

SOCIAL SKILLS & PROCESS SKILLS: PERFECTING THE COORDINATION

GOALS

1. To define and identify the difference between social skills and process skills.
2. To identify social and process skills in communication that tend to enhance the possibility of expected leadership outcomes.

DEFINING LEADERSHIP SOCIAL VERSUS PROCESS BEHAVIORS/SKILLS

Social leadership behaviors/skills are friendly, intentional words or actions that help build companionship, relationships, and communication with others. They create human connection through personal sharing and camaraderie. These behaviors/skills open the door to another person that encourages their listening and participation. Social skills once stated/done increase the chance of mutual positive relationships, consideration, and successful compliance with a personal request or need.

Process leadership behaviors/skills are goal-focused actions or procedures used to achieve a specific result. They involve active efforts to meet a need or goal, such as communicating, inferring, predicting, interpreting, drawing conclusions, forming hypotheses, measuring, applying basic reasoning, and sometimes acquiring a product. Process behaviors/skills are often most effective when leaders use them with, or after, social behaviors/skills. Using a process skill after a social skill usually helps gain a person's attention and trust, making it easier to meet the stated need or goal.

THE ART OF COORDINATING LEADERSHIP SOCIAL AND PROCESS SKILLS

There is an optimum time and an optimum place for every behavior. Leaders increase their chance of meeting optimum and intended goals by knowing when to commence their intended and goal directed use of social skills and when to commence using the intended process skills. A sensitive leader understands each individual situation and the desired outcome to skillfully blend social and process skills to achieve exceptional leadership outcomes. A leader's ability to effectively combine *social* and *process* leadership skills to acquire desired outcomes demonstrates the abilities of a true intellectually oriented leader. This covert coordination of social and process skills shows leadership insight, good judgement, and respect for others. Such intelligence and insight results in a truly effective (and successful) "leader."

LEARNING TO EFFECTIVELY USE SOCIAL AND PROCESS SKILLS

To learn how experienced leaders use social skills and then transition skillfully to process skills to achieve a goal, listen discreetly to selected conversations between effective leaders or individuals. When someone seeks favor or consideration, positive social comments often come before the process-oriented request. Notice how the speaker moves from building a social connection to making the process request--a shift that often leads to a successful outcome. Social and process skills can work together effectively to support important leadership decisions, mutual understanding, and desired results.

Although some people use social skills naturally, thoughtful leaders recognize that choosing the right social approach for each person can make a process-oriented request or favor more likely to receive support. Learning about another person's habits, interests, or accomplishments in advance helps leaders offer meaningful comments that gain the listener's attention.

Leadership courses should teach students how to use social and process skills effectively and provide opportunities to practice both.

ADMINISTRATOR/PRESIDENT VERSUS A VICE/ASSISTANT PRESIDENT ROLE

The administrator/president of an organization (among other responsibilities) is actively involved in out-of-facility organizational social and process activities. The administrator's social skills and process skills often include a need to seek and procure broad out-of-the-organizational funding and support for the entire organization. The professional and intellectual ability to understand and combine the effective use of social skills and process skills enhances the administrator's chance of success on the part of the organization.

A vice/assistant president's role in an organization is usually more actively involved in the organization's in-house functions. This usually includes the use of active in-house social and process skills to promote and hold constant the acceptable and required in-house behaviors and activities. Such astute and skillful ability in this supportive role to the administrator/president helps to keep the organization's mission, goals, purpose, job descriptions, and quality of organizational performance functioning and on task. Consequently, the support of the organization's vice/assistant president role objectively stabilizes the ongoing day-to-day functioning of the organization.

IN CLOSING

A novice leader might not recognize the intellectual importance of appropriate application of social skills as a precursor to process skills. However, intellectual awareness of proven academic psychological principles reinforces the understanding that there is a high probability of a favorable process skill outcome/response from another person when there is a recognized previous positive social skill interaction.

By an organization's administrator/president and a vice/assist president's shared understanding of the appropriate and meaningful use of social skills followed by process skills, there is a cooperative and educated pursuit of coordinated organizational success. Consequently, there is a sense of mutual pride when accomplishing and stabilizing worthwhile organizational goals and objectives. It is through the *intellectual* use of social skills and process skills that optimum organizational success usually occurs.

Is there anything more satisfying to a leader than to intellectually know and successfully perform psychologically proven leadership behaviors? I think not!

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