Have you ever worked on a group project where everyone got along, contributed to the group goals, and accomplished a lot? On the other hand, have you ever worked on a group project where many people argued, little was produced, or one person did most of the work? What do you think makes a group most effective?

**Objective:**

Discuss human relations skills and their importance in the workplace.

**Key Terms:**

- appearance
- attitude
- commitment
- compromiser
- contributor
- cooperation
- dependability
- diligence
- distractor
- dominator
- elaborator
- encourager
- follower
- human relations skills
- information giver
- information seeker
- initiative
- integrator
- manipulator
- no-show
- opinion giver
- opinion seeker
- personality
- protester
- recognition seeker
- respectfulness
- work ethic

**Human Relations Skills**

Human relations skills are important abilities that help people work together and get along. They are sometimes called people skills. Human relations skills are largely determined by personality and appearance. Personality is the emotional, thought, and behavior patterns of an individual. Appearance is how someone looks. It is an important factor in the develop-
ment of personality and social relations. Skills in human relations can be learned through practice and education, thereby improving a person’s worth.

Human relations skills include social skills, such as respecting other people, being courteous, using common greetings like “Hello” and “Good morning,” commending people when they have done a good job, and seeking and accepting others’ advice. Other social skills are using effective verbal and nonverbal communication, choosing appropriate times to criticize, helping others feel good about themselves, having faith in others’ decisions, and having empathy, or understanding another’s position on an issue.

Some human relations skills are closely related to personality. Examples of personality-related human relations skills are honesty and integrity, sensitivity, cooperation, flexibility, supportiveness, self-confidence, dependability, emotional maturity, enjoyment from work, confidence in others, and wise use of power.

Human relations skills are essential for leadership roles and for the gaining of respect from others. Inspiring leaders display excellent human relations skills. They use these skills to lead others; they are not manipulators. A manipulator is a person who uses people for his or her own selfish reasons.

Good human relations skills promote interaction. Practicing appropriate people skills helps unite members of a group and encourages them to work together. People skills help bring actions and ideas together to achieve daily goals. Good human relations skills often result in good work ethic and greater accomplishments.

**PERSONALITY STYLES**

People have different personalities. Although everyone is unique, researchers have developed models that categorize general types of personalities. Understanding personality types can help someone interact with other people. Some types of personality styles are dominator, compromiser, follower, protester, encourager, integrator, contributor, opinion seeker, opinion giver, information seeker, information giver, elaborator, recognition seeker, distractor, and no-show.

A **dominator** is a person who dominates a group. He or she likes to control the group and set the rules.

A **compromiser** is someone who strives to see all sides of an issue and then works to get opposing parties to meet in agreement at some midpoint.
A **follower** is someone who prefers to listen to group discussion and usually goes along with the group. A person may be a follower in some situations and a leader in others.

A **protester** is someone who speaks out against certain issues.

An **encourager** is a person who supports others, giving them confidence and building their self-esteem.

An **integrator** is someone who sorts through different ideas and develops a plan or goal from the ideas.

A **contributor** is someone who likes to share with the group or take on responsibilities for the betterment of the group.

An **opinion seeker** is someone who tries to find out what other people in the group think.

An **opinion giver** is someone who likes to make known to the group what he or she thinks.

An **information seeker** is someone who believes in finding facts and information in order to make informed decisions.

An **information giver** is an individual who provides answers to questions and helps solve problems the group confronts.

An **elaborator** is an individual who desires to have group projects planned to the finest detail.

A **recognition seeker** is someone who craves recognition for any and all contributions made to a group or group project.

A **distractor** is someone who does silly things to attract attention to him or herself.

A **no-show** is someone who fails to show up for group activities or events.

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**PERSONAL QUALITIES OF VALUED EMPLOYEES**

Employers have the responsibility to hire people who will benefit the company or institution. Personal qualities of a worker often determine his or her value to an employer. Educators often ask employers what they expect from students as these newcomers enter the workforce. The employers find personal qualities and human relations skills more important than technical skills or subject-matter knowledge. Human relations skills play a major role in the contribution an employee makes at work. Knowing this, employers look for employees who have good human relations skills or qualities. Those qualities include a positive attitude, cooperation, dependability, willingness to work hard, respectfulness, diligence, commitment, ability to handle criticism well, appropriate dress, initiative, and work ethic.

**Positive Attitude**

**Attitude** is one’s outlook on life. It is how one views the outside world. Attitude can be the single greatest factor in job success. A person is generally considered to have one of two types of attitude, a positive attitude or a negative one.

People with a positive attitude smile easily and are cheerful. They are outgoing and friendly and tend to see life as exciting and enjoyable. In the workplace they rarely complain, seldom criticize others, respect the opinions of others, and accept responsibility for mistakes. People
with a positive attitude are easy to work with and promote a positive image of the business. Employers like employees who display a positive attitude.

People with a negative attitude appear unhappy. They tend to complain a lot, find fault in others, make excuses for mistakes, be self-centered, and smile rarely. Often people with a bad attitude find it difficult to work cooperatively with customers and other employees.

**Cooperation**

**Cooperation** is the act of working with everyone for the common purpose. Cooperative workers are tolerant of others, avoid assumptions, do their share of work, and avoid gossiping and arguing. Employees might be asked to do unpopular tasks. If so, the tasks should be done without complaint. Employees might be assigned to work with people they do not like. In those cases, every effort should be made to get along in order to accomplish the task. Everyone should be willing to pitch in and do a fair share of the work. Willingness to cooperate is often recognized and rewarded by employers.

**Dependability**

High on the list of traits an employer appreciates is dependability. **Dependability** is the quality of being worthy of trust. A dependable employee can be counted on to do a job as instructed. He or she is reliable. Consistent performance is a form of dependability. Employers expect workers to be on the job every day and to report to work on time. Many people have lost their jobs because of failure to come to work or because of chronic tardiness. A worker should not miss work if at all possible. He or she should call early if sickness prevents going to work. An employer cannot keep someone on staff who is not dependable.

**Willingness to Work Hard**

Being a hard worker means being ambitious, alert, and energetic. Hard workers push themselves to get the job done correctly.

**Respectfulness**

**Respectfulness** is the assumption of good faith and competence in others. Respect among employees allows the employees to work together in a complementary fashion. Respect for the supervisor and others of authority is important.

**Diligence**

**Diligence** is an earnest effort to stay with the job until it is completed. A good employee doesn’t quit in the middle of a project.
**Commitment**

*Commitment* is a duty or pledge to see a job done right. Employers want someone who can be counted on for assignments above and beyond the “call of duty.”

**Ability to Handle Criticism Well**

Criticism should be taken constructively instead of personally. A worker should keep an open mind and always try to learn from mistakes. When the employee succeeds, the company succeeds.

**Appropriate Dress**

Employees should always dress appropriately for the job. Well-groomed employees have good personal hygiene and wear clean clothes. A worker who looks good feels better about him or herself and usually does a better job.

**Initiative**

Employees are sometimes confronted with situations for which they have no instructions. They can choose to sit around doing nothing, or they can be self-starters. A worker who is honest, has learned about the job, and is enthusiastic will show initiative. **Initiative** is the willingness of an employee to move on to another task without being told to do so. As an employee becomes more experienced, the employer will expect more in the way of initiative.

**Work Ethic**

Work ethic is often mentioned when describing a person’s work. **Work ethic** is a set of values based on the moral virtues of hard work and diligence. It is also a belief in the moral benefit of work and the ability of work to enhance character. Work ethic may include being reliable, having initiative, or maintaining human relations skills.

**Summary:**

Human relations skills are important abilities that help people work together and get along. They are essential for leadership roles and in gaining respect from others. Good human relations skills promote interaction. Human relations skills help bring actions and ideas together to achieve daily goals. They often result in good work ethic and greater accomplishments.
People have different personalities. Understanding personality types can help someone interact with other people. Some types of personality styles are dominator, compromiser, follower, protester, encourager, integrator, contributor, opinion seeker, opinion giver, information seeker, information giver, elaborator, recognition seeker, distractor, and no-show.

Human relations skills play a major role in the contribution an employee makes at work. Human relations skills or qualities include a positive attitude, cooperation, dependability, willingness to work hard, respectfulness, diligence, commitment, ability to handle criticism well, appropriate dress, initiative, and work ethic.

Checking Your Knowledge:

1. What are human relations skills?
2. How do personality and appearance relate to human relations skills?
3. What are some major personality styles?
4. What qualities do employers look for in employees?
5. What is work ethic?

Expanding Your Knowledge:

Visit your school guidance counselor and inquire about personality tests. With the aid of the counselor, find and take a personality test. Analyze the results, and through the process learn more about yourself.

Web Links:

Personality Styles Inventory
http://www.saleshelp.com/assessments/PersonalityStylesInventory/PerStyleInv.html

Oldham's Personality Styles
http://www.geocities.com/lifexplore/oldham.htm

Workplace Social Skills
http://www.conovercompany.com/Products/functional_skills/workplacesocial.htm

Ten Ways to Improve Your Interpersonal Skills

Agricultural Career Profiles
http://www.mycaert.com/career-profiles