ORAL COMMUNICATION

1. Some basics about oral communication

The eBook you are browsing focuses on oral communication in a professional context. It is a daily and familiar activity (think about the discussions that you may have about a particular file, phone calls you make each day, conversations in the cafeteria or your contributions at meetings).

Yet, this activity requires the implementation of a certain number of core competencies including:

- the ability to clearly **structure** your thoughts so as to express them effectively;

- the ability to stay mindful of your **objectives** that you are following when communicating with others (for example: to get more information, giving information or instructions, working together on a problem, showing interest in others, etc.);

- the ability to react quickly, in a conversational mode, in order to **adapt** to the responses of your interlocutor;

- the ability to **listen** to your interlocutor, ask him/her relevant questions to help him/her clarify his/her thoughts;

- the ability to **control your emotions** during the communication process.

This eBook is not only designed as a support for the seminar proposed by the European School of Administration (http://www.europa.eu/eusa), but also as a self-learning tool that you may use anytime and even independently from the seminar. Therefore, you will find a number of elements (theories, models, videos, lectures, exercises) that will allow you to develop your skills to communicate more effectively and also to select your communication style.

Generally speaking, in order to improve your communication skills we recommend that you:

- leave your comfort zone (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jinna-yang/8-reasons-why-you-need-to-get-out-of-yourcomfort-zone_b_8808360.html?utm_hp_ref=healthy-living) to reach your learning zone;

- take seminars;

- ask for feedback from a person you trust;
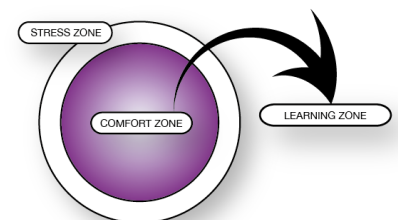
- get some coaching;
- if you have a chance, take a video of yourself when you are speaking;

- read this eBook and do the recommended exercises.

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In this first chapter, we will go through the basics of oral communication with you. It is not about an exact science here, but rather about an area that we may discover by taking small steps, each of which is likely to help us improve our skills.

1.1   The "magical square" or the principles of good communication

The first step to increase our chances of being understood and to understand others is perhaps to try to improve our own awareness of the 4 main principles of communication:

1. **The objectives of communication**

    - If we put aside the non-verbal and 'spontaneous' dimensions of communication (just by my posture or by the way I look at others, I communicate something to others, sometimes even unintentionally.), communication in the professional context is often linked to specific objectives.
    - To what extent am I really aware of these objectives?
    - In addition to short-term goals (e.g. to obtain some kind of information), my communication is also linked to long-term goals (e.g. to develop or maintain a good relationship, to give the impression of being a reliable person and someone with confidence in himself, etc.). To what extent am I conscious of these broader goals?

2. **Self**

    - How do I feel when I have to communicate?
    - Am I aware of my particular strengths or weaknesses? (e.g. "I find myself very introverted."; "I am afraid of conflicts."; "I get irritated very quickly."; "I am very clear when I speak."; "I am very considerate towards others and I know how to listen.")
    - What do you do with this information about yourself?

3. **The interlocutor(s)**

    - Do I sufficiently pay attention in order to adapt my way of communication with the person or persons with whom I am speaking? Am I able to take into account what interests them, the way they would like to be addressed, etc.?
    - One might call this "the meaning of diplomacy": We do not communicate the same way to our children, our partner or our boss.
   - Am I relevant when addressing another person?

4. **The context**

    - Are there particular implications linked to the professional context (codes, ways of addressing others, etc.)?
    - Do we find ourselves in a stressful situation? A reflective situation?
    - Does the context call for a more familiar approach, or, on the contrary, does it need a certain amount of formality?

👫 Exercise:

What could you say about the 4 dimensions of the "magical square" (the objective, myself, the interlocutor, the context) if you think back about a conversation you experienced at work? Do you believe that there were some elements to which you were not sufficiently attentive?

The diagram below shows that the context is comprised of a large number of dimensions: spatial, temporal, identity, rules, relational, positions (primarily hierarchical) and sensory (light, temperature, noise, etc.).
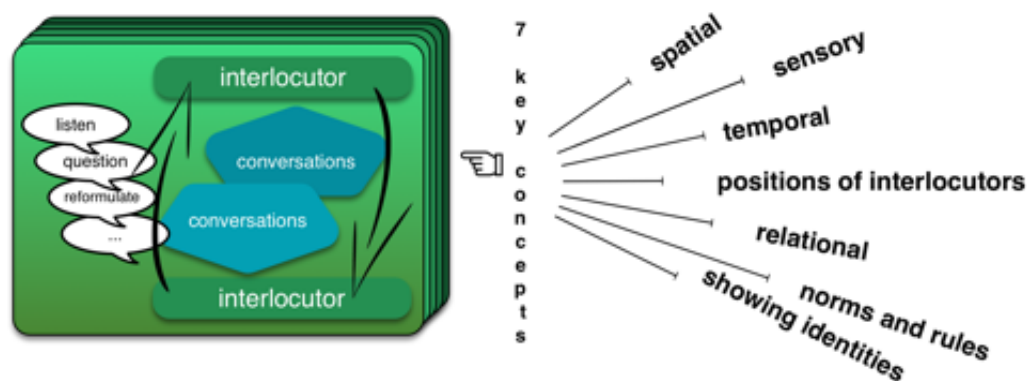
Communication is not a process produced in a vacuum or in an objective physical environment. Each interaction takes place in a **multifactorial context** in which one of the factors can, by itself, determine the outcome of the interaction or, at least, the direction it will take. For example, if shouting out for joy at the doctor's office to indicate that we are happy (that our blood tests are good) is perceived inappropriate, then shouting out at a soccer game, on the other hand, to show one's happiness about a scored goal is perfectly normal. The context of the **interdependent factors** in which the communication took place, dictates the way in which a message is formulated. Donnell King mentions 5 contextual and interdependent factors that play a decisive role in the verbal or non-verbal formulation and understanding of a message:

1. **The psychological context**

   In which psychological states do we find the protagonists of the interaction? What are their beliefs, their values, their desires, their personalities, their ages? Moreover, our psychological contexts can vary from one situation to another and from one moment to another.

2. **The relational context**

   The way in which each protagonist defines the relationship is an important parameter. This factor can even change during the course of interaction and can be redefined how this interaction will evolve.

3. **The situational context**

   The way we interact and the content of the messages we exchange in a meeting are different from our exchanges at the cafeteria or if we meet our adversaries in a martial arts room.

4. **The environmental context**

   This context makes reference to physical characteristics of places where we meet and interact. The decorations, the level and kind of background noise (music, crowd, silence, etc.), the geographical place, the temperature, the season, the time of day or night.

5. **The cultural context**

   All of the acquired behaviours and rules that influence our behaviours intervene in an interaction. Many of these factors are unconscious such as the notion of interpersonal distance or the duration of eye contact.

"Why did you not tell me what was bothering you!"

☑ Links with my work?

Analyse an interaction that you had this week at your workplace according to the physical, sensorial, psychological contexts.

🏋 Exercise:

What are the specific aspects and the challenges of communication in the European Institutions?

Going deeper...

- This scene illustrates how communication can become totally absurde. (EN) (https://www.facebook.com/474191262681124/videos/479892732110977/?theater)

1.2   Non-verbal and "spontaneous" dimensions of oral communication

In this introductory chapter, it is also important to remember that oral communication is not only done through words. Body posture, voice intonation and the exchange of glances are important elements of communication as well. They are, in general, dimensions of which we are unaware, that we master less easily and appear therefore to be more "spontaneous".

Did you know that in a case of discrepancy between words said and the body language or the tone of voice (e.g. words of comfort said in a tone and in a posture showing reproach or criticism) are, in general, the non-verbal elements that your interlocutor will retain. (EN) (http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/presentation-myths/research-nonverbal-communication/).

Exercise:

Use gestures to get your message across better.

Work with a partner:

Which gestures could one make to support the following statements?

1. "Welcome to Brussels and to the EUSA."
2. "First of all, we will examine the problem we are facing; secondly, I will outline this problem and thirdly, we will look at the best solution for this situation."
3. "We must keep costs down in order to be more efficient."
4. "These two parts join at an angle, making a kind of corner."
5. "They are always making new rules and the result is that our situation is becoming more difficult."
6. "This matter is finished. We do want to hear about it any more."
7. "And then, it opens very slowly like a flower and blossoms."
8. "So, what are the advantages"?

Going deeper...

- Moreover, if you could choose not to speak, you could not adopt a perfect neutral body posture. Even if you remained silent, in certain cases (for example if someone asked you a question or if someone enters a rooms), you often send a combination of messages. This is what Paul Watzlawick, a well-known communication specialist, used to say "one cannot not communicate". (http://www.euromediaawards.eu/category/euromedia-awards-2011/specialawards-2011/).

- Watch this clip about the secret world of body language. (EN 1h30') (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kY1K_IefjSA).

- Here you will find 10 non-verbal messages (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTE0G9amZNk) that may be misinterpreted in a multicultural communication.

1.3 The influence of the perceptions of ourselves and of others

Of course the way we communicate orally is also influenced by the perception we generally have of others.

Thus, for example, transactional analysis (http://www.businessballs.com/transact.htm), provides us with a model that rests on the fundamental perception we have of ourselves (I am "OK". / I am not "OK".) and of others (I am "OK". / I am not "OK".). By combining these two dimensions, we arrive at what that this model calls our "positions about life". (http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/ok_not-ok.htm).

the joint degree of esteem that I have of myself and of another person. It is the result of a personal "choice" and does not depend on others, even if, in each of these situations experience, we can be invited to have another position.

Generally speaking, communicating from a precise life position can have the following impact:

- **To communicate in a OK / OK** position is to demonstrate assertiveness, optimism and confidence in order to create synergy;

- **To communicate in a OK / not OK** position is to communicate with arrogance or even aggressiveness and seeks to impose one's point of view;

- **To communicate in a not OK / OK** position is lacking in confidence in oneself, playing the loser, forgetting to put forward what is important for oneself and in the end having an attitude of submission;

- **To communicate in a not OK / not OK** position is to put oneself in a position of abandonment, to not believe in the point of communication, to let events just take place and to put an end as quickly as possible to communication out of lack of interest.

Exercise:

This on line test on the website www.analyse-transactionnelle.com (FR) (http://www.analyse-transactionnelle.com/Positions/Positions.php)will show you your life positions according to TA. This website proposes also other tests under the section test yourself (FR) (http://www.analyse-transactionnelle.com/menutests.php).

Going deeper...

- TEST (http://www.transactional-analysis.info/Positions/Positions.php).

- Here is a a clip filmed by Coca-Cola that shows the power of sterotypes: (EN) (http://www.cci.com.tr/en/press-room/News/coca-cola-fights-stereotypes-this-ramadan/).

- « Oui, mais » (FR) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbcrYJrbFuc)is a French movie which illustrate the relational game concept.

- To help you better understand the dramatic triangle (EN) (http://www.karpmandramatriangle.com/)

1.4 The influence of our filters and our presuppositions

Finally, the way we communicate is also influenced by a large number of "filters" and inherited automatisms of our behaviours, experiences and education.

These automatic mechanisms allow us to adapt quickly to situations we face (being able to immediately select the really important information to understand right away why someone tells us one thing or another and to draw lessons that can be useful later on.)

Unfortunately these same mechanisms also lead us, more often than we would like, to make mistakes and jump to final conclusions too quickly. Therefore, it is advisable, at times, to take time and be more attentive to the situation and take the needed distance in order to better understand how these mechanisms influence us.

✍ Links with my work?

With your close colleagues in mind, describe the hasty conclusions you have made about them.

Going deeper...

- Here is an article which focuses on the principles of interpersonal communication: (EN) (http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/principles-communication.html).

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2. Knowing and varying communication styles

Spontaneously we use a variety of communication styles. In the same family, two brothers may have completely different communication styles.

A question, a way of doing something or the tone of voice can have an impact on a conversation or even on a relationship.

Taking this can help us to vary and adapt communication styles in order to:

• discover one's own spontaneous communication style;

• better identify communication styles of the members of your particular environment;

• adapt your communication style in order to get your messages across better.

Adapting your communication styles does not obviously imply giving up being yourself, changing your personality deeply or even more importantly that you are lacking in authenticity in your relationships.

Rather it is to use the best communication channel you have, just as you are, so that your interlocutor understands and accepts the message.

2.1 Do "extraverts" communicate better?

A first familiar dimension, linked to the communication style, is, without a doubt, that of introversion and extraversion. There are many definitions of these terms. One can, for example, recall the definition from MBTI, a psychometric tool commonly used in business and government.

The introvert	The extravert
Introverts focus their energy on their interior and it interacts strongly with their thoughts, their perceptions and reactions. Introverts seem to be reserved, discreet.	Extraverts project and direct their energy towards people and things on the outside. Extraverts are naturally more active, expressive and sociable.
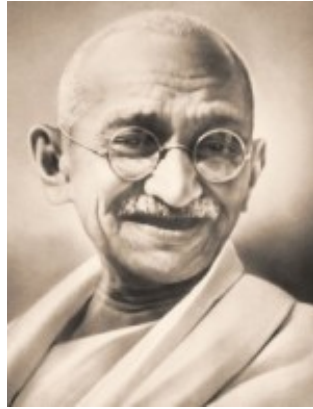
The question often arises whether extraverts are inherently better communicators than introverts. Susan Cain (https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts)(see this TED talk) (EN), in her book Silence, she shows us the many ideas circulating about introverts and that they can be excellent communicators.

It may be recalled, for example, that Bill Gates, Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi and many well-known leaders or speakers were introverts. Here is some key information on introverts. (EN) (http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-reasons-why-introverts-are-incrediblyattractive-people-2.html).

The abilities that introverts have to take time to analyse a situation, develop their messages, reflect on the impact they could have on others are, for example, more than compensate for their apparent reserve.

✔️ Links with my work?

In your workplace, how are extraverts and introverts perceived?

🏋️ Exercise:

Watch carefully this video from the film Les émotifs anonymes (FR) (http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19148856&cfilm=129640.html) and give an interpretation on what the characters don't say to each other.

Going deeper...

- You will discover a presentation by Susan Cain (https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts) on the platform TEDTalk (EN)

- Read Susan Cain's book "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that can't Stop Talking and check out her website (http://www.quietrev.com/) for further information: (EN)
- OLSEN LANEY, Marti, *Introverti et heureux*, Paris, Les Editions de l'Homme, 2005. (FR)
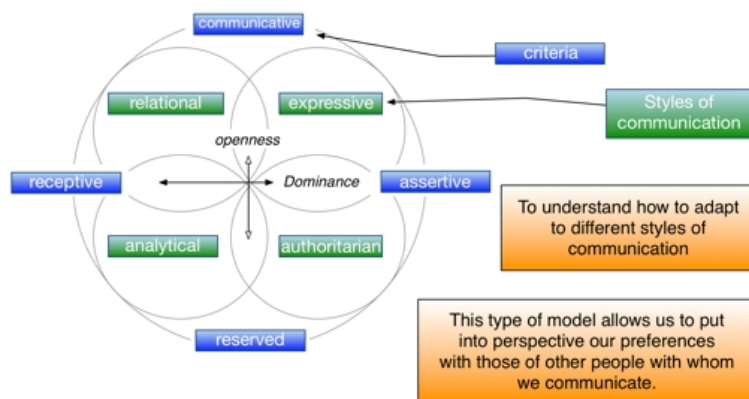
2.2   Better understand your communication preferences

Beyond the dimension introversion/extraversion, there are different models to understand communication styles we use most often.

We propose the test below which explores your preferences. (see exercise section below)

Based on the social styles discussed in Larry Wilson's "The Social Styles Handbook" (http://www.novavistapub.com/uploads/Social%20Styles.pdf) :

- the **degree of openness** towards others (communicative or reactive /reserved);

- the **proportion of dominance** (receptive / assertive).

You can do the test here that will help you to better understand what is your comfort zone and your predominant communication style. However, be careful, this is only an indication.

Exercise:

Instructions:

The Communication Styles Inventory can be used to determine the style of influence you and others have. The inventory is comprised of four groups of descriptive words with fifteen rows of four words each.

Keeping yourself in mind, select 2 words which best describe you in each of the 15 lines of the table below. It will be used in the course, so please bring it with you. You may calculate your personal results and discover the model.

	W	**X**	**Y**	**Z**
1	☐ Task-oriented	☐ Inspiring	☐ People-oriented	☐ Calm
2	☐ Formal	☐ Risk-taker	☐ Warm	☐ Careful
3	☐ Self-controlled	☐ Competitive	☐ Outgoing	☐ Adaptable
4	☐ Serious	☐ Expressive	☐ Playful	☐ Ambitious
5	☐ Industrious	☐ Active	☐ Sociable	☐ Gentle
6	☐ Logical	☐ Dominant	☐ Amical	☐ Trusting
7	☐ Systematic	☐ Confident	☐ Spontaneous	☐ Modest
8	☐ Organised	☐ Persuasive	☐ Freewheeling	☐ Reasonable
9	☐ Efficient	☐ Independent	☐ Idealistic	☐ Co-operative
10	☐ Practical	☐ Extraverted	☐ Creative	☐ Profound
11	☐ Diligent	☐ Enthusiastic	☐ Full of drive	☐ Very helpful
12	☐ Thorough	☐ Assertive	☐ Sensitive	☐ Tactful
13	☐ Deliberate	☐ Masterful	☐ Compassionate	☐ Receptive
14	☐ Detail-oriented	☐ Emphatic	☐ Easy-going	☐ Consistent
15	☐ Productive	☐ Urgent	☐ Responsive	☐ Patient

Calcuate the results

Authoritative	**Analytical**	**Relational**	**Expressive**

☐	☐	☐	☐
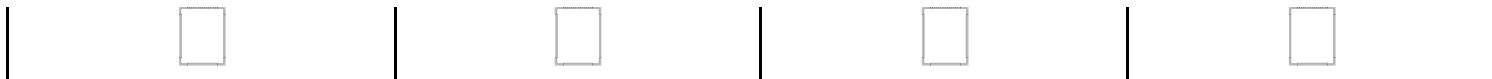
In order to help you interpret your results, please find below a table which summarises the characteristics of each style:

Authoritative	Analytical	Relational	Expressive
•structure •competitive •objective-oriented •affirm his point of view •serious •looking for results •serious and confident **How to motivate them?** Agree on the goals and objectives to be reached. Give them challenges and responabilities Do not lose time.	• patient • meticulous • more reserved • first the facts • attentive to the process • precise **How to motivate them?** Give them precise details and information. Communicate frequently with them, especially in periods of change. Give them time to decide. Be consequential.	• warm and laid back • focused on people • knows how to grab opportunities • sensitive • discerning • empathetic **How to motivate them?** Get them involved. Give them your support. Spend time with them. Give them positive feedback.	• not very empathetic • ready to defend a cause or take advantage of a situation • dynamic • enthusiastic and energetic • interested in ideas and concepts **How to motivate them?** Listen to their ideas. Show them your appreciation. Let them intervene in the name of the group. Stimulate them.

Please note that it is not about your only style. Being aware of your main personal style and your preferences and the style of the people around you will help you to adapt your communication with the goal of building relationships more easily and achieving your results effortlessly.

✔ Links with my work?

One can ask the question if certain communication styles are more or less represented in work environments. In general during our seminars, we have observed that the profiles Analytical and Relational seem to be more numerous among our participants. Does this mean that these styles are overrepresented in the Institutions? It obviously remains to be confirmed.

If that were the case, several factors such as bias at the time of recruitment or the influence of the work environment can explain the predominance of certain styles.

2.3 And the cultural dimension?

Cultural differences can also have an impact on the way we communicate, although there are so many nuances and exceptions. Thus, it is difficult or impossible to make generalisations.

However, we note a series of elements that will vary from culture to culture.

Among them we can note, e.g.:

- interruptions in conversations (Is it allowed or not to speak at the same time as another person?);
- the tone and volume of voice (speaking quickly or slowly, to speak up or softly);
- explicit or implicit style (long polite forms, "understatement");
- eye contact (looking or not looking into someone's eyes);
- the physical distance between people;
- showing disapproval (is one going to say "no" or "yes, but") ;
- touch (physical contact such as putting a hand on someone's shoulder. Is it acceptable, and even expected?);
- expressing emotions;
- greetings;
- titles and names;
- movements.

Going deeper...

We recommend you consider the work of three specialists from the multicultural world:

- Edward T. Hall (EN)
  (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_T._Hall);
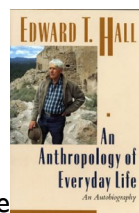
- Or the Milton Bennett
  (http://www.albany.edu/ssw/efc/pdf/Module%201_Be   odel%20Poster.pdf)Model
  of Cultural Competency And his institute
  website; (http://www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?
  menu1=2&menu2=3)

- Geert Hofstede (EN) (http://geert-hofstede.com/geert-hofstede.html);
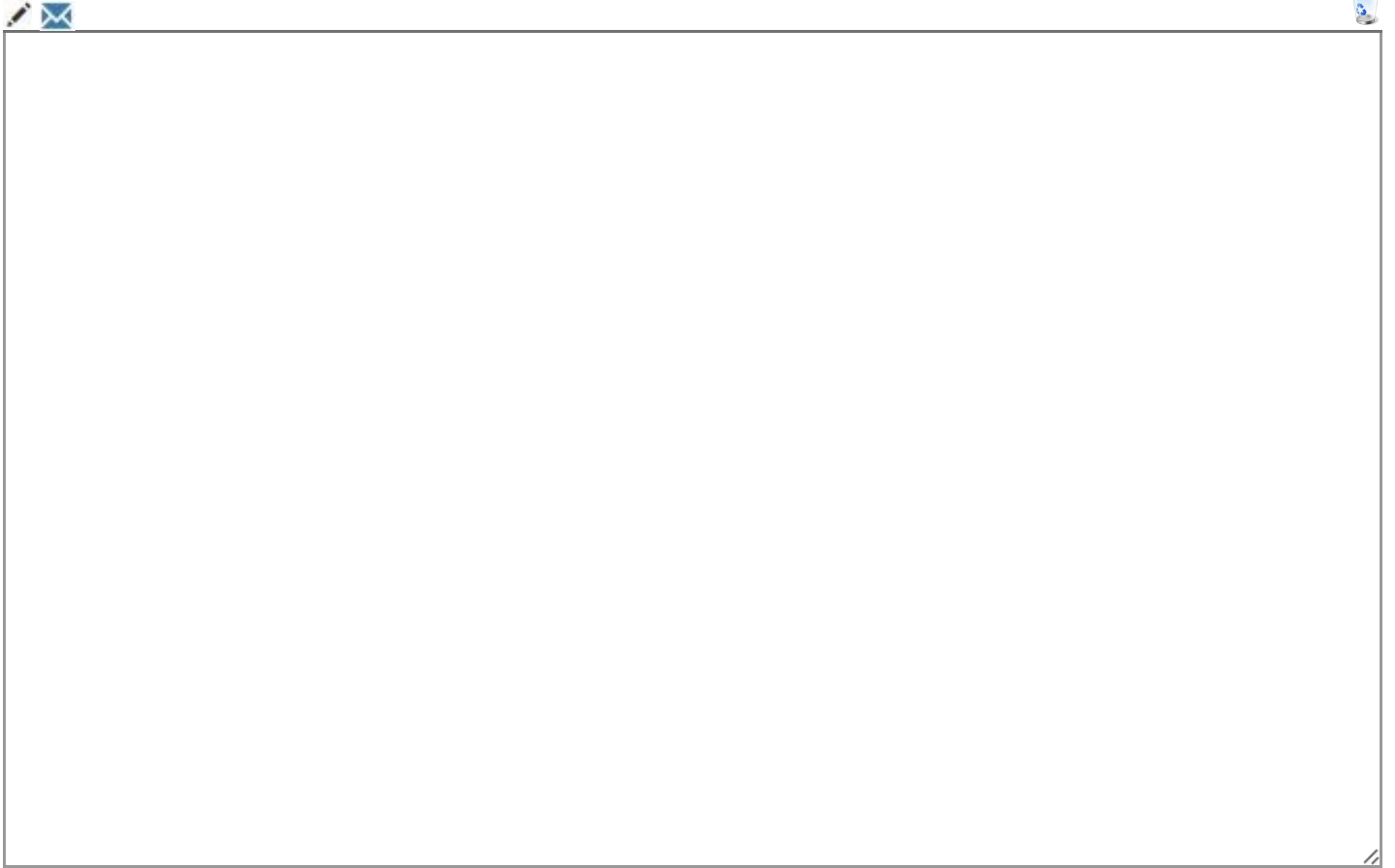
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3. Communicating with assertiveness

3.1 What is assertiveness?

Assertiveness or "exhibiting assertive behaviour" is the ability to respect ourselves, all the while respecting others. It is an attitude, but it is also a way to communicate. It is the art of expressing yourself or doing things without fear and having your emotions aligned.

"The term "assertiveness" was initiated by Andrew Salter, a New York psychologist in the first half of the last century. Assertiveness is defined as an attitude that allows a person to affirm himself, while still respecting others. It is about respecting oneself by speaking directly, "short and sweet", but still with consideration. This leads to decreased personal stress, does not evoke stress for others and increases effectiveness in the majority of interpersonal interactions. This attitude is especially important in all life situations, but it is especially crucial in all situations of professional interactions and, in particular, in management (an area where it is often ignored).

The skills linked to assertiveness are:

- to respect and to be respected;

- develop a good internal self-assurance;

- to identify one's most frequent attitudes;

- to know how to deal with passive, agressive and manipulative behaviour;

- to communicate effectively.

This does not necessarily exclude the fact of getting angry or being quiet at the right moment. In fact, one can be extremely assertive and still silent when a colleague expresses his or her dissatisfaction sharply not out of shyness or fear of wrath of the other person, but because one believes that one will not be heard at that particular time.

Assertiveness is, in some way, making the conscious choice to express (or not) what you want.

3.2 The four attitudes

One can find one's dominant attitude according to the type of attitude that we adopt most frequently. Depending on the person, we can react in very different ways.

We generally distinguish 4 types of attitudes:

1. **Aggressiveness of** "hedgehog" behaviour

   It is an attitude of dominance that disregards the dialogue. An aggressive person can have more than average confidence in himself. His will to dominate will not leave much room for others and can result, in an extreme case, in some degree of contempt.

   His behaviour can manifest a tendency to be authoritarian, criticize, rebuke or strongly shake someone up.

2. **Passiveness** or "doormat" behaviour

   This is an attitude of avoidance, actively or passively, consciously or unconsciously. A passive person often has a below than average confidence in himself. He reacts in fear of others: a fear of expressing one's thoughts, of being rejected or hurt. He is easily influenced and tends to be exploited or sees himself as a victim.

   His behaviour manifests in hesitation, complaints, a false "yes", postponement of problems or silence.

3. **Manipulation**

   To manipulate is to not state things, nor be clear, about one's objectives or state one objective yet follow another one. A manipulative person uses the indirect voice to get where he wants to be; his behaviour is often calculated. To this end this type of person often uses flattery or seduction and can also destabilise the other person by devaluating the person. To deliberately make a person "lose face" by getting scoffers to support him is a classical attitude of manipulation. Likewise, exaggeration of information and characterisations or repetitions of terror-struck information are also ways to be manipulative.

   The behaviour of the manipulator is characterised by an unclear, ambiguous or contradictory manner. However, numerous people develop attitudes of manipulation without even realising it.

4. **Assertiveness**

   This person tends to take a rightful place in society to respect and defend his values while respecting others. His behaviour is characterised by alternating between openly and honestly expressing his views and listening to others.

   Assertiveness is, of course, the most recommended approach, but other attitudes may also be necessary and effective:

   - passiveness when there is a lack of time or the subject is not that important.

   - aggressiveness in times of danger, to help someone.

• manipulation to guide a person, a child.

The secret of communication is to have the "right dose of the right cocktail".

3.3 Knowing when to say NO

Saying "NO" is a particularly difficult thing for some people, and often you have to be very assertive to do so. So in order to help you, Sabine Finzi proposes a model made up of four steps. These steps are presented as 4 levels. At each step, we encounter a different obstacle that we will analyse together.

On the one hand, remember that saying YES can be an extremely valid solution.
Saying YES, but by negotiating, by affirming one's hesitation, expressing one's expectations may be another way to manage communication and relationships.

Step I: What is my decision?

Often when we fail to say no, there are two opposing values which are dear to us. For example, on the one hand, I want to please and be recognised as someone who is helpful and, on the other hand, I want to be able to make decisions about the use of my time and have my "space" respected. In this case, the first person with whom I have to negotiate is myself.

During this brief period of time, when you are in the midst of negotiating with yourself, you reflect, your body language is clear and it is often the moment when the person in front of you sees you hesitating and takes advantage of the situation.

- **A possible solution:** Ask for some time to reflect. You are not always obligated to respond immediately. You can delay the response to the interlocutor by 10 minutes, two days or a week. Give yourself the necessary time to reflect in order not to give a hasty response that you may regret. Don't hesitate to say: "Before giving you a final answer I have to verify that".

Step II: Say NO

According to their culture, family culture or another culture, some people may experience real discomfort with the idea of saying NO. They use real verbal "contortions". "Oh! This seems difficult for me" or "I am not completely certain I can". Refusals, if they seem obvious for some, are totally unheard of for other.

- **A possible solution:** Our recommendation here is to clearly state what the situation is. Being clear does

not mean being brutal. A "no" can be said calmly and without any aggressiveness.

Step III: The pitfall of justification

The first instinct you may have when you should say "no" is to give as many reasons as possible to show how your position is justified. Moreover, you may have noticed that the more justifications you make, the more your interlocutor seeks to resolve what is impeding you to help him.

For example:

> - John: "Can you lend me your car tomorrow?"
> - You: "It will be difficult. I need to pick up my mother tomorrow morning."
> - John: "If you like we can go together."

This last proposition suits you and you solve the problem. On the contrary, it is an excuse to get rid of the request he made. You have not won anything.

- **A possible solution:** Here we advise you to avoid adapting your justifications. This not only puts you in an uncomfortable situation but, moreover, puts the relationship in danger. According to the context, you will decide to give all or nothing, be firm in formulating things and quickly move on to the next step.

Step IV: Help someone to solve his problem or use empathy

Too often one leaves another person in the lurch whereas by giving him time, in this step, one may probably be able to preserve the relationship.

- **A possible solution:** "I do not want to lend you my car. On the other hand, I have some taxi vouchers to give you. I can let you know how to get there as quickly as possible. I can come and pick you up."
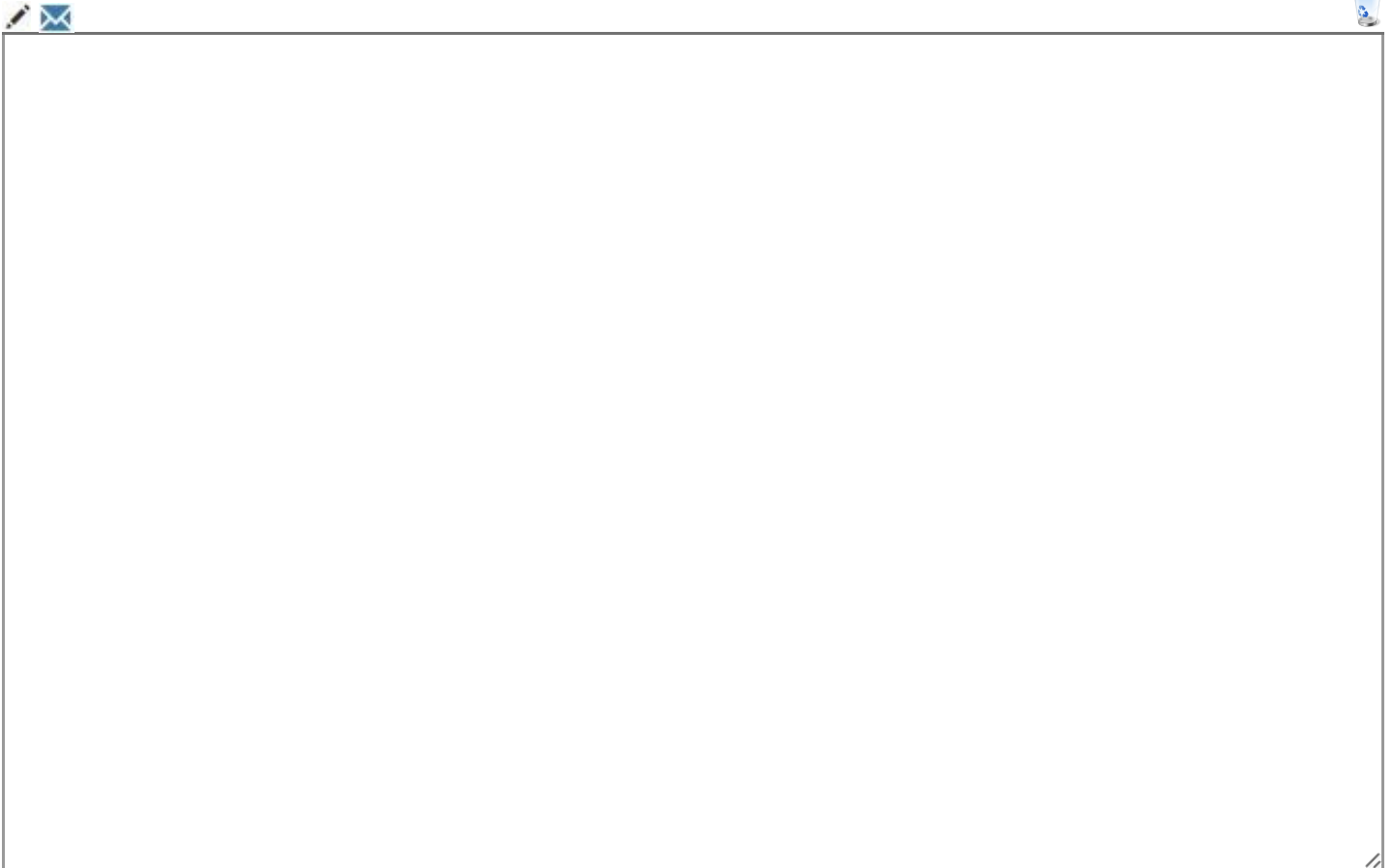
✒ Links with my work?

Do you recall a colleague who said "no" with assertiveness? Where was this? How did the conversation take place? What attitude did this person have?

Going deeper...

- Kenny Nguyen asks us to reflect on the meaning of the word NO: (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtPRrn5nwAo)
- An article that proposes 8 reasons to leave one's comfort zone: (EN) (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jinna-yang/8-reasons-why-you-need-to-get-out-of-yourcomfort- zone_b_8808360.html?utm_hp_ref=healthy-living)
- A nice clip that shows the power of self-confidence (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb2YOg_dkQM))
- Here is a story which shows how assertiveness is linked to awareness of our own needs. (FR) (http://mister-aidant.over-blog.com/article-les-gros-cailloux-48202852.html)

ORAL COMMUNICATION

4. Speaking in public

Even if it is your profession, speaking in public is never totally insignificant. It is generally considered a stressful situation.

A few simple rules presented below will allow you to both reduce stress and increase the quality of your presentations.

4.1 Knowing your goal, audience and the context of your presentation

There are a few things that you need to know in order to prepare an oral presentation. We can often summarise them in several simple questions better known as "reporter's questions".

Who?

Whom am I going to address? Journalists, students, experts, NGOs. Who is going to be my audience? How many people are going to be there? What is their prior knowledge of the topic? What is their background? Their experience? Why are they there? Who invited them? What setting suits them best? What are their needs? What specific needs should you meet? What are they expecting from you?

Why?

Does my presentation intend to inform, defend a point of view, convince someone, get reactions and then require listening to the answers, justify a position, serve as a basis for negotiation? Our reasons for communicating are numerous and it is important not to mix the different types. By representing the European Institutions you are, in a sense, an ambassador for the Institutions. Always know your exact position before speaking.

How?

Are you supposed to participate in a debate? A round table discussion? Has someone asked you to be a speaker at a conference? Will you be sitting down or standing behind a lectern? Will you have technical support to make a PowerPoint presentation?

Where?

Will you speak on television? On radio? In a small room? In a large hall?

When?

How much time do you have available for your presentation and at what time do you have to speak?

4.2 Knowing your subject

One of the difficulties that you may encounter before speaking in public is making sure you have a sufficient mastery of the subject.

The key pieces of advice for this are the following:

- No one, even the most famous specialists, knows everything about a subject. Therefore, set the exact limits for your speech. Knowing these limits and taking them into consideration in your presentation will help you to focus on the essentials;

- Always keep in mind the objective you would like to express in your presentation when you are researching support documents for your presentation. If your presentation has the aim of giving practical information on a subject, you should basically look for practical information. If your objective is rather to convince your audience, maybe you should search for positive testimonies or similar elements;

- Use at least one or two resources of a general nature and do not get lost in the details. Unless you are addressing an audience of specialists, basic information is more than often the most important. Do not hesitate, however, to verify that the information is up-to-date, correct as concerns content and relevant (for the goal of your presentation) in the manner in which it is presented;

- Also look for concrete examples and stories which make your subject come alive. Nothing is more sad than a presentation which is limited to just a series of facts and figures. Illustrating your position with anecdotes often makes your presentation more lively;

- Look for images/illustrations and not only words;

- Adapt the level of your information to your audience

4.3 Structure your intent: the *mind mapping* approach

Mind mapping can be an interesting approach to help you structure your thoughts and prepare your presentation, whether it is when you start a new job, receive a briefing on a subject or even when you need to work with a presentation prepared by someone else.

The term mind mapping was popularised by Tony Buzan, a well-known consultant, when it comes to creativity and innovation to design the graphical spatial representation "in two dimensions" of our ideas about a subject.

As we prepare a presentation (or take notes), the majority of us assume that the normal structure of a sentence is the best way to remember verbal images and ideas. In fact our brain does not function in a linear mode, i.e. using lists or lines. 90 % of the words are not necessary when we take notes.

Thus, instead of starting out at the top of the page to draft sentences or lines and move from top to bottom, we should start in the centre of the page or the main idea and create branches indicated by the individual ideas and general shape of the central theme.

Mind maps can be used on various occasions, but are specifically designed to capture the facts and then structure our thoughts.

This example of a mind map illustrates the topic "managing change".
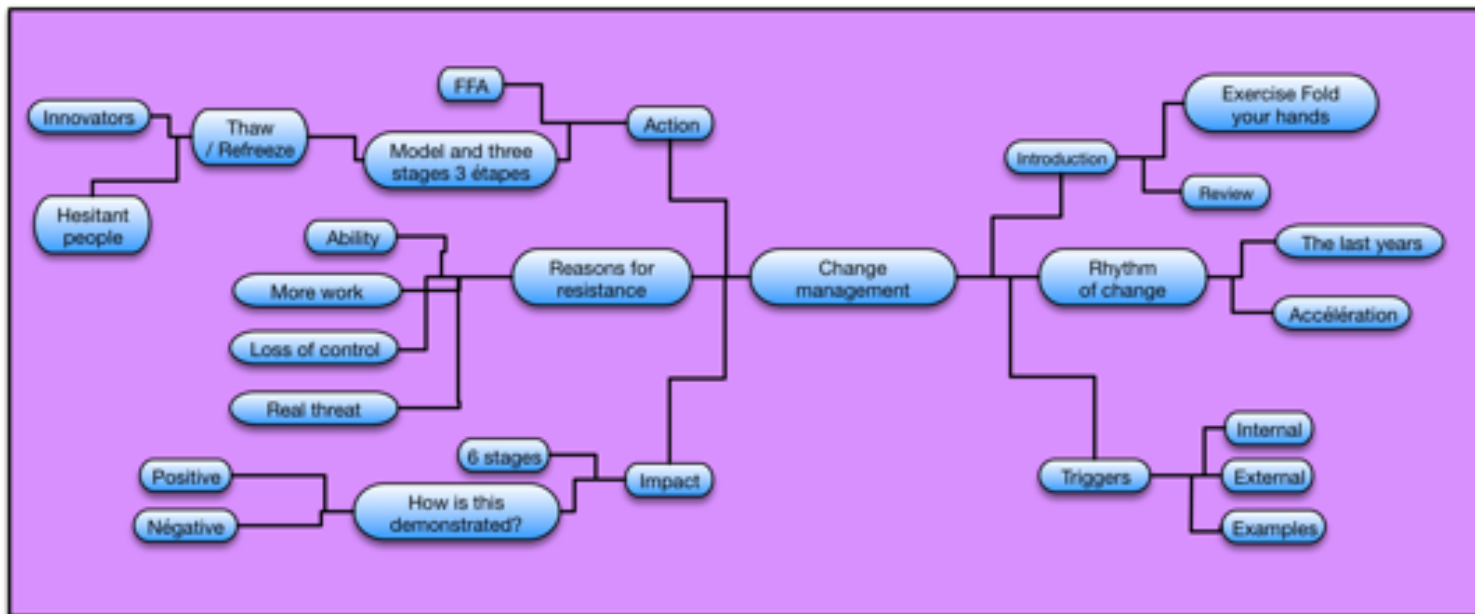
4.4 Structuring your goal: mapping out your line of thought

In the previous point we saw that the human mind does not work spontaneously in a linear mode. One proceeds in a totally different way with the spoken word (as well as the written word) where a sentence with a beginning, middle and end makes up the structure.

Whether or not you have passed through the stage of mind mapping, it will be necessary at one point or another to structure the elements of your presentation in a logical and linear order.

You need to always choose a structure that corresponds to the objective of your presentation.

You will find below a series of structures that may prove relevant depending on the subject and purpose of the presentation:

1. Logical structure (to persuade or discuss a subject) :

- presentation of facts / discussion / conclusion;

- general introduction / arguments for / arguments against / conclusion;

- "moving from the specific to the general";

- "moving from the general to the specific".

2. "Geographical" structure (putting a reality into perspective):

- situation in Europe / in the country / in a municipality;

- at the individual level/ at group level / at the community level or organisation level.

3. Chronological structure (to present the development of a subject):

- past / present / future;

- for children / for adolescents / for adults;

- 10 years ago / 5 years ago / today.

4. Structure using different aspects:

- social point of view / economic point of view / environmental point of view;

- for which purpose / how to do something / going deeper;

- testimonials of clients / core functionalities / price offer.

5. Procedural structure:

- stage 1 / stage 2 / stage 3;

- Activation / use / deactivation

It goes without saying that the order in which you present the main points of your presentation and the accent given to each point will influence the message that your audience will retain. Use, therefore, a structure which is more adapted to your audience and your objectives.

4.5 Structure and memorisation: the 3 S technique

As you structure your intention, you also need to keep in mind that this will help your audience to remember the most important points of what you wanted to tell them.

The attention span of your listener is low. Surveys on memory indicate that 80% of what you say will be forgotten.

You can improve this by trying to be clear and using some repetitions (know how to repeat key messages we will return to this in detail later on.

A technique often used by highly-experienced speakers is called the "3 S rule":

Say what you are going to say.
Say it.
Say what you have said.

More concretely, in order to structure your presentation with this concept in mind, you may use the following model:

• Opening overview clearly state the three most important points;

• Body of the presentation develop each one of the three points:
        o Point 1 : "sub-points" + examples + details;
        o Point 2 : "sub-points" + examples + details;
        o Point 3 : "sub-points" + examples + details.
• Closing the summary repeat the three main points.

4.6. Adapt your style and your tone of voice

Your style will not be the same depending on the intention for your audience:

- To persuade;
- To inform;
- To have a dialogue;
- To defend a point of view.

The tone, the time and the way which you will formulate your presentation should take into consideration your objective.

Also reflect in advance on the tone you are going to give your presentation. If you would like to pass on information, it is necessary that you adopt a logical tone and approach, insist on the facts, do not hesitate to give needed explanations without getting lost in lengthy explanations.

If one of your objectives is to create a rapport with your audience, do not hesitate to use some humour, tell some anecdotes and funny stories.

If you wish to motivate your audience, be positive in what you say, share your own positive stories with the audience and allow your listeners to respond personally and emotionally.

4.7 Using notes

Most speakers make use of notes during their presentations. However, you do not need to learn your presentation by heart. Nonetheless, it is dangerous to use your Powerpoint presentation in place of notes.

The way in which you structure your notes has a direct impact on your body language:

- if you read your notes, this will have an immediate effect on your voice and you will no longer focus on your audience;
- if you use A4 paper, this can hide your face or reveal your nervousness;
- if your notes are clearly arranged and the key words are highlighted (for example by using a highlighter), you will gain confidence and clarity;
- if your notes are concise and well-organised, you are more likely to retain them. You will give the impression that you master well your non-verbal language;
- small file cards are easily held in your hands and allow you to open up more to the audience.

Exercise:

Using the force of three S, get ready to make a short speech (3 min.) to convince an audience of your choice (However it needs to be a difficult audience!) to adopt the holiday destination you select. You may use the structure outlined below.

Exercise:

Prepare an introduction of yourself before this short 3-minute speech. You should cover the following topics:

- Name and areas of responsibility;
- Types of presentations done;

- Your personal learning objectives in the context of this seminar;
- The name of the person you consider to be an excellent speaker and why;
- Something that you remember from a previous course.

☑ Links with my work?

Do not hesitate, as much as it is possible, to offer yourself as the speaker. In fact, there is only one way to improve your ability to speak in public and that is to speak as often as possible.

Going deeper...

- In the presentation of Steve jobs (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGoM_wVrwng)of the first Iphone in 2007, his presentation follows a structure that we recommend you carefully observe.

4.8. Having impact: verbal and non-verbal

The impact of body language on the effectiveness of a presentation is decisive. As an "observer", we pick up very quickly when a speaker is comfortable or not.
Julian Treasure invites us to discover and Amy Cuddy to consider how your body language shows who you are (EN) (https://www.ted.com/playlists/226/before_public_speaking)

"Fake it till you become it."

It is also useful to be aware of your habits concerning body language and identify ways to avoid gestures that distract the audience. To achieve this, we strongly urge you to film yourself with your smartphones or other digital devices.

Generally speaking, we need to remember that we communicate with our whole being, so it is crucial that we watch out how we master the following aspects in order to achieve winning presentations:

- articulation;
- tone;
- pace;
- use of pauses;
- intonation or accentuation;
- agreement.

Each and every person who has been asked to do a presentation needs to keep the following saying in mind:"*It is not only what you say that*

counts, but the way in which you say it." This needs to be the motto of every person who speaks in public. It does not mean that the message is not important, but rather that the contents are not everything. An important and potentially interesting subject can be the object of a boring presentation. Likewise, a subject, that at first seems boring, can turn into a captivating speech.

Exercise:

Remember the three elements that have an impact on the message. In your next speech, highlight them with a three-second pause in your speech.

Exercise:

Body language

What do we mean by body language? Which elements contribute to the general impression that a speaker is confident and in control of the situation? How do we send signals that can often contradict our speech?

Through which elements can the message be expressed?

It is essential to maintain firm and assertive eye contact with the audience. What would your impression be if someone was speaking to you without ever looking you in the eyes? How do you successfully look at each and every person, even when the audience is very large.

Exercise:

Positioning one's voice

Before starting, evaluate the power of your voice! Evaluate it now and repeat this exercise one month later after having practiced it on a regular basis.
N.B. 0 = Never; 1 = Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Generally; 4 = Always

Would you say that:

The others let you speak without interrupting you.	☐
You speak without having the others ask you to repeat something.	☐
People seem to remember what you say.	☐
The others react quickly to your suggestions.	☐
You find it easy to make people change their minds.	☐
At the end of the day your voice is always fresh.	☐
Scores	☐

Scores :

20-24 = Excellent; 0-9 = Have you already thought that others do not notice you?

The quality of your voice

Think about the elements that make a voice interesting or difficult to listen to.

Going deeper...

- Here is a link to a show about the importance of non-verbal language EN (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kc2yRqat7q8))

4.9 Stress and speaking

All speakers, even the most experienced ones, feel nervous before a presentation. If your nervousness becomes overwhelming, it will keep you from being yourself.

However, many techniques will help you to concentrate and regain more of a sense of calmness to succeed in giving a convincing presentation. Here are some of them:

Technique 1: breathe to relax yourself and connect with yourself

Most of us do not know how to breathe effectively. Try these deep breathing exercises:

- make sure you are in a good position to breathe;
- sit comfortably;
- put your hands on your stomach;
- inhale through your nose;
- feel your abdomen expand;
- hold your breath;
- exhale.

Technique 2: stretch your muscles, move, shake away your tension

Stress causes the production of adrenaline, and it should be used in a positive way. Physical exercise can help you to "burn" this adrenaline. Some simple stretching can already help you:

- Place your hands on your thighs and spread out your fingers as wide as possible. Keep this position for 20 seconds.
- Stand on your toes for 20 seconds.
- Run in place for a minute.
- Then try to breathe in deeply.

See how you feel now!

Technique 3: Visualising your success

Top-level athletes have been practicing this technique for years. They call it "the inner game". If you attend an athletic competition or any other major competition, you observe it when starting out and especially in their eyes. They are in a total state of concentration. They visualise their task. They see themselves winning. You too, can use strong images and thoughts in the same way to help you take control of your nervousness and drive away negative thoughts you might have about the presentation you are about to give.

Exercise:

Why are you afraid to speak in front of others?
What are the symptoms of your nervousness?

Exercise:

1. Think of a situation where you really felt well. What did you feel?

2. Think about a time when you felt really bad. What were your dominant feelings?

Links with my work?

Focus on your successes / achievements rather than on your mistakes. Allow yourself to make some mistakes; use them as a learning experience. Immerse yourself in positive experiences of the past. Visualise the final result positively (What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?)

Going deeper...

- The film "The King's Speech" (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fY3BOcjAnw) in which you can see the final scene gives in detail the efforts that are necessary for King George VI to speak in public. He succeeds thanks to the support of Lionel Loque, an Australien therapist, who specialises in language rehabilitation, that will prepare him for his first radio talk.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

5. Listening, asking questions, giving feedback

5.1 The art of listening

When we talk about communication skills, it is often the ability to speak, talk and be understood that comes to mind.

Yet, the ability to listen is an equally important component of our communication skills.

We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.
Epictetus

BrainyQuote
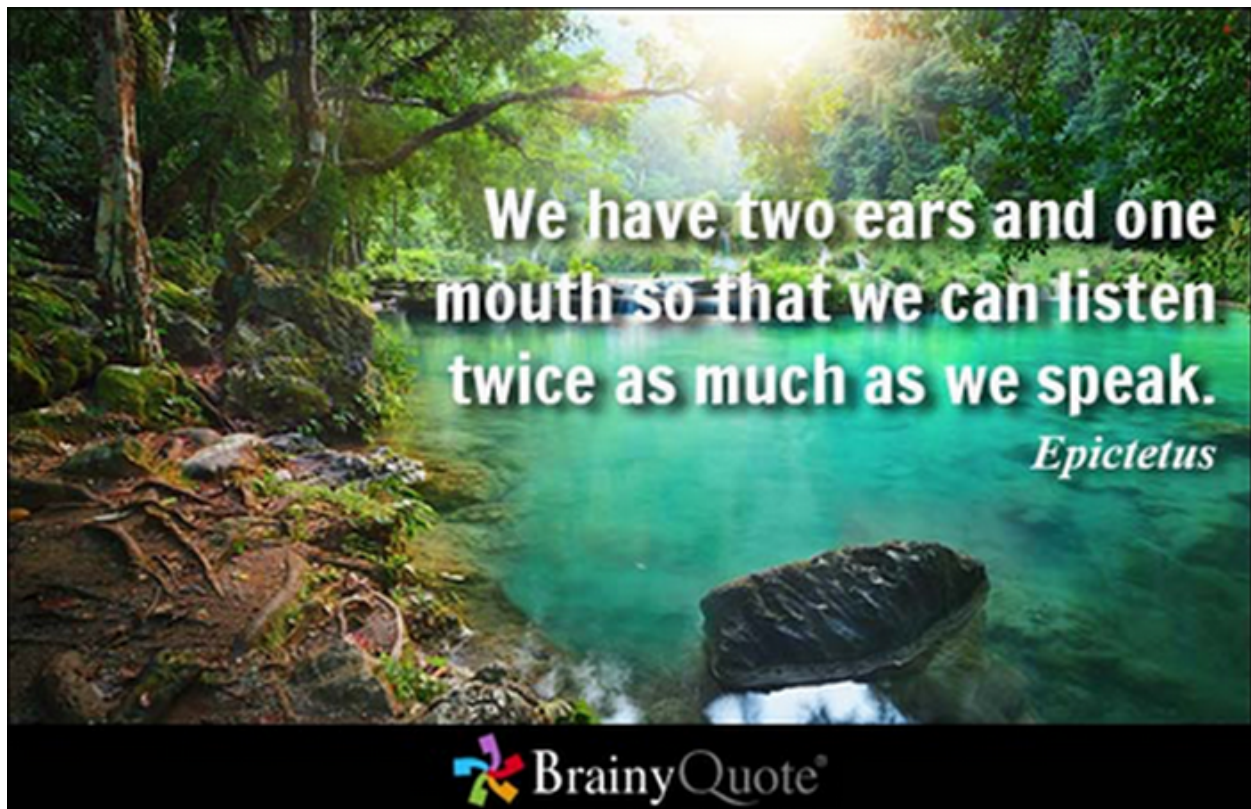
✎ Links with my work?

To what extent is the ability to listen a necessary skill for work? Do you remember a situation in which your ability to listen was useful for your work?
On the contrary, do you remember a situation where you had the impression that you did not listen enough?

Listening is an activity which requires effort on your part. It is not so easy to really listen. Whoever listens is often not concentrating on the words of the other person but rather on how he will respond when it is his turn to speak (if he waits his turn). Thus, he does not really listen to his interlocutor. He is lost in his thoughts.

Active listening is a technique for improving the quality of listening. It was developed by Thomas Gordon as part of his training on parental effectiveness. Active listening consists of listening to the other person attentively and repeating back what he says (his thoughts) and feels (feelings) without judgment. It is about reflecting neutrally about one's situation rather than giving one's own opinion.
Let's look at the following example:

<u>"You are disappointed that you were not promoted":</u>

Paul :
I was not promoted. I work myself to the bone and I am not even thanked by my boss.
Pierre :
Don't worry about it. He never thanks anyone. You'll get used to it.
André :
It is not that bad. You will be promoted the next time.
Jacques :
You should be happy to have work rather than complain.
Thomas :
You are disappointed that you were not promoted.
At least you would have liked to have been thanked for your efforts.

In this dialogue, Paul expresses his disappointment of not being promoted. Pierre and André try to minimise the impact of what has happened. It is a very common response, which is probably based on good intentions, but does not favour communication in the least. As for Jacques, he took the opportunity to blame Paul. These three replies all have in common the following implicit message: "You should not feel what you feel." That is why they do not favour Paul's ultimate breakthrough.

> In conclusion, active listening is not the mere repetition of words used by the speaker. It is rather the reflection of your thoughts and feelings without value judgment. It allows you to minimise the risk of misunderstanding while, at the same time, offering a safe environment where you may express your thoughts without fear of being judged.

The response of Thomas is completely different. He does not judge. He echoes the disappointment of Paul without telling him how to react. Thus, Paul feels not only that he has been listened to, but also that he has been understood.

(This is a translation of an extract from the website of Yves-Alexandre Thalmann: (FR) (http://www.yathalmann.ch/articles/communiquer/ecouteactive.htm))

5.2 The art of asking questions

OPEN QUESTION

Listening

Questions
(relaunch, verification)

Listening

Synthesis

Closed
question

NEW FUNNEL

This is very close, yet very different from the art of listening. The art of asking questions is very important in the work environment.

Some people have the skill, by using some simple questions, to draw out the necessary information. It is a skill that everyone can develop.

Here are some examples of possible questions:

- **Open questions**
  Such questions are designed to get the speaker to talk. You will often gather quality and authentic information that will be useful for the communication process. These types of questions show your interest and encourage your interlocutor to talk. They begin typically by an invitation: "Please speak about" or "What do you think of" or at times "What do you know about".

- **Reflective questions**
  A reflective question sends to the other person his own message in the form of a question. These questions encourage the development of a point already expressed. For example, "You mentioned your desire to change jobs. Can you tell me a little bit more about this... ".

- **Hypothetical questions**
  A hypothetical question is a question one asks to another person to invite that person to respond to a fictive or potential situation. These questions are often used in job interviews or in coaching to encourage people to think how they could adapt to change or to some changes in the future.

- **Make a silent pause**
  Making a silent pause is extremely effective to obtain more information. However, people in general, do not like silence and have the tendency to fill this silence.

- **Closed questions**
  (These are questions to which we reply with a yes or no or with some precise information like "how".) Closed questions have an important function. They help to confirm the understanding of a situation, facts or feelings.

- **Forced-choice questions**
  Proposing several possible options to someone and inviting him to choose the option which suits him best.

- **Guided questions**

A guided question can at times also be useful. For example, instead of asking your interlocutor: "What did you feel when this happened?", it is sometimes more useful to ask directly "Did this scare you?"

Going deeper...

- In this clip 12 angry man (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h140gkJe3FM)de 12.10 Ã 17.00) from Sidney Lumet with Henry Fonda, realised in 1957, the main character toggles the jury's verdict "simply" asking good questions.
- Kathleen Macferran offers us a TED talk on the art of listening (EN) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXRneCHrbT8)

5.3 Giving feedback

The ability to give constructive feedback to someone is one of the greatest social skills. We propose that you use a simple model that could help you to manage these delicate moments.

D.E.S.C. is broken down into four distinct phases:

- **(D)escribe :**
  To explain a situation or a problematic behaviour . This description should be simple and not exaggerated.

- **(E)xpress:**
  To know which feelings, emotions and disagreements the problem causes you. You should talk about what you feel (anxiety, irritability, fear, etc.) The act of expressing one's emotions gives sincerity to a relationship, but one needs to learn how to verbalise them.

- **(S)pecify:**

To explicitly indicate what one would like to see modified in order that the problem and the related feeling do not happen again. It is maybe a change of behaviour, implementing actions that aim to resolve a problem. You put yourself in the mode of problem solving. You suggest a solution. It is not a question of imposing but, on the contrary, to find a common solution. You remarks should be positive.

- **(C)onsequences:**
  To give positive consequences that are realised if everything happened in the (S)pecify phase. Inversely, what would be the negative inconveniences if the problem or behaviour persisted.

- **Precautions to take:**
  - work etiquette, the result, stating facts.
  - do not judge others.

IMPORTANT!

La DESC method is used according to the following principles:

- **Act quickly:** not letting things drag on; not expecting that things work out by themselves and not acting on the spot, but rather finding **the right moment to act.** The other person needs to be available and ready to listen.
- **Tackle one problem at a time.** Do not show off your reproaches otherwise DESC is doomed to fail!
- **Act in private** so you do not put a person at a disadvantage in front of other people.
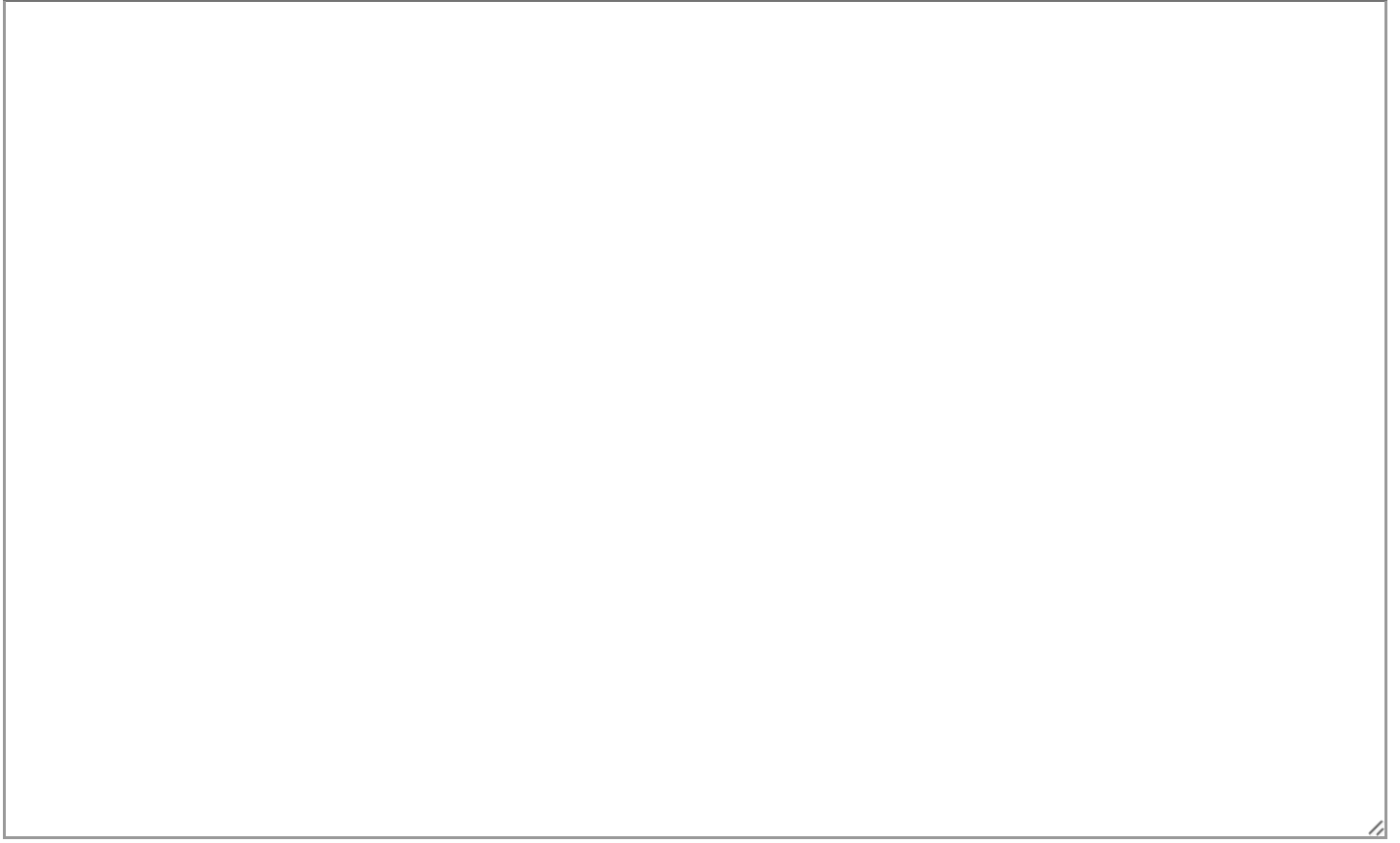

Links with my work?

Imagine possible feedback that you could give to one of your colleagues whom you ask to respect deadlines better.

Exercise:

Watch this scene of the film "Good Will Hunting" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGIFZ3AQQwQ)from Gus Van Sant and reformulate the speech of Robin Williams to Matt Damon using DESC.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

6. Managing emotions and difficult situations

We all go through difficult moments in our lives.

• the dynamics of a difficult team;

• a manager we consider incompetent;

• work overload;

• open conflict.

Of all the verbal communication situations we encounter with our colleagues or business partners, those marked by conflict or negative emotions are often the most significant.

In this chapter we propose that you explore five approaches that allow you to tackle these situations with adequate distance and effectiveness.

6.1 Choosing the right strategy

Thomas and Kilmann (1972) developed a model outlining five strategies - or conflict management styles - that one frequently finds. They claim that people usually have a personal and usual way to manage conflict, which manifests itself when they are under pressure. Even if this way may be the most effective style to resolve conflict, often it is not the case, and this only serves to aggravate the situation. The first step in managing conflict is to discover your preferred style(s) of managing conflict, which then allows you to learn how to handle a variety of situations using different approaches.

These styles emerge from a combination of two basic attitudes:

- **Assertiveness,** an attitude by which the behaviours of a particular person are aimed at satisfying his or her interests. This dimension is also linked to the achievement of personal objectives.

- **Helpfulness,** an attitude by which the behaviours of a person aim at satisfying the interests of the other person. This dimension assumes a concern about a relationship.

The combination of these two dimensions leads to five behaviours in the case of conflict: **accommodating, competing, avoiding, collaborating and compromising.**.

Each style is appropriate in certain contexts and ideally one should learn how to act in a strategic way when entering into conflict.
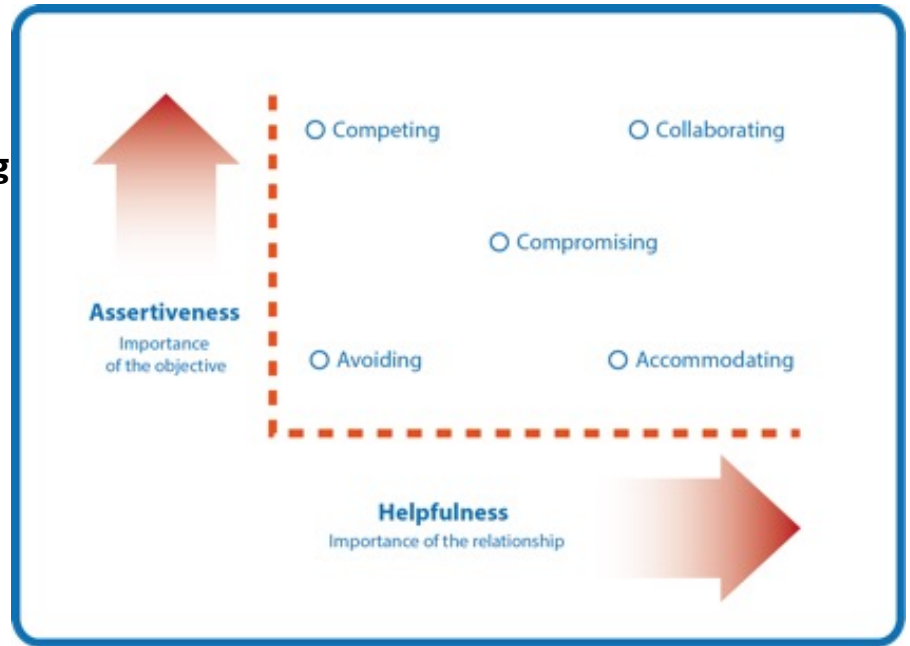
The 5 approaches - the advantages and the disadvantages

- **Accommodating** is a style in which one does not affirm and where one collaborates. The objective here is to concede. In general, a person using this conflict management style neglects his own needs to satisfy the needs of the other person. This attitude of selflessness aims at preserving the relationship rather than achieving an objective. This style is appropriate for reassurance - one wants to avoid clashes - and this is the opposite of competition.

  Pro: This attitude may help maintain harmonious relationships; one can admit that there is a better way of doing things.

  Contra: Not being able to meet your own needs can lead to resentment and reduce your influence: attitude of martyrdom.

- **The competing style** is oriented towards power: The person strongly affirms and collaborates very little. The objective is to win; the person follows his own agenda without being concerned about the other person. He can defend his own needs or an enviable situation, or just simply try to win. One gives a lot of importance to the objective. This style is also called "power" or dominant style.

  Pro: attitude where one decides and affirms, thus satisfying one's own needs.

  Contra: This style can damage relationships or degrade them.

- **Avoiding** is a style by which one does not affirm and one does not collaborate. The objective is to delay things. The person does not try to immediately meet his own needs or those of others; the person is indifferent to the way in which the problem will be resolved and to the interpersonal relationship. He withdraws or delays solving the conflict. This attitude may encourage some needed breathing space for a situation or, on the contrary, make things worse if the problem continues to be ignored. This attitude is also known as "flight".

    Pro: not taking everything seriously; delays can be useful.

    Contra: pressure builds up and can explode; one does not address key issues; to avoid a problem to then solve requires time and energy.

- **Collaborating** is a style where one affirms and collaborates at the same time. The objective is to find a solution that suits everyone. In general, by adopting this attitude, one looks for creative solutions for problems in order to meet the interests of the two persons involved; one learns, listens and acts by taking into account the interests of the organisation and the interests of the persons involved. This requires time and energy. This method is also known as the method of "problem solving" or the "integrator style" and is the opposite of avoiding.

    Pro: finding the best solution for everybody, which creates a high degree of commitment and more creativity for the resolution of problems as well as contributes to team building.

    Contra: This style requires time and energy It can be exhausting and useless when applied to all conflicts.

- **Compromising** is an attitude halfway between asserting and collaborating. The objective is to quickly find a common ground. The parties find a quick and mutually acceptable solution; each person makes concessions. This attitude is also called "sharing".

    Pro: One rapidly finds a solution that meets the needs of both parties; one settles complex problems temporarily. This is an alternative when the strategies of competing and collaborating have failed.

    Contra: This style can cause problems and impedes finding solutions in the long term. The compromises made can turn out to be unsatisfactory and need to be reviewed.

(Source (http://hrcouncil.ca/info-rh/milieux-de-travail-conflits.cfm))

Links with my work?

Recall the first dynamics you experienced in a team. Now analyse the posture of each person in a tense situation.

6.2 Using your emotional resources

For many years now, one has considered IQ to determine the professional success of individuals. Since then, one has discovered that the emotional quotient or emotional intelligence(EN) (http://www.danielgoleman.info/topics/emotional-intelligence/)is also a determinant factor.

It is equally an important dimension to take into account in order to improve our communication. We invite you now to discover below the 5 essential dimensions. They are all directly linked to our ability to communicate.

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Based on the Bar-On EQ-i model by Reuven Bar-On, copyright 1997.

Perception of self

This component of emotional intelligence goes back to the "internal world". Self-confidence, the alignment of values, the meaning one gives to one's life as well as the identification and understanding of emotions and their effects on thoughts and actions.

- Pure love consists in respecting oneself while, at the same time, taking into consideration one's strengths and weaknesses. Pure love is often associated with the feeling of selfconfidence.
- Self-realization is to commit to projects which are conform with one's own values, i.e. to persevere in all circumstances and thus give meaning to one's life.
- Emotional self-awareness is the ability to identify one's emotional state in its tiniest subtleties in order to find its causes and to measure the effects that this state may produce in oneself or in another person.

Individual expression

This component prolongs the component of self-perception. It refers to the way one expresses his internal emotions, feelings and thoughts. This facet of emotional intelligence gives light to the ability to act in any autonomous way and express one's ideas, opinions and feelings in a constructive and responsive mode.

- Emotional expression describes the ability of a person to express his feelings and emotions in an acceptable way, thus guaranteeing physiological wellbeing, consistent communication and authenticity in a relationship.
- Self-affirmation is the ability to express one's emotions and thoughts clearly, to defend one's interests and convictions in a way that is respectful of others and void of aggressiveness.
- Independence is the ability to take one's destiny in one's hands. Decisions are taken and projects are determined without being emotionally attached to others.

Relational skills

This component of emotional intelligence measures the capacity to tie and maintain relationships based on confidence and respect, to understand, validate and formulate a different point of view and act in a responsible way for the good of the team or the organisation.

- Human relationships deal with the ability to establish and maintain human relationships, based on the win-win mode and emotional closeness.
- Empathy is the ability to identify, understand and appreciate the emotions and thoughts of others. This aptitude sees the world as a result of putting oneself in another's shoes.
- Social responsibility is the ability to participate actively in a social group. This competence implies a level of consciousness of the collective good, a sense of commitment towards others.

Decision-making

This component of emotional intelligence refers to the understanding of the role of emotions in decisionmaking. It measures the ability to restrain or delay one's impulses and still remain objective to avoid decisions "made quickly and without much thought" or poor problem solving.

- Problem solving is the ability to provide solutions for problems presenting emotional aspects. Problem solving implies the recognition of the role played by emotions in decision-making.
- The meaning of the reality and the ability to accept a reality as it is presented rather than how you would like it to be or dread that it might be.
- Controlling one's emotions addresses the ability to step back when one has strong negative emotions, to resist the desire to take hasty decisions as a result of one's emotions.

Stress management

This component of emotional intelligence emphasises the ability to manage one's emotions in situations of change, pressure or unexpectedness as well as one's "resilience": the ability to stay optimistic and bounce back from disappointments.

- Flexibility is the ability to adapt one's thoughts, behaviours and feelings based on new information.
- Tolerance to stress is the ability to face adversity in a constructive way, have confidence in one's ability to manage, in a positive way, tense situations.
- Optimism is the ability to appear positive and to see life in a good way, to keep one's hope and ability to bounce back in the most difficult moments.

✒️ Links with my work?

For your favourite head of unit, director or director general, identify the elements of emotional intelligence named above.

👥 Exercise:

Do this test (FR) (http://www.oksub.com/index.php?
option=com_quiz&task=user_tst_shw&Itemid=50&tid=42)

6.3 Nonviolent communication (NVC) to get out of conflict

NVC, invented by Marshall Rosenberg, teaches us how to understand the hidden truths behind words.

Nonviolent communication is based on two axes:

- All human beings have similar basic rights;
- Everyone is naturally able to achieve a state of compassion and to demonstrate kindness towards one's own needs and those of others.

The practical implementation of nonviolent communication on a daily basis requires:

- Sincere listening to the other person who often expresses himself clumsily;
- Self-respect by taking into account one's feelings, needs and respect of the other person by recognising one's own needs;
- Empathy by the accepting the other person and his difference, and the creation of a link which discovers the deep qualities of each of the interlocutors;
- A reciprocal generosity which is the corollary of three previous points.

In addition to this process, which applies to oneself, NVC has been enriched by M.B. Rosenberg by yet another dimension: empathy. It teaches us to give the time and the space the other person needs to express himself and feel understood.

👥 Exercise:

In the film "Torch song Trilogy", (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q9HkURMrWs)Arnold

confronts his mother who does not accept his homosexuality (EN)

The effectiveness of NVC is a process consisting of 4 simple steps:

Marshall Rosenberg, father of nonviolent communication

1. **observe the situation:** This step implies learning to distinguish the evaluation of the observation. It consists of replacing generalisations and judgments by a circumstantial and precise description of facts;

2. **recognise the feeling:** It is about being conscious of the feeling provoked by the previous situation and to identify it while using the complete list of affective vocabulary;

3. **identify the subjacent need:** being aware and identifying the need that caused the feeling allows you, in return, to determine how to satisfy it;

4. **express a negotiable request:** the object of the request is to explain, in clear language, the actions one would like to see taken in order to satisfy the need.

✒️ Links with my work?

Think about the last time you felt anger at your workplace. Identify the need(s) behind this feeling.

6.4 Learning to communicate about conflict or misunderstanding

When we communicate with another person, we could believe that a message only transmits one particular fact. However, an important part of what we say is not included in the "factual" content of the communication.

It is around the message, its meaning and the reactions to this meaning that everything will revolve.

The model of the "communication square", designed by the German psychologist Friedemann Schulz von Thun, proposes to equally take into consideration all four dimensions of communication.

Figure 1: *the communication square*

The factual content layer: "I'm cold." It is about factual information conveyed by the message.

The relationship layer: A child, defines the relationship he has with his interlocutor (parent) and the quality of this relationship by the message: "We are in a parent-child relationship". The way in which I address you also expresses what I think about you and your respectives positions in our relationship. (formal/informal/affectionate/hierarchical.

The self-revelation layer: by exclaiming "I'm cold!", your child reveals something about himself and his personality. It could be that he likes to be mothered.

The appeal layer: In bilateral communication, when we want to say something to someone, it is because we want to evoke a reaction.

For example is your daughter comes home from school and exclaims, "I'm cold!", what reaction do you think she expects from you?

(1) "Not me, I'm fine."

(2) "I am going to look for a sweater for you, my dear."

Where things start to get complicated for the receiver is the way he is expected to understand the message, beyond its factual content. What does the sender reveal of himself? Herself? Disappointment? Enthusiasm? Likewise, what should the receiver think of what the sender thinks of him/her? Reproach? Or an indication of the importance that the sender gives to the receiver?

Often the receiver may question what is expected of him by the sender. Thus, the receiver may have very well understood the message in its formal and objective content yet remains ignorant of its true meaning, i.e. the entire meaning within the message and partially transmitted by the sender - inspite of himself/herself.

It also happens that that an inconsistency is perceived between the four layers of the message - for example, the factual content says something: "I am fine. I am very well." whereas the selfrevealing content says something else: the sentence is said in an unbalanced tone. The receiver will immediately understand that the message sent is not consistent.

When we feel some discomfort in our communication with another person, it might be very interesting to return to the consistency of the 4 messages and, where applicable, to clarify the message (or simply make clear that one's interlocutor has perceived something he wanted to say) by speaking directly about this inconsistency.

> Sometimes one uses the term " meta communication" to distinguish this type of communication about the message: it deals with communicating about the way we communicate. This allows us to sometimes get out of difficult conflictual situations.
>
> It is however important to voice a bit of reserve here, knowing that the success of the meta communication depends not only on the emotional maturity, the confidence and the authenticity of the persons interacting but also on the state of one's own pressure at the time that this meta communication takes place. It is therefore never won in advance.

Exercise:

Identify a recent dialogue with a person which whom you had a difficult conversation and break down the message according to the square of communication from the point of view of the sender and the receiver.

Exercise:

Watch the film clip "Ghost dog" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XfpkQF3UaA)(scene with the little girl) (EN) Analyse the meta communication between the main character and the little girl.

Links with my work?

Practicing communication in turn:

- attentive listening;
- asking questions;
- repeating, asking to repeat and reformulate.

Force "to put yourself in the place of another person", i.e.:

- by admitting a priori that the other person does not necessarily have the same point of view as we

do;

- by making the effort to listen and to understand his point of view in order to better present afterwards our own ideas;
- by not forgetting that "to dialogue" is to aspire to attain a common goal.

6.5 What if the problem was the solution? (P. Watzlawick)

The following principle is particularly interesting, yet it is not always intuitive, which means that it does not seem natural to us.

The individual has a natural tendency to do "a little bit more of the same thing." Unfortunately the consequence of this tendency is to produce only a little bit more of the same result.

Here are some examples:

- I hopelessly want to lose weight, I commit myself more and more to strict diets and, as this does not work, I am going to follow an even STRICTER diet.
- My colleague ignores me completely and in order to make myself more attractive in his eyes and be appreciated, I am more and more helpful and kind towards her, and despite this, she is more and more unpleasant.

The theory of Paul Watzlawick is simple: it implies that attempts at solutions are part of the problem. To get out of a problem, we could, for example, consider analysing everything which did not work out up until now and try to consider solutions that are totally different.

For example, my manager is extremely controlling. He wants to check everything I produce, send and say. My first reaction is to preserve at maximum my autonomy in my work and show him a deaf ear in order to demonstrate everything that I do.

I also legitimise my point of view, by telling myself that I have many years of experience and that this "abusive micro-management" is of no use.

This reaction has only one consequence, i.e stimulating even more my need to control my manager, who perceives my resistance.

The solution here would be, nevertheless, to implement a more radically different approach.

For example, we could imagine that instead of fiercely resisting, on the contrary, I take the decision to interrupt my manager as much as possible to the point that he ends up being irritated by my attitude and asks me to stop interrupting him and be more autonomous.

These solutions are not scientific guarantees of success, but they often prove their point.

> Thehe next time you face a repetitive situation, take the distance you need to analyse your attempts at solving the problem and think about what you have not already tried to reach your objective.

Going deeper...

- An interview with Paul Watzlawick: "When the problem is the solution" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7etsh4HwG78) (in German with English subtitles)