Communication Skills
Crossover Project
University of Sheffield

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Agenda

- Hints and Tips on Communication Skills (20 Mins)
- Lightning Talks and set up of Team Exercise (10 mins)
- Team Exercise (30 mins)
- Team Lightning Talks and Judging (45 mins)
- Discussion and closeout (15 mins)

The value of CommunicationSkills
Finding out what the system should do ...
Business Analysis or Requirements Engineering

Consultant or Sales Support
Making sure the system is easy to use ...

User Technologies
Making sure the system is easy to use ...

Demonstrating how the system works ...

Building the system ...

The secret to a successful communication

"Giving a presentation is an opportunity to tell the audience what they need to know ...
... it is NOT an opportunity to tell them all that you know"

Chris Winter, IBM Distinguished Engineer, 2004

The audience

- Remember why they are listening
- Think how to introduce yourself (their context)
- Choose the appropriate starting point
- Choose appropriate jargon (preferably none 😊)
- People have different preferences
  - Pictures, data, facts, visions, detailed plans, impacts/consequences
  - so include a variety of information styles
What are your goals ...

- For every encounter ...
  - What am I trying to achieve
  - What are the 2-5 key messages I want the audience to leave with today?

  1. Audience like presenters that tell them something interesting
  2. If you are clear about your key messages you can adapt the presentation style, length and use of props
  3. Preparation and practice make presentations easier

- Is this all they need to know?
- What do I want to happen next?

Presenting a message

- To communicate clearly, it is important to understand how the reader/listener perceives and processes information.
- In 1971, David Kolb observed that there are four stages to understand and process information
  - WHY (do I need to know), WHAT (is this about), HOW (do I use it), CONSEQUENCES & OPTIONS (what do I do next)
- You can use these questions as a guide to structure written text or speech. The questions should be asked with respect to the audience rather than yourself.
- This will improve your communication skills

Attention curve

Beginning Middle End

(a) Tell them what you are going to tell them – (b) tell them
   – (c) tell them what you told them

Dealing with nerves

- Case the joint before hand
- Breathe
- Smile
- Lock up
- Squeeze your toes
- Imagine what it will be like when you succeed
- Turn fear into excitement

Nightmare audiences

- No-one turns up
- Audience is not who you expected
  - Words, style, messages
- Difficult questions
- Saboteur
  - Know-it-all
  - Noisy
  - Chatting
  - Another agenda

Dealing with questions

- Listen
- Summarize
- Respond
  - Give answer
  - Offer to get back to them
What to do next ...

- Follow up with those who asked questions
- Distribute any presentation material and documents
- Take the next steps in your plan …

Negotiating

- Understand their point of view
- Start with the end in mind
  - Sign the deal
  - Complete the project
- Test the Relationship
- Agree the process
- Aim for a single message
- Act with integrity
  - Honest, Open, Credible

Summary

- Audiences like presenters that tell them something interesting
- If you are clear about your key messages you can adapt the communication style, length and use of props
- Preparation and practice makes communication easier

Lightning Talks

- Typical format
  - Short talks (5 minutes or less), many speakers
  - Immediately clap when the time’s up
- Key to success
  - Prepare – know what you’re going to say
  - Make your point – most details don’t matter
  - Slides – avoid if possible
- Today’s format
  - 2 minutes
  - Clap
  - + 1 minute for questions

Team Exercise

Acme Toys Inc. (ATI™) are looking for new designs for the Christmas season. You are a budding new design team looking to break into the toy industry and this is your big chance.

ATI have given you just 30 minutes in which to prototype your toy and prepare for a 2 minute presentation.

The brief is brief: they want the toy to be colourful, and want it to fit well with other toys being considered.

ATI have provided you with scissors, coloured paper, glue, sellotape, stapler, and a pen, but unfortunately they do not have enough to fully equip every learner.

The End