Lead effective workplace relationships

Learner Guide

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1. Collect, analyse and communicate information and ideas

1.1 – Collect relevant information from appropriate sources and analyse and share with the work team to improve work performance

Having accurate information is essential in assisting staff to do their work in an efficient and effective manner.

Information relates to any kind of documentation or other relative information that may be useful in the performance of a job role or function, or that assists in working towards team and organisational goals. It can be specific or generic ,depending on where it is sourced from and how it applies to what is needed.

Information can only be useful when it is:

➢ Sufficient

➢ Accurate

➢ Valid

➢ Reliable

➢ Understood

Staff members need to have the following information in order to perform their job roles:

➢ Access to and knowledge of the organisation's Mission and Vision Statement, Code of Conduct and any policies and procedures that relate directly to Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action and ethical behaviour in the workplace

➢ An action plan so they know what they are required to do

➢ An understanding of their own job role and the job functions of other team members

➢ A clear understanding of their required performance in terms of Key Result Areas (KRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

➢ A knowledge of common and team goals and an understanding of how the goals relate to them specifically

➢ A good working knowledge of how to access information they require, including resources, other staff members and any relevant information required to perform their job

Some of the areas where information can be sourced include, but are not limited to:

> ➢ Internet
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> ➢ Coaches or mentors in the workplace
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> ➢ Colleagues
>
> ➢ Industry experts
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> ➢ Professional associations
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> ➢ Journals and industry magazines
>
> ➢ Senior managers
>
> ➢ Results from surveys, questionnaires and other sources of feedback
>
> ➢ Statistics
>
> ➢ Social networking sites
>
> ➢ External consultants or other experts
>
> ➢ Meetings – both internal and external
>
> ➢ Company information and documentation including information from Operations, HR, Finance, Marketing etc.
>
> ➢ Peers and other staff in similar industries

Information that is not communicated to staff members in a timely manner is not useful, as it becomes out-of-date and no longer relevant to the organisation, staff members or job function.

Any information that is used should be from a reliable and relevant source, so that staff can rely on it to be accurate and appropriate. Information should also be validated and verified.

Some of the ways to do this include:

> ➢ Checking against older information
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> ➢ Checking against industry standards
>
> ➢ Collating and correlating information
>
> ➢ Benchmarking
>
> ➢ Checking with colleagues and peers
>
> ➢ Checking with industry bodies
>
> ➢ Checking with associations

> ➢ Matching up with different sources

> ➢ Looking for duplicated information

Once information has been sourced, decisions can be made using this information.

Decision making

Decisions can be made against information collected using data, analytical methods and any other manner of interpreting information given or provided.

By using relevant and accurate data, informed decisions can be made that take into account all options and suggestions. This reduces the chance of unnecessary risk taking in business as decisions can be made using objective opinions that have looked at different sources of information. Reliable and accurate decisions can be made based on objective information provided.

Sharing information

Many organisations have a weakness in that some staff members prefer to keep information to themselves and are not willing to share it with others, as required. This can be due to lack of job security or because they have not been informed about the advantages of sharing this information – however, it can not only help them but also the organisation as a whole.

Staff members who withhold information are actually impacting on the organisation negatively.

This includes such things as:

> ➢ Opportunities for improvement can be impacted

> ➢ Staff morale can suffer

> ➢ Staff can feel threatened

> ➢ Staff will become resentful of others that could be withholding information

> ➢ Staff may be unable to perform their jobs effectively

> ➢ Outputs and production can be affected

It is critical for all staff members to be aware of the importance of sharing information, in order for the organisation to have a competitive advantage.

Sharing information can be a powerful tool for all staff members in terms of:
> ➢ Gaining knowledge

> ➢ Being aware of industry standards

> ➢ Understanding of job roles

> ➢ Increasing effectiveness and efficiency in the workplace

> ➢ Understanding how their job functions relate back to organisational goals

> ➢ Maintaining industry knowledge

A good manager will ensure their staff and team members are sharing information with each other at all times to make sure the channels of communication are always open.

Good managers understand the importance of communicating in a transparent manner and will encourage all staff to work together to maintain a level of trust and sincerity in the workplace.

1.2 – Communicate ideas and information in a manner which is appropriate and sensitive to the cultural and social diversity of the audience and any specific needs

Once the relevant and appropriate information has been gathered and collected, it is important to distribute the information to other staff members and stakeholders. The manner in which it is communicated can impact to a large degree on how it is interpreted.

Some of the factors that can contribute to how information is distributed include the following:

> ➢ Current knowledge of recipient of information
>
> ➢ Understanding of the subject matter by the recipient
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> ➢ Current skill level of the recipient
>
> ➢ The job role the other person is in
>
> ➢ How long they have worked in the job role, in the industry or for the company
>
> ➢ What their language, literacy and numeracy skills are like
>
> ➢ What level of grammar and spoken English they have
>
> ➢ Their cultural and socio-economic background

The social diversity of the people receiving the information can have an impact on how the information is received.

This includes any of the following that needs to be taken into consideration:

> ➢ English and grammar skills
>
> ➢ Cultural sensitivity to issues
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> ➢ Religious sensitivity to issues
>
> ➢ Their perception of job security as it relates to them
>
> ➢ Job and industry knowledge

Consulting with staff, industry experts, other colleagues, stakeholders and anyone else who is involved in the communication process is very important from an organisational and professional perspective.

As a manager, keeping the lines of communication open at all times means that staff members will also communicate back as the opportunity and situation arises.

Getting feedback from the team members on a continual basis is also important to the communication process and is the most critical tool that can be utilised at any time.

Some of the ways in which feedback can be sought from team members include:

➢ Regular team meetings

➢ Questionnaires

➢ Surveys

➢ Collating information received, both internal and external to the organisation

➢ Updates from colleagues and industry bodies

➢ Newsletters and blogs.

Managers should encourage feedback at all times from their staff. By encouraging this, their team members are more likely to provide information to managers and other team members – this will then help to improve processes and make the organisation better in many ways.

Feedback should be acknowledged and accepted without criticism or detriment to the staff members providing it. It should be treated in a positive manner at all times, so that staff members feel comfortable in providing feedback and recognise that they are valued and their opinions are appreciated in the workplace.

When team members are criticised or reprimanded for providing honest feedback they will soon stop giving their opinions and managers will not be given accurate information back.

Staff members may feel worried, apprehensive or simply not bothered to give feedback. They will then become unhappy, disillusioned and possibly start looking for other jobs.

Once staff turnover gets high, it will cost the organisation a lot of money to replace staff members. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the organisation and management itself for managers to provide a happy and conducive environment for staff members.

Understanding that many things can wrong with communication is the first step towards ensuring that the communication channels in the workplace are open and as accurate as possible.

One of the key elements of good communication is to have strong listening skills.

Listening is the key to being able to present someone with a solution to their problem, understanding their position on a subject, or making an effort to communicate back with them.

When you actively listen, you are building a genuine interest in the other person. You pay attention and use appropriate body language to show you are listening. People feel valued and understood

when they recognise that you are actively listening to what they have to say, no matter what their background, knowledge or current skill level.

You should then check for your own understanding when you are communicating with someone by reflecting back what the person has said to you. Ensure you summarise what they are saying, to give them a sense that you hear and understand them.

1.3 – Lead consultation processes to encourage employees to contribute to issues related to their work, and promptly relay feedback to the work team in regard to outcomes

The processes within any organisation that encourage staff members to contribute – in terms of knowledge, assistance and feedback – will play a large part in how effective communication will be within the company.

The more open and honest the process is designed to be, the more likely the staff members will give their opinions and provide input into the system.

For this reason, it is important that managers and staff have a well-developed system in place that creates a sense of interest and availability to all employees.

There are a number of different consultation processes that can be adapted and used in the workplace. These can include formal and informal processes.

A formal process will usually involve written feedback and may be conducted in a formal meeting or environment where documentation is involved; a number of senior staff may be present.

An informal process will usually be a comment made in passing or a quick debrief on a matter between staff members and their supervisor.

Regardless of whether the feedback is formal or informal it should be taken seriously by management.

The way in which an organisation uses the processes is important. They can adapt systems and procedures from various different departments such as:

> ➢ Human Resources
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> ➢ Marketing
>
> ➢ Finance
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> ➢ Operations
>
> ➢ Sales

Organisations need to realise that their staff members and teams can provide a wealth of information on improvement. They can often come up with some good ideas in relation to:

➢ Waste management

➢ Communication methods

➢ Increasing efficiency in the workplace

➢ Goals

➢ Adapting resources

Managers that do not always have hands on experience with aspects relating to the organisation are often the ones that make uninformed decisions around new systems and policies. They should consult with staff members who have direct experience in said area(s) and can provide the best solutions and advice towards improving systems and procedures.

Staff members need to receive immediate feedback on their performance and the team's performance at all times for the following reasons:

➢ To ensure performance is measured appropriately and accurately

➢ To ensure they are on the right track at any given time

➢ For staff members to be aware of how they are performing in terms of organisational goals

➢ So employees can understand the measures that are in place in terms of work performance and how they are affected by them

➢ So that they are able to rectify any problems relating to their work performance and be on track with the organisational expectations

There are a number of processes that are usually implemented within any organisational framework. These processes should be identified and audited on a regular basis to see which ones are working well and which need improvement.

There may be systems and procedures in place that are no longer being used or being used incorrectly – an audit of these will determine what can be changed, improved, removed or updated.

Companies will often stick to outdated or inefficient processes – this can often be more time consuming than if they were to investigate the options available to them and improve anything that is not working. It can also cause resentment among staff.

The consultation process itself is where some organisations may fail.

Often, even the most senior managers do not realise the importance of consulting with the staff members that are actually using a system, to get feedback on their opinion of the system.

Some organisations even recognise that their employees find a system to be a hindrance but, due to the fact that they may have paid a considerable amount of money for it, they continue to use it, unaware that it is costing them even more money in downtime and mistakes. The resentment and negativity felt by the employees may also be creating an atmosphere of distrust and anxiety.

An organisation that accepts and understands that feedback from its employees is one of the most crucial avenues for improvement will be successful and moving forward at all times.

For an organisation to recognise the importance and value of staff, it should keep the following in mind at all times:

- ➢ To attract and retain quality people, they need to pay salaries accordingly

- ➢ Staff members need to feel valued and appreciated

- ➢ Feedback provided by staff members to an organisation should be taken seriously and acted on as soon as possible

- ➢ Staff members should never be made to feel bad for providing honest feedback

- ➢ Staff should be given responsibility in their job roles at all times

- ➢ Communication should be open and honest at all times

- ➢ When staff members come up with new and innovative ideas for change, they should be recognised for their contributions

- ➢ Encourage staff members to be self-motivated and self-directed

- ➢ A good induction process can make all the difference

- ➢ Managers should provide suitable leadership and encouragement to their team members

- ➢ Employees should be trusted to do their jobs properly after appropriate training

- ➢ Staff members should receive ongoing training to become more efficient and effective in their job roles

- ➢ Staff members should be encouraged to perform better and be promoted accordingly

1.4 – Seek and value contributions from internal and external sources in developing and refining new ideas and approaches

There will always be a number of people involved in the consultation process within any organisation.

These will include internal and external people such as:

- ➢ Customers

- ➢ Suppliers

- ➢ Vendors

- ➢ Internal staff

- ➢ Stakeholders

- ➢ Senior managers

- ➢ Board members

Refining new ideas is the process of continuous improvement that should be adopted by all organisations to advance their processes and procedures at all times.

Continuous improvement means that a company is changing, adapting, improving and expanding at all times.

Part of the continuous improvement process for a company involves building trusting and appropriate relationships with stakeholders, to ensure they are providing honest and accurate feedback at all times.

Building successful relationships with others means that:
- ➢ Feedback is honest at all times

- ➢ Communication is open between staff members and stakeholders

- ➢ Ideas are exchanged freely

- ➢ Suggestions are encouraged

- ➢ Processes can be monitored appropriately

- ➢ Confidential information will be taken seriously

- ➢ Goals are achieved

The types of relationships between employees themselves and between employees and external customers or suppliers will impact directly on the efficiency, effectiveness and success of an organisation.

Without employees, an organisation would not exist. Companies that recognise, value and appreciate their staff members will be more successful in the long term than those that don't.

There are a number of costs involved in employee turnover – the more there is, the bigger the cost to a company, both from a financial and from a morale perspective.

Employees that are unhappy at work are not productive. They tell family and friends, who then tell other family and friends. Bad news spreads quicker than good news, so a company that does not look after staff members will soon get a reputation in the marketplace as a poor place to work and, as a result, this can negatively affect the sale of products or services.

Employee attitude will also be evident in their dealings with suppliers and vendors, customers and other stakeholders.

Valuing, understanding and accepting any contribution from internal and external sources is one of the best ways for an organisation to move forward and grow, while maintaining a competitive edge.

Employees who become unmotivated or negative in the workplace will not be efficient or effective workers. They will not be trying to reach organisational or team goals and they won't want to improve themselves, the systems or their job roles.

Contributions can be sought relating to any of the following:

> ➢ Product quality
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> ➢ Customer service levels
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> ➢ Systems and processes
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> ➢ Managing waste
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> ➢ Managing and utilising resources
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> ➢ Complaints
>
> ➢ Employee health
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> ➢ How communication is shared
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> ➢ Further training for staff
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> ➢ Induction processes
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> ➢ Absenteeism and employee turnover

Any of the above mechanisms can be used to gain meaningful and accurate feedback, to improve the processes and systems in place within an organisation.

Receiving the contributions from any of the above means the organisation should then look at changes and avenues for improvement.

Ways in which contributions can be received include:

> ➢ Questionnaires
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> ➢ Anonymous surveys
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> ➢ Feedback forms
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> ➢ Informal and formal feedback
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> ➢ Sales figures
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> ➢ General market feedback
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> ➢ Benchmarking
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> ➢ Comparing with industry standards

1.5 – Implement processes to ensure that issues raised are resolved promptly or referred to relevant personnel as required

There are a number of processes that can be implemented within any organisation to make sure the communication system works well, is adaptable and creating the best advantage.

Some of these specific activities that can assist in this process can include, but are not limited to:

- ➢ Formal meetings

- ➢ Informal meetings

- ➢ Collating information from complaint forms or feedback forms

- ➢ Email responses from customers, suppliers and vendors

- ➢ Information sourced from newsletters or blogs

- ➢ Media and press releases, as well as stories relating to the company that may be published on the internet or in other media

An organisation needs to take into account the ease with which information can now be distributed and how quickly bad press or publicity can affect its reputation.

The relevant staff members need to be advised of changes as they happen or are expected to happen. All staff should be aware of changes in the marketplace or in the industry they are in. Management should have in place systems and processes to communicate these changes to their staff members at all times.

Companies that do not advise staff members of changes to technology, products or updates run the risk of appearing unprofessional and inconsistent in their approach to staff members and the market.

There can be some issues internally that create problems, such as:

- ➢ Staff members that do not get along

- ➢ Lack of resources to communicate effectively or complete job roles properly

- ➢ Unrealistic deadlines and targets

- ➢ Poor motivation from employees

- ➢ Lack of appropriate training

- ➢ Personality clashes between staff members

- ➢ Personality clashes between staff and managers

- ➢ Concerns over safety in the working environment

- ➢ Harassment or bullying issues

- ➢ Lack of specific role definition

If any of the above are present, it is important from a management perspective to identify and rectify these issues immediately to avoid situations getting worse or escalating out of control.

Managers may need to enlist the assistance of any of the following relevant personnel to help:

> ➢ Senior management
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> ➢ Colleagues
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> ➢ Specialists
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> ➢ Industry experts
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> ➢ WHS staff or specialists
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> ➢ HR staff
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> ➢ Independent staff

2. Develop trust and confidence as leader

2.1 – Treat all internal and external contacts with integrity, respect and empathy

Contacts, both internal and external to an organisation, are important to the success of any business. Utilising them in the workplace is a powerful method of ensuring that managers are always knowledgeable and up to date with industry players. It is also important to know who can help and who you can assist at any given time.

Treating people with respect at all times is a given. Treating contacts, colleagues, peers and other stakeholders to an organisation with respect is a *must*.

"Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity."

W Clement Stone

Determining how to treat others in a respectful manner that encourages integrity at all times is one of the key aspects of being a good manager.

Good managers understand the importance of working with others and recognise that contacts are a valuable source of assistance in the growth of an organisation.

Managers should attempt to build a solid base of contacts that they can call on at any given time to help them in situations.

Managers who have good contacts at their fingertips are often regarded as professional and knowledgeable.

It is also important to understand the difference between empathy and sympathy. A manager can have good empathy to understand what a team member or staff member is going through, but they also need to understand their limitations and where they are no longer able to help – to know to refer the staff member to a relevant person who can help.

For this reason, managers should have a good working knowledge of contacts that can help on a professional basis and on a personal basis for staff members in need of extra assistance.

In the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee, 1960) Atticus explains to Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

Effective managers understand that everyone has a story. People don't always communicate theirs. They may not tell you that they are currently going through a divorce, or having a personal crisis, or that they are having financial difficulties etc.

For this reason, empathy needs to be utilised at all times. Your perception of someone will change when you find out what they are going through. But, as mentioned earlier, be mindful of the fact that they will not always tell you when they are going through something.

Managers need to be assertive, firm, respectful, empathetic and act with integrity at all times.

Acting with respect, integrity and empathy is a choice. These are qualities that make a person and will encourage respect from others.

These qualities should be considered the foundation blocks for setting ourselves up as managers.

People who act and behave from these positions will usually display the following qualities:

➢ They will appear to have less problems to deal with on a day to day basis

➢ They react well to situations that are out of their control

➢ They always seem to be acting in a calm and quiet manner

➢ They seem to make decisions that are clear and sound

➢ Are more likely to 'respond' to situations

People who are not utilising or demonstrating these qualities will usually:

➢ Seem frazzled and disorganised

➢ Easily blame others for what goes wrong

➢ Seem to be constantly 'reacting' rather than 'responding' to situations

➢ Find that it is difficult for them to make decisions

Displaying qualities such as integrity, respect and empathy is not about morals or comparing yourself to others. These qualities simply indicate that as a manager you have made a choice to treat others in this way – you will probably be treated in the same way yourself.

Managers can define themselves by displaying these behaviours and qualities. Having them indicates that a manager can accept responsibility for their actions, take ownership for their results and maintain accountability for their job role at all times. They will feel aligned with their goals and those of the organisation.

They will seem to be expending less effort to get better results, while attracting like-minded employees and retaining valued staff in their team.

2.2 – Use the organisation's social, ethical and business standards to develop and maintain effective relationships

Ethical behaviour should be practiced at all times by a manager. A manager, as a professional, needs to display an ability to understand and empathise with their staff members, while maintaining an ability to do the right thing at all times.

The guiding principles that dictate the manner in which a manager behaves will most likely be part of the policies and procedures of the company for which they work. Moral and ethical standards apply to the conduct of a person or group of people.

Ethical behaviour includes:

➢ **Being fair to all staff members at all times –** Managers should display fair and just behaviour towards others.

➢ **Showing respect for all staff members –** Team members must be treated with respect. Managers should never belittle or degrade a staff member or make an example out of them in front of the others.

➢ **Displaying trust and integrity –** A good manager can be trusted, will always display integrity and keep to their word. Integrity means behaving in a morally correct manner.

➢ **Being honest at all times –** Staff members deserve to be told the truth so a manager should always be honest and upfront with them, while still maintaining relevant levels of confidentiality in their job roles.

➢ **Following policies and procedures as set out by the organisation for which they work –** The organisation will have set policies and procedures that should be followed. Often these policies will relate back directly to legal requirements, so it is important they are adhered to at all times.

➢ **Knowing where limitations end –** Managers will often want to help their learners. They should be aware that sometimes they cannot help and intervention or referral may be necessary.

The culture within any organisation can make a difference to whether or not employees enjoy coming to work or feel resentment at the thought of going in to the office every day.

The culture itself is usually defined by management and staff alike. Culture encourages staff members to identify themselves within the organisation.

Ideally, the culture at any organisation should incorporate any or all of the following:

➢ Honesty and transparency

➢ A dynamic place to work

➢ An understanding of the employees in terms of how they are helping to reach the overall objectives

➢ Support of goals and vision statement of the company

➢ A loyalty to other staff and customers

- ➢ Everyone working as part of an overall team to reach the required objectives

- ➢ Staff members are valued and appreciated

- ➢ Career progression is encouraged

- ➢ Ethical behaviour is displayed at all times, by staff and management.

Ethical behaviour in the workplace is one of the most important and crucial factors for any organisation to encourage and enforce. Behaviour in the workplace should tie in directly with the values of the organisation and, when a staff member is behaving according to the values set out by the organisation, they are effectively working in an ethical manner.

Values and ethics exist in every workplace. The mission statement or vision statement of an organisation will dictate the underlying values of the culture for the employees.

When staff members and managers behave in an ethical manner, they are effectively displaying integrity, credibility and respect towards others. In turn, they will be shown respect from their staff members.

Ethical behaviour includes the following:
- ➢ Being honest
- ➢ Acting in a reliable and responsible manner
- ➢ Showing everyone the same amount of respect
- ➢ Doing what they say they will do
- ➢ Following up any actions they need to follow up
- ➢ Leading by example
- ➢ Acting with credibility
- ➢ Being consistent
- ➢ Understanding that everyone has a point of view and respecting differences.

Displaying ethical behaviour in the workplace and as a manager or staff member means that effective relationships can easily be formed and maintained.

Company values will be stronger and staff loyalty will increase. Staff will feel more motivated and inspired to work in the organisation.

An organisation that shows integrity, by encouraging staff to display ethical behaviour at all times, will develop a positive reputation in the marketplace and become known as a desirable place to work.

Work practices should, at all times, be fair – just and treat all employees with respect.

Employees should never experience discrimination against their race, age, gender, marital status or religion. They should be treated equally and fairly at all times, based on their work merit.

There are a number Acts within each state that will protect employees against discrimination along with Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Legislation.

There are a number of Acts within NSW that protect workers and management alike. Some of them include:

> ➢ Work Health and Safety Act 2011
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> ➢ Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
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> ➢ Workers Compensation Act 1987
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> ➢ Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1988
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> ➢ Workers Compensation Regulation 2010
>
> ➢ Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987
>
> ➢ Workplace Relations Regulations 2006
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> ➢ Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005
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> ➢ NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

2.3 – Gain and maintain the trust and confidence of colleagues, customers and suppliers through competent performance

Competent performance is the manner in which staff members treat each other and treat customers.

Being competent gives the organisation a professional advantage as it means:

> ➢ Customers and clients get the best service possible
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> ➢ They will want to deal with the company
>
> ➢ Referrals will come easily
>
> ➢ People will trust and respect the organisation because it will be acting out of integrity

Colleagues include:	Customers include:	Suppliers include:
Peers	Current customers	Vendors
Industry experts	Prospects	Affiliates
Managers and supervisors	Previous customers	

Gaining and maintaining trust and confidence of anyone is easy. Once you behave with integrity, can build rapport, stick to your word and are honest and sincere, you will then have the trust and confidence of others.

If it is so easy, why do so few managers and organisations display these qualities?

If staff members are feeling:

> ➢ Stressed
>
> ➢ Overworked
>
> ➢ Underpaid
>
> ➢ Insecure in their job roles
>
> ➢ Bullied or harassed

… they may find it difficult to operate from the qualities that indicate trust and honesty.

As a manager, it is important to try to recognise when staff members are feeling angst over any of the above and realise that it is not a good working environment for them to be in. Also, you should realise the damage it can be causing the company, in terms of loss of sales or creating a bad reputation.

Trust within a working environment is important, to ensure that customers and staff can rely on you to deliver on your promises. It encourages customers to know that they can trust you when it comes to agreements and arrangements relating to business.

When people can be confident of your honesty and interactions and know they can rely on you, it is easier for them to share information, do business with and trust you to do the right thing by them.

Respect is when people show regard for the opinions and feelings of others. You will always protect someone's self-esteem if you are showing them respect and trust. Respecting self-esteem in others should be the first rule of management. Managers should direct and motivate their staff, but if they are not showing the respect and trust they deserve, their team will not value them or be motivated to work for them.

When communicating with others, if you show trust, understanding, active listening and respect, you will be considered a fair and just manager. You will also automatically gain the respect of others and your staff will value and appreciate you more.

It is important to gain mutual respect and trust in all business relationships. Mutual respect and trust creates reciprocation. A manager that does not respect his or her team will create anxiety and conflict within that team. When a manager is acting in a disrespectful manner, employees will have less self-esteem, will feel as though they are not valued and possibly also feel as though they are not understood in the workplace. They will lack confidence and begin to lose productivity.

Open and honest relationships need to be developed with:

> ➢ Customers – internal and external
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> ➢ Supervisors
>
> ➢ Managers

➢ Senior managers

➢ Suppliers and vendors

➢ Board members

➢ Other stakeholders

Having trust and confidence in others when it comes to business dealings means that:

➢ Customers will keep coming back

➢ Customers will refer others to your business

➢ You will always have assistance when necessary

➢ Staff will want to help whenever they can

➢ You will be relied on to help others

➢ You can work together to achieve team goals

➢ Staff will be happy and motivated to come to work

➢ Staff will be loyal and appreciate their jobs

➢ Confidentiality will be maintained at all times

2.4 – Adjust interpersonal styles and methods to meet organisation's social and cultural environment

As discussed earlier, the culture within any organisation makes a difference to employees, their motivation levels, their enjoyment and whether they want to come to work. Culture is usually dictated by management and staff and is a way of encouraging employees to identify themselves within the organisation.

Workplace culture can be positive or negative and, ideally, a manager needs to focus on making the culture positive so that going to work is an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Once a manager builds a culture around high standards from an ethical perspective, the organisation will be known as a good place to work and will have a reputation that encourages trust and respect in the workplace.

The cultural and social environment of any organisation will be obvious to customers, internal staff, external suppliers, vendors, stakeholders and anyone who is involved with or has dealings with, the organisation.

Healthy cultures within an organisation will usually be obvious by:

➢ Employees being motivated and driven in the workplace

➢ Employees demonstrating clear knowledge of the vision and mission statements and company goals

> ➢ Managers that display flexibility, show responsibility for actions, accept ownership for actions and that are approachable and fair

> ➢ Clear communication at all times

> ➢ Encouragement of employee progression and career development

> ➢ An organisation that values and encourages growth in the workplace

Good employees will stay with a company that has a vibrant and ethical culture. If a company does not display a culture of integrity, it is likely that good employees will look for work elsewhere and the only employees left are ones that lack confidence because they cannot get a job or do not want to look for further challenges.

Some of the characteristics of a culture where it is evident that staff members are unhappy due to unethical behaviour, lack of respect or lack of motivation include:

> ➢ Employees who keep information to themselves due to lack of job security

> ➢ Productivity and motivation decreases

> ➢ Staff members who come to work 'because they have to' or 'have no choice'

> ➢ Staff members who, when asked how they are, say things like, "Getting there" or "OK for a Monday"

> ➢ Employees who do not provide exceptional customer service therefore creating a bad reputation for the company in the marketplace

> ➢ Staff members who resist change of any kind, including change that is clearly for the better

> ➢ Employees who stop giving opinions and advice as they feel they are not understood, valued or heard

Managers should monitor the health of their employees and organisation in much the same way as they would monitor their own health.

As soon as something appears to be going wrong or alarm bells start ringing, they should investigate the root cause of a problem, eliminate the situation if appropriate and exercise measures of control to maintain the problem or prevent it from escalating or happening again.

There are a number of different psychometric programs and concepts that relate directly to interpersonal styles.
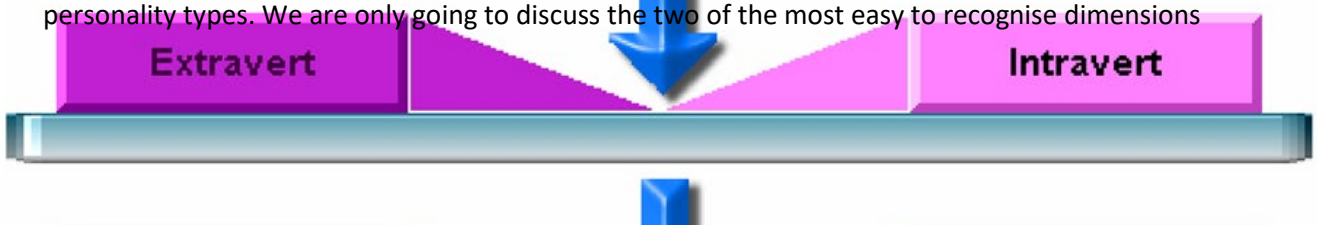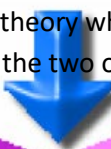
Some of the most popular ones include:

> ➢ Myers Briggs

> ➢ DISC

> ➢ The Johari Window

Myers-Briggs Theory

There are four dimensions to the Myers-Briggs theory which gives reference to 16 different personality types. We are only going to discuss the two of the most easy to recognise dimensions

| Extravert | | Intravert |

with some tools to help you recognise them and how to adjust your communication style to get your message across.

It works as follows:

There are four dimensions relating to the ways in which people we will cover Introvert/Extrovert and Thinker/Feeler:

Energise or charge their batteries up

The sorts of information they pay attention to (**not covered here**)

The criteria they use to make decisions

And the way they like to run their lives (**not covered here**)

Within each dimension are two opposite behaviours, called preferences and according to the Myers Briggs type indicator, we all have an inborn preference.

The extravert and introvert dimension

Extraversion – a quick overview

People who are extraverts need to interact with the world around them to charge up their batteries and feel alive. They prefer to be with other people, even just being in the same room as other people can liven them up. They are energetic, animated, talk and think out loud, and like to be involved. Too much time alone for an extravert would leave them restless and drained. The extravert needs interaction with others to energise themselves.

Introversion – a quick overview

You don't have to be a recluse, bookish, dislike people or wear an anorak to be an introvert. We are not thinking in terms of media depictions or Hollywood film type-casting here, introverts are not *really* extraverts waiting to be discovered and set free. Introverts are energised by their inner-world; they find strength from within so, naturally, they need time away from other people to draw on this. They tend to be private, self-contained and reserved, their manner in conversation is not as excitable and demonstrative as an extraverts. Too much social interaction leaves them weary and drained, they don't like to be the centre of attention and shy away from the limelight in the way they act, speak and dress.

Most people know, or have an idea of, what personality type they conform to most.

When meeting new people in the workplace it can be difficult to get a handle on what other people's personality types are. The only way to really get a firm sight of what kind of personality you are dealing with is to speak to people and to monitor how they conduct themselves. One way of doing the latter is to hold "ice-breaking" or "getting to know you" games and sessions. By playing certain games and by monitoring people, you can find out a lot about what kind of person they are.

A few tips on what to look out for:

Extravert	Introvert
Speak their thoughts out loud	Order their thoughts first, then speak
Social interaction gives energy, charges them up	Charged up by introspection, drained by social interaction
Generalise	Specialise
In social situations they're in feet first	Prefer to observe on the sidelines first
Variety is the spice of life	One thing at a time – often people too
Care more about their effect on others	Care more about the affect others have on them
More animated and expressive	More private, reserved and contemplative
Energy comes from people and things outside of themselves	Thoughts and ideas inside, their inner world provides energy
Like discussion	Like to reflect
Talkative	Quiet

Small talk is easy	Small talk is difficult
Friendly and outgoing	Reserved and unlikely to be the instigator of conversation with people they hardly know
Lots of friends and acquaintances	Few but deep friendships

Communication tips for extraverts

➢ Isolation will make them miserable and restless, so try to involve them in a buzzing environment with lots of people

➢ Don't take it personally that they need to be with lots of people no matter how special you are to them

➢ Give positive feedback – if this makes you feel uncomfortable or you are worried that you may come across as insincere, then perhaps send them a note to show your appreciation

➢ Extraverts like to take action – if you go to them with an idea or proposal expect them to want to act upon it immediately

➢ Understand that an extravert needs to vocalise their thoughts in order to organise them – if you interrupt them too much, they may lose their thread and become frustrated

➢ If you find a particular extravert's energy overwhelming, try telling them that you only have five minutes until your next appointment – this will focus their mind and hopefully encourage them to get to the point

➢ Be prepared to discuss a number of varied topics at once – remember that long silences make them feel uncomfortable and may cause them to ramble

➢ Remember, being the centre of attention for extraverts can be invigorating and fun – don't spoil the experience for them with your own misgivings and embarrassment

Communication tips for introverts

➢ Try to focus on one point at a time

➢ Don't press for feedback straight away – give them time to think about it

➢ Arrange times for discussion rather than interrupting them with questions

➢ Respect their privacy – they will not feel comfortable discussing their private life and will be hurt by any indiscretion

➢ Introverts need time on their own to charge their batteries – do not be offended if they ask to be left alone or are not interested in socialising too much

➢ Encourage them to contribute when appropriate

➢ Do not feel that you have to fill the silences – they are probably thinking and so would be distracted by talking

➢ Pressuring them to be sociable is unreasonable and stressful for them

➢ Remember their aversion to the lime light – try not to draw unwanted attention to them

The thinking and feeling dimension

Thinkers – a quick overview

People who use logic to analyse situations and make decisions are called Thinkers. Thinkers use impersonal criteria to assess problems and to reach solutions. They generally strive to be fair and consistent, taking all relevant information into consideration; they also try to be objective wherever possible. Thinkers can appear to be stoical and reserved because they prefer to keep their emotions in check. Thinkers have an excellent ability to spot flaws in arguments and remain cool when under fire – they don't shy away from conflict. They often enjoy a lively debate and relish the opportunity to examine both sides of the argument and are therefore accomplished at playing a devil's advocate. Thinkers tend to be competitive, assertive and thick-skinned, as they usually take constructive criticism in an objective manner.

Feelers – a quick overview

People who use subjective criteria in their decision making process are called Feelers. They base judgements on their own values and assess how the outcome will affect other people. They are warm, friendly and are driven by the need to understand people. They like to connect with others on a personal level. They want to be liked and try hard not to upset people by disagreeing with them or hurting their feelings. Feelers value honesty but not at the cost of offending people unnecessarily (as they see it); they try to be tactful and may sometimes simply omit negative comments altogether. Feelers will be tolerant of other's viewpoints and ideas unless they are offensive to their own ideas and beliefs – then, they become assertive and will stand their ground.

A few tips on what to look out for:

Thinker	Feeler
Won over by logic	Won over by feelings, emotional appeals
Tend not to take or mean criticism personally	Take things personally, are sensitive to other's needs/feelings
Are fair-minded and want justice	Tender hearted, want harmony

Honest and truthful even blunt	Tactful and diplomatic
Value competence	Value relationships
Judge using consistency and fairness	Judge using extenuating circumstances and mercy
More distant and businesslike	Like social niceties
Assertive	More gentle
Feel good mastering new skills or finding more efficient ways to do things	Need validation to feel good
Objectively weigh up pros and cons to decide on the right thing to do	Make decisions based on their own values and beliefs and how others feel or are affected by it

Communication tips for thinkers

➢ When presenting an argument, base your statements on what is logical and fair – do not make emotional pleas

➢ Thinkers respect people who appear to be calm and in control, so take time to gather your thoughts before approaching one

➢ Think about the logical consequences of what you are proposing – a Thinker will do exactly the same, so you will be in a position to discuss all the points they will raise

➢ Be prepared to debate, stay focused rather than defensive and keep your arguments rational.

➢ Thinkers will play devil's advocate in discussions, so accept that what they are suggesting may not actually be their personally held views

➢ Be clear about what you want from them – if you are just airing your views or getting something off your chest a Thinker will try and help you solve your problems, which may not be what you wanted. They may also become exasperated when you ignore their advice

➢ Don't ask them how they feel – ask them what they think

➢ Be assertive and say what you mean – Thinkers can take criticism as long as it is backed up by facts

➢ Value their natural skills and use them appropriately – Thinkers are calm in a crisis and can make quick objective decisions

➢ Thinkers value competence and efficiency, so do your homework and don't repeat yourself

➢ Generally, Thinkers remain calm under fire – save important discussions until you feel ready to present a composed and rational standpoint

Communication tips for feelers

➢ Try to focus on the point they are making rather than trying to spot flaws in their arguments

➢ Feelers take criticism personally so try to be as tactful as possible and be sure to include positive feedback, so they don't feel under attack

➢ Feelers will warm to proposals and ideas if they feel that they are benefiting people in some way, so highlight the humanitarian aspects of your ideas

➢ Never dismiss their feelings, no matter how illogical you think they are – they will be offended if you do not take them seriously

➢ If you feel uncomfortable in a one to one situation with an emotionally-charged Feeler in a discussion, allow them to get their feelings off their chest – remember that they may not be expecting you to solve their problems; rather, they are just venting their frustrations

➢ Always show that you listening – this is an important skill which a Feeler will greatly appreciate

➢ Feelers are driven to understand people – sharing some personal information or feelings about your discussion will allow them to warm to you and feel at ease

➢ Always express your appreciation (Feelers will suffer from a lack of positive feedback) – this could be in the form of a note, or even a card

➢ Conflict and disharmony make Feelers very uncomfortable and anxious so try to avoid arguing for the sake of discussion. Do not play devil's advocate but be honest and forthright about your opinions and feelings

➢ Value Feelers for their strong values and ability to empathise and nurture others

The Johari Window concept

Johari identified four dimensions of each person as follows:
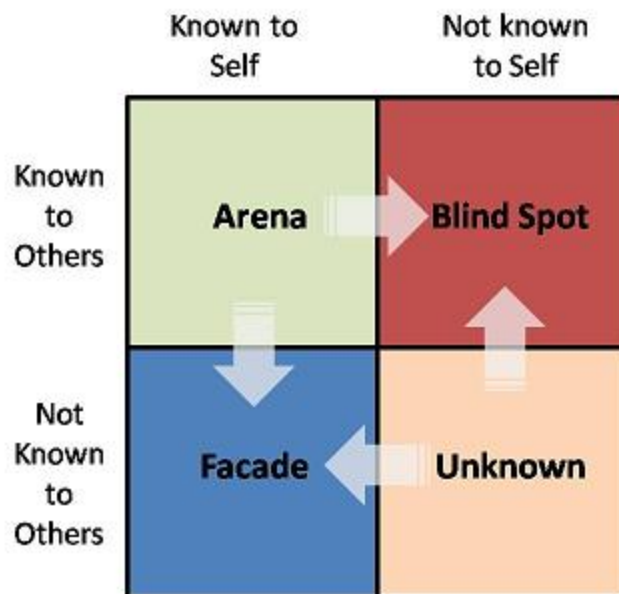
According to BusinessBalls.com: The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group. The Johari Window model can also be used to assess and improve a group's relationship with other groups. The Johari Window model was devised by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955, while researching group dynamics at the University of California Los Angeles. The model was first published in the Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development by UCLA Extension Office in 1955, and was later expanded by Joseph Luft. Today the Johari Window model is especially relevant due to modern emphasis on, and influence of, 'soft' skills, behaviour, empathy, cooperation, inter-group development and interpersonal development.

The Johari Window concept is particularly helpful to understanding employee/employer relationships within the Psychological Contract.

Over the years, alternative Johari Window terminology has been developed and adapted by other people – particularly leading to different descriptions of the four regions, hence the use of different terms in this explanation. Don't let it all confuse you – the Johari Window model is really very simple indeed.

Luft and Ingham called their Johari Window model 'Johari' after combining their first names, Joe and Harry. In early publications, the word appears as 'JoHari'. The Johari Window soon became a widely used model for understanding and training self-awareness, personal development, improving communications, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, team development and inter-group relationships.

The Johari Window model is also referred to as a 'disclosure/feedback model of self-awareness', and by some people an 'information processing tool'. The Johari Window actually represents information

– feelings, experience, views, attitudes, skills, intentions, motivation etc. – within or about a person – in relation to their group, from four perspectives, which are described below.

The Johari Window model can also be used to represent the same information for a group in relation to other groups. Johari Window terminology refers to 'self' and 'others': 'self' means oneself i.e. the person subject to the Johari Window analysis. 'Others' means other people in the person's group or team.

N.B. When the Johari Window model is used to assess and develop groups in relation to other groups, the 'self' would be the group, and 'others' would be other groups. However, for ease of explanation and understanding of the Johari Window and examples in this article, think of the model applying to an individual within a group, rather than a group relating to other groups.

The four Johari Window perspectives are called 'regions' or 'areas' or 'quadrants'. Each of these regions contains and represents the information – feelings, motivation etc. – known about the person, in terms of whether the information is known or unknown by the person, and whether the information is known or unknown by others in the group.

Quadrants

'Open self/area' or 'free area' or 'public area', or 'arena'

Johari region 1 is also known as the 'area of free activity'. This is the information about the person – behaviour, attitude, feelings, emotion, knowledge, experience, skills, views, etc. known by the person ('the self') and known by the group ('others').

The aim in any group should always be to develop the 'open area' for every person, because when we work in this area with others we are at our most effective and productive, and the group is at its most productive too. The open free area, or 'the arena', can be seen as the space where good communications and cooperation occur, free from distractions, mistrust, confusion, conflict and misunderstanding.

Established team members logically tend to have larger open areas than new team members. New team members start with relatively small open areas because relatively little knowledge about the new team member is shared. The size of the open area can be expanded horizontally into the blind space, by seeking and actively listening to feedback from other group members. This process is known as 'feedback solicitation'. Also, other group members can help a team member expand their open area by offering feedback, sensitively of course. The size of the open area can also be expanded vertically downwards into the hidden or avoided space by the person's disclosure of information, feelings, etc. about him/herself to the group and group members. Also, group members can help a person expand their open area into the hidden area by asking the person about him/herself. Managers and team leaders can play an important role in facilitating feedback and disclosure among group members, and in directly giving feedback to individuals about their own blind areas. Leaders also have a big responsibility to promote a culture and expectation for open, honest, positive, helpful, constructive, sensitive communications, and the sharing of knowledge throughout their organisation. Top performing groups, departments, companies and organisations always tend to have a culture of open positive communication, so encouraging the positive development of the 'open area' or 'open self' for everyone is a simple yet fundamental aspect of effective leadership.

'Blind self' or 'blind area' or 'blindspot'

Johari region 2 is what is known about a person by others in the group, but is unknown by the person him/herself. By seeking or soliciting feedback from others, the aim should be to reduce this area and thereby to increase the open area i.e. to increase self-awareness. This blind area is not an effective or productive space for individuals or groups.

This blind area could also be referred to as ignorance about oneself, or issues in which one is deluded. A blind area could also include issues that others are deliberately withholding from a person. We all know how difficult it is to work well when kept in the dark. No-one works well when subject to 'mushroom management'. People who are 'thick-skinned' tend to have a large 'blind area'.

Group members and managers can take some responsibility for helping an individual to reduce their blind area – in turn increasing the open area – by giving sensitive feedback and encouraging disclosure. Managers should promote a climate of non-judgmental feedback, and group response to individual disclosure, which reduces fear and therefore encourages both processes to happen. The extent to which an individual seeks feedback, and the issues on which feedback is sought, must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more resilient than others – care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset. The process of soliciting serious and deep feedback relates to the process of 'self-actualisation' described in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs development and motivation model.

'Hidden self' or 'hidden area' or 'avoided self/area' or 'facade'

Johari region 3 is what is known to ourselves but kept hidden from, and therefore unknown, to others. This hidden or avoided self represents information, feelings etc. anything that a person knows about him/self, but which is not revealed or is kept hidden from others. The hidden area could also include sensitivities, fears, hidden agendas, manipulative intentions and secrets – anything that a person knows but does not reveal, for whatever reason. It's natural for very personal and private information and feelings to remain hidden, indeed, certain information, feelings and experiences have no bearing on work, and so can and should remain hidden. However, typically, a lot of hidden information is not very personal, it is work or performance-related, and so is better positioned in the open area.

Relevant hidden information and feelings etc. should be moved into the open area through the process of 'disclosure'. The aim should be to disclose and expose relevant information and feelings – hence the Johari Window terminology 'self-disclosure' and 'exposure process', thereby increasing the open area. By telling others how we feel and other information about ourselves, we reduce the hidden area, and increase the open area, which enables better understanding, cooperation, trust, team-working effectiveness and productivity. Reducing hidden areas also reduces the potential for confusion, misunderstanding, poor communication, etc., which all distract from and undermine team effectiveness.

Organizational culture and working atmosphere have a major influence on group members' preparedness to disclose their hidden selves. Most people fear judgement or vulnerability and therefore hold back hidden information and feelings, etc., that if moved into the open area, i.e. known by the group as well, would enhance mutual understanding, and thereby improve group awareness, enabling better individual performance and group effectiveness.

The extent to which an individual discloses personal feelings and information, and the issues which are disclosed, and to whom, must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more keen and able than others to disclose. People should disclose at a pace and depth that they find personally comfortable. As with feedback, some people are more resilient than others – care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset. Also, as with soliciting feedback, the process of serious disclosure relates to the process of 'self-actualization' described in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs development and motivation model.

'Unknown self' or 'area of unknown activity' or 'unknown area'

Johari region 4 contains information, feelings, latent abilities, aptitudes, experiences etc, that are unknown to the person him/herself and unknown to others in the group. These unknown issues take a variety of forms: they can be feelings, behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, aptitudes, which can be quite close to the surface, and which can be positive and useful, or they can be deeper aspects of a person's personality, influencing his/her behaviour to various degrees. Large unknown areas would typically be expected in younger people, and people who lack experience or self-belief.

Examples of unknown factors are as follows, and the first example is particularly relevant and common, especially in typical organisations and teams:

➢ *An ability that is under-estimated or un-tried through lack of opportunity, encouragement, confidence or training*

➢ *A natural ability or aptitude that a person doesn't realise they possess*

➢ *A fear or aversion that a person does not know they have*

➢ *An unknown illness*

➢ *Repressed or subconscious feelings*

➢ *Conditioned behaviour or attitudes from childhood*

The processes by which this information and knowledge can be uncovered are various, and can be prompted through self-discovery or observation by others, or in certain situations through collective or mutual discovery, of the sort of discovery experienced on outward bound courses or other deep or intensive group work. Counselling can also uncover unknown issues, but this would then be known to the person and by one other, rather than by a group.

Whether unknown 'discovered' knowledge moves into the hidden, blind or open area depends on who discovers it and what they do with the knowledge, notably whether it is then given as feedback, or disclosed. As with the processes of soliciting feedback and disclosure, striving to discover information and feelings in the unknown is relates to the process of 'self-actualisation' described in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs development and motivation model.

Again as with disclosure and soliciting feedback, the process of self-discovery is a sensitive one. The extent and depth to which an individual is able to seek out discover their unknown feelings must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more keen and able than others to do this.

Uncovering 'hidden talents' – that is unknown aptitudes and skills, not to be confused with developing the Johari 'hidden area' - is another aspect of developing the unknown area, and is not so sensitive as unknown feelings. Providing people with the opportunity to try new things, with no great pressure to succeed, is often a useful way to discover unknown abilities, and thereby reduce the unknown area.

Managers and leaders can help by creating an environment that encourages self-discovery and to promote the processes of self-discovery, constructive observation and feedback among team members.

It is a widely accepted industrial fact that the majority of staff in any organisation are at any time working well within their potential. Creating a culture, climate and expectation for self-discovery helps people to fulfil more of their potential and thereby to achieve more, and to contribute more to organisational performance.

A note of caution about Johari region 4: The unknown area could also include repressed or subconscious feelings rooted in formative events and traumatic past experiences, which can stay unknown for a lifetime. In a work or organizational context the Johari Window should not be used to address issues of a clinical nature. Useful references are Arthur Janov's seminal book The Primal Scream and Transactional Analysis.

There are 55 Johari adjectives that are used as used as possible descriptions of the participant. They are:

➢ Able	➢ Friendly	➢ Nervous	➢ Sentimental
➢ Accepting	➢ Giving	➢ Observant	➢ Shy
➢ Adaptable	➢ Happy	➢ Organised	➢ Silly
➢ Bold	➢ Helpful	➢ Patient	➢ Smart
➢ Brave	➢ Idealistic	➢ Powerful	➢ Spontaneous
➢ Calm	➢ Independent	➢ Proud	➢ Sympathetic
➢ Caring	➢ Ingenious	➢ Quiet	➢ Tense
➢ Cheerful	➢ Intelligent	➢ Reflective	➢ Trustworthy
➢ Clever	➢ Introverted	➢ Relaxed	➢ Warm
➢ Complex	➢ Kind	➢ Religious	➢ Wise
➢ Confident	➢ Knowledgeable	➢ Responsive	➢ Witty
➢ Dependable	➢ Logical	➢ Searching	
➢ Dignified	➢ Loving	➢ Self-assertive	
➢ Energetic	➢ Mature	➢ Self-conscious	
➢ Extroverted	➢ Modest	➢ Sensible	

Source: www.schurzhs.org

Interpersonal styles

What are some of the skills that make managers and staff members able to communicate effectively?

On the list below, select the ones that you think would relate directly back to having good interpersonal skills. Add any others you can think of.

❏ Active listener

❏ Is able to explain things clearly and succinctly

❏ Is a **good listener**

❏ Is fair and reasonable

❏ Encourages staff to do better

❏ Is able to stay **calm**

❏ Challenges thoughts and ideas

❏ Is approachable

❏ **Applies the values of the organisation** to their job role at all times

❏ Can see the big picture but knows when to hone in on the smaller picture

❏ Understands **others**

❏ Knows how to give positive and constructive **feedback**

❏ Negotiates well

❏ **Gives clear** feedback

❏ Provides feedback immediately

❏ **Praises** staff members who are performing well

❏ Takes ownership of their job function

❏ Holds themselves accountable

❏ Accepts responsibility for their actions

❏ Works well with **others**

❏ **Transparent** in their communication

❏ Is a **good decision maker** that accepts their actions once a decision has been made

What other qualities can you think of?

❏ _____

❏ _____

❏ _____

❏ _____

2.5 – Lead and encourage other members of the work team to follow examples set according to organisation's policies and procedures

A manager is required to:

> ➢ Act in a professional manner at all times. This includes behaving ethically and with integrity.

> ➢ Act in a trusting manner and protect self-esteem

> ➢ Assist their team to understand the mission statement and company goals

> ➢ Lead by example
>
> ➢ Take their staff members seriously
>
> ➢ Understand relevant legislation, including WHS principles and keep their staff safe at all times
>
> ➢ Seek guidance from others if they don't know what to do in a situation
>
> ➢ Set relevant standards for their team members to adhere to
>
> ➢ Address inappropriate behaviour as soon as it begins
>
> ➢ Promote a culture of transparency and approachability
>
> ➢ Delegate accordingly.

The organisation itself will have a set of procedures and guidelines or a code of conduct that needs to be followed at all times by employees. Managers are responsible for ensuring that they follow these guidelines and that they encourage their staff members to follow and adhere to these guidelines also.

If a manager sees that an employee is not behaving in an ethical manner that goes against the company code of conduct or procedures, they are required to address this issue immediately and take it up with relevant authorities or escalate the matter if required.

3. Develop and maintain networks and relationships

3.1 Use networks to identify and build relationships

3.2 Use networks and other work relationships to provide identifiable benefits for the team and organisation

Brainstorm with the group:

What is a network?

_____

Networking is the term used to describe an interaction with other people and the forming of business relationships to benefit all parties involved. Networking provides an opportunity for to develop communication and people skills.

We are all familiar with the saying:

"It's not what you know, it's who you know."

Networking is the perfect example where this saying rings true. Successful business owners and managers invest a decent amount of time into networking as they are aware of the benefits created through these opportunities.

There are usually three main steps involved in successful networking:

1. Communicate with people you would be interested in networking with

2. Determine how the person/people you meet can help you now or in the future

3. Maintain contact with the person/people

"The best minute I spend is the one I invest in people"

Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson

Networks in relation to business are usually:

➢ A system of communication between people

➢ A method of connecting people from similar business disciplines

➢ A group of people with similar interests and knowledge that get together regularly

➢ Internal and external.

Networks within an organisation form a valuable and important part of the entire process relating to the systems and procedures in place.

Networks can include the following:

➢ A group of staff members internal to the organisation that work for the same team

➢ A group of staff members internal to the organisation that work within different departments

➢ A group of staff members from different offices throughout Australia or the world

➢ A group of people from the same industry that work in different companies that get together and exchange ideas or knowledge on a regular basis

➢ A group of people with common interests that get together on a regular basis

➢ Professional industry associations that are relevant to the job needs of people within that industry

➢ IT related information data systems

Managers who encourage and develop networks within their teams will find that employees will work better together and encourage and motivate each other to do well.

Networking activities should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure communication with others is always open, honest and staff members are finding out and sharing the latest information at all times.

By networking, staff may be able to find out the following:

➢ Latest technological advances from competitors

- Industry trends

- Continuous improvement process

- Government and regulatory activities

- Changing requirements of staff and customers

- Legislative issues and changes to their industry

- Cultural factors within the organisation that can be creating an impact

These issues are what could create change or impact on an organisation, its bottom line, staff turnover and motivation and anything else relative to the industry or organisation.

Managers and employees need to be aware of the benefits of networking, both within the organisation and external to the organisation. Managers should encourage staff to become members of industry bodies relating to their job roles or industry and then encourage attendance at some of the events relative to the networking groups.

Some of the benefits from an organisational perspective include:

- Staff will be familiar with others in the same job roles in other companies

- Staff members can be advised of latest changes in industry, technology, legislation or regulation

- Access to mentors and coaches in similar job roles

- Potential for partnership arrangements

Some networking strategies for staff and managers include:

- Attend seminars and conferences

- Become a member of an industry body

- Send out information about yourself or your organisation to others

- Join a social networking site

- Join a networking group

Attending seminars and conferences

This is a great opportunity for people with similar interests and backgrounds to meet and share ideas, knowledge and contacts.

Conferences range from day long to weeklong sessions. They usually involve attendees from similar industries getting together to listen to industry experts present papers, findings, give lectures, see trade displays or attend other social activities such as dinners.

Seminars are generally smaller and shorter meetings which can take place during breakfast, lunch or for just a few hours during the day or evening.

They are usually considered small business functions and may involve a member of industry discussing new concepts or ideas within the area of interest.

Whichever of these you choose to attend, ensure you have a good supply of business cards on hand in case you meet a lot of people you want to give your details to.

Become a member of an industry body

Industry bodies provide an ability to associate with a group that represents common interests among members.

When deciding which industry bodies to become a member of, you should consider what objectives you hope to achieve from your association.

In order to get the best value out of joining an industry association, you should consider some of the following:

> ➢ Are you able to attend some of the events they hold?
>
> ➢ Is the industry something that relates to your business?
>
> ➢ Do they offer free events?
>
> ➢ Is there a yearly conference you can participate in?
>
> ➢ What is the main demographic of the people who are members?
>
> ➢ How much does it cost to join?
>
> ➢ What kind of exposure will joining give you and your business?

Send out information about yourself or your organisation to others

This is a good way to get exposure and be known in the industry. You can send out regular newsletters, blogs or other comments, company brochures or anything else that may be of interest to members of other companies.

Join a social networking site

Social networking sites such as LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com.au) are becoming more popular. Studies are showing that they are the way of the future when it comes to employers looking to hire staff and one of the most popular networking tools around. If you want to increase sales or your exposure to other people in your industry, joining a networking site is a good starting point.

An interesting YouTube video depicts the statistics involved in social networking sites:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIFYPQjYhv8

Note that at time of publication this was accurate.

Join a networking group

Networking groups provide you with a chance to become a member and attend functions for less than non-member prices. Some networking groups are targeted at specific areas such as entrepreneurs, sales people, business professionals, young professionals etc.

They also offer an opportunity to attend networking sessions after work, during lunch or breakfast. A lot of them are now offering a speed networking service where you are introduced to a number of contacts in the time you attend. Take heaps of business cards.

Identify network opportunities

Networking opportunities can be varied and sometimes not as obvious as others. Something as simple as maintaining contact with someone, which in itself is considered networking, can also provide an opportunity to further network with others.

For example, how many times have you mentioned something to a colleague or friend in passing and they say "I know someone who can help with that"?

By making a conscious effort to stay in contact with people – to remember details about them such as birthdays, wives' names, children's names or hobbies etc. (keep notes if you need to) – you can make a better impression on them and they will be more receptive to helping you.

Some of the acquaintances you can make or maintain contact with include:

- ➢ Old classmates from schools or university

- ➢ People you attend training with

- ➢ Acquaintances from previous workplaces

- ➢ People you meet at sporting associations

- ➢ Clients or customers

- ➢ People you meet at conferences, seminars or trade fairs

- ➢ Parents from school associations

- ➢ Family and friends

- ➢ People you meet at the gym

- ➢ The local community

- ➢ People from local shops.

A network opportunity can present itself at any given time. Identifying these simply means you can maintain the circle of contacts you do have, while looking at other ways to branch out and increase your contact list within that.

You may not always see the potential benefits of having someone as a contact – you should treat every potential contact as someone who can benefit and who you can mutually help in the future.

People often don't realise that they network on an informal basis almost regularly. If a family member or friend needs a good mechanic or hairdresser and yours is worth the referral, you provide that information to them. The mechanic or hairdresser may not even realise that you would be a good networking source for them but the fact that they provide a good service makes them worth referring on.

Think of each meeting you have with someone as a networking opportunity. A real life example of this is:

Sally found herself in an elevator on the way to her dentist with Sarah, who was delivering an extraordinary bunch of native flowers. Sally introduced herself to Sarah and asked about the flowers as she felt they would make a great focal point in her office in the reception area.

Sally discovered that Sarah had just started a business where she delivers these flowers every week to companies as part of a sign-up service. Sally gave Sarah her business card and Sarah was thrilled to discover that Sally was an accountant. She had been looking to get some advice for her new business. They decided to offer each their services in return which worked out perfectly for both of them.

If you think of every meeting as an opportunity to network, you will be consciously aware of who can benefit from your services and how you can benefit from theirs.

When you do meet someone, record the information relevant to them somewhere handy. Usually, this means keeping a business card but also make sure to note down some important information relating to the meeting, such as if you discussed their interests, the child coming first in the local swimming competition or the fact that he and his wife take yearly trips to Italy. Every piece of information can help.

Find out:

> ➢ Where they work
>
> ➢ What they do
>
> ➢ What their company does
>
> ➢ Who they would associate with
>
> ➢ What skills and knowledge they have
>
> ➢ Whether they have access to other people or information that can help you

"Take a minute. Look at your goals.

Look at your performance.

See if your behaviour matches your goals."

Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson

4. Manage difficulties into positive outcomes

4.1 – Identify and analyse difficulties and take action to rectify the situation within the requirements of the organisation and relevant legislation

4.2 – Guide and support colleagues to resolve work difficulties

A lot of managers or staff members adopt an attitude of ignorance when it comes to situations that create or cause difficulties. This is not a good idea as often, when you ignore a situation, it can actually become worse.

Some of the reasons why these situations are usually ignored include:

➢ Lack of confidence from management in resolving situations

➢ Lack of training for staff members on how to handle difficult situations

➢ Some managers do not like confrontation

➢ Managers or staff members may be too busy to address a situation

➢ Managers may feel the situation is not that serious and resolution can wait

➢ Some managers may be worried that confronting the problem could make it worse

If managers or staff members are concerned about addressing situations for any of the above reasons, then it is likely that further training is required in these areas.

Further training could be provided around any of the following to help staff members to further develop their skills in resolving or addressing situations:

➢ Conflict resolution

➢ Supervisory skills

➢ Handling difficult people

➢ Leadership skills

➢ Managing conflict in the workplace

➢ Assertiveness and coaching skills

Any negative conflicts or situations should be managed immediately and appropriately as they can often increase in severity quite quickly.

It is these kinds of conflicts that create a negative organisational culture and then escalate out of control to end up creating ill feeling, negative vibes, lack of productivity or motivation in employees and, in some worst-case scenarios, law suits.

Where there are high levels of conflict in a workplace, it is likely the workplace itself is not functioning in an effective or productive manner.

Some situations which could be considered difficult and could create conflict include:

➢ Conflict between staff members that is not addressed immediately

➢ New technology implementation and staff members are not fully training in how to use it

➢ Under staffing creating the need for some staff members to work long hours

➢ Bullying or harassment in the workplace that is not addressed immediately

➢ Unclear goals and direction

➢ Personality issues

➢ Budget restraints

➢ Resource availability

As a direct result of the above mentioned situations, the following will therefore usually occur:

➢ Customer complaints will rise

➢ The organisation will undoubtedly lose customers

➢ Staff turnover will increase

➢ Staff will be less motivated to work

➢ Staff will no longer feel loyalty towards the organisation

➢ Staff will begin to operate in less ethical ways

➢ There will be increased conflict between other staff members and management

➢ Inconsistency in job role and job function definitions

➢ Staff members will not be working in alignment with mission and vision statements

Managers must learn to deal with conflict or difficult situations in an appropriate and fair manner to everyone involved.

They should ensure that they are behaving in an ethical manner and treating all staff members with respect and adhering to the relevant legislation and codes of conduct or procedures relating to the fair and equal treatment of all employees.

Once managers and employees can accept and understand that everyone reacts differently to different people, they can begin to manage conflicts and difficult situations from a perspective of understanding that it is not always personal, that sometimes people will simply not get along.

People may have conflict with others for a variety of reasons, and some of these reasons can include:

➢ When we meet someone, they may have been having a bad day which then sets the scene for how we react to them in future

➢ Someone may remind us of someone we dislike already

➢ We have a gut feeling that we just don't trust them

➢ We perceive them as unfriendly

An effective manager needs to ensure that they guide their staff members to help resolve any conflict or difficult situation as soon as is feasible to do so.

Some of the ways in which they can do this include:

➢ Providing coaching to staff

➢ Encourage staff members to act as mentors to other staff

➢ Further training

➢ Providing sessions on conflict resolution

➢ Offer relevant training on legislation that relates to fair dealings with others

➢ Provide regular meetings to encourage staff to communicate openly with each other

4.3 – Regularly review and improve workplace outcomes in consultation with relevant personnel

Workplace outcomes relate directly to productivity and output of work produced by staff members. Benchmarking and providing standards are a good way to measure whether or not work goals are being achieved and results are as expected.

Once a manager has a benchmark with which to set the standards, they can compare outputs based on any of the following:

➢ Quality of work produced

➢ Cost to produce the work

➢ How many units have been produced or what service is being offered

➢ The time it has taken to produce the units/ service that is being provided

Managers can develop a Performance Management Plan with their staff members to check on work output and quality. These can sometimes also be referred to Performance Reviews or Performance Appraisals.

A Performance Management Plan is a good way to check for consistency in the job functions and to ensure that team members are meeting the criteria related to their job roles, along with developing skills and increasing current knowledge.

Performance Management Plans (PMPs) or Performance Reviews are usually completed yearly and consist of performance objectives and development objectives which can be monitored by the staff member and their manager. The performance objectives can be measured by using key performance indicators.

Staff members are advised when they are not meeting the objectives based on a rating system. Most PMP programs will give the staff a considerable amount of input whereby they can rate themselves first and their manager will then agree or disagree, based on their performance.

Development objectives can be incorporated into the PMP so that staff members know what direction their career may be headed in and so that the Human Resources department or their manager can keep track of training requirements for the organisation for the year.

These reviews are an effective way for managers to be able to give staff members feedback on what they are doing right and what areas they may need to improve on. When a review is done properly, it can be a very powerful tool to help motivate staff to improve their work performance and encourage them to increase their career development.

Within any organisation there will be procedures relating to how employees are monitored in terms of work performance, and a Performance Management Plan or Review will be one of these. There are also continuous improvement practices that can be implemented to increase staff productivity and to encourage staff development. An organisation can implement a number of strategies to monitor the improvement of employees and management.

Continuous improvement is known as the process by which a company or organisation improves their practices and processes so, by consulting with staff members and management via Performance Management Plans or reviews, the process is highlighted and encouraged.

An effective continuous improvement process is one where everyone in the organisation gets involved. By involving all staff, they are given an opportunity to take ownership and responsibility for the continual improvement within the organisation.

Open and honest communication by way of transparency in dealings with staff is a good way to get feedback on the process itself and how well it is working within the organisation.

This is effectively one way in which management can empower team members and make them further accountable for the entire improvement process.

Staff members need to be aware of the processes, changes to procedures and any other changes that can impact their jobs or job roles, and can be advised by any of the following means:

➢ Company face-to-face meetings

➢ Emails

➢ Blogs

- ➢ Newsletters

- ➢ Regular conferences (e.g. quarterly sales conferences)

- ➢ Tele-conference or video conference

Feedback then needs to be sourced from relevant staff to ensure that performance is monitored and the information collected and collated is utilised to the best advantage of the organisation.

Feedback from staff and managers can be obtained in any of the following ways:

- ➢ Questionnaires

- ➢ Surveys

- ➢ Anonymous staff surveys

- ➢ General feedback forms

- ➢ Suggestion boxes

- ➢ Brainstorming sessions

- ➢ Meetings

It is important to ensure that staff members feel valued and their ideas are validated during the feedback process.

Brainstorming sessions should validate all ideas presented and include everyone's input to ensure management receives an accurate assessment of the monitored outcomes and performance.

4.4 – Manage poor work performance within the organisation's processes

4.5 – Manage conflict constructively within the organisation's processes

When employees are not working to the standards expected by the company, it could be for a number of reasons. An effective manager should be investigating these reasons and identifying how they can best manage the conflict or difficult situation as discussed earlier in this unit.

Some of the reasons why an employee may not be working to the standards expected can include:

- ➢ Lack of job knowledge

- ➢ Lack of confidence in their ability to perform their job

- ➢ Personal issues at home

- ➢ Personal issues in the workplace

- ➢ Conflict with other staff members

- ➢ Conflict with management

➢ Financial problems

➢ Drug and alcohol or gambling problems

➢ Lack of job security can be causing stress

➢ Divorce or illness

➢ Inability to cope with job stress

➢ Lack of resources to get the job done

➢ Lack of interest in getting the job done

➢ Low self-esteem

➢ The organisational values may not be in line with their values

When any of the abovementioned issues are present in the workplace or with an employee, a manager needs to take necessary action to ensure they are identifying what specifically is going on and how they can best help the employee to manage the issues that are confronting them.

If it is a personal issue that is out of the control of the manager, then perhaps the employee can be given some time off work, leave without pay, take some annual leave, or be referred to a counselling service or anther specialist service that can help. A lot of organisations offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), where employees can utilise free counselling if required.

If the issue is work related, the manager needs to take immediate action to attempt to rectify the problem to prevent it from escalating out of control or becoming worse, as identified earlier in this unit.

Usually the very act of conducting a Performance Management Plan can assist in the resolution of some of these issues. However, sometimes it requires a more careful or balanced approach to ensure that the situation is dealt with in an appropriate manner that is still in line with relevant legislation and ensures the staff member is treated with respect, in a fair and just manner.

Managers have a responsibility to their staff to make sure that:

➢ Issues that need resolution can be resolved in a confidential and appropriate manner

➢ Support services are available if and when required

➢ They offer performance counselling to their staff when appropriate

➢ They detect any issues and stop or control them before they get out of hand

➢ They are fair when dealing with situations related to their staff, regardless of personal opinions or personality clashes

➢ They agree on future actions with staff members once a control measure has been put into place

Some of the ways in which a manager can offer performance counselling to staff include:

- ➢ Maintaining confidentiality at all times

- ➢ Performance manage the staff member

- ➢ Offer to provide an independent person to sit in when discussing the issues, so that the staff member does not feel targeted and feels they are supported by a person of their choice

- ➢ Offer to provide time off without pay or annual leave if appropriate

- ➢ Document meeting discussions

- ➢ Follow up on all conversations and meetings

- ➢ Transfer the staff member to another team or department if necessary/viable

- ➢ Refer to senior management or take disciplinary action, if required

There are a number of laws and legislation that relate directly to how staff members need to be performance managed in each state within Australia. Managers should be familiar with the processes and procedures relating to their state prior to undertaking disciplinary action.