

# 7 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

## TWO - WAY COMMUNICATION



PPT 7  
TWO WAY  
COMMUNICATIONS



TOOLKIT  
MAKE IT  
EFFECTIVE

There is always a sender and receiver, and in any interaction these roles will be simultaneous and changing. N2000 managers must communicate with differing individual and groups with many different interest, views and opinions. This can sometimes lead to difficulties and conflict. **Appreciating and understating how these interactions work will help the N2000 manager modify and manage such situations.**

### You may need to

- Facilitate group activities & find out your group's opinions
- Negotiate

### And if that fails,

- Resolve conflicts.

*We will look at these in turn.*

### Firstly, looking at group behaviours...

Which do you think you are? Do you think you are **task centred** or **people centred**? And of course, some people are self-centred.

### GROUP BEHAVIOURS

In meetings or when working with groups, people may exhibit the following behaviours.

#### Task Centred

asks for ideas	clarifies things
summarises	checks agreement
keeps things "on target"	

### Self Centred

draws attention to themselves  
dominates to boost own ego  
concerned for self, not team or task  
withdraws if don't get their way

At some point, have a look at the

### People Centred

involves people  
checks feelings  
breaks tension  
handles disagreement  
ensures people "join in"

Questionnaire on Group Skills and Behaviours, below. If you are brave, ask someone back in your office to fill it in for you based on how you behave during meetings!

## 7.1 GROUP BEHAVIOURS

The following skills and behaviours are quite common in individuals when they are in meetings or group situations. Firstly, please tick those which apply to you. Are they positive or negative responses to have to working in a group?

If you think you ought to do more of a particular behaviour, then write "more" in the right-hand column, likewise for "less".

Use this to increase your awareness of your own behaviour in groups, and realise how that can affect others.

	Category	Description	✓	Should do more or less?
1	Supporting	Reinforcing ideas, adding strength		
2	Building	Develop/explores other peoples' ideas		
3	Proposing	Puts forward new ideas/ course of action		
4	Blocking	Raising difficulties without providing alternatives or reasons		
5	Acknowledging feelings	Aware of and stating feelings/emotions		
6	Attacking	Negative criticism (usually personal)		
7	Diverting	Joking, irrelevant comment to distract		
8	Seeking Information	Asks for facts/opinions		
9	Clarifying/ summarising	Checking, understanding, pulling together what has been said		
10	Speaking for others	Speaking for "others" to cover what you think		
11	Defending	Protecting personal position/ideas		
12	Giving information	Offering facts, opinions positively		
13	Bringing in	Involving others directly and positively		
14	Shutting out	Attempting to exclude contributions		
15	Assertive Conclusion	Asserting own conclusion to over-ride others		

## 7.2 FACILITATION SKILLS

**Facilitation is a means of helping groups generate ideas and problem solve. A N2000 manager may need to run a consultation exercise, a public meeting, or a workshop, so having some basic techniques to help such event run more smoothly and ensure the communication is effective would be useful.**

The facilitator should ideally be independent and not influence the discussions in anyway apart from helping to keep them on track. This can be difficult to achieve when this is being undertaken by the N2000 manager who will be associated by a particular point of view. However facilitation can be very useful where there is trust and open and transparent communications

For sensitive issues, it is advisable to use an independent facilitator rather than someone in your team, but an understanding of the techniques involved, to assist the facilitator to understand the audience and context is useful for the N2000 manager.

**Facilitation can be grouped into a series of events:**

- generating ideas
- organising and categorising them
- voting and prioritising
- generating solutions
- action planning
- And evaluation

### Top Ten (ISH) Facilitation Techniques

Facilitation is a means of helping groups generate ideas and problem solve. It can be grouped into a series of events – firstly generating ideas, then organising and categorising them, voting and prioritising, and generating solutions, and finally action planning. You may also want to include some kind of evaluation at the end – either of the facilitation or the event itself.

The facilitator should ideally be independent and not influence the discussions in anyway apart from helping to keep them on track. In many instances facilitating things for your own team should be fine, but for sensitive issues you may want to use someone unconnected with your team.

**Here are a few basic ideas for facilitating your own events.**

#### a) Generating Ideas

**1.** An obvious one to begin with – Brainstorming or Quick Thinking. Each person writes down their ideas. This can be done individually onto post-it notes or scrap paper, or in small groups onto flip chart paper.

**NOTE:** nothing is ever wrong with brainstorming – no ideas should be rejected at this stage.

**2.** Generate ideas in pairs, and write them down. Join with another pair in the group to compare what you've



come up with and make any additions. This group of four should then join another and do the same again. If the

groups get much bigger than 8 it becomes a bit unwieldy so it's best to stop there.

### b) Organising and categorising

3. Having generated ideas, stick them to a wall, white board, or lay on a flat surface. As new ones are added, read those already there and group similar ones. This can be done by the facilitator or the participants. It's better if the participants do it, because they then have "ownership" of the information, and there can be no later accusations of biasing information.

4. If you find the group going off at a tangent, or ideas coming up which are interesting but not relevant at the moment, then you could use an **Ideas Park** or **Talking Wall**. This can just be a sheet of flip-chart with Ideas Park written on it, and a few drawings if you are feeling creative. Write the ideas onto post-its or directly onto the flip-chart with a promise to come back to them later. Make this sincere and make sure you do refer back to them again or people will just think they are being fobbed off.

### c) Voting and Prioritising

Having generated ideas and grouped them, you need to start doing something with them. You may also want to use some of these techniques once you get to the action planning stage.

5. Lay the ideas, on post-its or pieces of paper, out in a straight line. People work their way along the line, moving them forward one place if they think it's a good idea. The ones which have progressed forward the most are the ones people feel should be focussed on now.

6. Alternatives to this include drawing a large target, on a cheap piece of material is good, placing the ideas around the edge and moving them towards the centre. As an alternative to the long line you can allow people to move the ideas backwards if they think they're a really bad idea.

### d) Generating Solutions

7. An effective way of generating solutions is to use a dilemma board. On a flip-chart draw lines to split the sheet into four quarters. Place, or write, the issue in the centre and the first group offers suggestions in the top-left quarter. The sheet then passes to group 2 who add to the solution or offer a new one. Then it's onto group three and four.

8. If you want the facilitator to do the writing, you could split a flip-chart in two, with a line, & write the issue on one side, and write solutions on the other. Work in small groups to ensure everyone has a say. The group call out suggestions which the facilitator writes down, these can then be expanded upon, or new ones suggested as appropriate.

### e) Action Planning

You could use some of the prioritising activities again to decide which ideas to go ahead with, or you could use a traffic light system.

9. Each person has one vote per suggestion/ solution and should stick a red, amber or green sticky dot on it, depending on whether they think it's "stop", "caution" or

more research needed, or "go!". You may want to use different shaped stickies as some people are red/green colour-blind.

10. As an alternative, you could issue each person with just three sticky dots (any colour) and they should stick these on the three they think are the most important.

#### f) Evaluation

11. A quick and easy version is to, again, use flip-chart paper. Draw a smiley and sad face at either end and people tick according to how they thought it went.

#### In Summary

By using techniques, you should be able to help groups come to a decision.

**Facilitation can also help with prioritising, action planning and generating solutions.** Ideally, the facilitator should not influence the groups thinking. They can point things out, but it should be a balanced perspective.

## 7.3 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Often in a N2000 site an agreed conclusion is needed between parties who may have differing needs and opinions about how the site is to be used and managed. **Finding agreement between disparate parties requires negotiation skills.** Use of all good personal, two-way and even group communication skills will be needed!



#### Definition

**Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties**, it is intended to:

- reach an understanding,
- resolve points of difference,
- gain advantage in the outcome of dialogue,
- produce an agreement upon courses of action,
- bargain for individual or collective advantage,
- gain outcomes to satisfy various interests of two or more people/parties involved in a negotiation

**Negotiation is not...**

- Coercion: meet my demands, or else
- Persuasion: our services are good value
- Arbitration: who has the fairest proposal
- Giving in: ok, I'll cut my prices by 20%

#### Outcomes of negotiation

##### Win/Win

- **Parties aim to agree**
- **Collaboration and Compromise**
- **Acceptable outcome is more likely**

##### Win/Lose

- **Parties are in conflict**
- **Need to "beat the opposition"**
- **Tactics are negative & Parties are confrontational**

## When would you need to negotiate?

Usually when there are areas of conflict and different people want different things. A mind map is one way of displaying and thinking about this information.

If the site manager is in the middle of the situation, this is how different things & people could appear to him/her.

From top, going clockwise:

**Worker** – represents his staff who he has to manage on a day-to-day basis

**Cows** – representing management policies for the site and site management planning

**Money** – as he is responsible for finding the money for all this work and balancing the budget!

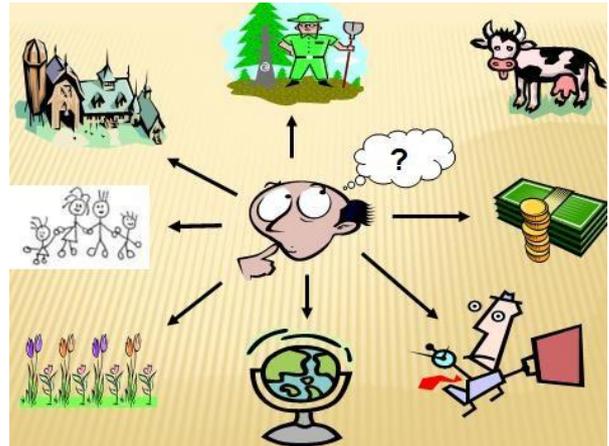
**Manager/ government officer/** anyone he has to answer to for his work and report to

**The world** – he has to think wider than just this site. He may be working on projects with others, possibly from other countries

**The flowers** – nature conservation is likely to be the key reason for him doing his job

**The family** – represents all the visitors to his site that he has to manage, inform and educate

**The old house** – represents any property on the site he may be responsible for maintaining



## Preparation for negotiation

**Draw up a negotiating strategy. Be clear what you priorities are and alternative solutions that can be considered.**

**Do the same for others involved in the negotiation.**

Before entering a particular negotiation, it is important to do some preparation. Essentially, you need to have a basic but flexible strategy worked out. A Principled negotiation focuses on achieving a lasting, win-win outcome by:

- separating the people from the problem
- focusing on interests not positions
- generating a variety of options before settling on an agreement
- basing the agreement on objective-criteria<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Queensland government. [www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au). October 3, 2014

# Key negotiation points

## • Information

Gather the information you need about the negotiation and what information you are going to disclose. Consider ways of strengthening your case - eg. getting more facts to back your case, comparisons with similar issues in other areas.

## • Goals

The outcome you want - the upper lower limits or what you must get and what you would like to get. What do you want and what do you think the other person wants?

## • Trades

What do you each have that the other wants? What are you each comfortable giving away? Think about the outcomes and concessions the other party might be considering. Trade things which cost you little but which the other person values in exchange for things that are valuable to you but which are cheap for them to concede. Consider the concessions you might make - and what you might require in return for making any concessions.

## • Alternatives

What alternatives do you have if you can't agree? What are the advantages and disadvantages of that?

## • Expected outcomes

What outcome do you and others expect from this negotiation? What has the outcome been in the past, and what precedents have been set?

## • Relationships

Is there any sort of prior relationship? Is this likely to affect the negotiation? Are there any hidden issues that may influence the negotiation? How will you deal with these? This may influence the style and approach you will take( eg. relaxed and friendly, confrontational), as may the number of people involved and their roles, where it will take place, the seating arrangements, etc.

## • The consequences

What are the consequences for you of winning or losing this negotiation? What are the consequences for the other person?

## • Power

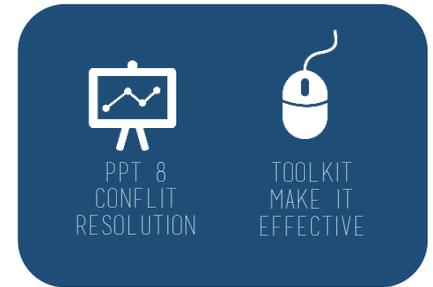
Who has what power in the relationship? Who controls resources? Who stands to lose the most if agreement isn't reached? What power does the other person have to deliver what you hope for? What are the relative strengths that you and the other party have? e.g. their arguments, the emotional case, the possible sanctions.

## • Possible solutions

Based on all of the considerations, what possible compromises might there be?

## 6.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts in N2000 site management are sadly not uncommon. A conflict can arise through a disagreement which may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. It is important to understand what is really behind the disagreement that is being presented. **When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is discussion and negotiation to resolve the disagreement.** Resolving a conflict will need all communication skills described earlier in the manual.



### Consider what non-verbal strategies you can employ

Remember all the things we talked about previously:

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Interpersonal distance
- Touch
- Body orientation and posture
- Hand and other gestures
- Your appearance

### Consider what verbal strategies you can employ

These include:

- Effective Questioning
- How you say things (para language)
- Being assertive, not aggressive
- And active listening of course

### Potential Influences leading to conflict situations

#### We have looked at

- **Body Language/ Non-Verbal Communication Language used**
- **Listening skills**

#### Win/Lose

- **Attitudes**
- **Stress**
- **Clarity**
- **Culture**
- **Existing knowledge**
- **Assumptions**
- **Context**

There are a few theories which may help us understand this a bit more.

### Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

It is proposed that all aggression is caused by some kind of frustration

Usually assumed that frustration always leads to aggression  
Try to determine what is behind the frustration to defuse the conflict and aggression.. Put forward by Berkowitz. The idea has some support from comparative studies of overcrowding in animals (& studies of people)

### Implicit Personality Theories

Assumptions people make that two or more personality traits are related so that, if a person has one of the traits, it is believed that he or she will have another one as well.

This may happen at first meeting and may be referred to as impression formation. It can refer to what people are like and what they may do. If this is extended to a group, it becomes stereotyping.

## Impression Formation

How do we make initial judgments of others? What sorts of information do we use?

Note: We often form impressions rather quickly, sometimes without any direct evidence. Impression formation...

We all make assumptions about people (mental stereotyping), but it's how you get beyond with them that matters.

### In summary

There is a lot of information you can draw on to manage a conflict situation. Think about these ideas and theories, and remember the assertiveness techniques, which may also help.

You can also try to analyse what is happening within the group. The table below may help you to do that.

	What to Observe in Groups	Thoughts/Notes
<b>Leadership</b>	Who is doing the influencing? Who are they influencing? Need clarity of task <b>and</b> process to be effective. Is the leader appointed or emergent?	
<b>Communication</b>	Who is actually participating? i.e. who is actually in the room physically and mentally? Who talks to whom? Is anyone left out?	
<b>Group Climate</b>	The tone or feeling of the group. How does it feel? Pleasant? Awkward? Constructive?	
<b>Decision Making</b>	How are decisions made? By the majority? The noisiest? The most experienced? By the leader? Consensus?	
<b>Conflict</b>	It's almost inevitable, but how is it resolved? Avoidance, Compromise, Competition, Collaboration?	
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Not the same as conflict. Involves identifying problems and how to deal with them, including generating ideas, action planning, evaluating etc.	
<b>Norms</b>	Expectations and assumptions held by the group. They govern what is considered to be "acceptable" and "normal" behaviour.	