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GLOBAL
EDITION

Human Relations

Interpersonal Job-Oriented Skills

TWELFTH EDITION

Andrew J. DuBrin



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON



A Framework for Interpersonal Skill Development

The same recession that ended Brian McChristian's finance career was raining quarters into his washing machines. "My sales are up 10% to 12% this year," said McChristian who bought the Austin Community Coin Laundry in far west Chicago after losing his loan officer job.

Like the American diner, the coin laundry is a cultural icon, but one associated with tedium, if not strife. In movies ranging from "Shopgirl" and "Wayne's World 2" to several named "Laundromat," the coin laundry is where important encounters occur between strangers who never aspired to be there.

Owners who aspire to simply drop by and collect coins take the hardest hit during a recession, say industry experts. "The survivors are running promotions and providing hand-on service to customers," says an industry specialist.



LEARNING Objectives

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

After decades in a coat and tie, McChristian now wears jeans and sweatshirts 40 hours a week in the Austin Community Coin Laundry. To some extent, his double-digit sales increase in one year came because of the recession. One Monday morning, the crowd inside his store included several newcomers whose home equipment had broken down or who had moved back into this low-income neighborhood following job loss.

The most difficult challenge facing McChristian, a 54-year-old college graduate from the suburbs, involved confronting the loiterers who had hung out in his store under its previous owner. In this stretch of inner-city Chicago, drug dealers reign among economic desolation, and their presence in the laundry had scared off business.

"I didn't like coming here before he bought it," says Muriel Moore, a nurse who now visits the laundry each Monday morning. "There were just too many guys hanging out doing things they shouldn't."

After employing locals to help him run the store, McChristian issued a plea though them: Anyone without clothes to clean please stay away from the laundry and its parking lot. Its customers—largely mothers, grandmothers, and children—deserve a crime-free place to clean clothes, he told them. It worked. "We don't allow any hanging around," says Jimmie Burnett, the assistant manager at the laundry.^[1]

One of the several themes emerging from the story about the coin laundry is that you need good skill in human relations to be successful. The owner worked with his team to gain the cooperation of neighborhood members who were frightening away customers. 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."^[2]

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.^[3] Many employers, including Southwest Airlines, emphasize hiring people with positive attitudes rather than focusing strictly on technical skills. And another airline JetBlue refuses to hire pilots who are arrogant or nasty despite their piloting skills.

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 behavior, and problems in interpersonal relationships rather than substandard interpersonal skill.^[4] An example of poor interpersonal relations that led to job loss was a receptionist at a boat dealer who told several potential customers something to the effect: "Are you just here to look. You don't look like you could afford one of our speed boats."

“ For employers, interpersonal and technical skills go hand-in-hand.”
 —Linda Leung, *Network World IT Education and Training Newsletter*

Another way of looking at the importance of interpersonal skills is that they enable you to connect with others, thereby being more successful in business. Author Susan Scott observes that the next frontier for growth in business lies in the area of human connectivity.^[5]

This chapter explains how people develop interpersonal skills and presents a model that can serve as a foundation for improving your interpersonal skills. In addition, the chapter explains how the workplace can be a natural setting for developing interpersonal skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

interpersonal skill training
 The teaching of skills in dealing with others so they can be put into practice.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

This entire book is devoted to 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 key concepts required for understanding a particular aspect of interpersonal relations, such as resolving conflict. Second, the chapter provides specific suggestions or behavioral guidelines for improvement in the aspect of interpersonal relations under consideration.

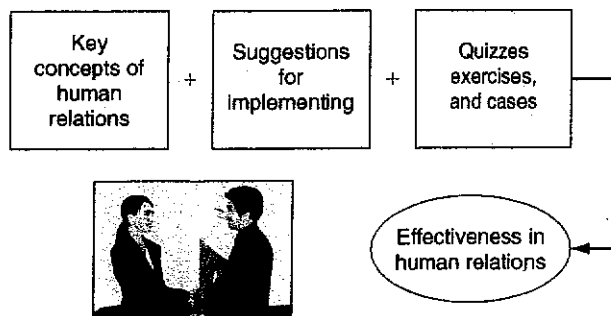
Third, a variety of exercises give you the opportunity to work on and improve your skills. Among these exercises are self-assessment quizzes, skill-building exercises, and cases for analysis. In addition, the questions at the end of each chapter give you an opportunity to think through and apply the key ideas in the chapter. Figure 1-1 illustrates the plan of the book.

Much of this book is concerned with interpersonal skill training, the teaching of skills in dealing with others so they can be put into practice. Interpersonal skills training is referred to as *soft-skills* training to differentiate it from technical training. (Technical skill training is referred to as *hard-skills* training.) Soft-skills 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 polite ^[6]
- Being able to cooperate with others to meet objectives (teamwork)

Soft-skills 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, 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.

FIGURE 1-1 Plan for Achieving Effectiveness in Interpersonal Relations



JOB-ORIENTED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN ACTION

Executive Learns About the Importance of Interpersonal Skills

Several years ago, while visiting a regional branch of Lee Hecht Harrison, a global management services company, then-president Stephen Harrison was stopped short by Ray, his chief operating officer. "You didn't greet the receptionist," said Ray, who proceeded to show Harrison how to do what he called the "two minute schmooze." Introducing himself, Ray inquired about the receptionist's commute and impressions of the company.

Ray explained to Harrison: "A receptionist is a corporate concierge. He or she will talk to more important people in a day—suppliers, customers, even CEOs—than you will talk to all year."

"Decency is not just about being nice," noted Harrison, author of *The Manager's Book of Decencies*. Rather, it is about creating a "bubble wrap" of good deeds that will protect a company in hard

times. "Our willingness to be decent at work cannot depend on whether business is up or whether we're in a bad mood or whether it's raining. Decencies don't amount to anything unless we take the trouble to make them come alive through concrete acts in all kinds of weather."

Questions

1. What might an executive chatting with a receptionist be considered an interpersonal skill?
2. In what way might be decent to employees help make a company more profitable?

Source: "Talking with the Receptionist, Pausing When You Speak, and Other Secrets of Leadership Success," *Knowledge@Wharton* (<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1792>), p. 1.

Soft skills are often the differentiating factor between adequate and outstanding performance because dealing with people is part of so many jobs.^[7] 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 also:

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 the 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. The accompanying box illustrates the importance of interpersonal skills for a business executive.

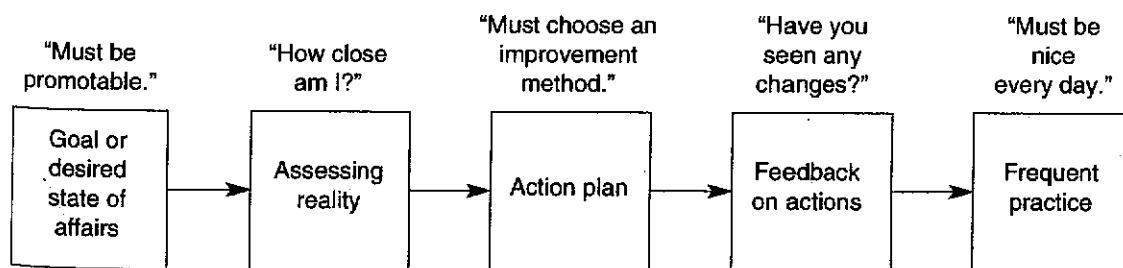
Well-known executive coach Marshall Goldsmith reminds us that building relationships with people is important for workers at every level in the organization, including the CEO. An example of an interpersonal skill that would help build relationships would be demanding good results from others yet showing them respect at the same time.^[8]

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 behavior. Learning is a complex subject, yet its fundamentals follow a five-part sequence, as shown in Figure 1-2. To change your behavior, and therefore improve, you need a goal and a way to measure your current reality against this goal. You also need a way to assess that reality, and a way to obtain feedback on the impact of your new actions.^[9]

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

FIGURE 1-2 A Model for Improving Interpersonal Skills



Goal or Desired State of Affairs

Changing your behavior, including enhancing 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 that 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 for reaching the goal.^[10]

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 hopes [a goal] are to be able to sit in a meeting and not nibble my nails even though I know I might be called on." This man's desired state of affairs (his goal) is to avoid putting his nails in his mouth in order to 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 acquiring the improvements in behavior 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 worthy of promotion to a leadership position. To achieve his goal, he will have to achieve the general goal of improving his interpersonal relations. By conferring with the human resources director, Sean learns that his broad goal of "improving my interpersonal relations" will have to be supported by more specific goals. Having poor interpersonal relations or "rubbing people the wrong way" includes many different behaviors. To begin, Sean selects one counterproductive behavior 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 To express your goals in positive statements is likely to be more energizing than focusing on the negative.^[11] 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."

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.

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 Depot supervisor might not get excited about having the store associates load lumber onto the steel shelves. 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 might just happen to meet the right partner for you.

Short-range goals make an important contribution to attaining goals of longer duration. If a 1-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 1 month. Progress toward a larger goal is self-rewarding.

Assessing Reality

The second major requirement for a method of changing behavior is to assess reality. Sean needs a way to assess how far he is from his goal of being eligible for promotion and how intolerant he is perceived to be. Sean has already heard from his manager, Alison, that he is not eligible for promotion right now. 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 coworkers perceive me to have?"

A starting point in answering these questions might be for Sean to confer with Alison about his behavior. To be more thorough, however, Sean might ask a friend in the office to help him answer the questions. A coworker is sometimes 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. Sean could ask a parent, a significant other, or both about the extent of his intolerance.

self-efficacy

The confidence in your ability to carry out a specific task.

action plan

A series of steps to achieve a goal.

An Action Plan

The learning model needs some mechanism to change the relationship between the person and the environment. An action plan is a series of steps 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 some actions to improve his interpersonal relations, especially his intolerance. The change 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 does. An example would be attempting to understand why a sales representative wants to extend credit to a customer with a poor credit rating.
- Learning to control his own behavior so that he does not make intolerant statements just because he is experiencing pressure.
- Taking a course in interpersonal skills or human relations.
- 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 Sean 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 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 have to measure your progress in several 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. Alison can also collect any feedback she hears from others in the office. Furthermore, Sean will profit from feedback over a prolonged period of time, perhaps one or two years. He will be looking to see whether his image has changed from an intolerant person who rubs people the wrong way to a tolerant person who has cordial interactions with others.

Frequent Practice

The final step in the learning model makes true skill development possible. Implementing the new behavior 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 practice being tolerant regularly until it becomes a positive habit.

After a skill is 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 book, you will need to practice them frequently to make a noticeable difference in your behavior.

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

Under the watchful eye of the coach, Marisa does put a foot out in front when she strikes the ball. Marisa is excited about the good results. But if Marisa fails to make the same maneuver with her feet during her tennis matches, she will persist in hitting weakly. If Marisa makes the effort to use her legs more effectively on almost every shot, she will soon integrate the new movement into her game.

In summary, the basics of a model for learning skills comprise five steps: goal or desired state of affairs → assessing reality → an action plan → feedback on actions → frequent practice. You must exercise self-discipline to complete each step. If you skip a step, you will be disappointed with the results of your interpersonal skill-development program.

BACK TO THE OPENING CASE

If Brian McChristian wants his business to survive, he must continue to practice his skills in developing good relationships with his assistant manager and community members. Gaining the cooperation of non-customers to stay away from the store will be a continuing challenge. McChristian must continue to work closely

with neighborhood people he hired, so they can help him continue to maintain a peaceful and nonthreatening environment for customers and potential customers of his coin laundry.



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 notes have I sent you since you've known me?" Also, reflect on your own behavior 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 behavior of others? Will you be sending thank-you e-mails, text messages, and warmly-worded postal cards; 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* are you going to recognize, *where* you are going to recognize them, *when* you will be giving recognition, and *how* (what form) of recognition will you be giving.

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 who you tipped so generously give you a big welcome? Does the bank teller who you thanked so sincerely seem eager to cash your next check? If you do not get the intended result from your recognition efforts, you might need to fine-tune your sincerity. Maybe when you sent a recognition e-mail or text message, you did not mention the person's name, and just wrote "Hey." Maybe 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 practice giving recognition in one or two settings. Yet if this exercise appears promising, you might continue to practice in the future. Should you continue to practice, you will be taking personal step to make the world a better place.

IDENTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

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 book 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 development. A specific area in which a person needs to change is referred to as a **developmental need**. For instance, some people may be too shy, too abrasive, or too intolerant, and some may not give others the encouragement they need.

developmental need

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

To improve interpersonal skills, we must first be aware of how we are perceived by people who interact with us.^[12] Developmental needs related to interpersonal skills can be identified in several ways. First, if you are candid with yourself you can probably point to areas in which you recognize that change is needed. You might reflect on your experiences and realize that you have had repeated difficulty in resolving conflict. Second, a related approach is to think of feedback you have received. If there has been consistency in asking you to improve in a particular area, you could hypothesize that the feedback has merit. Perhaps five different people have told you that you are not a good team player. "Becoming a better team player" might therefore be one of your developmental needs.

A third approach to assessing developmental needs is to solicit feedback. Ask the opinion of people who know you well to help you identify needs for improvement with respect to interpersonal skills. Present and previous managers are a valuable source of this type of feedback. A fourth approach to pinpointing developmental needs is closely related to the previous three: feedback from performance evaluations. If you have worked for a firm that uses performance evaluations to help people develop, you may have received constructive suggestions during the evaluation. For example, one manager told his assistant: "You need to project more self-confidence when you answer the phone. You sound so unsure and vague when you talk on the telephone. I have noticed this, and several customers have joked about it." The recipient of this feedback was prompted to participate in assertiveness training where she learned how to express herself more positively.

Self-Assessment Quiz 1-1 gives you the opportunity to identify your developmental needs. The same exercise is a first step in improving your interpersonal relations on the job because identification of a problem is the first—and most important—step toward change. For example, if you cite improving your relationships with people from cultures different from your own, you have planted the seeds for change. You are then more likely to seek out people from other cultures in the workplace or at school and cultivate their friendship.

Now that you (and perhaps another person) have identified specific behaviors that may require change, you need to draw up an action plan. Proceed with your action plan even though you have just begun studying this text, but peek ahead to relevant chapters if you wish. Describe briefly a plan of attack for bringing about the change you hope to achieve for each statement that is checked. Ideas for your action plan can come from information presented anywhere in this text, from outside reading, or from talking to a person experienced in dealing with people. A basic example would be to study materials about customer service and observe an effective model if you checked "I feel awkward dealing with a customer."

UNIVERSAL NEEDS FOR IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

universal training need

An area for improvement common to most people.

I have just described how understanding your unique developmental needs facilitates improving your interpersonal skills. There are also areas for skill improvement in interpersonal relations that are shared by most managerial, professional, technical, and sales personnel. These common areas for improvement are referred to as **universal training needs**.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ 1-1

Are Your Developmental Needs?

This exercise is designed to heighten your self-awareness of areas in which you could profit from personal improvement. It is not a test, and there is no score, yet your answers to the checklist may be helpful to you in mapping out a program of improvement in your interpersonal relations.

Directions: Below are a number of specific aspects of behavior that suggest a person needs improvement in interpersonal skills. Check each statement that is generally true for you. You can test the validity of this exercise by having one or two other people who know you well answer the form as they think it describes you. Then compare your self-analysis with their analysis of you.

	<i>Place check mark in this column</i>
1. I'm too shy.	_____
2. I'm too overbearing and obnoxious.	_____
3. I intimidate too many people.	_____
4. I have trouble expressing my feelings.	_____
5. I make negative comments about people too readily.	_____
6. I have a difficult time solving problems when working in a group.	_____
7. I'm a poor team player.	_____
8. Very few people listen to me.	_____
9. It is difficult for me to relate well to people from different cultures.	_____
10. When I'm in conflict with another person, I usually lose.	_____
11. I hog too much time in meetings or in class.	_____
12. I'm very poor at office politics.	_____
13. People find me boring.	_____
14. It is difficult for me to criticize others.	_____
15. I'm too serious most of the time.	_____
16. My temper is too often out of control.	_____
17. I avoid controversy in dealing with others.	_____
18. It is difficult for me to find things to talk about with others.	_____
19. I don't get my point across well.	_____
20. I feel awkward dealing with a customer.	_____
21. I am a poor listener.	_____
22. I don't get the point of the importance of ethics in business.	_____
23. My attempts to lead others have failed.	_____
24. I rarely smile when I am with other people.	_____
25. I multitask when people are talking to me.	_____
26. I insult too many people on social networking sites.	_____
27. _____ (Fill in your own statement.)	_____

Almost any professional person, for example, could profit from enhancing his or her negotiation and listening skills.

This book provides the opportunity for skill development in a number of universal training needs. In working through these universal training needs, be aware that many of them will also fit your specific developmental needs. A given universal training need can be an individual's developmental need at the same time. It is reasonable to expect that you will be more strongly motivated to improve skills that relate closely to your developmental needs.

The major universal training needs covered in this text are as follows:

1. **Understanding individual differences.** To deal effectively with others in the workplace, it is necessary to recognize that people have different capabilities, needs, and interests.

2. **Self-esteem and self-confidence.** To function effectively with people in most work and personal situations, people need to feel good about themselves and believe that they can accomplish important tasks. Although self-esteem and self-confidence are essentially attitudes about the self, they also involve skills such as attaining legitimate accomplishments and using positive self-talk.
3. **Interpersonal communication.** Effective communication with people is essential for carrying out more than 50 percent of the work conducted by most professional and managerial workers.
4. **Behaving appropriately when using digital devices.** Digital devices are integrated into most facets of our work and personal lives. Knowing how to use various electronic devices including e-mail, cell phones, and smart phones in a positive and constructive way instead of being uncivil and unproductive can be a major contributor to your interpersonal relationships.
5. **Developing teamwork skills.** The most sweeping change in the organization of work in the last 35 years has been a shift to teams and away from traditional departments. Knowing how to be an effective team player therefore enhances your chances for success in the modern organization.
6. **Group problem solving and decision making.** As part of the same movement that emphasizes work teams, organizations now rely heavily on group problem solving. As a consequence, being an above-average contributor to group problem solving is a key part of effective interpersonal relations on the job. In addition to solving the problem, a decision must be made.
7. **Cross-cultural relations.** The modern workplace has greater cultural diversity than ever before. Being able to deal effectively with people from different cultures, from within and outside your own country, is therefore an important requirement for success.
8. **Resolving conflicts with others.** Conflict in the workplace is almost inevitable as people compete for limited resources. Effective interpersonal relations are therefore dependent upon knowing how to resolve conflict successfully.
9. **Becoming an effective leader.** In today's organizations, a large number of people have the opportunity to practice leadership, even if on temporary assignments. Enhancing one's leadership skills is therefore almost a universal requirement.
10. **Motivating others.** Whether you have the title of manager or leader or are working alone, you have to know how to motivate the people whom you depend on to get your work accomplished. Given that few people are gifted motivators, most people can profit from skill development in motivation.
11. **Helping others develop and grow.** As power is shared in organizations among managers and individual contributors (non-managers) alike, more people are required to help each other develop and grow. To carry out this role, most of them need skill development in coaching and mentoring.
12. **Positive political skills.** Whether you work in a small or large firm, part of having effective interpersonal relations is being able to influence others so that your interests are satisfied. Positive political skills help you satisfy your interests without being unethical or devious.
13. **Customer service skills.** The current emphasis on customer satisfaction dictates that every worker should know how to provide good service to customers. Most people can benefit from strengthening their skills in serving both external and internal customers. (Internal customers are the people with whom you interact on the job.)
14. **Enhancing ethical behavior.** Although most workers in their heart know right from wrong, we can all sharpen our ability to make ethical decisions. By consistently making highly ethical decisions, people can improve their interpersonal relations.
15. **Stress management and personal productivity.** Having your stress under control and having good work habits and time-management skills contributes to relative

well to others even though they are not interpersonal skills themselves. By having your stress under control and being efficient and productive, you are in a better position to relate comfortably to others. Coworkers enjoy relating to a person who is not visibly stressed and who does not procrastinate.

16. **Job search and career-management skills.** Finding an outstanding job for yourself, holding onto the job, and moving ahead are not specifically interpersonal skills. However, both finding the right job for yourself and managing your career rely heavily on good interpersonal skills. Two basic examples are conducting yourself well in an interview and developing a network of contacts that can help you advance.



DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ON THE JOB

The primary thrust of this book is to teach interpersonal skills that can be applied to the job. As part of enhancing your skills, it is essential to recognize that opportunities also exist in the workplace for developing interpersonal skills. This dual opportunity for learning soft skills is similar to the way hard skills are learned both inside and outside the classroom. Studying a text and doing laboratory exercises, for example, will help you learn useful information technology skills. On the job, one day you might be asked to establish your company's presence on Facebook. Having never performed this task before, you may search a computer manual, ask questions of coworkers, telephone a help desk, and use trial and error. Within an hour, you have acquired a valuable new skill. The information technology skills you learned in the course facilitated learning new computer tasks, yet the actual learning of how to set up a Facebook presence for your company was done on the job.

Here, we look at two related aspects of learning interpersonal skills on the job—informal learning and specific developmental experiences.

Informal Learning

Business firms, as well as nonprofit organizations, invest an enormous amount of money and time in teaching interpersonal skills. Teaching methods include paying for employees to take outside courses, conducting training on company premises, using videoconferencing or Web-based courses, and reimbursing for distance learning courses on the Internet. Workers also develop interpersonal skills by interacting with work associates and observing how other people deal with interpersonal challenges. Figure 1-4 presents a summary of how people learn on the job. Observe that the learning experiences are a mixture of formal learning such as company-provided training and informal learning such as interaction with coworkers. Much of the learning shown in Figure 1-4 refers to technical skills and knowledge, but learning about interpersonal skills is also included.

Informal learning is the acquisition of knowledge and skills that takes place naturally outside a structured learning environment. In the context of the workplace, informal learning takes place without being designed by the organization. Learning can take place informally in such ways as speaking to the person in the next cubicle, asking a question of a coworker while in the hall, or calling the tech support center. A study of more than 1,000 employees at seven companies in seven states found that up to 70 percent of learning takes place informally. Another researcher reported about the same figure.^[13] The director of the first study emphasizes that formal training includes both a goal stated by the organization and a defined method or process. Informal learning can occur whether or not a goal is stated or the method is defined.

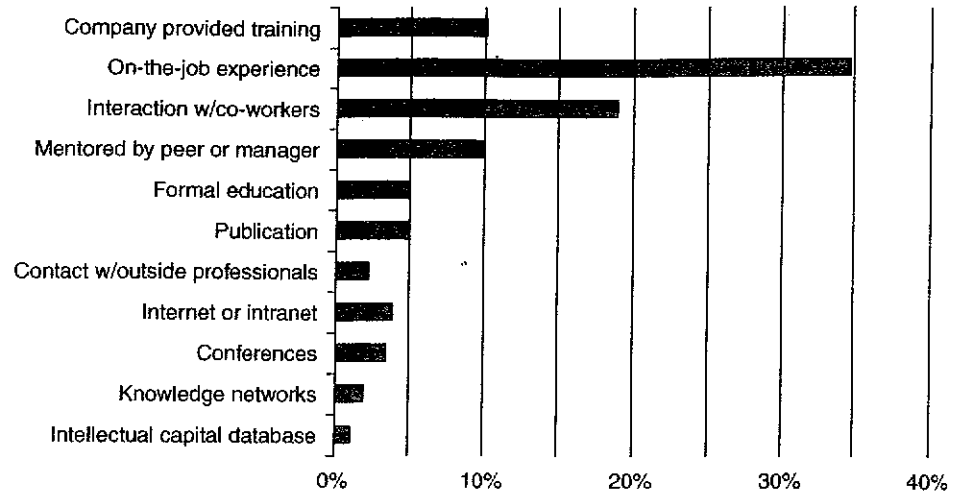
A more recent study conducted by the American Society for Training Directors also found that informal learning is part of how employees learn. Nearly one-half of the 1,104 respondents said that informal learning is occurring to a high or very-high extent in their

informal learning

The acquisition of knowledge and skills that takes place naturally outside a structured learning environment.

FIGURE 1-4 Sources of Learning on the Job

Capital Works reported that we learn at work through the following means:



Source: Reprinted with permission. Capital Works, LLC, <http://laglesslearner.com/intros/informal.html>.

organizations. E-mail emerged as the top-ranked informal learning tool, with accessing information from an Intranet being a close second.^[14]

Learning interpersonal skills informally can take place through such means as observing a coworker, manager, or team leader deal with a situation. A newly hired assistant store manager couldn't help seeing and overhearing a customer screaming at the store manager about a defective space heater. The manager said calmly, "It appears you are pretty upset about your heater that caused a short circuit in your house. What can I do to help you?" The customer calmed down as quickly as air being released from a balloon. The assistant store manager thought to herself, "Now I know how to handle a customer who has gone ballistic. I'll state what the customer is probably feeling, and then offer to help."

Informal learning can also occur when another person coaches you about how to handle a situation. The store manager might have said to the new assistant manager, "Let me tell you what to do in case you encounter a customer who goes ballistic. Summarize in a few words what he or she is probably feeling, and then offer to help. The effect can be remarkable." (This incident is classified as informal learning because it takes place outside a classroom.)

Formal and informal learning of interpersonal skills are useful supplements to each other. If you are formally learning interpersonal skills your level of awareness for enhancing your interpersonal skills will increase. By formally studying interpersonal skills, you are likely to develop the attitude "What hints about dealing more effectively with people can I pick up on the job?" You may have noticed that if you are taking lessons in a sport, you become much more observant about watching the techniques of outstanding athletes in person or on television.

Specific Developmental Experiences

Another perspective on developing interpersonal skills in the workplace is that certain experiences are particularly suited to such development. Coping with a difficult customer, as previously suggested, would be one such scenario. Morgan W. McCall, Jr., for many years has studied ways in which leaders develop on the job. Contending with certain challenges is at the heart of these key learning experiences. Several of the powerful learning experiences McCall has identified are particularly geared toward developing better interpersonal skills.^[15]

- **Unfamiliar responsibilities.** The person has to handle responsibilities that are new, very different, or much broader than previous ones. Dealing with these unfamiliar responsibilities necessitates asking others for help and gaining their cooperation.

For example, being assigned to supervise a group doing work unfamiliar to you would put you in a position of gaining the cooperation of group members who knew more about the work than you.

- **Proving yourself.** If you feel added pressure to show others that you can deal effectively with responsibilities, you are likely to develop skills in projecting self-confidence and persuading others.
- **Problems with employees.** If you supervise employees, or have coworkers, who lack adequate experience, are incompetent, or are poorly motivated, you need to practice such skills as effective listening and conflict resolution in order to work smoothly with them.
- **Influencing without authority.** An excellent opportunity for practicing influence skills is being forced to influence coworkers, higher management, company outsiders, and other key people over whom you have no formal control. Team leaders typically face the challenge of needing to influence workers whom they lack the authority to discipline or grant raises. (The reason is that a team leader usually does not have as much formal authority as a traditional manager.)
- **Difficult manager.** If you and your manager have different opinions on how to approach problems, or if your manager has serious shortcomings, you will have to use your best human relations skills to survive. You will need to develop such subtle skills as using diplomacy to explain to your manager that his or her suggestion is completely unworkable.

The general point to be derived from these scenarios is that certain on-the-job challenges require a high level of interpersonal skill. Faced with such challenges, you will be prompted to use the best interpersonal skills you have. Formal training can be a big help because you might remember a skill that should be effective in a particular situation. Assume that you are faced with an overbearing manager who belittles you in front of others. You might be prompted to try a conflict-resolution technique you acquired in class.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ IN OVERVIEW

Self-Assessment Quiz 1-1, "What Are My Developmental Needs," if answered accurately then acted upon will help you considerably in your job performance and your career. However, capitalizing on your strengths is even more important for your personal growth, and these topics will be discussed in Chapter 3 about building self-esteem, and Chapter 17 about advancing your career.

Concept Review and Reinforcement

interpersonal skill training 4
self-efficacy 7

action plan 8
developmental need 10

universal training need 10
informal learning 13

Summary

Effective interpersonal relations must be combined with technical knowledge to achieve success in any job involving interactions with people. This book presents a three-part strategy for achieving a high level of interpersonal skill. Each chapter presents concepts related to an area of interpersonal skill, behavioral guidelines, and experiential exercises. Interpersonal skill training is also referred to as soft-skills training to differentiate it from technical training.

A five-part model of learning can be applied to improving interpersonal skills. First, state a goal or desired state of affairs. Second, assess the reality of how far you are from your goal. Third, develop an action plan to change the relationship between the person and the environment. Self-discipline is required to implement the action plan. Fourth, solicit feedback on actions to measure the effects of your actions against reality. Fifth, continue to practice your newly learned skill.

To use the learning model effectively, it is useful to understand the goal-setting process. The guidelines offered here for goal setting are to (1) state each goal as a positive statement, (2) formulate specific goals, (3) formulate concise goals, (4) set realistic as well as stretch goals, and (5) set goals for different time periods.

People are most likely to develop new skills when they feel the need for change. A developmental need is the specific area in which a person needs to change. Identifying your developmental needs in relation to interpersonal relations can be achieved through self-analysis and feedback from others. You can also solicit feedback and make use of the feedback you have received in performance appraisal.

Universal training needs are those areas for improvement that are common to most people. The major topics in this text reflect universal training needs because they are necessary for success in most positions involving interaction with people.

Opportunities exist in the workplace to develop interpersonal skill. A general approach to developing these skills is informal learning, whereby you acquire skills naturally outside a structured work environment. Informal learning of interpersonal skills often takes place through such means as observing a coworker, manager, or team leader cope with a situation. Certain workplace experiences are particularly well suited to developing interpersonal skills. These include unfamiliar responsibilities, proving yourself, having problems with employees, influencing without authority, and having a difficult manager.

Questions for Discussion and Review

1. Several of the most prestigious business schools, such as those of Wharton, MIT, and the University of Virginia, now give much more emphasis on teaching soft skills. Why do you think this change might have come about?
2. In your opinion, do supervisors of entry-level workers rely more on soft skills or hard skills to accomplish their work?
3. Why do people need soft skills in an era of high technology?

4. Why are soft skills quite important for job seekers when there is a shortage of good jobs open in their field?
5. How does a person know whether or not the feedback he or she receives from another person is accurate?
6. How could doing a thorough job with Self-Assessment Quiz 1-1 have a major impact on a person's career?
7. A statement frequently made in business is, "If you are obnoxious, you need to be very talented to succeed." How does this conclusion relate to the learning of interpersonal skills?
8. Based on what you have learned so far in this book, and your own intuition, how would you respond to the statement, "You can't learn how to get along with people from reading a book"?
9. Give an example of a skill you might have learned informally at any point in your life.
10. The coin laundry operator described at the outset of this chapter salvaged his business by applying soft skills. Can you give another example of how a small-business owner needs good soft skills to survive?

The Web Corner

www.internetttime.com/Learning

(Informal learning)

www.impactfactory.com

(Interpersonal skill development)

www.winsportcanada.ca/cop

(Developing interpersonal skills through a challenge course)

Internet Skill Builder: The Importance of Interpersonal Skills

One of the themes of this chapter and the entire book is that interpersonal skills are important for success in

business. But what do employers really think? To find out, visit the Web sites of five of your favorite companies, such as www.Starbucks.com or www.Apple.com. Go to the employment section and search for a job that you might qualify for now or in the future. Investigate which interpersonal or human relations skills the employer mentions as a requirement, such as "Must have superior spoken communication skills." Make up a list of the interpersonal skills you find mentioned. What conclusion or conclusions do you reach from this exercise?

Nobody Likes Me

Marge Caitlin, the supervisor of inventory control, was walking down the aisle with BlackBerry in hand thinking about the major inventory-reduction program taking place at the company. She thought to herself, "The CEO is putting a lot of pressure on us to trim inventory to the bone. Yet the manufacturing and sales groups want enough inventory available so they can do their job. We really have to get focused and creative to satisfy everybody."

As Caitlin hurried down the aisle thinking about the inventory challenge, she still kept a watchful eye on her staff working in their cubicles. She noticed that Phil Baxter, one of the inventory control analysts, was looking even more discouraged than usual. Caitlin put aside her BlackBerry, and tapped on the entrance to Baxter's cubicle. "Can we talk?" said Caitlin with a reassuring smile on her face.

"Sure," said Baxter. "Did I screw up again?"

"Phil, there you go putting yourself down again," said Caitlin. "I just noticed that you look a little glum today. I want to know if you are having a problem that I could help with."

"Thanks, Marge, for being interested in my problems. It's really nothing new—just the same old problem that I have had in school and on the job. Nobody likes me. Nobody wants me. It gets sickening after awhile."

"What makes you so sure that nobody likes you and that nobody wants you?" asked Caitlin.

Baxter responded, "First of all, almost nobody asks me to go out to lunch with him or her. Second, when you asked us to form our own teams, no team invited me to join them. I was finally chosen to be on one of the three teams because I was the last person not assigned."

"What do you think is your problem?" asked Caitlin.

"Maybe you could tell me. I think people see me as kind of a nerd. Maybe I'm just not likeable. I don't think I'm special in any way."

"Just hang in there for awhile," said Caitlin. "After this big inventory overhaul is completed, I will get back to you with some suggestions."

"I'll be waiting for your magic bullet," said Baxter with a dejected look.

Case Questions

1. What developmental needs does Phil Baxter appear to have?
2. If you were Marge Caitlin, what would you recommend that Baxter do?
3. From the little evidence that you have, what is your opinion of Caitlin's interpersonal skills?

Betty Lou Sets Some Goals

Betty Lou is a marketing specialist at Pasta Mucho, the biggest pasta maker in her region. Two years in the position, she contributed to the success of the Pasta Mucho product line. Although Betty Lou admits that a recession has contributed to the upswing in pasta sales nationwide, she believes that more than luck is involved. "After all," she says, "I contributed to the marketing campaign that preparing pasta at home makes you cool."

Betty Lou's boss, Garth, is pleased with her job performance; but as part of the performance evaluation

process, he has encouraged Betty Lou to prepare a goal sheet, mapping out her plans for the upcoming year. "Make it impressive," said Garth, "because my boss will be reviewing your goals also." Three days later, Betty Lou sent Garth an e-mail laying out her goals as follows:

1. Help make Pasta Mucho one of the great brands on the planet, much like Coca-Cola, Mercedes, and Microsoft.
2. Become the best marketing executive I can be.
3. Help the company develop some other wildly successful brands.

4. Get in good with more buyers at supermarket chains.
5. Get Pasta Mucho all over Facebook and Twitter.

After reading the set of goals, Garth thought to himself, "What can I tell Betty Lou without hurting her feelings?"

Case Questions

1. If you were Garth, what would you tell Betty Lou about her goals without hurting her feelings?

2. What suggestions can you offer Betty Lou to improve her goal statement?
3. How might interpersonal skills contribute to Betty Lou attaining her goals?

Interpersonal Skills

Selling at the office

One student plays the role of Kristina, who sells wellness products such as vitamins and food supplements for a direct sales company. (Direct sales are from person to person, and not distributed through stores.) Kristina is working hard to reach her goal for the month, and she just needs to sell \$100 more of products to attain her goal. Another student plays the role of Ricardo who enjoys working with Kristina but thinks that wellness products are overrated. During lunch in the company cafeteria, Kristina approaches Ricardo and begins her sales pitch about her wonderful life-enhancing products.

Run the role-play for about six minutes, while other class members observe the interactions and later provide feedback about the interpersonal skills displayed by Kristina and Ricardo. Observers rate the role players on two dimensions, using a 1-to-5 scale from very poor to very good. One dimension is "effective use of human relations techniques." The second dimension is "acting ability." A few observers might voluntarily provide feedback to the role players in terms of sharing their ratings and observations. The course instructor might also provide feedback.