

# CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGEMENT



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# CONSTRUCTION

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### Module 9

#### Communication and People [People Management]

Aim:

*"Deals with people management."*

# Communication and People

## Module 9 - Unit 1

### Course Objectives

• Introduction	• Discrimination
• Poor Communication	• Working with Different People Groups
• Communication	• Respect
• Communication Time Wasters	• Why Respect is Important
• Emails	• Retaining Skilled Workers
• Letters	• Motivating Your Workers

### Slides 9.2 – 9.3 Introduction

- ❑ One of the most important aspects of managing a construction project is to be able to manage, work with, and interact with people.
- ❑ No matter how frustrated you are, or how bad the day has been, there is simply no place on a construction project where you can hide from dealing with people and their problems.
- ❑ Project Managers have to use all their people skills to negotiate, persuade, and lead the people working on the project, while at all times remaining calm.
- ❑ You have to establish and maintain relations with the Client, the Design Team and your Team.
  - In all of this you also have to be a coach, a teacher and a mentor to your Team.
  - This does not mean that you must always please everyone, or be an easy walkover, rather you must be fair, consistent and respected, while being respectful of others.
- ❑ Communication is something that a Project Manager has to do all the time, every day.
- ❑ It's both verbal and written.
- ❑ Project Managers must communicate with Workers, Project Staff, Management, Head Office staff, Subcontractors, Suppliers, the Client, the Client's team (which may include Engineers and Architects), local authorities, and members of the public.
- ❑ Good communication is vital to the success of any project.
- ❑ Communication isn't just about giving and receiving instructions, it's also about keeping the various stakeholders informed about developments on the project.
- ❑ Communication is a 2 way process. Good listening is also essential for effective communication.

### Slide 9.6 Poor communication causes problems

- ❑ It causes misunderstanding which can lead to issues resulting in anger, resentment, even disruption of the project.
  - Innocent remarks can be misconstrued.

- Different interpretation of language – English may not be the recipient’s first language.
- Even tone and loudness can be misinterpreted.
- ❑ It can lead to misinterpretation which could cause mistakes.
- ❑ It may not reach the intended recipient, meaning a task is missed.
- ❑ It causes confusion. So wastes time, results in mistakes, etc.
- ❑ It wastes time giving or receiving poor communication.

## Slides 9.7 – 9.8 Communication

- Good communication is vital to the success of any project.
- Communication should:
  - Be civil.
  - Be clear and concise.
  - Be persuasive and forceful enough to ensure instructions are followed.
  - Achieve the best outcomes for the project.
  - Be effective.
  - Take into account relationships.
  - Take into account the level of understanding the other person has.
  - Not be condescending.
- Communication must be directed through the right channels to the right person.
- Your Team must be aware of the communication protocol and all correspondence should be carried out in a professional manner.
- Inappropriate communications can cause irreparable harm to the project, individuals and personal reputations. –
  - Often things are said or written in haste, which are regretted long after the event.
- Speaking to someone can be more personal and effective than sending emails.
- Communication of a contractual nature (particular items related to time and cost) should be in writing.

## Slide 9.9 Example of wasting time using emails instead of talking directly to the person

[Space for Notes]

## Slides 9.10 – 9.12 Emails

- Emails can save time on a project, but they can also waste time and lead to embarrassing actions which we would all rather forget.
- Think before sending an email. Only send them if:
  - You want a record of the discussion
  - You don’t want to interrupt the person by talking to them directly.

- You know they are **unavailable**
- Emails waste people's time when they are **copied** to numerous people. –
- Emails should only be sent to people who are directly affected by the email.
- When replying to emails always consider **who** you're directing your reply to, in many cases you probably do not want to press the 'reply to all' button.
- Emails should be addressed to the person who is required to take **action** on the mail.
- No email is that important that it has to be read **immediately**. –
- Doing so while doing other stuff interrupts thoughts, causing you to lose focus, often resulting in the first task remaining incomplete.
- Only read emails when you can concentrate on their **content**, and have the time to **respond** or action them.
- Think carefully when **writing** a reply to an email. –
- Is your email appropriate? Do not rush your reply.
- Do not say things that you will **regret** later, or use language that could be misconstrued by the recipient.
- When replying to emails check the **subject** line – is this what your reply is about.
- **Check** that you are sending to the right person.
- **File** emails (both sent and received) where they can easily be found.
- Try and keep **1** subject per email.
- Check your email **before** sending it. –
  - Does it make **sense**?
  - Is the **grammar** and spelling correct? – Grammarly can help
  - Are the correct **attachments** included?
- Emails are **contract** correspondence, they must be **accurate**
- **Poorly written emails, or emails using the wrong language can be misconstrued and **lead** to mistakes and even ill feelings.**

## Slides 9.13 – 9.16 Letters

Often letters are poorly written.

### Letters should:

- Have a **date**.
- Have a **reference** number.
- Be addressed to the **correct** person.
- Have a **heading**, including the project reference name and number and a second heading line containing the subject matter.
- Have an **introduction**, normally a brief overview of the subject within the letter.
- Include the **body**, containing the facts and supporting information
- If the supporting information is lengthy or includes numbers, calculations and diagrams, consider inserting these in **appendices**, and including only the summary of the documents in the body of the letter, referring to the relevant appendix or attachment.
- Have a **conclusion** which summarizes the facts and indicates the required future course of action.
- Be **confined** to one topic, unless topics are linked, or a few similar topics.

- Be concise.
- Use simple language.
- Not be contradictory.
- Not use emotional language.
- Be arranged in easily readable paragraphs.
- Be checked for spelling and typographical errors.
- Be numbered correctly and consistently when it's required.
- Use consistent text (resist the urge to use text that is in CAPITALS, **bold**, in **colour** or in *italics* to highlight a point).
- Use exclamation and question marks sparingly – not ?????? Or !!!!!!
- Quote the correct clauses from the contract document, the specific reference from the tender documents, or the applicable drawing numbers.
- Be double-checked to ensure that all calculations and figures are correct and that they tie up.

### Poorly written letters:

- Are often not treated with the seriousness they deserve.
- Are unprofessional.
- May be misunderstood or create confusion.
- Will annoy your Client.
- May jeopardise your variation claims (change orders).
- Could be ignored.

### Slides 9.18 – 9.23 Examples of discrimination and problems relating to discrimination

### Slides 9.24 – 9.25 Working with different cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds

- People in construction come from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, economic and educational backgrounds.
- For some the language used on the project isn't their home language and they may have little understanding of the language.
- In this mix of **cultures** it's easy for misunderstandings to occur.
  - What one culture may think is a joke, another culture could see as an insult.
  - What some cultures may take as acceptable and normal behaviour, another culture could take offence to.
  - It's therefore important to be culturally sensitive, to have a basic understanding of the cultures of those working for you.
- Just because a person doesn't understand you doesn't mean they're stupid, they might simply not be familiar with the language, or even the slang and terminologies you're using.
- Project Managers must be able to work with all sorts of people, irrespective of their backgrounds.
- Project Managers must never discriminate, or let their own personal dislikes interfere with the project or the fair treatment of people on the project.
- We should never put a person into a category because of how they look or what their background is.

- Project Managers should **never** hold someone back because of their bias, or the norms in the industry or country.
  - Rather impartially judge people according to their actual attributes and abilities, their work ethic, loyalty and how they can develop and contribute to your team, the project, and most importantly to the company.
- **The construction industry is desperate for good, hardworking and skilled people. We cannot afford to **disqualify** whole groups of people because of our perceptions of that group, or because of our personal dislikes.**

## Slides 9.27 – 9.28 Respect

- Project Managers must **earn** their team's respect.
- Respect doesn't **automatically** come with the title, nor does it come with age or years of service.
- Respect is earned by being **knowledgeable** and making informed **decisions**.
- Respect is earned when the team **knows** that their Project Manager has their back and will stand up and support them in difficult situations.
- A **good** leader
  - motivates,
  - inspires,
  - trains,
  - directs,
  - and protects their team.
- Being a boss does not make one a leader.
- Respect also means that discipline is enforced without fear or favour, and that the rules are clear.
- Respect is earned by **demonstrating** honesty and integrity.
- Respect is earned by getting the job **done** – delivering it safely, on schedule, and with the desired quality.
- Respect is earned by making sound and informed **decisions**.
- It's earned by acting **professionally**, by staying calm in a crises and not letting your emotions take control.
- People **won't** respect someone who doesn't respect them.
- Respecting your Team **means** treating them fairly. It means respecting them as people and respecting their talents and abilities.
- **Discriminating** against somebody because of their culture, language or social upbringing isn't respect.

## Slide 9.29 Why respect is important

- A team that respects their Project Manager will **always** go that bit further, they'll be prepared to do a little extra.
- A team that respects their **Managers** is easier to manage and there'll be fewer disciplinary problems.
- People **stay** with Managers they respect.
- People want to **work** for Managers that are held in high regard by their team.
- People that respect you will be **more** inclined to follow your advice and take heed of what you say. Respect creates trust.

## Slide 9.31 Retaining skilled workers

- ❑ One research paper estimated it can cost 20% of a skilled person's annual wages to replace them.
- ❑ This probably did not factor in the cost in disruption and lost knowledge.
- ❑ Unfortunately, often the best employees leave first.
- ❑ Replacing skilled employees can be difficult.
- ❑ There is always the risk that the replacement will not be good.
- ❑ When people leave, those left must work harder and often morale suffers.
- ❑ Good people are the bedrock of every company. They must be nurtured, mentored, developed.
- ❑ Money alone will not retain people.
- ❑ Mercenaries are retained with money, but then there is no loyalty, and they will move to the highest bidder.

## Slides 9.32 – 9.35 Motivating your workers

**What does it take to motivate our employees, keep them happy,  
and ensure they are not searching for another job?**

**Well think what keeps you happy and motivated – is it money alone?**

- Employees want to feel valued, that they matter, say thank you. Greet people.
- Employees want to know that their contribution has purpose.
- Employees leave Managers not companies.
- Create a spirit of teamwork.
- Celebrate success.
- Train, inspire and mentor.
- Communication is critical.
- Treat people fairly. –
- This does not mean leniently!
- Be consistent.
- Be honest.
- Hear what people are saying. Be empathetic.
- Do not bare a grudge.
- Provide feedback.
- Employees want to see a career path. But do not promote for the wrong reason.
- Small rewards or bonuses can sometimes go far.
- Do not underestimate the power of family.
- Long hours kill morale.
- Provide the right tools.
- Create a winning brand.
- Employees want direction.
- Employees want order and organisation.
- Pay a fair wage.



- Be respectful.
  - ❑ People want to work for people who are knowledgeable and experienced, where they can learn.
  - ❑ People don't want to work in toxic environments where some aren't respected, a place where there's discrimination.
  - ❑ It is important to understand why people are leaving.
  - ❑ Can you change something to stop them leaving, or improve things so that others do not leave?
  - ❑ Attracting and retaining good people is essential to the survival of any company, yet it's one of the biggest challenges that a company faces in an increasingly competitive job market.
  - ❑ Companies need to be innovative, understanding the needs of Employees.
  - ❑ People have different needs – do you understand the needs of the younger generation?
  - ❑ People are no longer only satisfied to get a salary, they expect more. They want to feel part of the company.
  - ❑ Good people can literally be worth their weight in gold.
  - ❑ Do you appreciate your good people?
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# Communication and People

## Module 9 - Unit 2

### Course Objectives

• Feedback	• Does it Pay to do the Right Thing
• Training and Mentoring	• Effects of a Dishonest Worker
• Example of Why Training is Important	• Why Ethics are Important
• Training Benefits	• Examples of Unethical Behaviours
• Different Types of Training	• What are Unethical Behaviours
• Parties Involved with Training	• What Should Not Be Viewed as Unethical
• Ethics	

### Slide 9.37 Introduction

### Slides 9.39 – 9.40 Feedback

- ❑ It's important you provide **both** positive and negative feedback to your people.
- ❑ Often Project Managers complain about the quality of a person, saying 'they are incompetent'. But usually when asked if they've spoken to the person and explained their short comings, they **haven't**. –
  - In fact, the problem person often thinks they are doing a **good** job.
- ❑ It's important to tell people when they've done something **incorrectly**, or aren't performing to **expectations**. If you do this you may find them improving.
- ❑ Poor performance may also be related to the person having insufficient knowledge to perform the task, so their work may improve if they're given additional **training** or coaching.
- ❑ People appreciate being **thanked** for their efforts, and **positive** feedback should be provided if a task is done well, a milestone is met, quality standards are exceeded, or a task is done safely. This praise can be public, but not an everyday event or it will lose its impact.

### Give feedback in such a way that:

- It doesn't always appear to be **negative** and critical
  - Negative feedback isn't presented in a **public** place in front of other workers.
  - It isn't **shouted** or given in a rude or abrupt way
  - The problem is **explained** with a suggestion on how you think they can improve their performance.
  - **Supervisors** should be involved when one of their workers is praised or criticised
- 
- ❑ If a person's performance doesn't **improve**, and they can't give a reasonable explanation of why they will not, or cannot, improve then consideration must be given to following the disciplinary process.

- ❑ Of course positive feedback is also important. It encourages and motivates, and sets an example for others to follow.

## Slide 9.42 Training

- ❑ Most Contractors complain they cannot find good and skilled people.
- ❑ A lack of skills is often blamed for poor quality, unsafe practices, poor performance and schedule slippage.
- ❑ **But who is responsible for training people?**
- ❑ In the last unit we discussed how training is important with people retention, and in Module 8 we mentioned that delegation and good people help your time management.
- ❑ **Good skilled people are essential for the success of your project!**
- ❑ Training is critical to the success of every construction company.

## Slides 9.43 – 9.44 Example of why training is important [Space for Notes]

## Slide 9.45 Excuses for not training which are wrong

- A lack of time –  
– when will there be time?
- Training costs money.
- The person will want more money since they'll be more qualified.
- There will not be work at the end of this project.
- The person will leave after the company has spent money training them.
- Training is of little benefit.
- What people learn on training courses will not benefit the project.

## Slide 9.46 The benefits of training

- Skilled workforce.
- Motivated workers.
- Improved quality.
- Better productivity.
- Safer worksites.
- Less supervision.
- Less rework.
- Fewer workers.
- Skilled workers enhance a contractor's reputation
- Improved productivity reduces costs, resulting in more competitive prices and winning more construction work.

## Slide 9.47 Different types of training

- Off project training.
- On-line courses.
- On-site training from providers.
- On-site training in-house – such as safety.
- On site demonstration of how to do something.
- Mentoring.

## Slide 9.48 The parties involved with training

### The parties involved with training



## Slide 9.49 Ethics

- ❑ Unfortunately, many businesses carry out unethical practices. Contractors and the construction industry are often viewed as being unethical.
- ❑ Regrettably, there are many Contractors who are unethical, but equally, there are many Clients who also engage in unethical practices.

## Slide 9.50 Does it pay to do the right thing?

(Courtesy Camino Consulting)

- Or is it rather a case of "Profit today, principles tomorrow"?

- When doing business, it might seem as if doing the right thing will cost more, so it's a very valid question: Is there really a business case for doing **ethical** business?
- Committing to doing **ethical** business can seem like imposing a handicap on the earning potential of both yourself and your company.
- Opportunities for making additional profit at the cost of relatively "small indiscretions" will **frequently** come across the path of any business leader.
- Various studies have clearly demonstrated that companies that commit to good and ethical governance bank more **profit** at the end of the day. –  
 – For example, a study in the Journal of Business Ethics looked at the 26.8 percent of the 500 largest U.S. public corporations that commit to ethical behaviour toward their stakeholders or emphasise compliance with their code of conduct. The financial performance of these corporations ranked higher than that of those who do not.

## Slide 9.51 One dishonest worker can disrupt an entire workplace

(In Magazine 25 July 2020)

- A vicious **cycle** can begin with one little white lie from a co-worker, diminishing the ability of other employees to read others and then even undermining the entire workplace or business, finds a study from researchers at Michigan, Harvard, Virginia and Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis.
- Dishonest **deeds** diminish a person's ability to read others' emotions, or "interpersonal cognition," the research found. In addition, the consequences can snowball. One dishonest act can set in motion even more dishonesty.
- Such behaviour by **employees** is estimated to come at a \$3.7 trillion cost annually worldwide.
- Lying and cheating is "not only financially costly (as in the case of stealing from a company, for example, or increasing the risk of costly lawsuits) but also can **harm** interpersonal relationships through individuals' ability to detect others' emotions," even when those others are not the victims of the wrongdoing.

## Slide 9.52 Why are ethics important

- Being ethical **sets** the tone of the relationship between the contracting parties. Unethical practices lead to a breakdown of relationships.
- When unethical behaviour is uncovered it **leads** to a breakdown in trust.
- Good ethical **practices** are an essential part of a company's reputation.
- Unethical behaviour is **contagious**. Unethical behaviour breeds more unethical behaviour.
- Unethical behaviours **often** lead to increased costs.
- Our ethics, or lack of ethics, express who we **are**, and define our dealings with others.
- Unethical behaviours can lead to poor **media** attention.
- Unethical behaviours can lead to **finer, prison** time and barring from foreign countries, or from working with particular Clients.

## Slides 9.54 – 9.69 Examples of unethical behaviours [Space for Notes]

## Slides 9.70 – 9.72 What are unethical behaviours

### Unethical behaviours include:

- Not ensuring your project is **safe**.
- Giving the Client a **poor-quality** project, or one that is defective.
- Deliberately omitting **items**, or supplying products that do not conform.
- Paying **bribes** or providing incentives to the Client's representatives.
- **Accepting** bribes.
- Not paying employees their **agreed** wages and salaries at the agreed time.
- Employing illegal migrants.
- Accommodating workers in cramped, dirty accommodation.
- Employing and promoting friends and relatives over others who are **better** qualified to do the work.
- 'Rigging' or fixing **prices**.
- Submitting bogus or overly inflated **variation** claims and change orders.
- Not **paying** Suppliers and Subcontractors what's due to them and on time.
- **Falsifying** test results and faking documentation.
- **Fake** qualifications.
- Poor **environmental** practices.
- **Theft** of any sort.
- Taking a **cut** from payments to Subcontractors, Suppliers, or Workers.
- Getting Subcontractors to do work at no **cost** to you at your home.
- Giving **contracts** or orders to companies owned by friends or relatives, when they are not the cheapest or their products do not meet specifications.
- Adjudicating prices in a way that gives your favored Contractor or Supplier an **unfair** advantage over other bidders.

## Slides 9.73 What should not be viewed as unethical

### What should not be viewed as unethical:

- Submitting variation claims (change orders) for delays or extra work or changes, where the Contractor is **entitled** to claim for these, and providing these are a fair reflection of their entitlements.
- Making a **large** profit on a project where these have been earned.
- Deducting monies from Contractors, Subcontractors or Suppliers, for reasonable **valid** reasons which are communicated to them.

- ❑ Being ethical is about **how** we deal with the Client, how we deal with **our** Employees and how we **treat** our Suppliers and Subcontractors.
  - ❑ Ethical behaviour is about **being** honest and fair in all of our dealings.
  - ❑ We should treat others the way we expect them to treat **us**.
- 



# Summary Module 9

## Slides 9.75 – 9.77

- Good communication is essential to managing construction projects, and poor communication frequently leads to problems.
  - Project Managers must be effective negotiators.
  - Project Managers must build relationships with the Client's team, their own Team and Subcontractors and Suppliers.
  - Communication must be civil, clear, concise, effective, not condescending, and take into account the level of understanding of the person receiving the communication.
  - Speaking directly to someone is often better than an email. But contractual issues should be in writing.
  - Emails can save time, but they also have the habit of wasting time.
  - Think before you send an email. Don't say something that you may regret later, or use language which could be misunderstood by the other person.
  - Letters should be properly written, with good grammar, correct spelling, with a date and subject matter. They should be concise and arranged to be easily read, and should use simple language. Letters should preferably have an introduction, body, and conclusion.
  - Project Managers must be able to manage, work with, and interact with all kinds of people.
  - They should never discriminate or let their own dislikes interfere with the project.
  - Project Managers must earn the respect of their team by being knowledgeable, respectful of others, enforcing discipline fairly and consistently, be being honest, by acting professionally.
  - Respect is important and it creates trust and often leads to a more committed, loyal and productive Team.
  - We can retain good people by paying fair wages, treating them with respect, training and mentoring, by being honest and consistent, by providing the right tools.
  - It is important to provide feedback to your Team so that they know where they should improve.
  - Construction is desperate for good skilled people. Training and mentoring helps create skilled people, it helps retain good people, and it motivates your team.
  - Good ethics are important and it builds trust with the Client and your Team.
  - Good people are vital to our projects.
-





*"HAQE: To level up"*

# Quiz – Module 9

## True or False:

1. \_\_\_\_ Good communication is when you shout so the other person is sure to hear what you are saying.
2. \_\_\_\_ Communication of a contractual nature should be in writing.
3. \_\_\_\_ Emails are not contract correspondence on projects.
4. \_\_\_\_ If a person does not understand your instructions, it means that they are stupid.
5. \_\_\_\_ Project Managers should never discriminate.
6. \_\_\_\_ We can retain good people by paying the highest wages.
7. \_\_\_\_ Training is a waste of time and money.
8. \_\_\_\_ Training is more than just sending a person on a course; they should also be given the opportunity to use their skills.
9. \_\_\_\_ It is unethical for contractors to ever make large profits.
10. \_\_\_\_ Project managers should not give negative feedback to their team.

## Mark the best answer

### **11. Communication must be:**

- A. Clear and concise.
- B. Directed through the right channels to the right person.
- C. A & B.
- D. In writing.
- E. A, B & D

### **12. Letters should:**

- A. Have a date.
- B. Have a heading.
- C. Not use emotive language.
- D. Be checked for spelling and grammar errors.
- E. All of the above.

- 13. Respect is earned by:**
- A. Your age.
  - B. Your job title.
  - C. By being nice to people.
  - D. By respecting others.
  - E. All of the above.

- 14. Unethical behaviours include:**
- A. Paying bribes.
  - B. Submitting legitimate variation claims.
  - C. Encouraging unsafe actions.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. A & C.

- 15. Training can be:**
- A. Mentoring.
  - B. Off project formal training.
  - C. On-line courses.
  - D. On the project formal training.
  - E. All of the above.



# Homework

- Read: Chapter 6 of "Successful Construction Project Management" – pgs. 110-120
- Please complete all activities and or forms sent to your email as it pertains to the corresponding Module.

## Activity Questions

Please answer the following questions based on Module 9.

Once complete transfer your answers to our digital form for our teacher to review. (Forms provided in email)

### Questions:

1. What is good communication?
2. Why does discrimination harm construction projects?
3. Why is respect important?
4. How do you get respect from people?
5. How do you retain skilled employees?
6. What does it take to motivate your employees, keep them happy and ensure they are not searching for another job?
7. Why is feedback important?

8. What are the benefits of training?

9. Why are good ethics important?

10. What are unethical behaviors?



# Additional Reading Extra

**Notes:** Please see email for clickable links

## Module 9 People

1. A critical topic we haven't discussed is mental health. Construction has one of the highest rates of suicides compared to other industries. Every year thousands of people take their lives. It is something we can all help to prevent.  
This article on [mental health](#) provides some insights. Here's another article [Contractors tackle worker suicides, mental health stigma](#)  
Do you know someone who is suffering from depression or needs help?  
How can you make your project a safer and more inclusive place for all workers?
2. In this module we discussed diversity and how it's important to not discriminate and employ people from a diverse background. To find out more read this article [construction diversity numbers are awful](#). Here's another article on [how construction projects make it difficult for women](#).  
How can you encourage diversity on your project?  
Is there discrimination on your project?  
Why is diversity important?

