

Human Relations

Interpersonal, Job-Oriented Skills

Fourth Canadian Edition



Andrew J. DuBrin | Terri Geerinck

FOURTH EDITION

HUMAN RELATIONS

INTERPERSONAL, JOB-ORIENTED SKILLS

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PEARSON

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PREFACE

Welcome to the fourth Canadian edition of *Human Relations: Interpersonal, Job-Oriented Skills*. Success in any position involving interaction with people requires two broad sets of competencies: functional skills and generic skills. The term *functional skills* refers to knowledge of one's discipline (or organizational function), technical skills, specialty skills, or simply details of the job. *Generic skills* (often referred to as *employability* or *soft skills*) refers to competencies important in a variety of jobs. Among these generic skills are good work habits and time management, computer skills, high ethical standards, and interpersonal skills.

Our purpose in writing this book is to help readers improve their interpersonal skills in the workplace. By improving interpersonal skills, a person has a better chance of capitalizing upon his or her other skills. Two primary approaches are used in this text to achieve this lofty goal. First, basic concepts are introduced to enhance understanding of key topics in interpersonal relations in organizations. Second, skill-building suggestions, exercises, and cases are designed to improve interpersonal skills related to the topic. Chapter 6, for example, presents general information about the nature of teamwork, followed by suggestions for improving teamwork. The chapter also includes several exercises or experiential activities and two case problems—all designed to improve teamwork skills.

Third, examples and opening scenarios provide insight into how a particular skill is applied on the job. For example, in Chapter 3, we describe a successful Canadian entrepreneur who had enough confidence and self-esteem to make collecting junk a successful business.

AUDIENCE

The primary audience for this book is people taking courses that emphasize the development of interpersonal skills. Such courses typically include the term *human relations*. Because interpersonal relations contribute so heavily to effective leadership, the text is suited to participants in leadership and supervisory training courses that emphasize interpersonal skills rather than leadership theory and research.

FRAMEWORK

The information is organized into chapters, all emphasizing interpersonal relations between two or more people. Chapter 1, "A Framework for Interpersonal Skill Development," sets the stage for improving one's interpersonal skills on the job. Chapter 2, "Understanding Individual Differences," presents information that is the foundation of effective interpersonal relations. Chapter 3, "Building Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence," describes how to develop self-esteem and self-confidence both for oneself and to improve relationships with others. Chapter 4, "Interpersonal Communication," deals with skills in sending and receiving messages.

Chapter 5, "Interpersonal Skills for the Digital World," describes how interpersonal skills can enhance the use of digital devices, as well as how these devices lend themselves to poor interpersonal skills, such as cellphone abuse. Chapter 6, "Developing Teamwork Skills," sensitizes the reader to a vital set of skills in the workplace. Chapter 7, "Group Problem Solving and Decision Making," provides additional skill in collaborative effort.

Chapter 8, “Cross-Cultural Relations and Diversity,” is about developing cross-cultural skills in a diverse workforce. Chapter 9, “Resolving Conflicts with Others,” helps the reader develop skills in finding constructive solutions to differences of opinion and disputes with others.

Three consecutive chapters deal with exerting influence over others: Chapter 10, “Becoming an Effective Leader,” presents information relevant to exercising leadership in the workplace; Chapter 11, “Skills for Motivating and Helping Others,” emphasizes skills required in encouraging others to work hard to achieve goals and how to work with difficult people; and Chapter 12, “Positive Political Skills,” describes how to use power and influence for constructive purposes.

Chapter 13, “Customer Satisfaction Skills,” describes several approaches to enhancing skills required for satisfying customers. Chapter 14, “Enhancing Ethical Behaviour,” translates ethical principles into usable skills. The rationale here is that an ethical base is important for achieving career-long effectiveness in interpersonal relations. Chapter 15, “Personal Productivity and Stress Management,” supports the development of interpersonal skills by showing that productive people who have stress under control can relate more effectively to others. Chapter 16, “Job Search and Career Management Skills,” includes information about the application of interpersonal skills (such as networking) in advancing one’s career.

CHANGES IN THE NEW EDITION

The new edition of *Human Relations* adds several new features and content, most notably two chapters: one about the development of self-esteem and self-confidence (Chapter 3) and one about interpersonal skills for the digital age (Chapter 5). In many places throughout the text, we have added a third level of heading to better organize the information for the student. We have added many new skill-building exercises and new self-assessment quizzes as well as some role-playing exercises. New questions or statements are added to several of the self-quizzes. New information, research findings, and examples appear throughout the text. Most chapters have new case openers with many featuring notable Canadians and Canadian businesses. Material that may have lost some of its relevance has been selectively pruned.

The new topics in the text are as follows:

- Description of personality types and cognitive styles as measured by the Golden Personality Type Profiler (Chapter 2)
- New system of classifying values and associated goals (Chapter 3)
- How a manager builds the self-esteem of group members (Chapter 4)
- More information about active listening (Chapter 4)
- New chapter that includes information from previous edition about etiquette in relation to the use of electronic devices in the workplace (Chapter 5)
- New section on face-to-face versus virtual teams, replacing the previous edition’s section “Types of Teams” (Chapter 6)
- More information about the advantages of group work and teamwork (Chapter 6)
- The importance of collective efficacy for group problem solving (Chapter 7)
- Cultural factors and group decision making (Chapter 7)
- New dimension of differences in cultural values, social-support-seeking (Chapter 8)
- Work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (Chapter 9)
- The issue of work–life choices (Chapter 9)
- More about bullies in the workplace (Chapter 9)
- More about workplace violence (Chapter 9)
- Cross-generational conflict (Chapter 9)
- Workplace violence (Chapter 9)
- Conflict-resolution technique of allowing for face-saving (Chapter 9)

- A type of self-confidence specifically for leaders—leadership efficacy (Chapter 10)
- Group of personality traits associated with leadership effectiveness—positive core evaluation (Chapter 10)
- Making critical assessments as a leadership skill (Chapter 10)
- Self-sacrificing personality and leadership effectiveness (Chapter 10)
- Techniques for self-motivation (Chapter 11)
- Expansion of discussion of types of difficult people (Chapter 11)
- New section on political skills and other human relations skills (Chapter 12)
- Organizational citizenship behaviour as part of impression management (Chapter 12)
- Customer-centric sales process (Chapter 13)
- New survey on the extent of ethical problems (Chapter 14)
- Wasting company time as an ethical dilemma (Chapter 14)
- More strategies to enhance ethical behaviour at work (Chapter 14)
- Figure listing representative suggestions for helping a company contribute to a sustainable environment (Chapter 14)
- Adverse interaction with customers and emotional labour in relation to stress (Chapter 15)
- Job loss as a source of stress (Chapter 15)
- Cognitive behavioural approach to stress management (Chapter 15)
- Salary discussion during a job interview (Chapter 16)
- Career-advancement strategy of pursuing fields and industries many others overlook (Chapter 16)

This fourth Canadian edition features an increased presence of Canadian examples, research, and statistics. As well, whenever possible, Canadian businesses and organizations, or those with Canadian locations, are used to provide better examples of practices in Canada. Many companies are international with global locations, so not all were replaced.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS

The following instructor supplements are available for downloading from a password-protected section of Pearson Canada's online catalogue. Navigate to your book's catalogue page to view a list of those supplements that are available. See your local sales representative for details and access.

Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual for this text contains chapter outlines and lecture notes, answers to discussion questions and case problems, and comments about the exercises.

Test Item File

The Test Item File includes 800 questions in multiple choice and true/false format. Each question is accompanied by the correct answer.

PowerPoint Lecture Presentation Package

This supplement provides a comprehensive selection of slides highlighting key concepts featured in the text. The slides have been specifically developed for clear and easy communication of themes, ideas, and definitions.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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Andrew J. DuBrin
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Terri Geerinck
Peterborough, Ontario

HUMAN RELATIONS

INTERPERSONAL, JOB-ORIENTED SKILLS

A Framework for Interpersonal Skill Development

Dominique was one of several receptionists at a large hotel located not far from the airport in Vancouver. Two of the hotel executives were discussing which receptionist should be promoted to assistant hotel manager, a vacancy created because the current assistant manager was being promoted to manager of one of the company's suburban hotels.

One manager said to the other, "I think that Dominique is the strongest candidate for the assistant manager position. She has a little less experience than the other three receptionists, but I think she would make a wonderful assistant manager."

The other manager replied, "But take Todd, for example; he has a much better knowledge of hotel operations and our computer system than Dominique does. So maybe Todd should get the promotion this time." The first manager pointed out that Dominique's superior skills with people

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LEARNING Objectives

After reading and studying this chapter and doing the exercises, you should be able to

1. Explain how interpersonal skills are learned.
2. Explain the model for interpersonal skill improvement.
3. Pinpoint your needs for improvement in interpersonal relations.
4. Describe potential opportunities for developing interpersonal skills on the job.

made her the best candidate for the position. “I think that in time Dominique can learn more about our operations, including the new computer system. We can’t forget that hotels are a people business, and Dominique gets along well with people. I’ve seen her resolve tough problems with both guests and other members of the hotel staff. And what a warm smile she has. While Todd has a better knowledge of operations and the computing system, several guests have described him as rather cold or aloof. He often appears not to care about the guests and he rarely smiles. He has also had some issues with co-workers and he is not always a good team player.”

After thinking for a few moments, the second manager said, “You’ve got a good point. Let’s offer the promotion to Dominique, with Todd as a strong second choice. We’ll also coach Todd on his people skills so he can be promoted in the future. At that time we would offer him the promotion, assuming he were interested.”

Scenes like this one are common in the workplace. Many people are promoted to a supervisory position because they have good human relations skills combined with adequate technical skills. As the Dale Carnegie organization states, “To achieve success in today’s work world—with its emphasis on collaboration, teamwork, motivation, and leadership—you need to perfect your interpersonal skills.”¹

Effective **interpersonal relations** must be combined with technical knowledge and good work habits to achieve success in any job involving interaction with people. Workers at all levels are expected not only to solve problems and improve processes (how work is performed), but also to interact effectively with other employees.² Furthermore, the lack of good interpersonal skills can adversely affect a person’s career. A study found that 90 percent of firings result from poor attitudes, inappropriate behaviour, and problems in interpersonal relationships.³

This chapter explains how people develop interpersonal skills and how the workplace can be a natural setting for that development. It also presents a model that can serve as a foundation for improving your interpersonal skills.

PLAN OF THE TEXT

This entire text is devoted to the many different ways of improving interpersonal relations in organizations. A three-part strategy is presented for achieving the high level of effectiveness in interpersonal relations required in today’s workplace. First, each chapter presents

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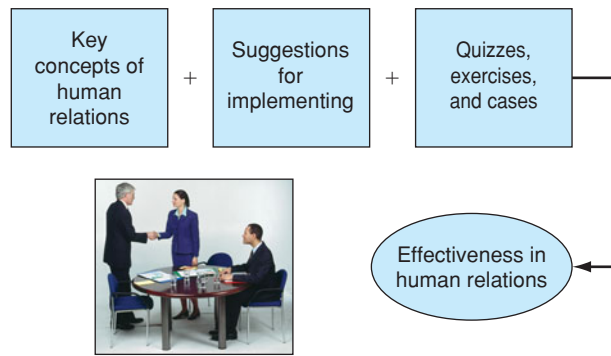


interpersonal relations

The technical term for relationships with people.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

FIGURE 1-1 Plan for Achieving Effectiveness in Interpersonal Relation



key concepts required for understanding a particular aspect of interpersonal relations, such as resolving conflict. Second, the chapter provides specific suggestions or behavioural guidelines for improvement in that aspect of interpersonal relations. Third, a variety of exercises gives you the opportunity to work on and improve your skills. Among these exercises are self-assessment quizzes, skill-building exercises, and cases for analysis. In addition, the questions at the end of each chapter give you an opportunity to think through and apply that chapter's key ideas. Weblinks are also provided at the end of each chapter to enable you to explore areas of interest in more depth. Figure 1-1 illustrates the plan of the text.

interpersonal skills training

The teaching of skills in dealing with others.

Much of this text is concerned with **interpersonal skills training**, the teaching of skills in dealing with others, so those skills can be put into practice. Interpersonal skills training is referred to as *soft-skill* training to differentiate it from technical training. (Technical skills are referred to as *hard skills*.) Soft-skill training builds interpersonal skills, including communication, listening, group problem solving, cross-cultural relations, and customer service. Several specific competencies related to soft skills are as follows:

- Effectively translating and conveying information
- Being able to accurately interpret other people's emotions
- Being sensitive to other people's feelings
- Calmly arriving at resolutions to conflicts
- Avoiding negative gossip
- Being polite⁴
- Being able to cooperate with others to meet objectives (teamwork)

Soft-skill training is more important than ever as organizations realize that a combination of human effort and technology is needed to produce results. Multiple studies have shown that soft skills can compensate for more traditional cognitive (or analytical) intelligence. For example, a supervisor with good interpersonal skills might perform well even if he or she is not outstandingly intelligent. The statement does not mean, however, that outstanding soft skills will compensate for high cognitive intelligence when doing highly analytical work such as analyzing the value of an investment or a company. Findings from the Conference Board of Canada, in its *Employability Skills 2000+* report, indicate the increased need for soft skills in this economy, including communication skills, positive attitudes and behaviours, working with others, thinking critically, goal setting, and adaptability.⁵

Soft skills are often the differentiating factor between adequate and outstanding performance, because dealing with people is part of so many jobs.⁶ Assume that a company establishes an elaborate intranet system to enable employees to exchange work-related information with each other. The system will not achieve its potential unless employees are motivated to use it properly and they develop a spirit of cooperation. The employees must also be willing to share some of their best ideas with each other. Consider this example:

Sara, a newly hired intake receptionist in a cardiac clinic, notices that too often the patients present incomplete or inaccurate information, such as omitting data

about their next of kin. Sara spends considerable amounts of time reworking forms with the patients, until she begins using soft skills more effectively. With coaching from her supervisor, Sara learns that if she attempts to calm down a patient first, the patient is more likely to complete the intake form accurately.

Well-known executive coach Marshall Goldsmith reminds us that building relationships with people is important for workers at every level in the organization, including the CEO. An example of an interpersonal skill that would help build relationships would be demanding good results from others yet showing them respect at the same time.⁷

A MODEL FOR IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Acquiring and improving interpersonal skills is facilitated by following a basic model of learning as it applies to changing your behaviour. Following a basic model of learning as it applies to changing your behaviour causes you to acquire and improve interpersonal skills. Learning is a complex subject, yet its fundamentals follow a five-part sequence, as shown in Figure 1-2. To change your behaviour, and therefore improve, you need a goal and a way to measure your current reality (behaviours or actions) against this goal. You also need a way to assess your reality, and a way to obtain feedback on the impact of your new actions.⁸

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

Goal or Desired State of Affairs

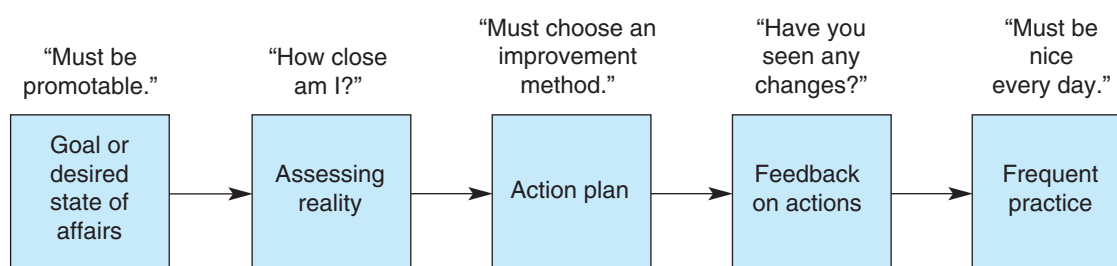
Changing your behaviour, including improving your interpersonal relations, requires a clear goal or desired state of affairs. Your goal can also be regarded as what you want to accomplish as a result of your effort. A major reason why a goal is important is that having a specific goal improves performance. With a goal in mind, a person will usually not be satisfied until the goal is attained. So he or she keeps plugging away until the goal is attained, thereby increasing both personal satisfaction and performance on the task. Goals are also important because where people perceive that they have not attained their goal, they typically increase their effort or modify their strategy to reach the goal.⁹

As a concrete example, let us take the common problem of a person who nibbles his fingernails during tense situations, such as being called on in a meeting. The nibbler might say, “My hope [a goal] is to be able to sit in a meeting and not bite my nails, even though I know I might be called upon.” This man’s desired state of affairs (his goal) is to avoid putting his nails in his mouth so that he can appear calm and professional. Having a goal helps provide motivation and makes it possible to exercise the self-discipline necessary to follow through on your plans. In short, the goal focuses your effort on making the behavioural improvements you seek.

Here we turn to Sean, a credit analyst who is being blocked from promotion because his manager perceives him as having poor interpersonal skills. After a discussion with his manager, Sean recognizes that he must improve his interpersonal relations if he wants to become a team leader.

Sean’s goal is to be considered promotable to a leadership position. To achieve his goal, he will have to achieve the general goal of improving his interpersonal relations. By confering with the human resources director, Sean learns that his broad goal of “improving my

FIGURE 1-2 A Model for Improving Interpersonal Skills



interpersonal relations” will have to be supported by more specific goals. Having poor interpersonal relations or “rubbing people the wrong way” includes many different behaviours. To begin, Sean selects one counterproductive behaviour to improve: He is exceptionally intolerant of others and does not hide his intolerance. Sean’s goal is to become less intolerant and more patient in his dealings with others on the job.

Fine Points about Goal Setting. So far we have made goal setting seem easy. A truer description of goal setting is that it involves several fine points to increase the probability that the goal will be achieved. Key points about setting effective goals are outlined in Figure 1-3, and described next.

1. **State each goal as a positive statement.** Expressing your goals in positive statements is likely to be more energizing than focusing on the negative.¹⁰ An example of a positive statement would be, “During the next year when I am attending networking events, I will create a positive, professional impression on everybody I meet.” The negative counterpart would be, “During the next year, I will avoid making a fool of myself when I am attending networking events.” Despite this suggestion, there are times when a negative goal is useful, such as in reducing errors.
2. **Formulate specific goals.** A goal such as “attain success” is too vague to serve as a guide to daily action. A more useful goal would be to state specifically what you mean by success and when you expect to achieve it. For example, “I want to be the manager of patient services at a large medical clinic by January 1, 2015, and receive above-average performance reviews.”
3. **Formulate concise goals.** A useful goal can usually be expressed in a short, punchy statement—for example, “Decrease input errors in bank statements so that customer complaints are decreased by 25 percent by September 30 of this year.” People new to goal setting typically commit the error of formulating lengthy, rambling goal statements. These lengthy goals involve so many different activities that they fail to serve as specific guides to action.
4. **Set realistic as well as stretch goals.** A realistic goal is one that represents the right amount of challenge for the person pursuing the goal. On the one hand, easy goals are not very motivational—they may not spring you into action. On the other hand, goals that are too far beyond your capabilities may lead to frustration and despair because there is a good chance you will fail to reach them. The extent to which a goal is realistic depends on a person’s capabilities.

An easy goal for an experienced person might be a realistic goal for a beginner. **Self-efficacy** is also a factor in deciding whether a goal is realistic. (The term refers to the confidence in your ability to carry out a specific task.) The higher your self-efficacy, the more likely you are to think that a particular goal is realistic. A person with high self-efficacy for learning Chinese might say, “I think learning two new Chinese words a day is realistic.”

Several goals that stretch your capability might be included in your list of goals. An extreme stretch goal might be for a store manager trainee to become the vice-president of merchandising for Target within four years. Another type of stretch goal is striving for a noble cause. A Home Hardware supervisor might not get excited about having the store associates load lumber onto the steel shelves.

self-efficacy

Confidence in one’s ability to carry out a specific task.

FIGURE 1-3 Guidelines for Goal Setting

1. State each goal as a positive statement.
2. Formulate specific goals.
3. Formulate concise goals.
4. Set realistic goals as well as stretch goals.
5. Set goals for different time periods.

However, she might get excited about the lumber being used to build homes, schools, and hospitals.

5. **Set goals for different time periods.** Goals are best set for different time periods, such as daily, short-range, medium-range, and long-range. Daily goals are essentially a to-do list. Short-range goals cover the period from approximately one week to one year into the future. Finding a new job, for example, is typically a short-range goal. Medium-range goals relate to events that will take place within approximately two to five years. They concern such things as the type of education or training you plan to undertake and the next step in your career.

Long-range goals refer to events taking place five years into the future and beyond. As such, they relate to the overall lifestyle you wish to achieve, including the type of work and family situation you hope to have. Although every person should have a general idea of a desirable lifestyle, long-range goals should be flexible. You might, for example, plan to stay single until age 40. But while on vacation next summer, you just might happen to meet the right partner for you.

Short-range goals make an important contribution to attaining goals of longer duration. If a one-year career goal is to add 25 worthwhile contacts to your social network, a good way to motivate yourself is to search for two contacts per month for 11 months, and three for one month. Progress toward a larger goal is self-rewarding.

Assessing Reality

The second major requirement for changing behaviour is to assess the current reality. Sean needs a way to estimate how far he is from his goal of being eligible for promotion, and how intolerant he is perceived as being. Sean has already heard from his manager, Alison, that he is not currently eligible for promotion. Sean might want to dig for more information by finding answers to the following questions:

- “If I were more tolerant, would I be promoted now?”
- “How bad are my interpersonal relations in the office?”
- “How many people in the office think I rub them the wrong way?”
- “How many deficiencies do my manager and co-workers perceive me to have?”

One starting point in answering these questions might be for Sean to confer with Alison about his behaviour. To be more thorough, however, Sean might ask a friend in the office to help him answer the questions. Sometimes a co-worker is in an excellent position to provide feedback on how one is perceived by others in the office. Sean could also ask a confidant outside the office about his intolerance. He could ask a parent, a significant other, or both about the extent of his intolerance.

An Action Plan

The learning model needs some mechanism to change the relationship between the person and his or her environment. An **action plan** is a series of steps necessary to achieve a goal. Without an action plan, a personal goal will be elusive. The person who sets the goal may not initiate steps to make his or her dream (a high-level goal) come true. If your goal is to someday become a self-employed business owner, your action plan should include saving money, establishing a good credit rating, and developing dozens of contacts.

Sean has to take action to improve his interpersonal relations, especially his intolerance. The changes should ultimately lead to the promotion he desires. Sean’s action plan for becoming more tolerant includes the following:

- Pausing to attempt to understand why a person is acting the way he or she is. An example would be trying to understand why a sales representative wants to extend credit to a customer with a poor credit rating.
- Learning to control his own behaviour so he does not make intolerant statements simply because he is experiencing pressure.
- Taking a course in interpersonal or human relations.

action plan

A series of steps designed to achieve a goal.



Piotr Marcinski/Fotolia

- Asking Alison to give him a quick reminder whenever she directly observes or hears of him being intolerant toward customers or workmates.

In addition to formulating these action plans, Sean must have the self-discipline to implement them. For example, he should keep a log of situations in which he was intolerant and those in which he was tolerant. He might also make a mental note to attempt to be cooperative and flexible in most of his dealings at work. When a customer does not provide all the information he needs to assess his or her creditworthiness, Sean should remind himself to say, “I want to process your credit application as quickly as possible. To do this, I need some important additional information.” Sean’s habitual reflex in the same situation had been to snap: “I can’t read

your mind. If you want to do business with us, you’ve got to stop hiding the truth.”

Feedback on Actions

The fourth step in the learning model is to measure the effects of one’s actions against reality—you obtain feedback on the consequences of your actions. When your skill-improvement goal is complex, such as becoming more effective at resolving conflict, you will usually need to measure your progress in several different ways. You will also need both short- and long-term measures of the effectiveness of your actions. Long-term measures are important because skill-development activities of major consequence have long-range implications.

To obtain short-range feedback, Sean can consult with Alison to see whether she has observed any changes in his tolerance levels. Alison can also collect any feedback she hears from others in the office. Sean will also profit from feedback over a prolonged period of time, perhaps one or two years. He will be looking to see if he has become more tolerant by being polite in his interactions instead of snapping at others or being impatient.

Frequent Practice

The final step in the learning model makes true skill development possible. Implementing the new behaviour and using feedback for fine-tuning is an excellent start in acquiring a new interpersonal skill. For the skill to be long-lasting, however, it must be integrated into your usual way of conducting yourself. In Sean’s case, he will have to practise being tolerant regularly until it becomes habitual.

Once a skill has been programmed into your repertoire, it becomes a habit. This is important, because a skill involves many habits. For example, good customer service skills include the habits of smiling and listening carefully. After you attempt the new interpersonal skills described in this text, you will need to practise them frequently to make a noticeable difference in your behaviour.

A sports analogy is appropriate here. Assume that Marty, a tennis player, takes a lesson to learn how to hit the ball with greater force. The instructor points out that the reason Marty is not hitting with much force is that he is relying on his arm too much and not enough on his leg and body strength. To hit the ball with more force, Marty is told that he must put one foot out in front of him when he strikes the ball.

Under the watchful eye of the coach, Marty does indeed put a foot out in front of him when he strikes the ball. Marty is excited about the good results. But if Marty fails to make the same manoeuvre with his feet during matches, he will persist in hitting weakly. If Marty makes the effort to make better use of his legs on almost every shot, he will soon integrate the new movement into his game.

In summary, a model for learning skills comprises five steps: (1) choosing a goal, (2) assessing the current reality, (3) deciding on an action plan, (4) gathering feedback on actions, and (5) frequently practising the new behaviour. Skill-Building Exercise 1-1 will give you an opportunity to apply this model to improve interpersonal skills.

BACK TO THE OPENING CASE

If Todd wishes to be promoted, he will need to work on his interpersonal (soft) skills. While his technical skills are good, he lacks some of the skills required to be effective in a more senior position. With feedback from his supervisor, Todd can set goals, make an action plan, practise, and solicit feedback to improve how he

comes across to customers. He may also want to work on team skills such as cooperation. With improvement in these areas, he is more likely to earn a promotion.



SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 1-1

Applying the Model for Improving Interpersonal Skills

The model for improving interpersonal skills is aimed at developing skills. At the same time, becoming effective in applying the model is a valuable skill within itself. You will need to apply the model perhaps a few times before you can become effective at developing an interpersonal skill when you want to. To get started with the model, attempt to develop an important, yet basic, interpersonal skill. For illustrative purposes, begin with enhancing your ability to give recognition to others for actions and words you consider meritorious. If you are already good at giving recognition, you can enhance your skill even further. For additional information you might want to refer to the discussion about giving recognition in Chapter 11. The exercise under discussion should take a few minutes here and there to spread out over several weeks.

Step 1: Goal or Desired State of Affairs.

Your goal here is to learn how to give recognition, or to enhance further your skill in giving recognition. You want to recognize others in such a way that they are encouraged to keep up the good work. (Or perhaps you have another, related goal.)

Step 2: Assessing Reality.

Ask a few confidants how good you already are in giving recognition. Ask questions such as, "How good have I been in saying thank you?" "When you have done something nice for me, how did I react to you?" "How many thank-you emails have I sent you since you've known me?" Also, reflect on your own behaviour in such matters as giving a server a big tip for exceptional service, or explaining to a tech specialist how much he or she has helped you. Ask yourself whether you have ever thanked a teacher for an outstanding course, or explained to a coach how much his or her advice helped you.

Step 3: Action Plan.

What are you going to do in the next few weeks to recognize the meritorious behaviour of others? Will you be sending thank-you emails, text messages, and warmly worded postcards; offering smiles and handshakes to people who help you; or giving larger-than-usual tips for excellent service with an explanation of why the tip is so large? Part of the action plan will be *who* you will recognize, *where* you will recognize them, *when* you will be giving the recognition, and *how* (in what form) you will be giving the recognition.

Step 4: Feedback on Actions.

Observe carefully how people react to your recognition. Do they smile? Do they shrug off your form of recognition? It is especially important to observe how the person reacts to you during your next interaction. For example, does the server you tipped so generously give you a big welcome? Does the bank teller you thanked so sincerely seem eager to cash your next cheque? If you do not get the intended result from your recognition efforts, you might need to fine-tune your sincerity. Perhaps when you sent a recognition email or text message, you did not mention the person's name, and just wrote, "Hey." Perhaps you did not combine a thank-you with a smile. Analyze carefully the feedback you receive.

Step 5: Frequent Practice.

For this exercise, perhaps you can only practise giving recognition in one or two settings. Yet if this exercise appears promising, you might continue to practise in the future. Should you continue to practise, you will be taking personal steps to making the world a better place.

IDENTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

An important concept in skill development is that people are most likely to develop new skills when they feel the need for change. The importance of the perceived need for change is reflected in a variation of an old joke:

Question: How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: None, if the light bulb wants to change.

As you read this text and do the experiential exercises, you will probably be more highly motivated to follow through with skill development in areas in which you think you need improvement. A specific area in which a person needs to change is referred to as a **developmental need**. For instance, some people are too shy or too abrasive. Some do not give others the encouragement they need.

To improve interpersonal skills, we must first be aware of how we are perceived by other people who interact with us.¹¹ Developmental needs related to interpersonal skills can be identified in several ways. First, if you are candid with yourself, you can probably point

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

developmental need

A specific area in which a person needs to change or improve.