know their work goals and continue working towards these as per the established plan and on schedule. It may also help us communicate instructions and feedback across teams clearly.

Effective communication skills in the workplace reduce office conflicts and make our work more enjoyable. Few communication skills required at workplace:

1. Showing respect
2. Active listening
3. Displaying positive body language
4. Be willing to ask questions
5. Understanding email etiquettes
6. Remaining open minded
7. A willingness to give feedback



The most important communication skills for leaders include listening and responding.

□ Listening

A good listener is someone who listens to the speaker to receive and interpret messages accurately. No one likes to communicate with a person who cares only about what they have to say. That's why, to become a good communicator, we need to be a good listener too. Listening is the key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. The listening process involves four stages: receiving, understanding, evaluating and responding. In the first stage, receiving, the listener hears the speaker and tries to make sense of the message.



This requires the listener to pay attention and to be able to process the information. In the second stage, understanding, the listener tries to interpret the meaning of the message. This requires the listener to have some background knowledge and to be able to make inferences. In the third stage, evaluating, the listener makes a judgement about the message. This requires the listener to have some standards or criteria by which to judge the message. In the fourth stage, responding, the listener takes some action in response to the message. This might involve giving feedback to the speaker or taking some other action. Completion of all these stages is necessary. Good listening skills make workers more productive. By being active listeners workers can understand their assignments in a much better way and can give their best outputs



- **Leaders need to be good listeners:**

By continuous listening a leader can help build a healthy and productive work environment.

1. Listening shows respect and regard for the people you work with: It helps to build rapport and demonstrates that you care about others and what they have to say. Thus, listening is a powerful tool for increasing influence and improving relationships at work.

2. Listening builds a broader sense of trust and community: Listening to the people who work with and for you is an invaluable skill in leadership – and an essential duty. It demonstrates that you value the members of your group as well as your external and internal stakeholders. Together, such manifestations can improve effectiveness in your work and interactions.



3. Listening broadens your perspective and helps you accumulate important information and reduce misunderstandings. If your work colleagues are comfortable bringing their ideas, concerns and issues to you, they will generally be more satisfied and more productive, and you will be aware of potential problems before they can grow. Listening is fundamental to innovation and problem solving. When the leader is a good listener, everyone becomes more capable of providing value in their work.



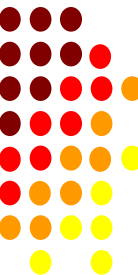
□ Responding

The responding stage is the stage of the listening process in which the listener provides verbal and/or nonverbal reactions. A listener can respond to what they hear either verbally or non-verbally. Nonverbal signals can include gestures such as nodding, making eye contact, tapping a pen, fidgeting, scratching or cocking their head, smiling, rolling their eyes, grimacing, or any other body language. These kinds of responses can be displayed purposefully or involuntarily. Responding verbally might involve asking a question, requesting additional information, redirecting or changing the focus of a conversation, cutting off a speaker, or repeating what a speaker has said back to him/her in order to verify that the received message matches the intended message.



Nonverbal responses like nodding or eye contact allow the listener to communicate their level of interest without interrupting the speaker, thereby preserving the speaker/listener roles. When a listener responds verbally to what they hear and remember—for example, with a question or a comment—the speaker/listener roles are reversed, at least momentarily.

Responding adds action to the listening process. Oftentimes, the speaker looks for verbal and nonverbal responses from the listener to determine if and how their message is being understood and/or considered. Based on the listener's responses, the speaker can choose to either adjust or continue with the delivery of him/her message. For example, if a listener's brow is furrowed and their arms are crossed, the speaker may determine that he/she needs to lighten their tone to better communicate their point.



If a listener is smiling and nodding or asking questions, the speaker may feel that the listener is engaged and him/her message is being communicated effectively.

▪ **Why a leader needs to be good at responding:**

1. Responding is a way to add action to the process of listening.
2. Listening with responding creates a bond between the leader and his team members.
3. Responding in any of the medium (Verbal/non-verbal) makes the leader as well as his team members aware that they need to continue sharing.
4. In a way, responding properly while listening completes the process of communication.
5. Responses from the leader makes the speaker feel comfortable. Responding while listening turns passive listening into active and makes the communication process more effective.



Lecture – 29

Mental Health at Work place: Managing Stress, Techniques



❑ **Mental health at work place:**

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Both change throughout our lives, and like our bodies, our minds can become unwell. The World Health Organisation describes mental health as ‘a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community’. Mental health denotes a symptom free mind and fair level of emotional wellbeing. Be it home or workplace; mental health of an individual is subjected to environmental stressors that may reduce one’s state of wellbeing. The workplace in particular can be a very tiring environment for anyone.



The stress of long working hours, ever increasing targets, managing co-workers and subordinates can take a toll on a person's mind and prove very toxic to one's mental and physical health in long run. It is difficult for persons with full blown mental illness to continue at work; but it generally takes a gradual course, before an individual shows full blown symptoms of a particular illness. Thus it becomes necessary to constantly check mental health and stress level of workers.

▪ **The workplace and the risks:**

It becomes important for an individual; rather say necessary to engage in some employment or other occupational activity for the very existence and wellbeing of him and his family. However, every occupation comes with its own hazards.



The physical hazards and the working environment can be a constant source of stress for the employees. Especially, extreme hot temperatures, high intensity sounds, poor or extreme light could be uncomfortable and trigger stress.

While physical dangers at workplace are very apparent and can easily be taken care of using safety precautions, burnouts and stress are the other face of workplace hazards, which are not visible apparently and they take a gradual course and need careful monitoring and defences to deal with. Every person before entering into a job has certain expectations from his own work and the organization, often setting his personal targets. Vice versa, the organization also has certain expectations from its employee.



A certain motivation, feedback and reward fuel this interdependency. However, problem arises when there appears to be a misbalance between the two, and either of them starts expecting more from himself or the other without proper motivation, feedback, reward and resources. This is the stage when stress and burnout starts creeping in into the workers. While burnout is a shorter phase of exhaustion and related symptoms, stress is relatively a prolonged phase.

□ Managing Stress

Stress can be defined as the degree to which we feel overwhelmed or unable to cope as a result of pressures that are unmanageable. In simple words, stress is a mental situation in which people feel pressure to perform or act.



There are two main types of stress:

1. Acute stress: The little stress that we experience on daily basis is called acute stress.

2. Chronic stress: More severe stress that can be built up when we are exposed to a stressful situation over a longer period is called chronic stress.

❑ **Techniques:** Stress is any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental unrest. While the removal of stress is unrealistic, management of stress is a manageable and realistic goal that can be achieved by a number of strategies. People with strong social support networks report less stress and fewer negative symptoms of stress than those who lack social support.



Stress-management techniques include relaxation techniques, time-management skills, counselling or group therapy, exercise, and maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle. There are different relaxation techniques to help manage stress:

1. Mindfulness Meditation

This is the first Stress Management technique. One of the most widely used techniques across the world, ‘meditation’ offers relaxation to mind and body. It is a powerful technique to overcome stress. Based on deep breathing, meditation gives peace of mind and improved focus.



2. Exercise/Yoga

Regular work-out/exercise is good for the body and keeps stress levels in control. Physical activities like lifting weights, walking release stress-combating hormones and has contradictory effects of putting physical stress on the body and relieving mental stress. Regular exercise helps to effectively manage stress and reduce feelings of anxiety. ‘Yoga’ is one of the popular methods of stress management practiced across the globe by all age groups. Yoga helps to raise body and breath awareness and is a great stress buster. Many other physical activities such as Pilates, Tai Chi or sports help to effectively reduce stress.

3. Imagery

This method uses soothing and pleasant images such as that of nature, and by visualizing a calming image and controlling breaths, it offers deep relaxation. It is a convenient method and easy to implement.



4. Time-Management

The majority of stress results from poor time management and planning. So, it is essential to create a timetable/schedule of tasks and prioritize them so as to effectively balance time and work.

5. Self-Care

The well-known saying, 'Health is Wealth', is so true as without taking good care of health, one cannot work properly. So, when it comes to managing stress, taking care of self is vital. One needs to maintain a healthy diet and take adequate sleep to function properly and to keep physical ailments at bay. Resorting to substance abuse such as alcohol or drugs should be prohibited as it further worsens stress. Thus, the role of a healthy lifestyle and good habits cannot be undermined in curbing stress.



6. Maintain a ‘Stress Diary’

It is important to emit out the negative emotions, and one can write down all the negative feelings in a diary as a way to let them go. Also, listing down positive emotions would help to shift the attention, and one can think of memories to be grateful for. In this way, negativity is ward off and replaced by positive thoughts.

7. Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy uses essential oils/scents to treat one’s mood. So, the use of essential oils or aroma candles helps in reducing stress. Many research studies have shown that aroma oils having a calming effect and help in lowering anxiety and improving sleep.



8. Tune in to Music

Researchers confirm that listening to calm and soothing music helps to lower down the heart rate and blood pressure, thus reducing ‘cortisol’, the stress hormone. Therefore, listening to good music is an easy escape to stress.

9. Reading Books

What better way to stay away from the stressors than picking up a good book to read. Reading improves concentration and keeps the mind away from stressful thoughts. It diverts the mind and thus is an effective method to lessen stress.



10. Socializing with Friends and Family

Being in the company of loved ones helps to relax and enables one to share their concerns or problems. This allows for freeing up the feelings and garnering emotional support. Studies reveal that socializing helps in the release of the hormone called ‘Oxytocin’, which is a stress reliever.

11. Get a Hobby

Getting our time into some good hobby like painting, dancing or fishing enables our mind to take a break from stressful thoughts and keeping it engaged. Thus, it not only acts as a de-stressor but also engages our mind to use the time productively.

12. Befriend Nature

Exposure to nature helps reduce anger, anxiety, and stress. Being in the company of nature enhances pleasant and positive feelings, thus, reducing stress hormones.

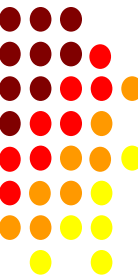


13. Consult a Psychologist/Counsellor

Nowadays, many people seek professional help to manage stress. Therefore, seeking treatment or getting counselling sessions can also prove beneficial to manage stress.

14. Keep a Positive Mindset

Many times, ‘stress’ is a result of our own thoughts, and therefore, one has to train the mind to adopt a new perspective and develop a positive attitude. Self-affirmation takes away unnecessary stress. Although stress and feelings of worry can arise in personal and professional life, tackling stress by implementing the above-listed tips can help to keep the stressors away. So, it is time to live more and worry less!



Lecture – 30

Application of 4 A's: Avoid, Alter, Access, Adapt



Stress is the emotional or physical tension the body creates when presented with events or thoughts that cause worry, frustration, anger or nervousness. Although short-term stress can help avoid danger, long-term stress can cause health issues. When stress exceeds the ability to cope, balance in the mind and body need to be restored. Stress management is an effective tool to accomplish this. The four A's of stress management are to avoid, alter, access and adapt.

1. Avoid

Stress can often be avoided by planning ahead, rearranging surroundings and carrying a lighter workload. Approaches include the following:

- **Take control:** Taking control of stressful, routine tasks helps to build confidence. For example, leaving earlier for work or taking a new route can ease the stress of traffic. Preparing lunch can ease the stress of waiting in a line during lunchtime.



- **Avoid bothersome people:** Physical distance from someone who is causing stress can relieve tension.
- **Learn to say “no”:** Most people have a lot of responsibilities and very little spare time. Saying “no” to social invitations, extra responsibilities at work, or volunteer requests can be difficult, but it is often needed for personal mental health.
- **Prioritize a to-do list:** Making a to-do list helps the mind let go of stressful thoughts regarding required tasks. Scratching an item off the to-do list can create a feeling of accomplishment.



2. Alter

When stressful situations cannot be avoided, behaviours, communication, and time management may need to be altered. Approaches include the following:

- **Ask others to change their behaviour:** Small issues often snowball and turn into huge problems. It's okay to ask others to change bothersome behaviour; however, it's important to listen to others about personal bothersome behaviour, too.
- **Communicate openly:** Honesty is always the best policy. When sharing feelings, using "I" statements rather than "you" statements helps to negate any blame on the other person.
- **Manage time better:** Grouping similar tasks together can increase efficiency, resulting in lessened stress.
- **State limits in advance:** Prior to engaging in a long conversation, letting the other person know if time is limited avoids any hard feelings.



3. Access

Accessing resources that can help cope with stress, such as healthy food, exercise, or therapy. Many times, acceptance is the best way to avoid stress. Approaches include the following:

- **Talk with others:** Feelings are legitimate even if frustrating situations cannot be changed. Discussing stressful situations with a friend who actively listens and understands is helpful.
- **Forgive others:** Forgiving takes practice. Learning forgiveness releases negative energy from the mind and body.
- **Practice positive self-talk:** Negative thoughts tend to feed off each other, creating additional negative thoughts. Positive self-talk can reduce stress and help maintain objectivity.
- **Learn from mistakes:** Mistakes are inevitable and should be used as teachable moments rather than create feelings of self-loathing.



4. Adapt

Adapting often involves changing expectations, which in turn, lowers stress levels. Approaches include the following:

- **Adjust standards:** Perfection is impossible. Striving for perfection can cause feelings of frustration and guilt. Adjusting personal expectations can reduce stress.
- **Practice stopping bad thoughts:** Negative thoughts should immediately be replaced with positive ones. Refusal to replay a stressful situation in the mind may actually cause it to be less stressful.
- **Reframe the issue:** Looking at situations from a different viewpoint is often helpful. For example, rather than being frustrated for using a sick day from work, use the day to catch up on television programs or read a book.
- **Adopt mantra sayings:** Mentally repeating confident sentences, such as, “I can do this,” has a positive effect on stressful situations.



- **Create a list of happy resources:** Making a list of happy experiences, situations and thoughts can put things into perspective. Looking back on this list during a stressful situation can help calm the mind.
- **Look at the big picture.** Figuring out if something will matter in one year or in five years is important. If it will not, letting it go can relieve stress.

Stress is a part of everyday life; however, practicing the 4 A's of stress management can help.



Thank You!

