

SkillBott

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS MODULE

Interpersonal Skills (IP) are needed for every facet of your career. From the interview for your first job to your speech at your retirement party—IP is the common denominator for nearly all successful employees (Roper, 2005). In fact, research has found that as many as 80% of “first job” college grads who are fired during their first year of work are let go because they don’t have adequate interpersonal skills and cannot get along with co-workers (NACE, 2000). IP isn’t only useful at work, it is critical for life skills as well. Having fulfilling friendships or relationships with family require IP, and IP always comes in handy in the classroom or working with groups of people (Polzer, 2002). That is what makes our Interpersonal Skills Module so valuable. It is the opportunity for you to gain life altering skills that transfer to all areas of your relationships with others!

The Interpersonal Skills Module in the SkillBott Program was designed to meet the expectations of employers from ANY industry—as well as to arm our learners with the tools they need to get employed, stay employed and enjoy a prosperous career.

Our lessons and activities were developed to ensure that our learners would experience true-to-life situations that elicit the interpersonal skills that employers expect and demand. In addition, we formulated a sequence of high-powered topics that begin with the fundamentals for success and culminate with the acquisition of skills that exceed expectations.

Having a good attitude is critical to workplace longevity and IP skills are the required ingredient. In the first lesson, our learners discover that attitude affects every aspect of your job and career. Learning to adjust one’s attitude is not difficult or impossible—it simply takes a few IP skills to do it. Without giving away the contents of the entire lesson, we can tell you that a good attitude in the workplace makes a huge impression on co-workers and employers alike. Our learners take stock of their overall “attitude” at work. Having the right attitude about taking on extra work that the boss has given you or having confidence in being able to complete a difficult assignment is all about being in the right frame of mind. So, our learners figure out if they need an attitude overhaul or just a slight tune-up as they are guided through the appropriate and expected attitudes necessary for on the job success.

As a follow up to developing a good attitude, our students are guided through experiential activities that teach them the meaning of arrogance in the workplace and how it affects everyone. Arrogance is not pretty and it is difficult to tolerate in the workplace. Our students not only learn what it is, but how to avoid having an arrogant attitude and how to deal with it in others.

In our cultural sensitivity lesson, learning how to be sensitive to the cultural (religious, nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc.) needs of others in the workplace is taught in thorough detail. Learning to be culturally sensitive is coupled with understanding how to exhibit cultural awareness in the workplace. Our learners will understand how cultural awareness at work helps everyone get along on an interpersonal level. One exercise addresses whether certain questions are inappropriate from a cultural standpoint, helping our learners know when they are about to “cross the line.” Then, we take it one step further by providing workplace scenarios that bring to life real-world instances where an awareness

of various cultures will/can improve interpersonal relationships with co-workers and supervisors.

In some instances, it takes resourcefulness, ingenuity and an ability to motivate others in order to turn a situation around for the better. For the person with high IP skills, if an opportunity does not exist, he/she will create an opportunity. He/she will recognize and utilize the talents of others in his/her group and will motivate them to "make something out of nothing," which happens to be the title of another lesson in this module. Our learners are taught how to use IP skills to do more with less, pool resources of others, and work within a variety of group dynamics under realistic, on the job encumbrances and frustrations.

Our learners explore how the corporate culture works in our lesson called Corporate Cultures: Learning How to Fit In. In these exercises, our learners investigate the idiosyncrasies and sometime esoteric operations found behind the scenes in the corporate world. They explore cultures within cultures which include operational systems in departments. They learn the cultural importance of a company's rules and employee expectations, as well as why attendance at a company picnic just might be an important part of fitting into the organizational culture.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your IP skills just aren't working and you are having a conflict or disagreement with someone at work? Perhaps one of the most powerful IP skills in the history of humankind is covered in detail in our next lesson, The Art of Compromising. Yes, the IP skill of compromising with others is probably as valuable to a business person as an MBA. People who know how to compromise and can teach others to do the same are very successful indeed. This is because compromising people argue less, are more productive, have higher morale, and can work together in teams with little effort—a boss's dream to say the least!

One of the most critical skills that any employee will face is customer service. Not only your job, but the jobs of your co-workers, supervisors and managers will often hinge on how you interact with the public. Customer service is the most visible face of a company and often determines if others are willing to continue doing business with you. Whether it is on the phone, in person or via email, interaction with customers, clients, and competitors reflects the integrity and attitude of a whole company. This two-part lesson on customer service is a "must have" regardless of the field one seeks to enter.

References:

1. Title: Develop Interpersonal Skills to Better Manage Employee Relations.

Author: Roper, Greg

Journal Citation: *Career Human Resources Magazine*

Publication Year: May, 2005

2. Title: Soft Skills at Work

Author: Collins, Mimi, Editor

Journal Citation: *National Association of Colleges and Employers, JOBWEB Online*

Publication Year: April, 2000

3. Title: Capitalizing on Diversity: Interpersonal Congruence in Small Work Groups

Author: Polzer, Jeffery

Journal Citation: *Administrative Science Quarterly*

Publication Year: June, 2002

