

# The Importance of Interpersonal Skills in the Workplace

- [Siôn Phillpott](#)

On a scale of 1 to 5, managers rate the importance of having good interpersonal skills at 4.37, just below the 'ability to [work in teams](#)' (which obviously comes in at 4.49). In all seriousness, though, there's a reason why they are so valued; even though most workplace business is now conducted through [instant messaging software](#), it's still necessary to possess verbal and diplomatic skills in order to work effectively with your colleagues and bosses.

Therefore, interpersonal skills are crucial. Below are ten reasons that demonstrate why they are so important, as well as a few tips on how these skills can help you navigate the workplace, [increase productivity](#) and potentially [advance your career](#).

## 1. They Foster Effective Communication

[Effective communication](#) is the cornerstone of any successful business, and to [be a good communicator](#), you need interpersonal skills. They are necessary for the establishment of relationships between yourself and your workmates, which leads to a mutual exchange of ideas, information and skills.

Furthermore, you establish mutual respect and consideration for one another's opinions and input. Communication conducted in this manner enables a more fluid performance of duties, better management of tasks and the timely completion of assignments.

## 2. They Keep the Feedback Loop Open

Most companies attempt to create a dynamic workplace which can adapt quickly to both internal and external factors; for this to work effectively, though, you need an open and [constructive feedback](#) loop.

If you are unfamiliar with what this process entails, it is essentially the ongoing communication that happens between a task-giver and a task-completer. As the person performing the task completes steps, they may ask for feedback; the supervisor then either tells the employee that they are doing well or that they need to make relevant adjustments. This cycle, or 'loop', is constantly ongoing.

The reasons why a feedback loop might break down are multiple but undeniably linked to interpersonal skills. For example:

- one or either party is not being approachable
- one or either party is not being present mentally or physically
- the inability of the supervisor to communicate well with the subordinate.

An extremely damaging behaviour – and one that is very frequently seen – is the supervisor allowing the task to be completed and then giving feedback *afterwards*, especially if the employee asked for it previously and was denied it. This can affect productivity, [morale](#) and the quality of work produced; after all, there is nothing worse than a person pouring hours of labour into a project, only for a supervisor to then come and tear it all down.

## 3. They Expand Your Opportunities

Through connecting with managers and fellow workmates, you're able to gain access to more exciting opportunities in the workplace and in your field of interest. If you [make a good impression on your boss](#), for example, then they'll be in a position to give you good references or even bump you up to a higher position with more responsibilities and perks – which is, of course, a big plus for your professional development.

## 4. They Make You Relatable

With good interpersonal skills, your colleagues and managers are far more likely to perceive you as an approachable person. As a result, coworkers will be more comfortable interacting with you and more willing to seek your assistance and advice.

You'll also find that people become easier to work with, allowing you to engage with them more meaningfully and thereby increase productivity levels across the board.

## 5. They Demonstrate Social Awareness

Good interpersonal skills show that you have an interest in the wellbeing of coworkers and customers, gaining their trust and confidence as a result. For example, a keen sense of perception and emotional intelligence can help you through a particularly tricky social situation; interpersonal skills also help you make the right decisions and judgement calls about sensitive work-related issues.

## 6. They Increase Client Satisfaction

The ability to be diplomatic is an imperative trait in the workplace, but it's not just coworkers who benefit from your tactful approach; customers are also able to see that you don't compromise on productivity, that you are aware of their needs and that you are willing to find solutions to their queries.

A happy client means a happy boss, too, so your ability to build positive relationships won't go unnoticed by your superiors – or by the promotion board, either.

## 7. They Build Trust

According to the American Psychological Association, a whopping quarter of employees in the US do not trust their employers, and only about 50% of them believe that their bosses are open with them. A lack of transparency can result in disenfranchised employees and disloyalty amongst the workforce.

If your team feels that they are deprived of a say in the company's direction and activities, and that important personnel decisions (like hiring and firing) are also made without any warning, then they are almost certain to go and seek alternative employment. The stress of potential abrupt joblessness can create a lack of trust in administration and their decisions, while even employees that aren't on a constant hunt for a new job will inevitably be working at diminished capacity due to the chronic stress.

## 8. They Help Foster and Maintain Personal Relationships

Interpersonal skills are at their most effective, beneficial and rewarding when they foster meaningful relationships. Not only is it important to build personal relationships in the workplace, but it is also important to maintain these relationships within professional boundaries.

Maintaining these relationships can prove to be even more challenging than creating them, as it involves multiple variables like consistency, follow-through and continued empathy. Therefore, the best way to maintain interpersonal relationships in the workplace is to make them sincere.

## 9. They Make You an Effective Leader

If you take a look at any list or article that talks about interpersonal skills in the workplace, their importance to effective management and leadership will be a recurring theme.

This is because the ability to foster interpersonal relationships, establish trust and communicate clearly are all crucial skills for an effective leader. A leader without the ability to connect with their team will inevitably fail in the long term, while valuable team members will likely jump ship in the short term. Either way, it will result in a loss of productivity, and it will burden the remaining employees with additional work.

## 10. They Encourage Empathy

As this article already mentions, empathy is a critical characteristic of a leader. Knowing what might be preoccupying your employees – both inside and outside work – will help you create a powerful connection with them.

Ultimately, each employee is a person with their own life and worries away from work, as well as their own sets of challenges and tribulations. Understanding them will create loyalty, boost morale (which is especially instrumental to productivity) and facilitate positive communication.

Aside from establishing relationships, excellent interpersonal skills greatly influence group performance and drive the engagement with – and effectiveness of – teamwork in the company.

Remember: in the workplace, you need to be able to relate to others in order to optimise productivity. Good interpersonal skills are held with high regard in the corporate world, and being able to demonstrate them will help you stand out from the rest of the crowd.

Do you think that your interpersonal skills need to be improved? Let us know in the comments section below.

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