Fifth Edition
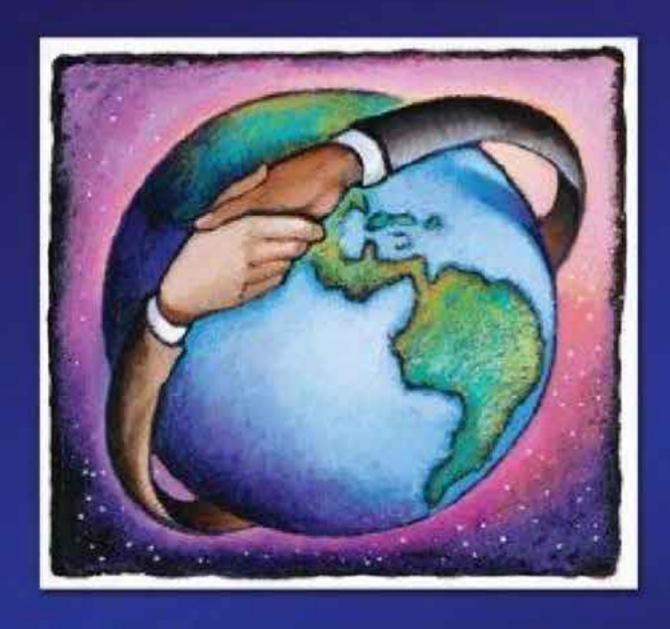
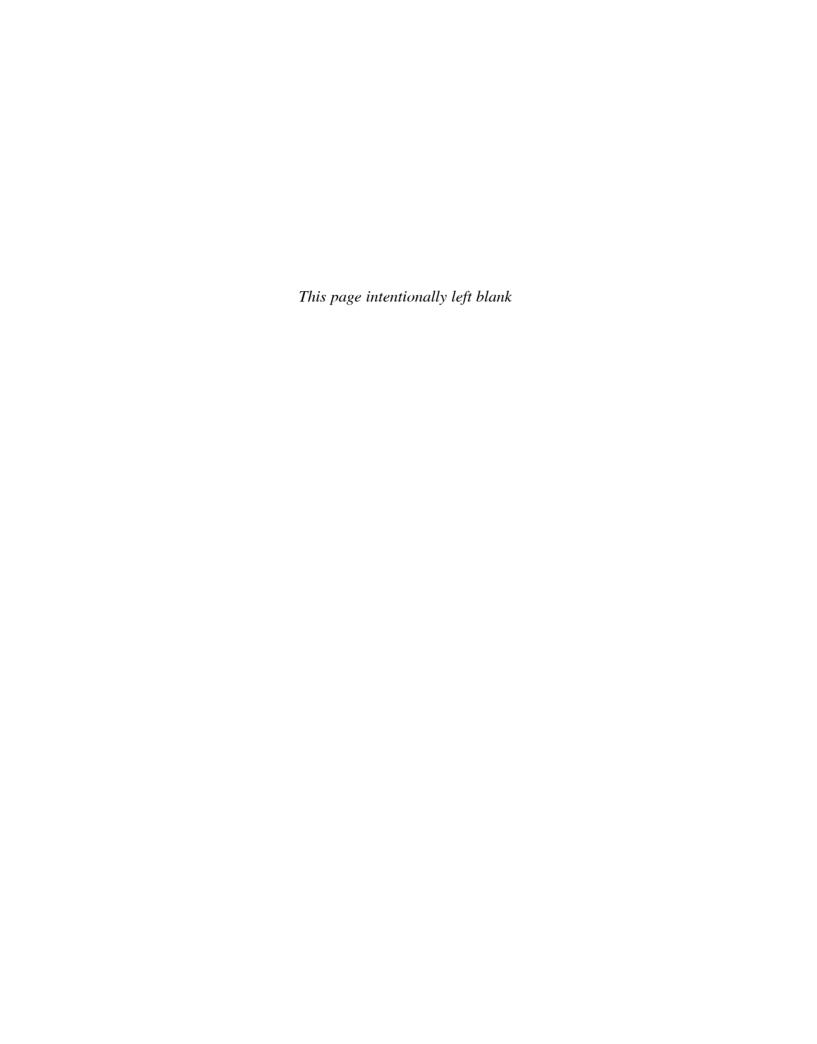# INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN
Organizations

SUZANNE C. DE JANASZ | KAREN O. DOWD | BETH Z. SCHNEIDER

McGraw Hill Education

Interpersonal Skills in Organizations

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Interpersonal Skills in Organizations

Fifth Edition

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INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN ORGANIZATIONS, FIFTH EDITION

Dedication

From Suzanne:

> To my father, Stan Cooper, who was a model of strength, courage, and perseverance; you are forever in my heart. To my children, Alex and Gabby, who, as young adults and university students, continue to make me proud in so many ways. To my friends, colleagues, and loved ones, who have been a source of inspiration, renewal, and support.

From Karen:

> To my siblings Valerie, James, Joan, Mark, and Laura for their resilience, patience, and love. To my husband Tom without whom this book could not have been written. To my current and former students and colleagues from whom I learn about interpersonal skills each day.

From Beth:

> To my father, Ferdinando Zuech, "Hey dad, I did it!" To my husband Jeff, who remains my rock.

About the Authors

Suzanne C. de Janasz, Ph.D., is Professor of Leadership and Organization Development at IMD in Lausanne, Switzerland. As a Fulbright Fellow, she taught at Warsaw University in Warsaw, Poland, and has had visiting stints there and at ALBA Graduate Business School in Vouliagmeni, Greece. An award-winning instructor, Suzanne currently designs and delivers programs for mid-level and senior executives in global companies, specializing in leadership, negotiations, mentoring and careers, organizational behavior and change, creativity/innovation, work–life balance, entrepreneurship, and interpersonal/managerial skills.

Suzanne's research on mentoring, careers, authenticity, work–family conflict, and leadership appears in such journals as *Academy of Management Executive, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Journal of Vocational Behavior, British Journal of Management, Career Development International,* and *Journal of Management Education* and features frequently in domestic and international newspapers, online publications (she's a featured blogger for Huffington Post), and radio programs. Her text *Negotiation and Dispute Resolution* (co-authored with Beverly DeMarr) was published in 2013. In addition to her Fulbright Fellowship, Suzanne received the New Educator Award from the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society (OBTS) and the Jepson Fellowship from her previous university. Suzanne recently served as the Careers Division Chair in the Academy of Management, and she has held leadership roles in the Southern Management Association and the OBTS. She regularly consults with a variety of global organizations, and also serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations.

After earning an undergraduate music degree from the University of Miami, Suzanne earned her MBA and Ph.D. degrees from the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC). Between the two degrees, she worked for five years as an organizational consultant in the aerospace industry. Prior to joining the faculty of IMD, Suzanne taught at James Madison University and the University of Mary Washington's College of Graduate and Professional Studies, both in Virginia.

Karen O. Dowd, Ph.D., is Assistant Dean, Career Management and Corporate Engagement, Simon Business School, University of Rochester, New York. Dowd is an experienced teacher, writer, administrator, speaker, and consultant. Prior to the University of Rochester, she was at The University of Denver, the University of Notre Dame, The Empower Group in New York City, and the University of Virginia. Dowd also taught at James Madison University, where she teamed with her co-authors and the Management Department to develop a required course in Interpersonal Skills that is offered to all undergraduate business students. Karen is the co-author, with Sherrie Gong Taguchi, of *The Ultimate Guide to Getting the Career You Want* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003). Karen earned her doctorate from the University of Virginia, her master's degree from Indiana University South Bend, and her bachelor's degree from Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. She is a member of the National Association of Colleges and Employers and has served on the board of the MBA Career Services Council. She is currently head of the CSC's Asian Expansion Initiative. Karen has conducted numerous management training programs on many of the topics addressed in this book and on career management for managers. Her research interests include faculty careers, career development, candidate selection, and career branding.

Beth Zuech Schneider is a Clinical Instructor of Management at Winston Salem State University. Schneider is an experienced instructor and course administrator, having taught for several years at James Madison University and George Mason University prior to coming to WSSU. Beth is also an experienced small business owner, having owned and managed businesses in the retail, restaurant, and mail-order catalog industries. She is now serving as a small business consultant through her own business, CORE Consulting in Greensboro, NC. Beth earned her DBA from Durham University in England, her MBA from the University of Central Florida, and her BA from St. Bonaventure University. Her research interests include social entrepreneurship, international business strategy, cross-cultural management, and women's workplace issues.

Contents in Brief

Contents

**Unit 2 Interpersonal Effectiveness:
Understanding and Working with Others**

Preface

Birth of an Idea

While we were all teaching at James Madison University, a group of executives, who served as the College of Business dean's board of advisors at the university, identified a critical ingredient missing in most business school graduates. The executives found that while students were technically competent—they could read a balance sheet, do a market analysis, and develop cash flow projections—many graduates lacked interpersonal skills or the ability to work effectively with others. The executives created a wish list of "soft skills," faculty were hired, and the Interpersonal Skills course was born. Since that time, thousands of students have taken part in this required undergraduate course.

In the beginning, the cadre of faculty dedicated to this course selected two books and additional readings to support the course objectives. In response to student and recruiter feedback, we improved continuously both the content and delivery of the course. One such improvement stemmed from students' concerns that the books were inadequate for a variety of reasons. We agreed and continued to search for a book that met our needs. Frustrated with our inability to find the interpersonal skills text for our particular audience, we decided to write it.

"I Want to Buy This Book for My Boss"

As our colleagues and students have heard about this book, a common response is not simply "Where can I buy this book," but "My boss could use this—can you send him (or her) a copy?" The truth is this book is very relevant to a variety of readers. While it was written primarily with an undergraduate student audience in mind, each of the authors is experienced working with graduate students, adult learners, and working managers. In addition to our current teaching and research responsibilities, one or more of us has been a management consultant, a corporate trainer, an internal organization development consultant, a director of a career services center at a top-tier graduate business school, or a small business owner. Because of the depth of experience we offer, we are convinced that the material, with slight modification, is very appropriate for graduate students, adult learners, and managers as well as for undergraduate students. In short, this book is appropriate for anyone who wants to improve his or her ability to interact with others in the workplace.

A Unique Focus on Developing Managerial and Interpersonal Skills

In this textbook we have included certain design elements in order to:

- Offer a variety of activities and experiential elements to meet many types of instructional needs.
- Provide coverage of areas such as diversity, project management, facilitation, and personal goal setting, which are sometimes missing or limited in other textbooks.
- Maintain an academic standard appropriate for an undergraduate audience; yet with minor adjustments the material can be utilized at a graduate or professional training level.
- Use direct and action-oriented language in order to blend academic research with practical application for each skill set.

Emphasis on Both Personal and Professional

Some texts focus solely on managerial skills but provide little if any assistance in helping the reader understand how understanding him- or herself (intrapersonal effectiveness) relates to interpersonal and managerial effectiveness. The premise and sequencing of our book is that for students to be successful as managers in business, they must first have a solid understanding of self and how the self interacts with others to facilitate organizational success. The chapters and units are designed to be interchangeable so they can be easily rearranged and presented to fit many types of courses. Accordingly, we incorporate information on personal qualities needed for success in business and provide personal examples throughout the book focusing on family and other relationships alongside professional examples focusing on the workplace.

Balance between Theory and Practice

Our book offers a balance between theory and application. The skill sets addressed in this book are timeless. We don't focus on fads but on tried-and-true principles that are proven to help individuals succeed in organizations. In our experience, students and managers benefit by having some conceptual background on the topic of interpersonal skills but relate best to practical information that can be applied immediately to school, job, or team settings. Providing tips and techniques as well as conceptual grounding based on academic research motivates the reader to learn a particular skill. Some popular interpersonal skills texts provide substantial theoretical and conceptual grounding of each skill area covered and are written primarily for a graduate audience rather than for undergraduates or working managers. In each chapter, we strike a balance by providing both sufficient conceptual material and applied material appropriate for use in real-life personal, academic, and professional situations, using conversational, user-friendly language.

Coverage of New Topics or More Thorough Coverage of Existing Topics

We have included a number of topics that are covered minimally, if at all, by other textbooks. Reviewers who have read our manuscript report that our treatment of topics such as self-disclosure and trust, stress and time management, conveying verbal messages, listening, diversity, ethical decision making, and negotiation are more thorough than what exists now. Other topics such as project management, facilitation, and problem solving are new and not addressed substantively in other books. Although some of these topics may deal with more advanced interpersonal skills, these chapters can be important for individuals who gain greater experience in their professional lives as well as impactful for graduate level students.

Focus on Experiential Learning

In addition to the latest thinking about each of the topics covered, we provide different types of exercises at the end of each chapter that have been tested in the workplace or classroom and evaluated positively by both undergraduate and graduate students as well as working managers. The variety of exercises accomplishes several objectives. First, the instructor can accommodate multiple learning styles by fashioning a subset of exercises appropriate for a particular audience. "One size does not fit all." Second, the combination of experiential and reflective exercises helps give students concrete experience, feedback, and an opportunity to reflect on ways to improve their current skill level. These activities help you create an experiential learning environment that encourages learning through doing. Our experiential focus will allow you to further engage younger learners who tend to prefer and respond more positively to active learning. Finally, in an age when virtual and distance education are increasingly popular, the numerous observational and reflective exercises can facilitate learning even in settings that lack face-to-face interaction.

Why Focus on Interpersonal Skills?

The need to focus on improving interpersonal skills is recognized by more than business school faculty, deans, and executive advisory groups. In a recent survey by the TRACOM Group, more than 80 percent of people identified communication or interpersonal skills

training as important for leadership development, and 55 percent said bosses needed to improve these skills.[1] Studies have shown that interpersonal or "soft skills" are extremely important for entry-level success, and the lack of interpersonal skills may be the major reason highly qualified professionals are not promoted.[2] The rise of teamwork in contemporary organizations has increased the need for every employee to work effectively with and through others. Individuals on work teams need to be able to communicate and collaborate effectively with others whose personalities, approaches, and work styles may differ greatly. In addition, as power to make decisions and implement solutions is transferred down the condensed hierarchy to nonsupervisory employees, the ability to marshal needed resources in the absence of power or authority makes interpersonal and managerial skills more critical than ever. Even those in leadership positions need to be skilled on the softer side of management along with having the right knowledge and experience. Recent studies report communication skills, interpersonal skills, and initiative are what corporations seek when hiring MBAs.[3]

Organizations are looking for employees with outstanding interpersonal skills to help them remain flexible and viable in today's competitive workforce. Organizations are profoundly affected by interpersonal interactions within and between employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. The more effective the relationships and interpersonal communications are, the more productive for the organization and the individuals.[4]

According to Harvard professor Robert Katz, three types of managerial skills are necessary: conceptual, technical, and interpersonal. As one moves through the managerial layers, the need for technological and conceptual skills changes, whereas the need for interpersonal skills remains proportionate for all managerial levels: lower, middle, and top.[5] Improving interpersonal skills goes beyond the classroom and the boardroom; the lessons learned can have broad applications in helping individuals to better deal with problems and conflicts with family and friends.[6] Interpersonal skills help individuals initiate, build, and maintain relationships—in both personal and professional life.

"For things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

Aristotle

A Pedagogical Approach That Works

In today's service-oriented, knowledge- and information-focused, global marketplace, interpersonal skills are essential. However, these skills seldom occur naturally; for most of us they must and can be learned.[7] If these skills are neither learned nor practiced, the good news is that it is never too late to start. Recognizing the need for these skills and acquiring and enhancing them can help workers be continuous learners and remain marketable.[8]

We have designed the text and the supplementary materials to aid students and practicing managers in assessing their level of effectiveness and enhancing their capability in each of 19 skill areas. Each chapter begins with a set of questions that relate to the learning objectives of the chapter. Next, we include a case study that helps the reader understand how the skill (or lack thereof) applies in real-world situations. Then, we lay out the background about the skill—what it is and why it's important. We offer strategies and techniques for learning and using the skill. Key terms are listed at the end of each chapter and highlighted in the margins so students can check their understanding of the terms or phrases. The chapters are written in an easy-to-read style with numerous practical examples in both professional and personal settings. After the chapter summary and list of key terms and concepts, the reader can test his or her understanding of the written material and ability to apply the skills through the many exercises in each chapter. Some exercises are reflective, while others are experiential. Some exercises are designed to be performed in a class environment, while others can be performed outside the classroom. Some exercises allow for feedback from others while some activities encourage self-feedback. Many of the assignments can be used for creating writing assignments, either by reflection on the results of the activity or as a starting point for additional research.

How the Book Is Organized

The book is organized in a practical, experiential learning format that facilitates learning.[9] Each of the 19 chapters can be used as a stand-alone, modular chapter independent of the rest of the book or used in conjunction with other chapters. The chapters are grouped into four units: understanding self (intrapersonal skills), working effectively with others (interpersonal skills), working in teams, and leading individuals and groups.

In the first unit, intrapersonal skills, we begin the process of looking within ourselves to analyze our strengths and weaknesses and gain a better understanding of our personal perceptions, views, beliefs, and work style. Unit I topics include self-awareness, self-disclosure and trust, personal values, goal setting, and ethics, as well as self-management. In the second unit we move to interpersonal skills, or interacting with others, through multiple forms of communication, listening, persuading, and working with diverse others. The third unit focuses on more advanced interpersonal skills for working with teams and groups such as building teams, running meetings, facilitation, and decision making and creative problem solving. In the final unit, we focus on leading groups or individuals through the use of power and politicking, networking, mentoring, coaching, empowerment, and managing projects.

In each chapter, we discuss how a skill or concept can be incorporated into one's self-development, how a skill or concept is used in interactions with others, especially in team settings, and how the skill or concept is applied in the context of managerial roles in organizations.

Note to Instructors

Teaching interpersonal skills using an experiential, learner-centered approach differs greatly from those classes in which a more controlled, lecture-oriented approach may be appropriate. In order to help instructors transition from professor to facilitator—"sage on the stage" to "guide on the side"—we took pains to carefully construct a comprehensive Instructor's Manual and supporting materials that support this goal.

The Online Learning Center (OLC) available at www.mhhe.com/iso5e will enhance instructors' teaching experiences and students' learning experiences. Instructors will have access to the Instructor's Manual, which contains sample syllabi and assignments, chapter-by-chapter explanatory notes, teaching plans, ideas for implementing the material in the classroom, ways to motivate the discussion on a topic, detailed instructions for using the activities and exercises, discussion questions, additional resources, and sample test questions. PowerPoint slides, an electronic test bank with EZ Test, and an Asset Gallery of videos and exercises are also available on the OLC. Students will have access to self-grading quizzes and chapter review materials. Premium content is also available for purchase, including Test Your Knowledge exercises, Self-Assessment exercises, and Manager's Hot Seat videos.

What's New in the Fifth Edition?

Thanks to our students, faculty colleagues, and reviewers, we continue to search for new means to present the material necessary for assessing, learning, and improving interpersonal skills. The emphasis in this edition focuses on making the text more current and enhancing its pedagogic effectiveness for students and instructors. We do this by updating the content as well as enhancing the pedagogical process.

Organization of Material

In this edition, we've added material from the popular press along with results of current research and illustrative current events and company examples to provide depth for skill areas presented in the chapters. We've also added discussion questions at the

end of each chapter. Despite these enhancements, the overall map of the book that specifies both the journey and the major stops along the way, including intrapersonal effectiveness (understanding yourself), interpersonal effectiveness (understanding others), understanding and working in teams, and leading individuals and groups, remains intact.

It is always a challenge to determine the exact order for delivering each skill area, so this edition has included more examples to illustrate how these skills are interrelated without reordering the chapters. For instance, effectively coaching others or providing feedback, as discussed in Chapter 17, requires not only well-honed communication skills (Chapter 7), but also listening skills (Chapter 6) and goal-setting skills (Chapter 3) as vital components for success. Dealing with challenging behavior on teams (Chapter 10) is also referenced in Chapters 11 (conflict), 12 (meetings), and 13 (facilitation). In the chapter on project management (Chapter 19), almost every chapter is referenced to reinforce how all of the skill sets are necessary for becoming an overall effective manager. Since Chapter 7 has taken a broader approach in communications beyond just verbal communication, the title was changed to "Communicating Effectively" in this edition to clearly reflect the expansion of material. The content of the chapter was also reworked to emphasize the importance of integrating nonverbal communication and electronic media.

Updating

Updating the material within the chapters was a key focus of this edition. While "landmark" research has been retained, several chapters incorporate new academic and commercial sources to reflect current trends and research on the topics. Several new opening scenarios were added to provide clearer applications of how each interpersonal skill impacts business situations. Greater emphasis is also placed on the importance and challenge of effective interpersonal skills in a global context. The ever-increasing impact of technology on our lives and interpersonal connections is further discussed throughout the text by including more material on virtual communication and social networking. Changes were made to address current implications of how social media, generational differences, and global expansion impact interpersonal skills.

Graphics were added or changed as space permitted to provide visual reinforcement of the content. New shaded boxes were added to illustrate the skill sets in action, and cartoons were included for visual interest and concept illustration.

Topic Expansion

Based on reviewer feedback and our own self-reflection, we've provided clearer explanations, more tips and techniques, and more visuals or examples to enhance several topics. For instance, Chapter 3 clarifies how goal setting and ethical decision making occur in and are affected by different cultures, while Chapter 5 now provides discussions of "global mindset" and generational diversity. Chapter 7 was enhanced with new materials on business writing and public speaking. We continue to update our exploration of virtual communication's impact on negotiation, teams, meetings, and mentoring (Chapters 9, 10, 12, and 16). We've added material on special challenges in Chapter 9, such as negotiating virtually, dealing with defensiveness, and negotiating in a family business. We've added new material in Chapter 11 that covers difficult conversations and how to deal with an abusive boss. Chapter 14 includes new tools and techniques, along with examples and graphic illustrations that use them. And in Chapter 19 a connection to all of the skill sets and chapters has been added to point out the range of interpersonal skills needed to direct a project from start to finish and to illustrate the integration of the skill areas. Overall, chapters have been updated with the latest research and business examples, with the addition of quite a few new exercises; all but a few chapters contain at least one new exercise and many more of the existing exercises were revised and called out in the text. Expansion of ideas for changing many of the activities are also provided in the Instructor's Manual.

The application of concepts through experiential activities has been and continues to be a necessary strength of our approach, and we continuously search for and create exercises that facilitate skill acquisition. We believe the additions and changes to the

fifth edition make the text more current, informative, practical, and immediately accessible and applicable. We are excited about these strengths and improvements and hope you find them as valuable as we believe they are.

Endnotes

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7. Ahmed et al., "Managerial Communication," p. 107.

8. Mary McCarthy, "Experiential Learning Theory: From Theory to Practice," *Journal of Business & Economics Research* 8, no. 5 (May 2010), p. 131.

9. Priscilla Berry, "Redesign of the Undergraduate Business Curriculum: The Way Forward, a Paradigm Shift," *American Journal of Business Education* 2, no. 8 (November 2009), p. 55.

Acknowledgments

As is true of any substantive effort such as writing a book, there are many people to thank—more than can be listed here individually. Many thanks to all our teachers, colleagues, friends, and family members, from whom we learned what interpersonal skills are (and aren't!). Special note needs to be made of several individuals and groups. Among them are our editors and production staff at McGraw-Hill—Michael Ablassmeir, Laura Hurst Spell, Elizabeth Trepkowski, and Mary Jane Lampe—and our colleagues at our respective schools for their support and ideas. Special mention needs to be made of our reviewers, who gave us substantive, honest feedback that strengthened the final product. They include:

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Stanley C. Ross, Bridgewater State University

We also must recognize our many academic friends, especially those in the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society, the Academy of Management, the MBA Career Services Council, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers, who provided a sounding board for our ideas about the book. We thank our families and friends, especially Alex and Gabby de Janasz; Tom Dowd; and Jeff, Andrew, and Nicholas Schneider, for supporting our work. Most importantly, we wish to acknowledge our terrific students—in the United States and abroad—who keep us honest and are a joy to work with.

Introduction

Every journey needs a map . . .

Imagine that you are finally able to take a much-needed vacation. If you're like most people, you will take time to plan your trip—the route you'll take, the places you'll stay, the activities you'll experience. You want to get the most out of this opportunity to relax, refresh, and renew.

What if the journey you were about to take were different? Longer? More meaningful? With more impact? Such is the journey to personal development: an exciting journey with a winding path toward an evolving destination and wonderful sightseeing opportunities. Some of the stops might be short visits, while others are like family and good friends who always leave the light on.

As with any planning for a journey, we first need to take time to consider where we've been and where we want to go. Then we envision all the wonderful places we might want to visit, honing in on a place that would bring us the most happiness. Finally, we'd have to create a plan and devise a route for how we would get there. We can take the scenic route, stopping along many points along the way. We could take a train and observe the passing sights or take a plane and go directly to our destination. Before we leave, we will also need to select from numerous lodging options and make reservations.

This journey of interpersonal skills is no different. In Unit 1, we offer an opportunity for you to assess what (skills, values, traits) you have. By taking inventory, we are better equipped to select where we want to be (clarifying target areas for improving personal and professional effectiveness). The different stops along the way—Units 2, 3, and 4—offer an assortment of options that, individually and collectively, promise to provide an interesting and enlightening journey on your way to personal and professional success.

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Interpersonal Skills
in Organizations

UNIT 1

**INTRAPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS:
UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF**

1. Journey into Self-awareness
2. Self-disclosure and Trust
3. Establishing Goals Consistent with Your Values and Ethics
4. Self-management

UNIT 2

**INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS:
UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH OTHERS**

5. Understanding and Working with Diverse Others
6. Listening and Nonverbal Communication
7. Communicating Effectively
8. Persuading Individuals and Audiences

UNIT 3

UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING IN TEAMS

9. Negotiation
10. Building Teams and Work Groups
11. Managing Conflict
12. Achieving Business Results through Effective Meetings
13. Facilitating Team Success
14. Making Decisions and Solving Problems Creatively

UNIT 4

LEADING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

15. Effective and Ethical Use of Power and Influence
16. Networking and Mentoring
17. Coaching and Providing Feedback for Improved Performance
18. Leading and Empowering Self and Others
19. Project Management

Unit 1

The first leg of your journey toward interpersonal skill development begins with an opportunity to take inventory of what you have and what you still need. This first unit is devoted to intrapersonal effectiveness—**understanding yourself** (and your goals, strengths, weaknesses, style, biases) and **improving self-management** skills, such as emotional intelligence, time management, and stress management. As you'll discover, "knowing yourself" may not be as easy as it sounds. However, we give you the tools to facilitate this process. Each of the four chapters in this unit helps you increase the odds of achieving intrapersonal effectiveness, and ultimately, personal and professional success and satisfaction. This first leg provides a solid start to your journey, as well as a strong foundation on which to build interpersonal, team-based, and leadership skills in the units that follow.

Unit One:
Intrapersonal
Effectiveness:
Understanding
Yourself

Unit Two:
Interpersonal
Effectiveness:
Understanding
and Working
with Others

Unit Three:
Understanding
and Working in
Teams

Unit Four:
Leading
Individuals and
Groups

1

Journey into Self-awareness

Learning Points

How do I:
- Figure out my strengths and understand how they might guide me in personal and professional choices?
- Know what motivates me in order to reach my potential?
- Assess my limitations and develop a plan for improving in these areas?
- Gain understanding and insight into my personality, attitudes, and behaviors?
- Identify the biases I have that affect my understanding and appreciation of others?

James Morgan, age 22, was excited about his first job out of college. He had worked summer jobs and one internship, but never in an environment as professional as the bank for which he'd work upon graduation. After taking some time off in the summer, he began work in August. Eager to show he was worthy of having been hired, he worked hard the first six months on the job. He enjoyed his co-workers, got along well with his manager, and was even involved in a technology project through which he was able to meet people from other departments of the bank.

The project objective was to develop a new system to handle customers. The present system barely met the needs of the bank's customers and was inefficient and costly to run. Over a period of several weeks, James and his project team members worked diligently to study the problem and develop a solution.

The team consisted of James plus five co-workers: two were about his age and the other three were considerably older. Four of the five were college educated and all but one team member had greater tenure than he had. Of the six-person team, four were Caucasian and two were African American. The team did not have an official leader. Things ran smoothly for several weeks, until the time came for decisions to be made. As soon as a deadline was imposed on the group, James became aware of some significant personality differences within the project team. Two members who had always arrived late to meetings were procrastinating on their assignments for the project. Two others who had attended the meetings began to spend more time socializing than working. One person who had been reluctant to state her opinion about the data that had been collected now said she thought the group needed more time before it would be ready to make a

decision. James had been very task oriented all along and was eager to finish the project and move on to other projects within the bank. He was very frustrated with the lack of progress being made by the group and was concerned about being part of a team that wasn't going to meet its assigned deadline. Yet he was reluctant to speak up. He felt he was too young and hadn't been at the bank long enough to have credibility with his team-mates and take charge of the project. He didn't think he could approach his boss about the situation. He was perplexed about why the group was experiencing so many problems. James thought to himself, "Why can't they get along? Why can't everyone on the team be more like me? I work hard and have pride in how this project is going to turn out. Why don't the others?" He began to wonder if this was the right place for him.

1. Why is James upset?

2. In what ways are the work styles of James's teammates different from his? What causes those differences?

3. Can these differences be resolved? Why or why not?

4. How would you handle the situation if you were James?

"Know thyself."

Socrates

The charge to "know thyself" has commonly been attributed to the ancient philosopher Socrates as well as to Plato, Pythagoras, and Thales. As early as 42 BC, Pubilius Syrus proposed: "It matters not what you are thought to be, but what you are."[1] Understanding yourself—your internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions—gives you the chance to understand your strengths and shortcomings. This is key not only to your ability to succeed, but also to your ability to work effectively with others. The best managers are keenly aware of their strengths—*and* their weaknesses.[2]

Good managers are able to capitalize on their strengths and either improve their limitations or work with others whose qualities complement theirs. They are able to understand others—their motivation, needs, style, capabilities, and limitations—and use this information to motivate and get results from them. They also keep current and regularly engage in self-assessment exercises and experiences that allow them to learn about and improve themselves continually. This chapter describes self-awareness: what it is, why it's important, and how to improve your level of self-awareness. It also addresses how strong self-knowledge can enhance your ability to manage and work with others and provides a number of exercises that enable you to assess yourself and develop improvement plans.

What Is Self-awareness?

Self-awareness is "the capacity for introspection and the ability to reconcile oneself as an individual separate from the environment and other individuals."[3] It is knowing your motivations, preferences, and personality and understanding how these factors influence your judgment, decisions, and interactions with other people. Internal feelings and thoughts, interests, strengths and limitations, culture, fit within your organization, values, skills, goals, abilities, leadership orientation, career interests, and preferred communication style are just a few of the many elements of self-awareness.

Through self-awareness, you develop the ability to know how you are feeling and why, and the impact your feelings have on your behavior. It also involves a capacity to monitor and control biases that potentially affect your decision making. Self-awareness requires a strong commitment to study and evaluate your behaviors and characteristics and make plans for modification as necessary.[4]

Why Is Self-awareness Important?

Self-awareness is the starting point for effectiveness at work. The astute author and statesman Machiavelli wrote, "To lead or attempt to lead without first having a knowledge of self is foolhardy and sure to bring disaster and defeat." Or as a more contemporary blogger recently wrote: "few skills are as critical for a leader as that of accurate self-knowledge . . . all of us have a view of ourselves but that view is not always accurate. When it is not accurate we often get in the way of ourselves."[5] Self-awareness can help you:

- Understand yourself in relation to others.
- Develop and implement a sound self-improvement program.
- Set meaningful life and career goals.
- Develop relationships with others.
- Understand the value of diversity.
- Manage others effectively.
- Increase productivity.
- Increase your ability to contribute to organizations, your peers, employers, community, and family.

Knowing what you are good at and what you enjoy doing can help you to select a career or job that is professionally, financially, and personally satisfying. By knowing yourself—your strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes—you'll know where you "belong."[6]

Self-awareness is important for managers and organizations. Managers who have heightened self-awareness are superior performers. Awareness of self often leads to a greater understanding of others. Managers who can relate to or empathize with co-workers are more trusted and are perceived as being more competent.[7] Because self-aware managers are in tune with the concerns of others, they are also able to reduce the potential for conflict and are more likely to be open to feedback. Self-aware managers who listen to feedback and make positive modifications to personal behavior are able to create trusting and productive work environments. Working effectively with others will therefore increase managerial and organizational effectiveness.[8]

Self-awareness is key for global leaders. Understanding cross-cultural nuances and differing values, work ethics, and motivations of individuals in countries other than your home country is essential for anyone working in business today. All business is global; enhanced self-awareness gives you an understanding of your abilities and also of how to interact and work effectively with others. In a study of global leadership competencies, Jokinen identified three areas of global leadership competence that must be addressed, and self-awareness is at the top of the list, along with inquisitiveness and personal transformation. The author also stresses the importance of continuous learning, which is key to ongoing self-awareness and change.[9]

In assessing your own levels of self-awareness, be aware that cultural differences may play a part in your own awareness and that of others with whom you interact. While we don't wish to "label" people or groups, some cultures are viewed as more "**individualistic**," meaning that people define themselves independent of group affiliation, and some as more "**collectivist**," meaning that people define themselves in relation to what is acceptable within their group. Typically Westerners are individualists and people from Asian countries are collectivist. In one study it was shown that individualists and collectivists use different strategies to increase self-awareness. Individualists use internal information such as personal emotions when observing themselves, and collectivists assess themselves in relation to group harmony and in relation to group-approved norms.[10] Which are you? What individual and group norms affect your level of self-awareness?

Self-awareness is crucial to understand you and the organization where you are working. Each of us can be thought of as an instrument for assessment and change. By asking ourselves a series of questions, we can diagnose our situation and develop some solutions to problems we or our organizations are experiencing. Doing this requires strong self-awareness of our emotional reactions, initial perceptions, biases, and judgments—and a willingness to learn and change continuously. All of these will be considered in this and subsequent chapters.

Lack of Self-awareness

"The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none."

Thomas Carlyle—Scottish author, essayist, and historian (1795–1881)

Self-awareness enables you to make good decisions: a realistic appraisal of your own and others' needs, objectives, resources, and capabilities can lead to more accurate judgments and more positive outcomes. Lack of self-awareness can lead to poor decisions and to an unrealistic notion of one's competencies. Self-awareness allows you to understand your strengths and core competencies—those core elements that contribute to your success. Lack of self-awareness can result in the opposite—incompetence, because the individual does not realize the gap between his or her perception and the reality of the strengths and competencies in question. Lack of self-awareness has also proven to be correlated with career derailment. In a study by the Center for Creative Leadership, a common factor in derailed careers was "lack of accurate portrait of self." Those who lack self-awareness are less able to see themselves accurately and are therefore less able to "midcourse correct" and make modifications necessary for change and improvement.[11]

"There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self."

Benjamin Franklin

Strategies for Gaining Self-awareness

The first step to becoming self-aware is to recognize your weaknesses, strengths, biases, attitudes, values, and perceptions. There are many ways to enhance self-awareness. Some of these are taking an online assessment; journaling (see Exercise 1–A); watching certain movies and TV shows to identify people to whom you relate; and seeking feedback from trusted role models and mentors throughout your career. Analyzing your own experiences, looking at yourself through the eyes of others, self-disclosing, and acquiring diverse experiences can also increase your self-awareness and improve the way you interact with and come across to others.

Self-analysis

Self-analysis requires you to step back and observe (as objectively as possible) the factors that influence your behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, or interactions. Self-analysis is not always easy, yet it is necessary for you to increase your effectiveness personally and professionally.

Self-analysis can begin with reflection and exploring your thoughts and feelings. This helps you to obtain new perspectives based on new insights. You can become more effective by implementing new behavioral and cognitive changes in future situations. For instance, James, from the chapter's opening scenario, has an opportunity to gain self-awareness from his dysfunctional team experience. Through reflection, he could see that his current behavior of remaining silent has not aided the team in its process. Gaining awareness of the impact of his action, or lack of action, could lead to a new perspective regarding teaming and his part in the process and to positive behaviors and attitudes in his current and future team projects. This learning will not only help James in his professional life, but will enhance overall team and organizational effectiveness.

One means to gain insight is through examining your behavior, personality, attitudes, and perceptions. (See Exercise 1–A.)

Behavior

Behavior is the way in which we conduct ourselves—the way in which we act. Behavior is influenced by our feelings, judgments, beliefs, motivations, needs, experience, and the

Figure 1–1
Means for Obtaining
Self-awareness

Others' Perceptions Feedback	Self-disclosure	Diverse Experiences

Self-awareness
(Self-concept)

Self-analysis

Behavior	Personality	Attitudes	Perceptions
Motivation Modes of thinking Modes of acting Modes of interacting	Traits Factors Self-monitoring	Thoughts Feelings Emotions	Stereotypes Selective Perception Projection Expectations Interest Attributions

opinions of others. Patterns of behavior develop through reactions to events and actions over a period of time (see Figure 1–1). Behavior consists of four components:[12]

1. **Motivation**—the drive to pursue one action over another. What underlying factors move you to make a particular decision or choice? For example, what drives you to do a good job? The answer might be a competitive nature, strong achievement orientation, or a difficult childhood experience. Being aware of your core drivers, those things that motivate you—positively and negatively—can help you understand the roots of your behavior and make adjustments as necessary to modify your behavior.

2. **Modes of thinking**—the way you process the various inputs your brain receives. How do you analyze information and make judgments about how to use and apply that information? For example, do you process information quietly by reflecting on your own, or do you process information out loud by talking with others? Being aware of how you take in and make sense of information can help you understand how you make judgments and decisions that lead to choosing one behavior or course of action over another.

3. **Modes of acting**—the course of action you apply in a given situation. What approach do you use in response to stimuli, events, and people? For example, when someone does something that offends you, do you react in anger? Or do you react quietly, assessing your options before acting? Being aware of how you express your reaction to things that happen can help you understand the alternatives available when certain events arise.

4. **Modes of interacting**—the way in which you communicate ideas, opinions, and feelings with others. How do you typically share your thoughts with others? For example, are you comfortable in large groups of people? In team situations? Or do you prefer to work on your own? Being aware of how you work with others can help you understand how your preferred style meshes with others.

Personality

Personality describes the relatively stable set of characteristics, tendencies, and temperaments that have been formed by heredity and by social, cultural, and environmental factors.[13] These traits determine how we interact with and react to various people and situations. Some aspects of our personality are believed to be a result of nature—those traits with which we are born and that we possess through heredity. Other characteristics of our personality are thought to be a result of our environment—those factors that we acquire through exposure to people and events in our lives.

Personality traits are enduring characteristics that describe your attitude and behavior. Examples are agreeableness, aggression, dominance, and shyness. Most of these traits have been found to be quite stable over time.[14] This means that if you are cold and uncaring in one situation, you are likely to behave similarly in other situations. The Big Five model[15] is a powerful assessment that organizes numerous concepts into a "short list" of just five factors that are representative of the characteristics that can be linked with satisfaction and success. The Big Five model has five primary components (see Exercise 1–B): extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Studies show these factors can be linked to job satisfaction, employee attitudes and behavior, stress, and job performance.[16] The Big Five factors also relate to overall life satisfaction. "Similar to job satisfaction, life satisfaction appears to be dispositionally based. Moreover, it appears the same traits that predict job satisfaction also predict life satisfaction."[17] While some personality characteristics are inherited, some factors can be modified through training, experience, and a conscious attempt to change.

1. Extroversion assesses the degree to which you are social or antisocial, outgoing or shy, assertive or passive, active or inactive, and talkative or quiet. A person who rates high for the first traits in these pairs is extroverted, while someone who rates high for the second traits is introverted. Extroversion or introversion, in itself, is not necessarily bad, but extremes at both ends of the spectrum can be equally dysfunctional. A person who is too outgoing could be perceived as overbearing, and a person who is too reserved might be perceived as disinterested.

2. Agreeableness measures the degree to which you are friendly or reserved, cooperative or guarded, flexible or inflexible, trusting or cautious, good-natured or moody, soft-hearted or tough, and tolerant or judgmental. Those scoring high on the first element of these paired traits are viewed as agreeable and easy to work with, while those rating low are viewed as more disagreeable and difficult to work with. Being too agreeable could cause a person to be too accommodating, however, and others may take advantage of this weakness.

3. Emotional stability measures the degree to which you are consistent in how you react to certain events, weigh options before acting, and look at a situation objectively. Those who rate high on emotional stability are viewed as generally calm, stable, having a positive attitude, able to manage their anger, secure, happy, and objective. Those who rate lower are more likely to be anxious, depressed, angry, insecure, worried, and emotional.

4. Conscientiousness represents the degree to which you are dependable, can be counted on, follow through on commitments, and keep promises. Those who rate high on conscientiousness are generally perceived to be careful, thorough, organized, persistent, achievement oriented, hardworking, and persevering. Those who score lower on this dimension are more likely to be viewed as inattentive to detail, uncaring, disrespectful, not interested or motivated, unorganized, apt to give up easily, and lazy.

5. Openness to experience considers whether you are interested in broadening your horizons or limiting them, learning new things or sticking with what you already know, meeting new people or associating with current friends and co-workers, going to new places or restricting yourself to known places. Individuals who score high on this factor tend to be highly intellectual, broad-minded, curious, imaginative, and cultured. Those who rate lower tend to be more narrow-minded, less interested in the outside world, and uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings and situations. Professionals who are open to experience are more willing to reflect on feedback for personal development.

Your Personality

■ What are the characteristics of your personality? How do you know this? (See Exercise 1–B.)