



## **SOLODSI – Solopreneurs‘ Digital Social Innovation**

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# **IO2: Training program for social solopreneurs**

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## **Social solopreneurs soft skills**

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## ABOUT THE COURSE

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The course is aimed at people who want their work to become more effective - and they have become valued employees or have made a decision to become self-employed (e.g. on the Solopreneur principles). The addressees of the course are both young people who are faced with the choice of their first job, struggling with dilemmas regarding the content of a CV or a cover letter; as well as mature people who plan to change jobs, career advancement, want to change the nature of work or increase the effectiveness of their activities. In addition to such important hard skills, the acquired soft skills are also important in each profession. Soft skills that encompass all traits beyond professional competences, such as teamwork, communication skills, and flexibility. Soft skills are becoming more and more important, especially when assessing candidates in job interviews. In addition, observations and research show that soft skills determine our professional success, and their strength is appreciated more and more by employers each year. In this course, we've collected the 9 most important soft skills you can learn to be successful at work; to get a job and to be noticed when submitting your CV, to shine during a job interview or career promotion.

Soft skills, or what exactly is it? The following features can be listed that define this area of our behaviour, and they are:

- assertiveness,
- communicativeness and communication
- resistance, including resistance to stress,
- creativity,
- ability to work in a team, organizational skills
- good manners,
- self-discipline,
- good work organization, time management
- engagement
- empathy
- analytical skills
- social media skills

The soft skills presented in the course have been divided into three areas: personal competences, social competences and methodological competences.

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## COURSE STRUCTURE

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Development and education are important at every stage of our lives; not only professional. Acquiring new competences and skills allows for the development and better use of the brain - which affects its vitality and allows you to avoid many diseases (including dementia). Self-knowledge, self-awareness and the desire to expand the range of acquired new soft skills affect the quality of our work and allow us to present ourselves on the labor market as a valuable employee, effectively managing his personal and professional life. The awareness of the acquired and assimilated hard and soft skills helps employees to conduct a thorough analysis of their strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). The approach to this analysis will also allow you to consider taking up the challenge of self-employment - e.g. in the form of Solopreneur, which gives self-employed persons who are aware of their skills and talents.

### Objectives and subject of the course

This course aims to raise knowledge, self-awareness and name the soft skills that each of us has. The course objectives are related to its modules:

1. assertiveness,
2. communicativeness and communication,
3. resistance, including resistance to stress,
4. creativity,
5. the ability to work in a team, organizational skills,
6. high personal culture,
7. self-discipline,
8. good work organization, time management,
9. commitment,
10. empathy,
11. analytical skills,
12. social media skills.

### Entry Standards (Prerequisites)

The most important and necessary condition for joining the course is the willingness to acquire knowledge and skills related to working on oneself, on the development of soft skills. Experience in teamwork can be an additional advantage.

## Equipment and teaching aids

We recommend the following devices and teaching aids for the on-site course:

- Non-electronic - chalk boards / flipcharts, chalk / markers, copies of evaluation cards.
- Electronic / digital - Computer, video projector, speakers; Internet, PowerPoint slide shows based on modules), videos.

## Training outline

### Knowledge

Trainees should acquire knowledge of:

- professional competences
- soft skills
- self-management
- time management
- team work

### Skills

Trainees should be competent in:

- Setting priorities
- Communication while working in a team
- Motivating and engaging yourself and colleagues to work
- Improve the quality of working life

### Attitudes

Trainees should:

- Be aware of the various myths and stereotypes related to the acquisition of soft competences and skills
- Recognize that continuous development and self-improvement is a constant part of our lives
- Be open-minded and cooperative with teammates
- Be aware of their attitudes towards their own education and development
- 

## Curriculum (and training outcomes)

The curriculum is designed to provide a learning process from theory to practice. So that students could learn about soft skills issues, and then have the opportunity to practice these solutions supporting soft skills on themselves. If the students practice the techniques of development on themselves, they will feel their power; it is a good chance that they will be more willing to implement them in their lives, and later in the workplace



### **Assessment method and recognition system**

After each module, there is a test with 20 multiple-choice questions. These questions are designed to assess the acquired knowledge and skills after each department. On the other hand, in the field of evaluation of attitudes, we encourage self-reflection during, and especially after completing the course, in situations related to work and the development of soft skills.

The recommended assessment time for each module is 20 minutes. (1 min on ARS)

All students will receive a certificate after completing the course. When using the Moodle online platform, you will receive the certificate from the machine after completing the course and passing the tests; or it will be issued by the trainer if the students attend the full-time course.

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## SOLOPRENEURS AS A BUSINESS MODEL

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Solopreneur as a business model is a new phenomenon on the labour market. Solopreneur comes from English and is a combination of two words: solo and entrepreneur. You could literally think of someone who is self-employed. In terms of meaning, however, the two concepts are not identical. They differ mainly in the entrepreneur's approach to running a business.

Solopreneur fits perfectly into the geek economy trend in the economy. Excludes hiring employees - it is the individual work of one person. What is right, it happens that he accepts projects implemented in teams or outsources individual activities to external companies, but always works on his own.

The handbook will contain a lot of the latest information and trends related to business management, from searching for a business idea, through creating a business plan, to financial analysis or issues related to outsourcing. In addition, the script will be enriched with a collection of examples from the European solopreneur market, which will help to look at global trends in Europe.

Showing students on one example of a business model - solopreneur - so many aspects of management will allow them to take a broader perspective on the issues of management, marketing, financial analysis and market research. Due to the universal nature of the script, it will be possible to widely use the examples and substantive content presented therein during didactic classes at the management department.

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Promotion of the textbook will be possible and effective during the conference of Scientific Circles organized by the Polish Economic Society in 2022. A richly displayed list of management issues will be an interesting item supporting academic teachers of management faculties while conducting classes, and at the same time for students the script will be a base of current knowledge in this field. The script will be dedicated to students of AWF Katowice of all faculties and university students. Moreover, it is planned to promote the results of comparative research at national and international conferences. In the future, it is planned to edit this study in English so that the ERASMUS + students coming to our university have scientific assistance during the program of study (marketing, management, marketing research).

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## SOLOPRENEURS SOFT SKILLS

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Soft skills, also known as common skills or core skills, are skills which are desirable in all professions. These include critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, professional writing, teamwork, digital literacy, leadership, professional attitude, work ethic, career management and intercultural fluency<sup>1</sup>.

Unlike hard skills, soft skills are not measurable. This means that the employer has to check, e.g. by organizing a cut-scene, whether the candidate can cope in the position where such skills are necessary. Soft skills are also often called personal and interpersonal skills. These are features and social skills that determine how you behave, integrate with other people or organize your work. Soft skills are skills that are not measurable. They are revealed in the behaviour of the employee and the way in which he performs his duties, but it is impossible to evaluate them on the basis of the documents obtained. These are more personal and interpersonal skills.

Soft skills are more difficult for an employee to measure and enforce. Many people have natural predispositions to be leaders, it is connected with the fact that they quickly establish contacts with other people and are able to convince them to their own ideas. Some, on the other hand, do not feel comfortable in the spotlight, but they do an excellent job "behind the scenes" of being great planners and analysts. However, not everyone is aware of their skills. That is why there are more and more specialists on the market who discover unused potential in employees. This course aims to familiarize students with their soft skills, what are their predispositions to use and how this potential can be strengthened and developed.

If you want to show your supervisors that you are a dedicated employee, do more than required. Do your best, work more efficiently if necessary, and create creative suggestions to get involved in the company. Support your co-workers when they have a lot to do and are unable to manage all their work on their own.

During the course, you will receive a package of ready-made tools that can be used while working on your professional and personal development.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://softskills4.eu>

**Examples of soft skills:**

- assertiveness,
- communicativeness,
- resistance to stress,
- creativity,
- ability to work in a team,
- good manners,
- self-discipline,
- good work organization.

Until recently, these immeasurable skills were not taken into account as much as they are today. Now employers appreciate this type of competence more and more. Probably because it is often easier to teach an employee hard skills than to build and invest in the creation of their soft skills from the beginning. Market research suggests that the demand for soft skills is steadily increasing.

A great example of a position where highly developed soft skills come in handy is the salesperson. It should be a person who knows how to take the initiative and offer the customer a product or wait for the customer to specify his expectations and then recommend specific products to him. In this case, the ability to deal with difficult situations and stress as well as dynamism in action is also important - the salesperson cannot focus only on serving one customer.

You will be able to use the knowledge acquired during this course for yourself as well as for colleagues and subordinates in the organizational structure.

The first module will discuss soft skills that relate to working on yourself and the area of individual work on your competences. This module is built on a theoretical basis, supported by examples of individual development of individual competences.

The Kaizen philosophy on which this course is based is focused on change and constant learning.

## Soft skills development<sup>2</sup>

How to develop soft skills? First of all, through everyday practice, contacts with other people, observing and analysing your reactions in social contacts. Contrary to hard skills, these are not skills that can be learned from books. The Internet is full of various types of soft skills training. It is best to choose those conducted by professional trainers. Trainings are often held in small groups, in which it is necessary to re-create the assigned role play. Such an exercise allows participants to get rid of unwanted reactions and develop important interpersonal skills.

Can an introvert effectively manage a team and be successful on the labor market? Although it would seem impossible, both scientific research based on a representative group of people and individual examples (for example Steve Jobs or Meryl Streep) show that not only extroverts can start their own companies and gain popularity.

Although some competencies are closely related to our innate temperament, it does not mean that the skills desired by employers cannot be developed to some extent. The time spent on developing an assertive attitude, the ability to set goals, delegate tasks, enforce and motivate the team will certainly pay off in the future.

One would like to say that the more skills in your CV, the better. Versatility is undoubtedly a big advantage. However, it's hard to be good at everything. That is why it is worth getting to know your own abilities and limitations, and then go in the direction that is consistent with our personality traits. It is certainly worth investing in yourself, even when we said goodbye to school walls years ago. This is a chance for a faster career development.

There are plenty of options for developing hard skills - it is possible thanks to courses, vocational training or major studies. However, it is more difficult to develop soft skills that come with experience and appropriate management and require not so much theoretical knowledge as practice and a good example. Training in soft skills is becoming more and more popular, and it is worth going to it to develop these more subtle skills.

They all have some soft and hard skills, therefore, to increase your chance among the competition, you should try to be unique. It is also worth making sure that these skills

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<sup>2</sup> <https://interviewme.pl/blog/umiejtnosci-miekkie-i-twarde>; <https://www.aplikuj.pl/porady-dla-pracownikow/1339/kompetencje-miekkie-i-twarde-co-musisz-o-nich-wiedziec>; <https://ebook.interviewme.pl/interviewme-ebook-1-24-bledy-w-cv-przez-ktore-nie-dostajesz-pracy-prs.pdf>

correspond to the employer's offer as much as possible and agree with the requirements for a given position.

### **How to include soft and hard skills in your CV?**

First, describe your abilities in the "Skills" section on the front page of your resume. Employers rarely read the back of the submitted CV. Remember to always try to match the skill description with the job offer. Thanks to this, the employer will immediately see that you are a good candidate and you do not send the same CV to all companies. Try to be detailed and unusual. Try not to list common skills that almost every candidate has, e.g. instead of "Knowledge of Office", it is worth listing the programs included in the package that you know and describe what you can create thanks to them (e.g. "Ability to create tables and diagrams in a program Microsoft Excel").

In the case of hard skills, it is clear that all achievements that are documented or are a specific acquired skill should be listed, e.g. knowledge of Italian (B2 certificate), Excel, Word, creating multimedia presentations (PowerPoint, Prezi), driving license, etc. So what is the list of interpersonal skills and soft skills that are important and valued in virtually every position?

Here is an example of a list of competences especially valuable for employers that should be included in your CV:

- Logical and critical thinking. Currently, advanced technology requires the ability to think quickly and analytically. An employee who can critically and logically approach a given problem is highly valued in the labor market.
- Flexibility and creativity. It is an important soft competence, because nowadays, when the market is changing dynamically, it is very important to be open to changes and new solutions and to create new, innovative services or products.
- Communicativeness. In most professions, work involves cooperation with other employees. It is important to have the ability to communicate effectively and resolve disputes in a group. The potential employer certainly knows how important the ability to work in a team is and will undoubtedly appreciate it.
- Diligence and willingness to develop. Employers value employees who want to constantly increase their competences - attend courses, trainings, develop skills in the use of new programs, etc. the candidate will appear more professional and committed.
- A positive attitude and a nice disposition. A positive attitude is contagious and has a great influence on the well-being and energy of other team members. It also helps to reduce conflicts in the group and to be more willing to perform the assigned duties.

Regardless of the position you apply for, it is very likely that your employer will expect you to have both hard and soft skills. The latter can also be developed - today there are many trainings and courses that you can take advantage of.

By combining hard skills with soft skills, you have the best chance of finding employment. Both hard and soft competences have an impact on the quality of our work and its effectiveness. The key competences are different for each job (e.g. a tram driver does not have to be a polyglot, but must necessarily have the appropriate driving license, as opposed to e.g. a journalist). In all professions, however, you must have the skills of both groups - hard competences and soft competences. It is worth investing in their development to increase your chances on the labor market.

To sum up, hard competences are those that are measurable and are specific skills acquired on the path of education or through experience. Soft skills, on the other hand, are individual features that determine your disposition and behaviour. Both of these groups are extremely important, although at present it is soft skills that are considered more valued on the labor market.

Remember to ask your boss for a reference in any job you decide to change, which will then help "prove" our true pool of skills. This document can successfully list not only professional achievements, but also soft skills. For employers, references are very important because they confirm the information contained in the CV.



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## SOLOPRENEURS SOCIAL SOFT SKILLS

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### Assertiveness, independence

“You have the right to express yourself - even when it hurts someone else - as long as your intentions are not aggressive. You have the right to make your requests known to others - as long as you feel they have the right to decline. There are situations where the rights of individuals are not clear. However, you always have the right to discuss the situation with another person. You have the right to exercise your rights. " Human rights according to Herbert Fensterheim

It can be assumed that there are three types of human behaviour: submissiveness, aggressiveness and assertiveness.

A submissive man agrees to everything because he feels the fear of losing a client, partner or job. Aggression is the counterbalance of submission, that is, not agreeing to anything. Both attitudes are negative because submission leads to a loss of respect, and aggressiveness makes it impossible to enter into dialogue.

Assertiveness in psychology means the ability to express your thoughts, feelings and views within your own boundaries and respecting the boundaries of other people. Assertiveness is also the art of saying no when you really disagree with the whole.

Most people equate assertiveness with refusing, and refusal is only part of the assertive behaviour. Being able to say "yes" is just as important as being able to say "no". We are assertive when we are able to receive praise but also criticism; as well as when we know how to ask for help.

People tend to display one of the attitudes - they are either submissive or aggressive. Assertiveness is somewhere in the middle; it can be defined as "a subtle balancing act between defending one's own boundaries and selfishness."

Hence, according to the definition, being assertive is directly connected with honest and firm attitudes, opinions, desires expressed towards another person, but in such a way as to respect the feelings, attitudes, opinions, rights of the other person; do not behave aggressively. Assertiveness is the fact that we exercise personal rights without violating the rights of others, assertiveness should not be confused with submission, because we act in accordance with our own interests.

It should be emphasized that being assertive is not easy as it requires knowledge about yourself. To be an assertive person, you first need to find out what I care about, what is important to me. You need to precisely define your boundaries, relieve yourself of beliefs and cultural influences that pigeonhole many attitudes and behaviours. And this is not as simple as it may seem, because it is quite non-obvious knowledge.

Our assertive attitude is the result of the attitude: I'm fine (despite my many faults). I have the right to be myself. You are fine. You have the right to be yourself. Both sides are equally important. This approach facilitates respecting people and - on the basis of reciprocity - provokes respecting you.

Assertiveness is quite an art, especially if you often say "yes" when you think "no." We can propose a small set of knowledge about assertiveness with exercises. To start with, being assertive means respecting yourself and others. Your opinions, beliefs, thoughts and feelings are as important as anyone else's. Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself appropriately, clearly and directly, and to attach meaning to what you think and feel. It is respect for your own abilities and limitations.

Both in professional and family life, each of us is in a maze of countless issues that always lead to another person, so we are in no way "doomed" to contacts with others, building relationships. The quality of our personal life and our professional success depend on how we feel and find in these relationships. To begin with, an assertive contact style is a way of communicating with people; it is firmness and gentleness towards others at the same time. Assertive attitude means looking at oneself and others as valuable persons who deserve respect and thus respect for dignity and personal rights. Assertive behaviour is a non-violent response that respects our rights, dignity and interests.

Why are we being assertive? We are assertive when:

- we are satisfied with ourselves
- we respect ourselves and others
- we don't hurt others
- thanks to this, our self-confidence grows
- it gives us a sense of control over our own life

Why is it worth learning assertiveness? Mastering the skill of being assertive will help you at work:

1. be firm and confident without aggression or submission,
2. not allow for manipulation with oneself,
3. be effective, get what you want without manipulating others,
4. express your anger and anger without offending other people and respecting yourself,
5. express your opinions, feelings and desires openly, clearly and adequately.

6. to defend their rights firmly, acting in accordance with their own interest, but in a manner that respects the personal rights and feelings of other people.

So, contrary to popular belief, assertiveness is not the ability to say "no", it is the ability to negotiate and reach a compromise. In business, it is about making both parties benefit from the cooperation they have undertaken, to find a compromise, a "win-win" situation. By directly communicating to the client that although it is possible to negotiate the offer, you are not able to fully agree to its terms, you can work out not only a mutual compromise, but also mutual respect.

### Exercise 1:

How to define assertiveness in everyday life? How to introduce assertiveness into your life with small changes? Start with:

- Defend your own rights, while recognizing the rights of others (it may be a seemingly trivial refusal to perform another "favor" for a colleague at work; e.g. not taking his mail to the secretary's office, as you are responding to a client's e-mail at the moment and you do not want to interrupt your work)
- Facing problems and being constructive to difficult situations (focusing on solutions, not finding the blame)
- Expressing your needs, views and feelings and making choices
- (consciously looking at your own life and discovering a sense of agency)
- Stay calm, practice relaxation techniques (breathing, yoga ...)
- building self-confidence and awareness of your rights, and thus the rights of others (self-confidence should be adequate to our skills, abilities and achievements)
- the art of speaking without respecting other people; thanks to which we achieve our goals without hurting others
- building high self-esteem, thanks to self-confidence we feel good and behave appropriately

It can be summed up that assertiveness is such a great quality that the more assertive you are, the more respect others have for you.



### Exercise 2:

12 rules of assertiveness; that is, how to be assertive. Think about each of these 12 examples and write what your assertiveness looks like in these areas today and how you would like it to look after the training. To be an assertive person, i.e. one who knows that I have the right to:

**Ask for what he wants, but not demand it.**

The employer may ask his employee to perform the task and the right to do so. However, the employer or supervisor may not require it, for example, after working hours or during holidays. Let us also apply this principle in private life. Examine the example:

You shouldn't say:

- Adam, I see that you are standing, drop my reports at the office.

It is imposing on others their opinion or actions that they must perform - ordering - and is associated with a possible quarrel and a lack of understanding of the other person. It is much better to ask and argue your requests.

- Adam, please take my reports to the office. We have time until 3 p.m. (it's already 2.50pm); and I urgently need to issue a communication policy to our client. I promise that next time I'll do it for you!

**Have and express your opinion.**

Each of us thinks for ourselves and is entitled to our own beliefs. Our partner, client or employer may think otherwise, but this does not mean that our opinion does not count and we cannot express it.

**Make decisions and bear their consequences.**

Everyone has the right to make decisions. However, the moment you make a mistake, ask yourself, "How would you have acted differently? What would you do differently? How will you act next time to avoid failure?"

**Don't know, don't know, don't understand.**

We don't need to know everything. Assertiveness allows us to communicate that we are not sure about something, that we need help.

**To your privacy.**

You have the right to decide about yourself and if you really need rest, if you are hungry, if your other needs are not satisfied at the moment and it does not allow you to work efficiently and effectively - learn that communicating this need is not a bad thing.

**Decide if you want to get involved in other people's problems.**

Take a notebook and write down what you are doing every half hour for 2 days. What turns out? 80% of the things you do, someone can do for you, you can delegate these tasks to others. In addition, you find that you waste a lot of time, e.g. talking to friends, advising them and listening to their problems. Often times you don't feel like knowing it at all and feel uncomfortable, but don't know how to say that these things are of no interest to you or that you do not want to be involved in them. Start talking about solutions instead of wasting time complaining that doesn't get you anywhere. Please respect your time.

**Change and exercise your rights.**

It is often said that we live in a constant run, in the so-called rat race. Of course, not everyone has to take part in this race. However, when you work, whether on a full-time or self-employed basis, you must remember that when you stop changing, developing, learning, expanding your skills - the competition may overtake you.

**Make mistakes.**

The essential thing. Each of us has the right to make mistakes, mistakes are part of our science. However, once you've committed or forgiven yourself, admit it and, most importantly, think about the lesson from this failure? What lessons should be learned from this error, and focus on finding a solution.

**Be successful.**

This is another principle of assertiveness. Most often, however, you are not successful because you don't believe in yourself and you don't realize that you have the right to do so. For example, one of the Kaizen principles recommends the "why" fivefold method.

For example:

- He won't be promoted!
- Why don't you get promoted?
- Because I can't talk to my boss about my career path.
- Why can't you talk to your boss?
- Because I can't argue.
- And why can't you argue your point?
- Because I don't believe in myself.

And when you ask yourself "why" using this Kaizen method, the real cause of the problem will emerge.

### **Change your mind.**

You have the right to agree to something today, but to honestly announce tomorrow "I'm sorry, I'm stupid, but I thought it over and changed my mind".

### **Live your life and decide what and whom to invite to it.**

Avoid people who pull you down, look for the company of people who make you smile and those who inspire you to act.

### **Allow myself to do the things I want to do.**

Do not worry that you are too old or too young, that it is not appropriate for you. If you want to rest, no one can forbid you to do so, because you are the most important person for yourself.

### **Exercise 3:**

Think how your life can improve when you start applying the principles of assertiveness? Try to recall situations from your private or professional life and complete the following sentences: Remember! Assertiveness is not innate. It results from learning a certain way of experiencing and reacting in different situations. Assertiveness is variable and depends on the situation. You can easily express your feelings and rights towards certain people (e.g. spouse, parent), and in certain situations (e.g. social, professional) - feel a paralyzing difficulty in being yourself towards other people.

"The benefits of developing assertiveness in oneself are essential in the work situation as well as in everyday activities: a relationship based on mutual trust arises between you and the environment, which means that everyone gradually determines their position towards others and is able to strengthen positive attitude towards them, at the same time supporting the same approach in one's own environment". A. Townend

Examples of assertive sentences:

- This is my opinion, i suggest ...
- I judge ...
- this is what I feel it, and you?
- what do you think about this?
- this is what I see
- we will consider it together
- I would like to hear how you feel with it
- consider this
- maybe we can find a solution that satisfy both

According to the PWN dictionary of the Polish language, independent (independence) is:

- «able to cope, not needing any help»
- «created without someone's help or influence, made independently by someone»
- "about the state, institution, etc .: independent, able to decide about itself"
- "creating a separate whole"

Summing up, it can be added that the definition of assertiveness is much broader and deeper than the concept of independence. Independence excludes asking for help or support - while being an assertive person we assume clear communication about our feelings, fears or asking for help.

## **Good manners**

Personal culture has many synonyms in Polish, it can mean good manners, principles of savoir-vivre, social manners or politeness. Most people intuitively know what this term means, but putting it into words can be problematic. What is personal culture and how to behave culturally in different situations?

## **Collective culture is not the sum of personal cultures.**

It is the totality of those products of thoughts and actions, values and methods of conduct that have been recognized and accepted by the community and have become important for its members, setting out behaviours considered obligatory, e.g. decency, rules of coexistence,

criteria of aesthetic and moral judgments, etc. No therefore everything from the personal culture of the members becomes the common good of the entire community. Many individual ideas and ideas, both brilliant and unsuccessful, are lost and do not enter the common system.

Collective culture is not the sum of personal cultures; so we have a set of cultural norms that should apply in a given society, however, it should be remembered that on our way we can meet someone who is:

- an educated boor,
- a dishonest moralizer,
- emotional sadist,
- utopian or cynic,
- pedant,
- arrogant, ignorant,
- a wise slut,
- a cultural life failure,
- an inaccessible bastion to others,
- an unpredictable partner.

In the colloquial, narrower sense, it is said that someone is a man of high personal culture, that is, he is a well-mannered person scrupulously following the rules of morality and politeness.

The professions that should be characterized by a higher personal culture of employees are presented below:

### **Working with constant contact with customers:**

High personal culture is required in every work with clients. Many employers providing services for particularly important and wealthy people even point out in the job offer posted, for example, on Pracuj.pl, that the requirement is high personal culture and impeccable manners. Advertisements of this type most often come from international concerns and industries such as architecture, construction, finance and trade. Usually, the employee's behaviour in contacts with the client is to have the features of extending the company's policy, which is why high culture is so much required.

### **Taking care of others:**

Professions of social action and those in which we are responsible for other people require a lot of personal culture for a simple reason. Only thanks to it and self-control, we are able to provide information, apply persuasion and translate important things to our care. High personal culture is therefore impeccable in professions related to social care, in education, as well as in foundations, clinics and hospices.



**Scientific career:**

Scientists and academics should be characterized not only by above-average knowledge and intelligence, but also by polite and good manners, as befits enlightened people. For this reason, high personal culture is inscribed in the scientific and academic environment, although it is not required in writing. Nevertheless, especially senior professors, doctors and associate professors can boast of a very advanced level of *savoir vivre*. This fact results from their combination of caring, didactic and scientific functions.

A wider arrangement of objects, devices or images, ideas, regulations and rules functionally related to a specific element is called a cultural complex. For example, a commune's budget is undoubtedly a separate feature of culture, just like the budget of a workplace, voivodeship or state. We can also talk about the financial system, about the economic system, about the efficiency of production or services, about marketing, about loans, about money, about securities, about the stock market, about recession, about inflation, etc. on an economic cultural complex or in itself is such a complex of matters, problems, institutions, decisions, regulations and, finally, concepts and programs.

**Exercise 4:**

Think about the features of a person with high personal culture? List 5 features that characterize a person with high personal culture.

The principles of personal culture enter practically every sphere of life, defining norms of conduct and regulating interpersonal relations. Personal culture at home is slightly different than at work, but in practice it is based on similar principles. In general, personal culture is a set of norms that facilitate coexistence with other members of society. These are not strict rules that should be memorized - personal culture is rather certain social skills that in many situations make life easier. Knowing the rules of good manners increases self-confidence and makes it easier to enter into relationships with other people.

In the colloquial, narrower sense, it is said that someone is a man of high personal culture, that is, he is a well-mannered person scrupulously following the rules of morality and politeness. However, each of us should have high personal culture, regardless of the place of employment. However, there are job offers in which employers mark this feature as superior. It is needed not only in specialized industries, but also in contacts with customers.

A person's personal culture is more than just polite and courteous behaviour towards others. It consists of various attitudes, which for some are obvious, because they have been assimilated

with upbringing, while others simply have to learn them. Personal culture consists of the rules concerning:

- socializing depending on the situation
- behaviour in special situations (foreign guests, conflict)
- saying hello,
- eating meals as well as appropriate posture while eating
- selection of a dress code adequate to the situation - that is, how to choose the right clothes for a given situation in order to feel comfortable and not to offend anyone,
- social norms (including body language)

Personal culture is closely related to the concept of *savoir-vivre*, i.e. the principles of good manners. Why is it worth getting to know them? *Savoir-vivre* applies to virtually every sphere of our life and serves to facilitate everyday social activities. The rules of *savoir-vivre* define in detail the norms of behaviour in a specific situation - who should we greet first, how to dress appropriately to the situation and how to behave in the company of a specific group of people. It is worth knowing the rules of *savoir-vivre*, if only to be able to break some of them consciously. As the maxim of specialists in diplomacy and good manners says: "It is not an art to know the rules - the trick is to know when they can be broken".

Each society allows an individual a certain margin of originality, some deviations from generally accepted patterns. This margin may be wider or narrower depending on the social role and position of the individual in the community.

It should be remembered that a different scope of freedom is left to artists, creators, scientists, materially independent people, and another, more limited, e.g. to judges, teachers, doctors, state officials, economists, police officers, and entrepreneurs.

Analysing each aspect of personal culture in detail, the following can be distinguished:

1. **Intellectual qualities, which include:** way of thinking, understanding concepts, efficiency of thinking processes (analysis, synthesis, generalization, concretization, abstract), intelligence (understood not as eloquence, but as the ability, the ability to adapt to new, changing living conditions and work).
2. **Emotional sensitivity, that is:** compassion (empathy), shared experience, identification, understanding, forbearance, tolerance, etc. It is mainly about the ability to empathize with other people's emotional states and respect them. In addition, it is worth mastering the ability to control your emotions and temperamental traits as well as a sense of humour.
3. **Directional development of personality**, including views, attitudes, beliefs, life and professional ideals;
4. **Conduct and behaviour, in particular:**
  - adherence to good manners and manners,
  - the language we use in dealing with others,
  - tactful behaviour towards others, showing respect, interest,

- readiness to help,
- using decent methods of operation:
- 5. **Effectiveness of activities and products of this activity.** Undoubtedly, an element of personal culture is the effectiveness (efficiency) of conduct and the quality of products resulting from the behaviour and work of an individual;
- 6. **Ethical values**, otherwise internalized rules and norms of socio-moral behaviour; and at the same time openness to contacts with other people and the ability to cooperate and coexist;
- 7. **Taking care of health and personal hygiene** as well as appearance and beauty

## Self-discipline

Self-control (self-discipline) is the ability to control your emotions and behaviour. Research using the functional resonance of the human brain shows that self-control is associated with a certain area of the dorsolateral part of the prefrontal cortex that belongs to the frontal lobe. The control of one's emotions was also mentioned in the case of personal culture; talking about soft skills

## Self-discipline muscle

American psychologists and researchers of self-control, Mark Muraven and Roy Baumeister, have noticed that the mechanisms governing self-discipline resemble those related to muscle work. There are two conclusions important for practice:

- Self-control can be developed and strengthened through exercise.
- Willpower weakens with exertion.

What does it mean? First of all, working on self-discipline resembles physical development exercises - no matter which sport discipline you choose, regularity is the most important. This is because it is regularity that most effectively stimulates changes in our central nervous system - it causes the development of a network of neurons responsible for self-control. So if we discipline ourselves in any area of our life, it will strengthen self-control in other areas of our life.

Second, studies by Muraven and Baumeister found that the functioning of self-control is dependent on blood glucose levels. That is, what tires and weakens the work of muscles, affects self-discipline in a similar way. What strengthens it, however, is a good psychophysical condition.

**Exercise 5:**

Consider whether you value self-discipline more than motivation. Justify your statement.

According to psychologists, it is easier to work on improving self-discipline than on strengthening motivation. Of course, you can learn to motivate just like any other skill, but with self-discipline it's a little different because it is not an action in itself. Let's think, if we change one thing in our behaviour, we start to get up a little earlier, we will always start work at the same time and at the same time we will not waste our time, for example, browsing gossip sites or Facebook, our work will be more effective and this action will be related to it is with self-discipline, not with motivation.

The best areas to start exercising in self-discipline are not those related to organization, time management, etc., but those related to so-called fundamental habits. That is sleep, healthy eating and exercise. Even the slightest improvement in all three (or any of them) will make everything else easier. You will start to sleep, which means you will stop being tired. You will start to move, and the effects that will appear after some time will mobilize you to support your actions, for example, healthy eating. Once you start eating healthily, the sugar drops in your body will disappear and you will start working more efficiently instead of looking for something sweet to eat.

1. Begin your self-discipline learning process by accepting that you are capable of doing it. Apparently everyone would like to finally start doing something regularly, but they communicate everywhere that they cannot cope, that they cannot, that they are a hopeless case and that they will certainly fail. So before they start, they already give up and it is a kind of cry of despair.
2. The second step is to plan your activities. This action must be systematic. Plan your day in such a way that you cannot avoid action. On a large piece of paper, write in capital letters and hang it at eye level. Or on the bathroom mirror. Or on the exit door. Break the day into steps so that you don't start tomorrow - but today!
3. third - plan the right tasks in a timely manner. Get to know yourself, analyze your day, evaluate when you are the most effective and when you are the least. Plan activities that require discipline from you at a time when you have plenty of energy and will to live. Then it will be easiest for you to take new actions, and in addition, doing them will give you power for the next stage of the day!
4. Plan your tasks for a very short period of time, remember the "little steps" rule. Do not plan anything over 15 minutes a day for a new activity and believe me that sometimes even they will turn out to be extremely difficult, especially since you have your current duties.
5. Remember that your plan has to be flexible as we are never able to plan or predict everything. During the course of action, it may turn out that you have overestimated your abilities or, on the contrary, you have underestimated them. Nothing prevents you from changing it while learning. It is also important to monitor your progress and make changes on a regular basis.

6. Start with one area where you will apply self-discipline; because too many areas in which you will want to practice her will make you feel tired and distract you too much.
7. Get rid of temptation. If you know that it is stronger than you - turn off WiFi only so that you do not feel the temptation to browse the Internet while working. All kinds of blocking programs for certain websites serve exactly the same purpose.
8. Don't think you'll feel great about it. Many people think that learning self-discipline will become such a great adventure. Because at the beginning we are actually high, especially when we notice the effects we want to achieve. However, it lasts about a week, and then we return to the old rubbish: we do not want anything, there is doubt, because it was supposed to be so beautiful.
9. Remember that doubt occurs regularly, and you need to learn to recognize your little successes. Successes will push us forward and make us persevere in the implementation of our plan longer.
10. You will slip up and make mistakes - and you have to accept it. Many people believe that a slip-up or fall out of the rails causes the end, the failure. And falls, mishaps, mistakes, and trips are normal. And they will always take place! Remember that mistakes are part of science - let's learn from them. Also, don't blame yourself for your mistakes.
11. Remember! When you combine the tasks in pairs, it will be easier for you to complete them

It is a strategy of pairing habits in such a way as to choose a habit that we have firmly rooted in our actions and combine it with one that we want to develop in ourselves. To do this, you need to know what habits you have learned.



### Exercise 6:

Imagine you want to plan your day regularly, it will be an element of self-discipline. Over the next week, introduce a new habit into your life. Find a constant element of the day that you enjoy; for example morning coffee at 7.00 or evening bath around 22.00. If you drink coffee at 7:00 AM every morning, you can combine this habit with the planning habit, so that drinking coffee is a signal for you to start planning; if you think better and plan in the evening - try to introduce a new habit in the evening, e.g. while taking a bath, start planning the next day.

1. Check your progress; maybe it will help you find some tool to monitor your self-discipline; it can be a calendar, card, or app. It is important to honestly mark your daily progress in front of yourself.
2. Infect yourself with self-control, work hand in hand. American scientists: Michelle van Dellen and Rick Hoyle, pointed out that self-control - like other human behaviour - is "contagious". Observing a disciplined person, and even just thinking about them, makes it easier to stick to your own decisions. This means that the positive behaviour of others can help us develop ourselves. Unfortunately, this mechanism works the other way as

well - the lack of self-discipline in others can also affect us. So if we want to implement our decisions and persistence, it is worth consciously seeking contact with people with strong self-control and avoiding being among people who are inconsistent and often indulge themselves.

3. NO BANS with optimism! In order to persistently implement your intentions, it is worth formulating them without coercion, denial, without using the word "no". Our mind does not like prohibitions and reacts automatically to them with rebellion or sharp opposition. Self-discipline is fostered by messages that answer the question of what to do instead of what not to do, e.g. "I eat more fruit and vegetables" instead of "I won't eat sweets", "I practice focusing" instead of "I can't get distracted." Etc.

### Exercise 7:

Be attentive to your thoughts and messages to yourself as you follow through on your resolutions. In inner speech, identify and notice the following phrases or similar variants, and replace them as suggested by the given suggestions:

Negative messages:	Convert to positive:
I can't, I shouldn't	I choose, I deserve, I want, I decide, I need, I do.
I am not allowed, I will not do any more.	I can take a small step
It is a big and difficult challenge - I cannot cope.	I can make mistakes, but I want to fix them.

### Self-discipline and motivation!

Finding motivation is fun and fashionable. Being motivated is trendy. If anyone has a problem with anything, everyone advises him to look deeply for motivation to act. Because being motivated is a fantastic feeling, you grow wings, you have more energy and you have the impression that you can conquer the whole world! You feel like screaming, dancing and singing just thinking about your enthusiasm right now. However, finding your inner motivation is a time-consuming process that requires a lot of self-focus. We are not always quiet enough to look at ourselves, to have time to analyze our motivators and their strength. With self-discipline, the situation is so much simpler that self-discipline has to be learned. Nobody is born with self-discipline. Just like singing, a foreign language and driving a car. Self-discipline does not come easily to anyone the first time, but it does come easy with the next.

- **Self-discipline is a skill**, so you can reach for it when you need it, while motivation is a feeling that is sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker.
- **Self-discipline depends only and only on you**; this is both its plus and minus. You have the option to make changes. You decide how self-discipline will work for you and

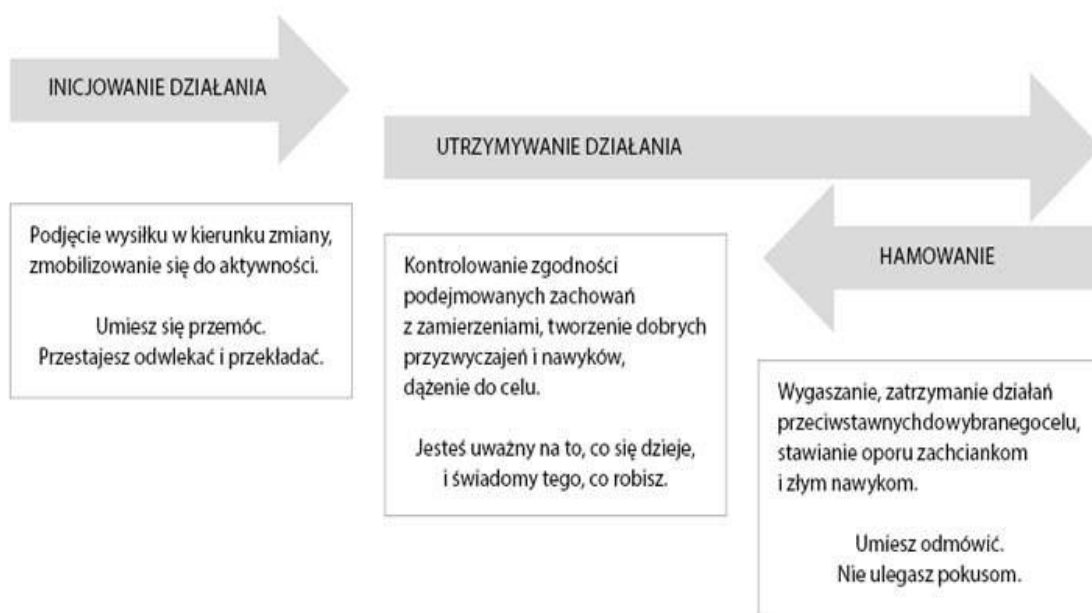
what it will affect. But there is also a minus - you won't be able to blame anyone if something doesn't work out.

- **Learn self-discipline like a foreign language**, ie from basic and simple issues to slowly learn more difficult ones.
- **Choose your areas of activity wisely**. You are not starting to discipline yourself right now, immediately, in every sphere. Don't even try, or you'll fail anyway. You need to identify an area you care about.

There is nothing more interesting, fascinating, creative and exciting than being able to create your own life. And that's where self-discipline helps me!

How can we persevere in our decisions when we are surrounded by many distracting stimuli from all sides? Some of them act like a temptation that encourages you to postpone the action in time, let it go for a moment or give it up completely. A strong will comes to our aid. What is she? How can we use it? And how to develop it?

Strong will, fortitude, self-discipline, and self-control are terms that we use interchangeably in everyday language. How does psychology define them? It is the ability to achieve a set goal thanks to the ability to control impulsive behaviour, i.e. refrain from fleeting and sudden desires. Self-control consists of three basic skills: initiating, maintaining an action, and inhibiting impulses.



<https://forumlogopedy.pl/media/cache/thumb/uploads/5ba/383/5ba3836be81f3988553343.jpg>

In other words, self-control sets the course of action and the limits in which we are to move in order to go in the right direction. It is focus on a goal - starting its implementation, and then systematic activity on its behalf, independent of distracting stimuli from the inside (doubting,

sabotaging thoughts, worse mood, fatigue) and from outside (persuading others, worse weather, unexpected circumstances, duties and burdens).

### **Exercise 8:**

Consider your last week. Answer the following questions:

- Are there times when you clearly lack self-control and self-discipline? What are the most common situations? What connects them?
- Which component of self-control is then most often defective - initiating, maintaining or inhibiting?
- Learn to recognize when you are at your weakest. Notice where you may see that your self-control resources are running out. Be aware of what you feel then, what you think, how you act.

### **Analytical skills, critical thinking**

Often, job advertisements for the position of an analyst require "analytical thinking" or "analytical skills". For formalities, do you declare that you are like this?

### **Exercise 9:**

Think about what analytical skills mean to you. Do you have such abilities as so to what extent? The ability to think analytically is one of the requirements that surprisingly often appears in job advertisements. The question is, however, what does it really mean? For everyone can understand this concept in their own way. In particular, one in which you can assign these competences to yourself. Because probably most people have nothing to complain about their analytical thinking abilities.

Analytical skills are really a set of different skills that allow you to understand and solve problems based on the available data. So they will be, among others

- logical thinking,
- combining facts,
- data analysis, analysis
- searching for information and selecting it,
- drawing conclusions and, consequently -
- making informed decisions.
- critical thinking,
- communication skills
- broadly understood creativity.

From the employer's perspective, analytical skills also include:



- Ability to make (good) decisions quickly and independently or to present correct recommendations.
- The ability to search for solutions to existing problems.
- The ability to correctly interpret information and draw correct conclusions.

And it is worth noting that it is only the combination of all these skills that makes a person cope better in problem situations. And above all, it achieves better professional results.

Many people define analytical thinking as the ability to break down complex problems into smaller ones. In this way, you achieve big goals in small steps - and there is a lot of truth in such explanation, and the abovementioned competences help to achieve these goals.

The basic feature - and advantage at the same time - of the analytical mind is seeing the problem from multiple perspectives. Thanks to this, it is easier to choose the optimal solution (from the point of view of the set goals). This is one of the key issues in managerial positions, where the need to make the right decisions is essential for the company to function properly and generate profits instead of losses.

### **What is analytical thinking?**

What's worth noting, however, is that analytical ability is not something to be born with. Rather, they are some kind of qualification that you can develop yourself. To put it even more simply, analytical thinking consists largely of a set of practical techniques and methods of approaching problems, tested and described by others, that work in specific situations.

### **Benefits of an analytical approach**

It can be summarized that it is not the trick to act actively, such as finding new ideas and getting into the vortex of work in order to implement them; but the trick is to consciously choose the best solutions for given problems and their subsequent effective implementation. Or to put it another way, there is a very big difference between doing something and doing something right. The analytical approach that shows how to do something to achieve better results makes the difference.

### **Thinking alone and in a group**

An individual's thinking and actions translate into another key requirement placed on employees - i.e. independence in action. Because you don't hire employees to think for them.

These are not the times when there were large differences between managers and operational positions. Even 20-30 years ago, the situation was clear: managers said what to do, and their employees obediently did it.

things are a bit more complex these days. Generally, employees are expected to be highly independent and responsible on the one hand. So that they can complete the tasks from start to finish. On the other hand, the emphasis is also on the so-called group thinking. Because the complexity of the problems faced by business cannot be solved by one person. Different competences and knowledge from different areas are needed. And, of course, communication skills - including the ability to present your ideas and argue them.

Examples of analytical thinking techniques

- ***Ability to define the problem*** - because in practice the problem is not always what we think it is. And the key to success is identifying the problem itself and its actual causes. And in more complex situations, it's not that simple.
- ***Breaking down the problem into prime factors*** - because it is generally easier to manage this way. In particular, separating a problem allows you to be able to solve it step by step.
- ***The ability to ask questions and obtain information*** - because analytical thinking is based on facts, not theoretical considerations detached from reality.
- The ability to combine data from various sources - including the ability to interpret often contradictory residual or even erroneous data. It is also about being able to question certain data and finding the correct ones.
- ***Filtering the most important information-*** after all, we are surrounded by a huge amount of data and information. And the great art is precisely the ability to isolate these key facts from among thousands of insignificant ones. Anyone can gather a lot of data for analysis, and then spend days and weeks processing it. However, this does not necessarily turn into worthwhile conclusions. It sometimes happens that faster analysis of the topic and staying on a greater level of generality brings much better results.

It should be emphasized that there are also a number of problems with analytical thinking, because "analytical thinking" also includes seeing problems that others cannot see; or that others don't simply want to see. Analytical thinking without the courage to defend your way of thinking and correct arguments is simply useless.

Analytical thinking is not some enigmatic term, but a set of specific skills that can be determined to exist. Analytical thinking and problem solving is one of the competences underlying the work of a business analyst, and it consists of:

### Creative Thinking

Give yourself a plus if you come up with good ideas easily, find solutions to problems, and can see alternatives. Shareholders in your projects accept the new approaches recommended by you.

How do you know?

- You create and productively consider new ideas.
- Using your ideas solves the problem.
- Shareholders accept the new approach you suggest.

### Decision making

When you have to make a decision, do you consider what factors are important? Do you define the criteria for the decision ("it will be beneficial if I have 5 days, the cost will not exceed PLN 1000 or if you manage to postpone the meeting with the president")? If making decisions is not difficult for you and you can even help others during this task (you pay attention to the most important issues, weigh arguments, ask auxiliary questions), set yourself a plus. How do you know? The people you discuss with can be sure that the decision is right.

- If something changes your decision, it's new facts that have emerged and were not previously overlooked.
- Your decisions help to solve the problem.

You effectively assess the influence of uncertainty and new information on the decision.

- Learning Do you feel that you learn new topics easily? Can you apply them and put them into practice? Make a note of the plus in your account. How do you know? Shareholders confirm that your analytical models effectively and completely describe the field.
- You identify related issues and problems from different areas of the field.
- You absorb new information in a new field quickly.

Problem solving - Can you solve the emerging problems effectively and efficiently? Can you focus on the most important ones with the greatest implications? A plus. How do you know?

- The shareholders are convinced that the chosen solution is the right one.
- The chosen solution meets the goals and solves problems.
- The chosen solution is not based on any unsubstantiated assumptions, the organization's policy, or any premises leading to a suboptimal choice.

System thinking, Sounds no less puzzling than analytical thinking. It is about understanding the operation of component parts and their impact on the whole (e.g. the impact of people, processes, technology on the entire organization). Do you note a plus? How do you know?

- Understanding how the system responds to external pressures and changes.

- Recognition of ways to strengthen and extinguish feedback (a mechanism causing the impact of the effects of, for example, an organization on the operation of this organization).

It is worth adding the ability to draw conclusions and predict effects on the basis of the data and analyses carried out.

### **Exercise 10:**

Now you will know what they expect from you. Maybe you will bend the employer himself by exchanging your strengths during the interview? List them on a piece of paper and add a description that justifies them

### **How to practice analytical thinking?**

You can train your analytical skills - some are more predisposed to it, others less, but it is not a skill we are born with. It is worth taking care of it, because in many cases it makes life much easier - both professional and private. The basis is exercises that train the brain. This is a very broad term, so here are just a few examples:

- Start with the basics - for example, reading regularly. Crime novels or detective novels will work perfectly well, in which the reader can follow the directions scattered by the author in the text and look for connections. Crime series will also play a similar role.
- Learning new things is also good training. A foreign language, a driving license course, knitting or using a graphics program - whatever you choose, performing new activities or tasks stimulates the brain and breaks the routine of everyday life. Think about what you want to know, but so far you haven't been motivated to get down to it - and try it! Your analytical mind will thank you for sure.
- Analytical thinking is also practiced by various games and logical tasks, such as nonogram, chess or sudoku. You can solve them on your smartphone - just download one of the brain-developing apps and exercise on the bus, in the supermarket line or before falling asleep. If you prefer offline entertainment, check kiosks for appropriate puzzle books. Simply ... sets of math exercises will also work great.

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is the ability to think rationally and in an orderly manner so as to understand the relationships between facts or concepts. Thanks to him, we can decide what to believe. In other words, it is "thinking about thinking": it is recognizing, analyzing, and then correcting mistakes in your own reasoning.

Critical thinking is an attitude expressed in readiness to consider in a deliberate manner problems and objects that fall within the scope of experience, knowledge of logical methods of reasoning and inquiry, and some skill in applying these methods.

The critical thinking attitude requires a relentless effort to re-examine each belief or other supposed form of knowledge in the light of the supporting evidence and the subsequent conclusions to which it leads. (Edward Glaser)<sup>3</sup>

A well-formed, critical thinker:

- considers life's questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- collects and evaluates relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret them effectively;
- arrives at well-founded conclusions and solutions, testing them against appropriate criteria and standards;
- thinks openly within alternative thinking systems, recognizing and evaluating what is necessary, their assumptions, implications and practical effects,

Communicates effectively with others when solving complex problems.

Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplining, self-monitoring, and self-correcting. It presupposes acceptance of rigorous standards of excellence and care for their application. Critical thinking entails effective communication and problem-solving skills, and a commitment to overcoming our innate self-centeredness and sociocentrism.<sup>4</sup>

“Critical thinking is a type of realistic thinking focused on the specific goal of evaluation. ... The aim of critical thinking is a reliable and realistic assessment of important aspects of human intellectual activity”,<sup>5</sup>

Critical thinking is thinking that is self-controlled, disciplined, and strives to reason at the highest level and as intellectually honest as possible. People who think critically constantly endeavour to live rationally, reasonably, and in an empathetic manner.

Think how to think - this is the core of critical thinking, one of the most valued and sought-after competences today. But the brain likes to take shortcuts - it more willingly reaches for thought patterns and heuristics than deep, critical reflection on reality. Can you learn critical thinking? How to do it?

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.criticalthinking.pl/czym-jest-krytyczne-myslenie/>

<sup>44</sup> (Zaczerpnięte z The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools, Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2008, Richarda Paula i Lindy Elder). <http://www.criticalthinking.pl/czym-jest-krytyczne-myslenie/>

<sup>5</sup> definiuje w „Psychologii poznawczej” prof. Edward Nęcka.

Tina Turner is dead. The legendary singer was 76 years old ”- the tragic news spread like wildfire across the network. The main media picked up the news in no time, and with it masses of Internet users. And then there was a collective surprise - the singer is alive and is not going to the other world at all. The fake news about her death arose after a viral link with this information appeared on Facebook, then multiplied in dozens of articles, eagerly shared on private profiles on social networks. And as we know from the MIT Media Lab analyzes, fake news takes an average of six times less time than the truth to reach 1,500 people on Twitter. What could save Tina Turner from alleged death and save Internet users from disinformation? Critical thinking. So what?

### **Is critical thinking a competence?**

“Critical thinking is a type of realistic thinking focused on the specific goal of evaluation. (...) The goal of critical thinking is a reliable and realistic assessment of important aspects of human intellectual activity ”<sup>6</sup>.

An informal code of critical thinking characterizes this man <sup>7</sup>:

- the ability to evaluate opposing arguments and evidence;
- recognizing the position, conclusions, arguments presented by the interlocutor, as well as techniques and manipulations that he may use to make his argument more convincing;
- a person who thinks critically considers problems in a structured manner, carefully and using the rules of logic,
- they are able to present their point of view in a clear, understandable and thoughtful way.

There are two basic competences that make up critical thinking <sup>8</sup>:

- Evaluation through thoughtful and logical judgments and the incorporation of values is essential to the critical thinking process
- self-steering - it consists of self-awareness and self-regulation - managing one's own thinking and motivation to think,

Critical thinking, or a rational approach to reality, is competence. Many studies have shown that it is not innate, but needs to be learned. People are predisposed to emotional, not rational,

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<sup>6</sup> Definiuje w „Psychologii poznawczej” prof. Edward Nęcka

<sup>7</sup> Dr Stella Cottrell z University of East London

<sup>8</sup> Robert DiYanni, profesor nauk humanistycznych na New York University, w książce „Pomyśl, zanim pomyślisz”

reactions. However, a critical-minded person admits to himself that it may be different than what his emotions tell him. Before embarking on the path of critical thinking, it is worth realizing that a person who thinks critically is faced with many dangers, and it is not only about emotions that distort the rational perception of reality; because we are naturally predisposed to emotional rather than rational reactions.

Why do we avoid critical thinking? Because automatic and emotional thinking is fast, it does not require much mental effort and self-control - it is based on thought patterns and heuristics, i.e. simplified rules of inference.

We should start our adventure with critical thinking as early as possible. At home and at school, show children that the first intuitive solution does not always have to be correct and that almost every fact can be checked. Critical thinking must hit fertile ground, this competence is fostered by:

- open mind,
- honesty,
- flexibility,
- persistence,
- reason,
- diligence
- focus.

In critical thinking, it's important to rethink your ideas and not be afraid to change your mind. What is important and at the same time very difficult - one should open up to alternative views, accept nuances and ambiguities and keep learning. It is openness to learning that is the basis of critical thinking - the willingness to obtain new knowledge always and everywhere. But also an attitude that takes into account other perspectives and ideas. It helps to develop negotiation skills and better find yourself in conflict situations.

### **Exercise 11:**

Asking questions and identifying problems - Questions obviously require answers that often reveal the limits of our cognition. Question marks provoke inquiries, arouse intellectual unrest, and sometimes expose ignorance.

(Let's see how you can demonstrate your critical thinking to increase your chance of getting your dream job.)

The critical mind keeps asking himself questions:

- "How do I know what I know?",
- "What evidence do I have for what I think I know?".

Basic questions to strengthen critical thinking - that is, the question "What is the thesis?"

In order to find the thesis, it is worth asking what the person writing or saying is trying to prove:

- "What is the main thought?",
- "What is this person trying to prove to me?",
- "What is this person trying to convince me to?",
- "And the results of this is?".

In your answers, look for the words-hints: "the conclusion from this is that ...", "it follows that ...", "it attracts ...", "you can agree with the opinion that ...", "It is correct to say that ... "etc.

The thesis can either be confirmed or disproved. Study your answers in detail and look for clues within yourself. How can you check if what you think is true? It's a good idea to ask as many questions as possible. Do not be afraid to face hypotheses that are inconvenient for us, in order to avoid a confirmation error, and thus - enslavement in your own information bubble.

Reflect on your life, passions and work - explore one of the areas of your life, ask yourself questions and write down the answers. Write down your thoughts.

What did you learn from this exercise, how did you feel about asking yourself questions and after answering?

What areas of your life should you stimulate you to think critically? Start with:

- taking intellectual risk - Intellectual risk also means being ready to fail and learn from it. It is also a willingness to face a crisis, which may or may not be followed by a breakthrough,
- cultivating a curiosity about the world and people - creating curiosity as the most important habit of our mind. Nurturing it is the most important duty of a critical person,
- thinking independently and in an interdependent way - independent thinking is always worthwhile, but collective thinking is also essential. In conversation, exchange of ideas and ideas, a new quality of thinking is born that leads to innovation and discovery. The ability to collaborate in a group is also developed on the basis of collective thinking.

Learning to think critically requires time, practice, and patience. To get started, there are seven steps you can take to solve all kinds of problems - both at work and in your personal life.

1. Define the problem or question. Do it as precisely as possible: the narrower the problem, the easier it is to find a solution or answer.
2. Gather data, opinions and arguments. Try to find several sources with different views on the problem and compare different points of view.
3. Investigate and evaluate the data. Are your sources trustworthy? Are their conclusions corroborated by data or just expressions of judgment? Is the hypothesis supported by sufficient information or data?
4. Check your objectivity. Are you sure your sources are not biased? Did some assumptions or personal preferences surely not guide your choice of sources?



5. Assess the validity of the data. Which information is the most important? Is the study sample large enough? Do all the opinions and arguments you have gathered really relate to the problem you want to solve?
6. Make a decision / set conclusions. Think about what different conclusions you can draw and which of them are sufficiently substantiated in the facts (if any). Assess the strengths and weaknesses of all possible options.
7. Present or communicate the results. When you come to a conclusion, present it to those who are interested.

### **Exercise 12:**

Now let's go back to Exercise 11, analyze the problem described there by thinking critically, following steps 1 to 7 mentioned above.

By analyzing a given problem again, we understand why critical thinking is so important: it is thanks to it that we can understand the gaps and limitations in our reasoning, identify gaps in our knowledge, and also use them!

When you think critically, you constantly question what others would take for granted. For example, at work, even if something seems to be working properly, critical thinking will make you look for new and better solutions and implement them.

The ability to think critically is the key to self-development and improving the quality of your work. That is why it is extremely desirable today by employers.

### **Social media skills, digital skills**

New digital media are an integral part of our world, even in our daily work life. As a result, more and more employers are looking for employees who can handle the media. Reflective use plays an important role - this means that you use your media deliberately and responsibly.

Digital competences are increasingly seen as a major component of basic skills. There are many initiatives to define digital competences. However, in many cases, especially at the legislative level, critical thinking and reflection on digital content do not receive the necessary attention to safely guide European citizens through technological challenges.

### **Exercise 13:**

Consider whether "Digital competences are the key to success or a requirement in everyday life?" "What are digital competences?" "What is the importance of digital competences in life

and professional success?" (you can use the 7 steps of critical thinking from the previous section)

The world is changing in the area of digital competences, 15 years ago skills reserved for a narrow group of specialists have now become commonplace and require being up to date with new trends and services in the digital world. As of the beginning of 2021, almost nine out of ten (89 %) individuals in the EU, aged between 16 and 74 years, used the internet (at least once within the three months prior to the survey date). This share was at least 95 % in six countries, with the highest values recorded in Denmark, Ireland and Luxembourg (all 99 %), followed by Finland and Sweden (both 97 %). The lowest share was recorded in Bulgaria (75 %)<sup>9</sup>.

Consumers and businesses are rapidly switching to mobile services. That is why it is worth taking a closer look at new forms of communication. Digital communication and competence. As defined in the 2018 European Council Recommendations, "Digital competences cover the critical and responsible use of and interest in digital technologies for the purposes of learning, working and participating in society". It is a certain set of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Digital competences include:<sup>10</sup>

- the ability to use information and data,
- communication and cooperation,
- media literacy,
- the ability to create digital content (including programming),
- security (including digital comfort and cyber-security competences),
- intellectual property issues,
- Troubleshooting
- critical thinking.
- understanding the general principles, mechanisms and logic underlying evolving digital technologies and
- knowledge of basic functions and the use of different types of devices, software and networks;
- taking a critical approach to the relevance, credibility and impact of digitally shared information and data; and
- awareness of legal and ethical principles related to the use of digital technologies.
- ICT kiko educational solutions

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<sup>9</sup> *Digital Economy and society statistics - households and individuals*. Digital economy and society statistics - households and individuals - Statistics Explained. (n.d.). Retrieved January 4, 2022, from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital\\_economy\\_and\\_society\\_statistics\\_-\\_households\\_and\\_individuals#Internet\\_access](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals#Internet_access)

<sup>10</sup> kompetencje-cyfrowe-kiko-educational-solutions-1

Today, it is extremely important to understand how digital technologies can help in communication, creativity and innovation. It is important to be aware of the possibilities, limitations, effects and risks associated with digital competences. More and more services and activities are moving into the digital sphere. More and more procedures are moving to the digital sphere and the Internet. Settlements with the tax office, submission of documents in offices, access to information. Therefore, the ability to use digital technologies in everyday life is essential. We use digital competences every day. They are also needed to cooperate with other people. We also use them in expressing ourselves, our creativity, implementing our intentions, goals:

- personal,
- social
- professional.

Growing data consumption and the increasing popularity of cellular technologies and cellular services (e.g. 3G Internet, music, movie streaming, online e-mail access) are the most important trends in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector. ICT or Information and Communication Technologies. This concept covers issues, tools related to information processing and communication using electronic (IT) technologies.

Digital competences are a broader issue as not everyone uses social networks. In everyday life we use a lot of electronic media, often without even thinking about the fact that we make them in digital form. We use online banking, we use electronic media to check or obtain information. We apply for jobs online, we order and receive packages, we do shopping and many other activities. Digital competences also include, inter alia,:

- ability to use digital content,
- accessing digital content, filtering it, evaluating, creating, programming and sharing it,
- using technology and digital content in a reflective and critical way, and at the same time in a way full of curiosity and openness,
- an ethical, safe and responsible approach to the use of digital tools.

The ability to manage and protect digital information, content, data and identities as well as to recognize and effectively use software, devices, artificial intelligence or robots is also very important within digital competences.

The digital reality reshapes the patterns of creation, behaviour and thinking we know so far every day. A specific, new language of digital communication is being created. It is good to improve digital competences - learn this language and navigate the digital world, if we want to understand it and be an active participant in it.

In 2017, UNESCO<sup>11</sup> published a report entitled: "Digital skills in life and work". The report presents a set of interrelated skills that make up digital competences, from basic functional skills to specialized know-how, including information literacy, including the ability to critically evaluate information, its objectives and dissemination methods.

#### **Exercise 14:**

Using the tools of critical thinking, refer to the following questions, rely on your experiences, observations, articles found on the web:

- To what extent is critical media literacy part of digital literacy in your country?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges in teaching critical media literacy?
- How would you describe the most important factors that underpin critical media literacy?

Once a niche skill set, digital skills are now essential in the workplace. It is worth noting that in Europe and in all sectors, at least 80% of managers and professionals need basic digital skills. In larger workplaces as much as 50% must have specialist digital skills. Digital technologies are now common in everyday life and embedded in the culture of work. Having a workforce that knows how to use them efficiently is key to a successful business.

In the age of big data, many companies rely on countless information about their customers, processes and workforce. As the digital transformation progresses, recorded data will continue to grow. Knowing how to use this data is critical to understanding your business and its future. Employees who can extract, analyze, and translate useful information from your company's dataset will be essential, and this skill will integrate with an increasing number of team roles.

An effective data analysis can provide the necessary business and customer information. It can also be used to inform campaigns and content. There are currently four main types of data analysis used by companies.

- Descriptive Analysis - Often in conjunction with other analyzes, this practice combines raw data from multiple sources to provide valuable insight into the past.
- Diagnostic analysis - Requires more detailed data to identify patterns and provide insight into specific problems.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/pl/discussions/umiejtnosc-krytycznego-korzystania-z-mediow>

- Predictive Analytics - uses the results of descriptive and diagnostic analyzes to detect trends, clusters, and exceptions, and to predict future trends.
- Prescriptive Analytics - Requires historical data and external information and uses machine learning, business rules, and algorithms to determine what actions to take.

With the growth of social media in 2000, advanced social selling is established and maturing, as are its users. This means that your sales teams will also have to adapt in the future. According to today's most successful sales trend of value-driven social media sales, trust is at the heart. To create this, advanced social sellers need to equip themselves with content and conversations so that they can build more meaningful relationships with their customers, meaning "Put Relationships First." Social media is much more an opportunity to educate and become a resource for potential customers than for direct sales - it is the customer's further path.

The advancement of mobile technology means companies need to adapt their strategy accordingly. This means adopting a mobile-centric approach where communication, content and customer journey are optimized for mobile devices. The advantage of an app also means that companies will need to stay abreast of trends to make sure their app remains relevant - and more importantly - discoverable.

As more and more customers spend their time online, moving between different devices, your company's digital presence will have to take centre stage. The key is to ensure easy navigation in your application or website, which is at the heart of UX (user experience) design. Importantly, websites and applications will need to respond to ensure that users experience consistency across devices. Failure to do so will create a stalemate between the brand and the user, which will encourage consumers to look elsewhere.

Cybersecurity is one of the biggest concerns today and will continue to do so as the digital transformation progresses. As security methods evolve and develop, so do the threats to them. The more connected employees are, the more the entire company is at risk of being oversaw by one employee. Even something as simple as using social media at work can pose risks.

Creative thinking is probably the most important digital skill for the future, not device or software specific. With the rapid development of technology, previously respected breakthroughs are quickly forgotten and specialist skills become obsolete. Therefore, the most important skill of every employee in the face of automation is creative thinking. To ensure the longevity of the workforce, they must be able to do what machines cannot. When it comes to digital transformation, having employees who understand the complexities of the digital world and the new milestones in the customer journey is critical.

**Exercise 15:**

Think about and describe what your company's approach to the issues discussed in this subchapter looks like. Describe what training and what scope of knowledge you will need to develop your competences.

**Career management**

The career path is a logical and coherent sequence of successive positions that employees take during their work in a given organization, the purpose of which is to achieve personal goals, fulfil their own ambitions, raise qualifications, acquire new experience, and meet the company's expectations. The idea behind career paths is to enrich them with new skills and practical experience, and not to have formal diplomas that guarantee the completion of specific vocational training or evidence of education.

Career management consists of 2 processes:

- Career planning, which defines the development of employees within the organization in accordance with the needs of the organization and the results, capabilities and preferences of employees;
- Consequence planning management aims to ensure that the organization has the managers that it will need in the future to meet its various needs. "

Career finds its meaning also in English, where the meaning of the word "career" means the course of life, including professional life and is sometimes translated as a path, professional life path. performs throughout his life.

Career paths are an important tool used in the process of employee career planning by human resource management units in an organization. Despite the fact that employees are the most interested and responsible for the development of their own careers, the organization or enterprise employing them has a lot to do in this respect. It should clearly provide employees with comprehensive and transparent information about their career and professional development opportunities, and encourage them to act in this direction, which results in benefits both for employees (enrichment of skills and qualifications) and the organization itself (acquiring increasingly better qualified employees within the internal labor market, which reduces the need to look for new employees outside).

Career management has three overall goals, which are:

- Meet the organization's needs for follow-up in managerial positions.
- Hiring promising employees and providing them with the appropriate training and experience to help them fulfil their responsibilities.

- Providing predisposed employees with the guidance and encouragement they need to see their predispositions and pursue a career that matches their talents and aspirations.

Career planning is a key process in career management. It uses all the information from the organization's needs assessment, assessment of effects and potential, and management follow-up plans, and turns them into individual career development programs and general arrangements for leadership development, career counselling, mentoring and training of management personnel.

When planning a career, it must be remembered that it should be controlled by the company and development strategies aimed at meeting the company's needs. It is also important to take care of all employees, not only those who have high ambitions and those whose career is developing rapidly. All employees should be encouraged to use and develop their skills and aptitudes. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the topic of employee career planning, not only in the field of managerial positions.

Human resources management and career planning should be strategic in nature and closely related to the company's development strategy, as well as the development of the existing work potential. They allow to achieve mutual benefits, reducing the costs of selection or recruitment (if it is necessary to acquire employees from outside), bind employees with the organization, as well as strengthen the organizational culture in a given organization and reduce the number of unnecessary destructive conflicts between employees' personal goals and their organizational tasks.

Good career path development brings benefits in the form of higher qualifications of employees, better matching of their interests to the work performed, greater job satisfaction, which results in a significant improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of employees.

As the majority of contemporary organizations are unique and unique systems characterized by different goals and needs, the problem of developing career paths in each of them is approached in a different, appropriate and best-suited way for a given situation. It does not change the fact that this process should be the subject of special care of the top management, because in the near future it will certainly bring great benefits to both parties, both employees and employers.

Tools used to manage the career path include:

- preparation of the so-called the displacement matrix, which recognizes various types of internal and external employee movements at a given time within the organization, clearly and transparently presents employees with opportunities to change positions, and thus helps in the development of their own careers.

- creating career paths is the logical development of knowledge and skills, as well as the desired characteristics of an individual, which is rewarded with successive promotions within the organizational structure of a given organization.

All necessary information regarding the possibility of promotion or replacement of a position is provided in this case by a job analysis, which summarizes all the necessary qualification requirements for a given position, as well as the scope of subsequent duties and competences.

Profiles of qualification requirements taken from the job analysis are compared with the individual profiles of specific employees and on this basis the difference between the so-called job analysis is determined. the potential and actual job profile.

The smaller the difference between the aforementioned profiles, the better the selection of an employee for a given position, the greater the employee's chances of self-education and further development, as well as a huge benefit for the company resulting from acquiring a senior employee who knows the organization perfectly without the need to look for him on the external labour market .

The mere definition of possible forms of promotion or career paths does not guarantee adequate development of the company's personnel.

As you know, the interest of the organization itself in the professional development of its own employees is not less than the interest of the employees themselves. Therefore, all cells or departments responsible for human resources management play an important role here.

In addition to developing possible career paths, they should also:

- predict careers, that is, identify staffing needs in the company and adjust the filling of positions to the existing supply of work potential within the organization,
- plan careers, i.e. adjust the needs and aspirations of the employee to the needs and expectations of the staff resulting from career forecasting so that the benefits are reaped on both sides,
- advise on a career, that is, carry out all activities related to the evaluation of the employee's previous work and on this basis provide advice on further career development. HR managers or other units responsible for HR matters in the organization must play an important role here,
- help in professional development by creating opportunities for further education, training, granting long-term study leave, or assistance in starting or continuing studies.

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- help in professional development by creating opportunities for further education, training, granting long-term study leave, or assistance in starting or continuing studies.

Based on the time ranges related to career planning, we distinguish three types of policy:

- Short-term policy is where employers focus on the "here and now" principle. They recruit employees with very good results who fulfill the duties entrusted to them for adequate remuneration. For good results, there is a prospect of promotion, if there is such a promotion, which means that the employer assumes that the future training of managers is unnecessary. If he has a demand, he will hire a new employee from outside. Short-term policy is usually applied in small dynamically developing organizations.
- Long-term policy, i.e. the employer's structured approach to career management, focuses on the analysis of the effects and potential and uses integrated assessment methods to confirm the employee's potential or discover his talent. The employer plans this type of career development in accordance with the previously planned program. The long-term system is mainly used in large and bureaucratic organizations. Where the career development of employees is stable and we can easily forecast needs.
- Long-term flexibility, which is based on focusing on achieving a good result at a given moment which prepares the employee for development. This is an attitude similar to an employer using a short-term policy, but with the difference that the employer assumes that employees' abilities should be developed through training, rotation or career change. Thanks to this method, we can avoid the error of myopia when focusing on the present state, as well as avoid the stiffness of assumptions used in a structured system. Considered the best of the methods listed.

By analysing the career dynamics, we can divide it into three stages:

- Initial career development - define your ability to develop competencies
- Career definition - confirmation or modification of aspirations, acquired skills are combined with experience and the full level of competence is achieved.
- Maturity - Career develops steadily in line with his abilities and motivation

Based on the study of career dynamics, assumptions for career management are created and follow-up plans are developed. It can also be helpful in identifying the necessary career changes for an employee. It helps to detect problems such as: overgrowing the manager's top form or stagnation.

### **Exercise 16:**

While analysing your dynamics of professional development, describe your development priorities. Development priorities consist in preparing for changes that must inevitably occur at the next stages of the career.

It is also of great importance to match the career path to the appropriate generation of employees. It is worth presenting a few groups of employees, and these areIt is also of great importance to match the career path to the appropriate generation of employees. It is worth presenting a few groups of employees, and these are<sup>12</sup>:

- The traditionalists and the baby boomers show great commitment and attachment to the organization. They are motivated by a job well done and the stabilization of the feeling of being appreciated and needed.
- Generation X - values autonomy and independence, are enterprising and focused on building their own skills, the motivation for them is success and challenges.
- Generation Y - this is a challenge for management as they often treat work as a way of raising money to meet their needs. Representatives of this generation often evaluate organizations to see if they meet their expectations. Compared to other generations, they are much more demanding and open to changes. Millennials (generation Y) are the predecessors of generation Z, born between 1980 and 1996. Their childhood fell during the period of the political transformation in Poland, and their start into adult life was defined by the first signs of capitalism and the spread of the Internet. Millennials are considered to be audacious and demanding employees. The research shows that almost 1/3 of the respondents of the Y generation believe that the modern career path is based on frequent changes of work. This feature is defined as [ang .: jopp hopping], it is the result of the approach to work as generation Y considers it as a means to achieve the goal, as a result of which all activities are treated temporarily.
- Generation C - young workers from generations X and Y, often referred to as generation C - from the adjective connected, as people constantly connected to the Internet and using social media daily for private and professional communication.
- Generation Z - these are people born after 1995. They don't know life without the Internet and social media. They are open-minded and creative, but it is not easy for them to focus on one task. Their main features are mobility, quick reaction to changes and a realistic approach to life. Generation Z is also referred to as: post-millennials, Internet generation and generation C (connect, communicate, change). People from Generation Z are assessed quite critically and treated with a high degree of distrust. There are voices that they are demanding and have difficulties with logical thinking and concentration. Opinions are heard that they are not competent and it is difficult to communicate with them.

### Exercise 17

Think about and write which generation you belong to; which features are close to you and support you at work; and which you need to work on.

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<sup>12</sup> [https://mfiles.pl/pl/index.php/%C5%9Acie%C5%BCka\\_kariery](https://mfiles.pl/pl/index.php/%C5%9Acie%C5%BCka_kariery)

**Evaluation quiz # 1**

Analyse and write down your answers to the questions in exercises 1-17.

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## SOLOPRENEURS TEAMWORK SKILLS

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### Teamwork

understood as:

- the art of problem solving,
- correct reasoning,
- critical thinking (discussed in detail in section 1.4 of this training)

In addition, an increasingly appreciated competence is the ability to take personal responsibility and it is increasingly required of all employees. This means that you can do your job yourself. You don't need to get approval for everything you do. Due to your personal responsibility, you can judge situations and consequences yourself. Of course, it all depends on many factors, such as the nature of the job, type of responsibility or length of service; however, the ability to make decisions, critical thinking and independence will be assets that cannot be overestimated. How to find assertiveness or the art of refusal in this effort of all competences; which means the ability to communicate with people while maintaining your own individuality and without imposing your opinion. The essence of assertiveness is based on the belief that everyone has the right to be themselves, that is, to express their feelings and views, to manage their own time and to make personal decisions. Contrary to appearances, it is not easy. There is a saying: "If you are in doubt as to whether a given behaviour is assertive, see if it increases your self-esteem a little." (You can find more about assertiveness and independence in section 1.1 of this course)

As a reminder, I will provide a diagram of the 4 stages of an assertive conversation:

1. Provide information. If someone's behaviour does not suit us, irritates us or angers us, we bring them to our attention and ask them to behave differently. Usually people don't want to be nasty and change their behaviour.
2. Express your feelings. If, despite the attention paid, someone continues to misbehave, we say a second time to change the behaviour. This time the tone of our voice should be more firm and decisive. We also inform you what we feel about his behaviour.
3. A warning about the consequences that threaten him if he does not change his behaviour. Let us remember that the consequences should be real (the ones that we will really apply).
4. Consistency. If, despite our reaction, someone does not change their behaviour, we apply the announced consistency.

Example: we are talking to a friend on the phone. At some point, she starts screaming. The four steps are as follows.

- I am asking you not to raise your voice to me.

- Don't yell when you call me because I feel very bad about it.
- If you keep screaming, I will stop talking to you on the phone.
- You keep shouting, so I end the call. And we hang up the phone. • You keep shouting, so I end the call. And we hang up the phone.

### Exercise 18

Follow the Assertive Refusal Steps and describe your example based on your work or private life experiences.

Assertiveness requires making sure that what you think and feel is important. It is the ability to discard false beliefs about yourself and believe in your own abilities. Assertiveness is also the ability to firmly but gently define one's own territory, while respecting the territory of others. Assertive behaviour gives you a sense of power and self-confidence. Try to present your point of view briefly, to the point, without entering into unnecessary discussions. Under no circumstances should you allow verbal scuffles or regret into submission. It is also important to be able to constructively criticize others without offending or deprecating them. When someone behaves inappropriately towards you, tell them how you feel and why, for example, "I'm sorry because you didn't keep my word."

### Exercise 19

You can start your assertiveness training by highlighting your strengths - this is helpful when you mark your territory, define your competences and, of course, build and strengthen your self-confidence.

When thinking about communication and building relationships, it is worth remembering the art of Communication Without Violence, M. Rosenberg laid the foundations for the language of empathy towards oneself and towards other people. According to its premises, when building a message or criticism of a given person, we should remember to:

- Avoid generalizations and damaging judgments like "You never keep your word. You're hopeless."
- It is important to name your emotions, which no one can question, and to stick to the facts. Instead of saying, "You're always late," refer to a specific event: "I'm sorry because you're late for an appointment."
- Finally, you can say what you expect from your interlocutor in relation to the situation, eg "I would like you to call in the future and let me know you will be late".
- You always have the right to say no

If you really do not want to agree to something, you have a choice: either say "no" to someone and "yes" to someone - then you will lose respect for yourself, or ... refuse, risking that someone will be offended - then you will behave however, a sense of inner harmony with oneself.<sup>13</sup>

At NVC, we take into account both our own and other people's needs. We distinguish between thoughts and feelings by clearly communicating our inner states. We focus on facts, not judgments. You can successfully use this method in many different situations - both to prevent conflicts and effectively manage the existing ones. In this way, each side will be heard and it will be possible to work out more favorable solutions.

Talking about feelings and needs helps to prevent misunderstandings and clears the atmosphere. People feel better about being together. Their relationships improve, they cooperate more willingly and effectively. This tool also works well for providing feedback. It helps to present it in a constructive, non-attacking form. Such a message minimizes a defensive attitude, introduces the possibility of dialogue: the recipient can respond to the statement.

The NVC message consists of 4 elements:

- Observation
- Feeling
- Need
- Request

Each of them should be included in the speech. The form depends on who you are referring to:

- to yourself (empathy inward)
- to others (empathy outside)

### **Example 1 - own needs**

Observation: Last week, I asked you to prepare a report. It's already Thursday. I still haven't received it from you.

Feeling: I feel angry because of this, but I am also worried ...

Need: ... because I have to give my boss a full report by tomorrow. It is very important for me to meet the deadline.

Request: Could you please prepare this report by the end of today?

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<sup>13</sup> Efektywna komunikacja nie tylko w biznesie – metoda NVC, <https://www.gowork.pl/blog/efektywna-komunikacja-nie-tylko-w-biznesie-metoda-nvc/>

If you are referring to another person's conditions, be sure to give them the opportunity to confirm or deny it. Even the most observant observer can get it wrong sometimes. For example, the following phrases will be relevant here: "I have the impression that ...", "I think that ...", "did I understand you correctly?", "Was it really so?".

### **Example 2 - the needs of the other person**

Observation: I've noticed that you have made more mistakes in your reports than usual lately.

Feeling: I have the feeling that you've been feeling overwhelmed by an overload of responsibilities for some time.

Need: It seems to me that you may therefore need someone to help you relieve you of them.

Request: Tell me, is it really so from your perspective? Can I help you somehow?

### **Exercise 20**

Each of these steps is best practiced with a few examples. You can organize a workshop for the entire team, during which everyone can learn to formulate constructive messages in different situations. However, today, for the purposes of the course, describe two examples according to the above formulas. Think about which step is the most difficult for you.

### **Ability to work in a team, organizational skills**

Remember to work with your colleagues, not against them. Most job advertisements require this skill. The best solutions for the company can be worked out as a team. Make criticism constructive, don't insult your coworkers, and don't be rude. If your idea is criticized, take that criticism on board, even if it's not always easy to do.

Each organization is one organism. Everyone should act in such a way as to influence the results of the entire company by pursuing their own goals. When everyone is responsible for specific tasks that come together, work becomes much faster and more effective. The ability to listen to other people and to conduct substantive discussions can also be developed.

## Good work organization, time management

Time management is of great importance, both privately and professionally. When you manage your time well, you make sure you meet deadlines. You can also avoid unnecessary stress. Time management comes with resilience and organizational skills

Surely you have worked with a person who, instead of trying to find an answer to a given problem, was looking for a ready-made solution from others each time. Of course, you should not refuse to help less experienced employees, but do it in such a way that they can figure out how to solve the problem themselves.

The ability to manage yourself in time is also about proper prioritization. It's not about working as long as possible, but as efficiently as possible. You can learn that too! Specialized training and notebooks may be helpful. Review self-discipline material; this is a chapter containing many tips for making changes in your personal and professional life.

## Leadership

In a broad sense, leadership can be understood as the ability to influence individuals or a group in order to achieve specific results. Leadership is about setting direction, developing a vision for the future of the organization, as well as giving direction to people.

According to the encyclopaedia of management, "Leadership is defined in different ways because it is a term that does not have a recognized and accepted single definition. In a broad sense, leadership can be understood as the ability to influence individuals or a group in order to achieve specific results. In management, it should be understood as the ability to influence the behaviour of employees in order to achieve specific goals. Leadership is based primarily on the authority of the person as well as authority that others voluntarily accept. Leadership is about setting direction, developing a vision for the future of the organization, as well as giving direction to people. Leadership is also about motivating and inspiring, releasing energy in people. Leadership is necessary to create change and management is necessary to obtain results systematically. A good manager is a leader. "

Leadership has common areas with management, as well as those that show how different these definitions are. Most often, however, it is believed that the two concepts are separate, which to a large extent overlap. It can be assumed that management is the achievement of goals set by someone else. However, every well-managed company needs something more, therefore leadership has five additional elements, which are:

- setting the course of action,
- Provided inspiration



- team building

Tab. 1 "Management functions and leadership functions"<sup>14</sup>

Management	Leadership
Planning / Budgeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing an action plan and time schedule,</li> <li>• resource allocation</li> </ul>	Goal setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a vision,</li> <li>• establishing a strategy,</li> <li>• explaining general assumptions,</li> </ul>
Organizing and engaging employees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• job allocation,</li> <li>• establishing rules and procedures,</li> <li>• developing a structure</li> </ul>	Employee targeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicating goals,</li> <li>• building coalitions and teams,</li> <li>• seeking involvement</li> </ul>
Troubleshooting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking corrective actions,</li> <li>• creating creative solutions,</li> <li>• developing incentives and incentives</li> </ul>	Motivating and inspiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stimulating and inspiring to action,</li> <li>• delegating powers,</li> <li>• meeting the needs of the group</li> </ul>

source: Karaszewski R., Leadership in the global business environment, Toruń 2008, page 68

A leader is a person who has the leadership qualities, knowledge and skills needed to lead a group in order to achieve his goals willingly. Adequate personality and character traits are required to guide people. When analysing the position of a leader in a group, we should start by describing the features that characterize him, which are:

- Enthusiasm - it is important for the leader to show it, to set an example and approach all tasks positively.
- Honesty - is understood as a personality trait, faithfulness to external values, honesty and nobility.
- Firmness - it is important that the leader is demanding, persistent and resistant to adversities. He cares more about respect than popularity. He creates high standards that he himself adheres to.

<sup>14</sup> źródło: Karaszewski R., Przywództwo w środowisku globalnego biznesu, Toruń 2008, str 68

- Justice - the leader should be objective, reward and punish for results, not sympathy, and treat everyone equally.
- Cordiality - A truly good leader engages not only the mind in his work, but also the heart.
- Humility - is very important because it teaches you to listen to others and protects you from ego growth.
- Self-confidence - it is important to believe in yourself, because it also works well for subordinates.

### Exercise 21

Describe the characteristics, decision-making characteristics, and management style of the leader group you have met on your career path. Focus on its features, describe them with examples.

### Public speaking

Public speaking can cause a lot of stress and difficulties, not only in terms of content, but also visual and logistic. As with other soft skills, this skill can be acquired through experience. In order to help every beginner on the path to a perfect speech, here are 10 key tips. Experienced speakers can check themselves whether their performances in front of the audience do not require any correction?

1. As they see you, this is how they write you - take care of your outfit. The first impression is built within seconds. Therefore, it is not worth exposing yourself to unnecessary criticism or prejudice from the audience. Try to dress neatly and simply. Also, avoid uncomfortable, embarrassing and too tight garments. A shirt and a pencil skirt and a jacket for a woman, and a suit, or a shirt and elegant trousers for a man will work well regardless of the subject of the training. Remember that the audience is supposed to focus on what you say, not what you look like. Do not distract them, but show professionalism.
2. The setting of the speech - the power of gestures. Body language is another element of our image and invaluable help in establishing cooperation between the speaker and the listener. Moderate change of location during the presentation, pointing to a specific sub-point of the presentation, showing the area on the map. These activities stimulate the audience to listen, prevent boredom, but also prove that the presenter is confident and prepared. If gesturing is not your forte, try at least while standing to maintain an open attitude towards the audience. So avoid sitting behind a desk - reach out to your audience and make contact with them.
3. Eye contact. When giving a lecture or conducting workshops, it is necessary to make eye contact with the audience. Only in this way will they be aware that what you are talking about is aimed at them. Thus, you will avoid a situation where half of the room looks at the screens of smartphones and tablets.

4. Tone of speech and voice modulation. Adapt your speech to the topic. Don't present an issue in one breath. Do you raise a controversial topic? Try to ask a rhetorical question. Are you presenting a difficult phenomenon, or maybe the effects of a catastrophe or accident? Pause for a few seconds. Build the mood and impression, and you will make the audience remember your speech for a long time.
5. Avoid the card. One of the most common mistakes made by the speakers is excessive attachment to the sheet with the text of the speech. Some people even go so far as to read the whole thing. Let us remember that the reading skill was probably mastered by each of the gathered people, and the purpose of their arrival was to listen to living statements. So prepare, at most, a framework plan for the presentation. Put it in front of you. Holding it in your hand will constantly focus your eyes on the text. It will also make it difficult for you to fulfill the rule from the second point. Prepare in advance and speak naturally. Listeners will appreciate your confidence and preparation. Also, don't memorize your speech - it will only make your stress worse and sound artificial. You need to know what you want to say. Then no situation will surprise you.
6. Establish a relationship. The best presenters know very well that interaction is essential in gaining audience sympathy. Try to ask a question, ask for an opinion. You can also add an anecdote. Confirm your skills and commitment by allowing you to ask questions when in doubt.
7. Apply additional tools. It can be a multimedia presentation, a short film or a photo slideshow. In this way, you will keep your interest in the subject, and thus help yourself to present some phenomena or processes
8. Create a story. A good solution to gain interest and sympathy is to share a subjective life story in relation to the presented phenomenon.
9. Stress is your enemy. Even the most refined speech can be destroyed by ourselves. Just before going out in front of the audience, don't think about what you say. If you are prepared, there is nothing to fear. Remember that your stress can also generate a distanced approach from your audience. A smile or even a joke at the beginning of the meeting will help you alleviate the stiff atmosphere and fears.
10. Stick to the scheduled time. If your speech is to be in 60 minutes, try to end it 10 minutes early. It is worth devoting the last moments to possible questions from the audience, clarifying misunderstood issues. Please respect your listeners' time. If you drag out the lecture, distraction and nervous glances towards the door are guaranteed. Leave a good impression. Too long presentation may mean that you have not fully thought through the concept of the speech.

Practice. Try to prepare a plan for your presentation in advance, so that you have time to practice it yourself at home and before Wednesday

### **Exercise 22**

Prepare a presentation plan on any topic, the next step will be to prepare a multimedia presentation for this speech.

## Work ethic and professional attitude<sup>15</sup>

According to the PWN encyclopaedia, professional ethics is "a set of standards setting out specific moral obligations related to the performed profession and social professional relations (eg medical and legal ethics)".

According to J. Sikora, one of the authors of "Sociology of work", professional ethics consists of:

- professional specification of the generally recognized moral requirements in society
- a hierarchy of values specific to each system of professional morality
- a specific method of resolving conflicts of moral values, preferred by a professional group.

Professional ethics is, therefore, a set of moral principles that should be followed by representatives of a given profession. It is especially important in professions of public trust, where employees face moral dilemmas or there is a conflict between private and social interests. Examples of such professions are doctor, lawyer, judge, policeman, teacher or journalist.

The term ethics is often used interchangeably with the word "morality" and is referred to as "the science of morality". Ethics is to protect not only customers and patients, but also employees themselves. Its rules show them the way of proper conduct and protect them against abuse, irregularities, etc.

Professional ethics is indirectly mentioned in the Constitution in Art. 17: "Professional self-governments may be established by law, representing persons performing professions of public trust and supervising the proper performance of these professions within the limits of the public interest and for its protection".

This means that certain professional groups are granted a certain autonomy and authority to enforce the standards of professional ethics.

The code of professional ethics is a document in which the moral principles applicable in a given profession have been written down, we call it the code of professional ethics. It allows you to maintain consistency between the mission of the organization and the requirements for employees. The code of professional ethics does not have a normative force, but it is honorary. According to Wojciech Drzeżdżon's "Ethical Aspects of Professional Work", the Code of Professional Ethics should:

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<sup>15</sup> <https://interviewme.pl/blog/etyka-zawodowa>

- first of all, normalize (and not contain a description of the values and ideals that the corporation serves)
- take care of the public interest (it should not contain provisions for which the justification is only to protect the interests of members of the corporation)
- be factual and honest, and must regulate important and job-specific problems (and not set norms that are inherent in common morality anyway).

In general, the main principle followed by the authors of codes of professional ethics is the non-contradiction of their ethical principles with the norms of applicable law.

### **Evaluation quiz no.2**

Analyses and write down your answers to the questions included in exercises 18-22.

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## SOLOPRENEURS COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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"The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has happened." G.B. Shaw

Listening carefully is an important skill. Basic rules for being a good listener:

Listening is a complex process of perceiving, interpreting, and responding to a message.

Listening is receiving verbal messages from our interlocutor.

- Listening is not:
  - for a rest, after which we start talking,
  - two interlocutors interrupting each other,
  - for quick memory of questions or facts,
  - to wait your turn to say something
  - about judging in the mind of your interlocutor,
  - about figuring out how to counter arguments.
- Preferred ways of listening
  - a people-oriented listener
  - a listener focusing on the way that the fact that he is listening influences interpersonal relationships
  - an action-oriented listener
  - a listener focusing on how the fact that he is listening influences the task being performed
  - content-oriented listener - a listener who appreciates information from reliable sources and focuses on analysing what he hears

### Communicativeness and communication

In the simplest terms, interpersonal communication could be closed in the pattern: sender-message-recipient. We know, however, that despite the fact that this model is true, it does not exhaust the topic of nuances related to interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication is a phenomenon that accompanies us from the beginning of life; it is a message flowing into the world, towards another person ("interpersonal" means just "between people"). It is the basic tool for building and maintaining social relations. It is thanks to communication that we exchange thoughts, ideas, observations, warn each other about potential threats, conduct conflicts and build alliances. Each of us is born with a range of skills in this area, but thanks to experience, socialization and all kinds of learning processes, we develop the scope of our competences in the field of interpersonal communication.

It is true that, as in the case of other skills, we have certain predispositions or tendencies that affect our effectiveness in this area, but communication, like any other competence, can be subjected to training. It is worth looking at your interpersonal communication methods - how

they shape our reality and which elements of it should be improved. The way we communicate affects our relationships, private and professional lives. There is practically no area of life that is not related to some degree with communication.

Every act of communication is a process, usually includes some basic elements such as:

- context,
- language used,
- symbols
- message
- transmission channel, etc.

We constantly send messages involuntarily to the world and the environment, whether we like it or not, reads and interprets them. It is important that the method of communication is adapted to the recipient.

Much has been said about the complexity of communication mechanisms, but when considering your own development in this field, it is worth looking at its components.

Communication is an act of a social nature, so the requirement for its occurrence is the presence of at least two individuals. The social context is the number of people involved in a given act of communication and other determinants of this phenomenon. Each person in a given communication process has their own way of coding and decoding the message, which is why individual characteristics and skills have such a great influence on the entire process. It is because of these differences that the act of communication is creative, dynamic and often unpredictable. The effectiveness of communication also depends on the extent to which participants use the same symbols. Often, the need or necessity of an agreement forces them to assimilate and use signs that are understandable to both parties.



<https://www.analizait.pl/2019/komunikacja-co-moze-pojsc-nie-tak/>

What kind of interference may we encounter between the sender and the recipients of the message? These are among others:

- Low level of interest
- Distractions
- Conducting an internal dialogue
- Defective way of communicating information
- Body language inconsistent with the content of the statement, transmitting contradictory at the same time
- messages
- Poor eye contact
- Waiting to speak
- Habit of not listening
- Defence (we don't want to hear something)
- Premature formulation of assumptions and conclusions
- Not communicating what you are really thinking
- When do people listen but cannot hear?
- No common code
- The sender's message does not accurately reflect his intentions
- The recipient interprets the message differently
- The statement is unclear

In addition to disruptions, we also have communication barriers. It is the so-called "dirty dozen") according to T. Gordon <sup>16</sup>

- Criticizing
- Naming
- Making diagnoses
- Praise combined with evaluation
- Ordering
- Threats
- Moralizing
- Asking too many or the wrong questions
- Giving advice
- Distraction
- Logical argumentation
- Calming down

Knowing how to talk, what to pay attention to and what to avoid while ensuring good and correct information transfer - we can move on.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.focus.pl/artykul/12-bledow-w-komunikacji-ktore-utrudniaja-dogadywanie-sie-z-innymi>



### Exercise 23

Remember a situation when during the speech you did not know what to say next, you lost the thread. Those moments when you are not clear what you really want, what and how to convey to the audience. In such moments, pause, give yourself a moment of pause and reflection so that you can hear your thoughts.

Describe the situation, write down a "contingency plan" what you can say to defuse the situation. Make a list of sentences that will be helpful for you, such as "I'm sorry, I lost the thread, where did I stop?" Or "I do not know the answer to this question, I will read it, we will start our next meeting with it" ...

### Immunity, including resistance to stress

We live under constant stress, we work a lot, eat poorly and rarely rest. And this translates into a decrease in immunity and vitality.

Employers must be able to rely on their employees' readiness to meet their goals, even with a heavy workload. When you can withstand stressful situations, you will make a good impression on the manager and will be considered a valued employee.

Although stress is talked about primarily in a negative context, it can motivate you to act in moderation. In many professions it cannot be completely eliminated. That is why it is worth learning the techniques of dealing with nervous tension, e.g. through breathing exercises or regular physical activity.

There are many ways to fight stress and, to be honest, there is no one real recipe, because for each of us it is an extremely individual matter. Therefore, we present several methods of fighting stress or preventing bad feelings from overwhelming us. There is a high probability that you will find the one that will be perfect for you.

- **Learn to relax.** Yoga or reading a book have a relaxing effect, but also a bath with a lot of foam and the addition of aromatic oil.
- **Think positive.** Put negative thoughts out of your mind. Try to be optimistic. Look for the good side of even these bad events. And believe in yourself: look in the mirror and think about what is good in you, and what you become aware of, repeat in your mind or out loud as soon as you feel that black clouds are approaching.
- **Don't blame on everything.** Let's be more patient and understanding with ourselves and others. Not always everything has to be done in tip-top, not always our children have to have only sixes, and we do not always have to be perfect in every situation. Let's give it up a bit, spread out the responsibilities, let's engage others to carry them out.
- **Physical activity.** Regular exercise and walks not only reduce stress but also help control blood sugar levels. So allocate at least half an hour a day to exercise every day.

## Negotiation skills

An efficient negotiator should comprehensively and reliably obtain and use certain necessary information - concerning both the specific situation and the planned goal, as well as the people with whom the talks will be conducted. It is also necessary to prioritize what we want to achieve as a result of the negotiations.

The condition for effective negotiation is not only having the necessary knowledge, but also the ability to use it in solving practical negotiation problems. When considering the abilities and skills that an efficient negotiator should have, one should take into account both those of a more general nature, necessary for efficient operation in a modern company, and the more specific ones, desirable in negotiation situations. Negotiations are a very important aspect both in life and in business. We meet with negotiations every day as part of our professional duties, in family and social life. You could say that we don't get what we deserve, but what we negotiate. Nowadays, more and more people decide to work on the basis of self-employment or to perform the so-called a freelance profession. Regardless of whether we want to develop as independent consultants, within the structure of the company, or by running our own business - it is worth taking care of continuous improvement of our qualifications. Effective career development - regardless of the form in which it is - requires a certain amount of capital, including knowledge, skills and the so-called "Soft skills". The latter category includes, inter alia, ability to solve problems, communicate with the environment, and negotiation skills. While not everyone has the qualities of a diplomat, there are ways to improve your negotiating skills in 5 steps. What are these methods? We invite you to familiarize yourself with our proposals ...

- 1) Before starting any negotiations, it is worth analysing the specific skills that should be acquired (or developed). An efficient negotiator should comprehensively and reliably obtain and use certain necessary information - concerning both the specific situation and the planned goal, as well as the people with whom the talks will be conducted. It is also necessary to prioritize what we want to achieve as a result of the negotiations. Only when you have an appropriate "base" of knowledge, you can start building a strategy. Based on the main goals, you can also formulate specific offers (preferably in the number of several alternatives), plan which argumentation and persuasion techniques we will use, create an image of ourselves as a negotiator.
- 2) It is worth realizing that not only the facts are important in the negotiation process, but also the way they are communicated. Our image must be credible, but at the same time it should be adapted to a specific situation. The analysis of the situation should be conducted on an ongoing basis - both on the basis of verbal information and gestures made by the other party. A good negotiator must learn to listen, but also to observe. Only then will it be able to use negotiation techniques (which should always be adapted to specific person).

- 3) Having some knowledge about your options, it is worth getting acquainted with the basic negotiation styles. They can be based on different competencies. And yes - if ours a strong point is matter-of-factness and argumentation skills, it is worth choosing a style of striving for domination. If, however, the main advantage is flexibility and the ability to empathize with the other side - then it is better to use the fitting style.
- 4) The next step is to learn the basic techniques of persuasion in negotiations. Let's take a look at the most commonly used:
  - building a sense of community with the other party - when contacting the client or superior, you should focus on the features that connect us. It may be a shared goal, but shared interests, views, and tastes also matter. The negotiation process should not, of course, be based on too much familiarity with the other party, but it is worth introducing some "warming" elements to our image;
  - the tactic of a wolf in sheep's clothing - it involves creating a completely different image of yourself. The negotiator emphasizes his lack of competence (obviously apparent), reveals his weaknesses - all in order to lull the vigilance and to some extent manipulate the opponent;
  - the tactic of extending the entire process, "stalling" - this is a method in which the main task is to fatigue the other party so that it can propose concessions, just to complete the transaction faster;
  - using a bluff - useful especially when we are in a lost position;
  - Compliments - and it is extremely important to match them to a specific person. The sense of observation is very useful here - only in this way will we gain the trust of the other party. The technique often requires long practice but is very profitable in the long run;
- 5) In order to effectively improve your negotiating skills, it is worth practicing as often as possible. Let's start with the fact that negotiations can affect almost every sphere of life, they are not limited to commercial transactions. The laws governing them are very universal - first of all, you should avoid personal attacks, focus on analyzing problems, looking for a consensus. The first offer formulated by us should always represent a higher level than the one we want to achieve. This will allow you to keep a certain margin. Moreover, flexibility is extremely important.<sup>17</sup>

## Cultural fluidity

cultural intelligence<sup>18</sup> is the ability of an organization to adapt to different cultural realities. The expression of her abilities is the ability to identify cultural differences, their appropriate interpretation and taking into account the acquired knowledge in overcoming problems

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<sup>17</sup> <https://instream.io/pl/jak-poprawic-swoje-umiejetnosci-negocjacyjne-w-5-krokach/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://docplayer.pl/43493618-Kobiece-i-meska-kultura-organizacyjna-oraz-plynnosc-kulturowa-w-procesach-nawiazywania-wspolpracy-miedzyorganizacyjnej-kooperacji-i-kooperencji1.html>

resulting from differences. Having such an ability makes people sensitive to cultural differences "in" and "between" organizations, which protects against stereotypical perception of representatives of other cultures and allows for skilful use of their experiences and knowledge in the course of cooperation (both in the form of cooperation and cooperation, i.e. with competitors). Cultural fluidity is the set of organizational skills and abilities necessary for effective functioning in the global economy. It is the ability to "smoothly" move in the sphere of business in different cultures. A culturally fluid organization is an organization whose management is aware of its culture and its relations with the implemented strategy, has the ability to carry out cultural changes in it, and skilfully uses the cultural diversity of the workforce and the surrounding business environment. It seems that the abovementioned abilities constitute the basis of the model of the effective functioning of a modern organization. A model based on relationships, intuition, communication skills, the ability to empathize with the needs of others and based on shaping the climate of effective cooperation inside and between organizations (even with competitors). The model, in many cases similar or evolving towards inter-organizational networks, which reduce labor costs and make it easier for partners to jointly search for sources of success (e.g. employee talents, new products, new technologies, new organizational solutions, new ways of reaching the customer, etc. ), but also accelerate: building a better reputation, improving the efficiency of market activities, reacting to market changes, the possibility of lowering the price of the final good, higher profitability of activities, strengthening the resource potential, increasing innovation.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Rakowska A.: Kompetencje menedżerskie kadry kierowniczej we współczesnych organizacjach, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie Skłodowskiej. Lublin, 2007. I 15.' Więcej patrz: Doz Y., Hamel G.: Alliance Advantage. The Art of Creating Value through Partnering, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 1998; Adamik A.: Współpraca sieciowa w funkcjonowaniu współczesnych MSP |w:J Studia i Prace Kolegium Zarządzania i Finansów SGH, Zeszyt Naukowy 99, Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, 2010, s. 7-16.11 Masłyk- Musiał li.: Organizacje w ruchu, Olicyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków, 2003, s. 111.11 Więcej patrz Adamik A.: Partnerzy, formy i obszary współpracy małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw w regionie i ich efektywność |w :| A. Adamik (red.), Współpraca małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw w regionie. Budowanie konkurencyjności firm i regionu, Difin, Warszawa, 2012, s. 250-303.12 Toffler A.: Szok przyszłości, PIW, Warszawa, 1974, s. 439.11 tendencja do tolerancji wobec zachowań innych osób! Bate P.: Using the Culture Concept in an Organization Development Setting, „The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science” 1990, No. I

**Exercise 24**

Describe in your own words and illustrate how you understand cultural fluidity in a selected organization.

**Evaluation quiz # 3**

Review and write down your answers to the questions in exercises 23 to 24

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## SOLOPRENEURS ADAPTABILITY SKILLS

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### Commitment

When starting to consider increasing employee involvement, it is worth answering the question, what exactly is work engagement? It would seem that commitment is an intuitively understood term. When it is said that someone is involved, the meaning of such a statement seems understandable without additional explanation. Meanwhile, some difficulties may arise if you think more deeply about the definition of commitment.

If you want to show your supervisors that you are a dedicated employee, do more than required. Give more than 100%, work longer if necessary and create creative suggestions to get involved in the company. Support your co-workers when they have a lot to do and are unable to manage all their work on their own.

One of the researchers of commitment, Dilys Robinson, (2004) and his colleagues describe it as a positive attitude of the employee towards the organization and its values. A committed employee works with colleagues to increase work efficiency so that it benefits his company. He is also aware of the context in which he has to act, he knows the importance of his work for the company. In turn, the organization must work to develop and nurture commitment, which requires a two-way relationship between the employer and employee. What is characteristic of this way of understanding commitment is its specific two-sidedness. Commitment cannot take place if both the employee and the employer do not make reasonable efforts to achieve it. It is therefore impossible to achieve commitment if only one of the parties is committed to it.

On the other hand, Kevin Kurse (2012) in the internet edition of the Forbes magazine notes that employee involvement leads to increased company value. This is thanks to a process he describes as the "Engagement-Profit Chain". This chain begins with engaging employees. Employee involvement leads to an increase in the quality and efficiency of their work, which results in higher customer satisfaction, which in turn results in increased sales. More sales mean more profits, and high profits translate into higher returns for shareholders (e.g. rising share prices).

## Creativity

According to the definition that can be found on the PWN website, creative "is creating something new, original". ... An alternative, more everyday definition of creativity is that it is simply "the ability to create something new." As thinking people, we react and come up with new solutions to make our lives easier.

The modern world is developing very fast and leaves no other choice but to adapt to the prevailing requirements. Every profession requires creative thinking, because sometimes patterns can fail. Without a creative and creative approach to a problem, it is sometimes impossible to solve it.

Ways to stimulate creativity

Creative thinking has become a desirable trait by employers who appreciate an employee who solves problems by himself in a creative way. Each of us has the potential for creative thinking, but not everyone knows how to stimulate creativity.

- **SLEEPING UP** - A sleepy person is an irritable, nervous and frustrated person. Even a nap during the day can provide us with an interesting solution to a problem that keeps us busy.
- **PENCIL AND PENCIL** - when writing an idea on a piece of paper, we must involve a larger part of the brain, which is responsible, for example, for the coordination of the hand and eye while writing. When you write down your notes, you can draw something in the margin that will result in another idea.
- **BE INSPIRED BY PEOPLE** - it is easier to find new ideas in a group. By working outside the home, you can meet interesting people. Therefore, a cool solution is to work in a coworking space, which is a chance to meet new, creative people.
- **GOOD MUSIC** - everyone should try out different genres and choose what suits them and helps them while creating, because it is known that silence does not help creative thinking.
- **MEDITATION** - it brings us into a state of relaxation and relaxation, during which we can begin to look at our thoughts and find solutions to our problems.

Thinking is the key to being creative

However, one must remember to be a participant and recipient of the world of art, because reading books, going to the theatre to see performances, or admiring works of art is the stimulus that drives our brain to think creatively.

Can you be creative and analytical at the same time?

In job offers, creativity and analytical skills are the most important among the requirements for employees. So, is it possible to be both creatively and analytically gifted?

First of all, it is worth remembering that we are talking about two different, even contradictory thought processes.

Analytically is the ability to break down a problem into prime factors and find meaning and logical structure in it. Creativity means conceptual thinking that results in the creation of something new, so it is about synthesis, not analysis. Logic alone often hinders the creative thinking process by setting artificial limits to the imagination.

There are only a small percentage of people who combine both. They are exceptionally gifted with systems design and strategic planning. It is worth knowing, however, that they do not perform well in positions that require quick decision-making, they are also theoreticians rather than practitioners. In FRIS we call people with this style of action Strategists - they are Researchers with a strong perspective of Ideas or Visionaries with a strong perspective of Structures.

However, the absolute majority of us can have either a creative or analytical mind :)

The chain of creative thinking begins with the preparation phase, in which you need to gather the necessary information about solving our case on an intellectual level, in which we consciously try to come up with a solution, although very often irritation and frustration come, because the solution does not appear. Then a good solution is to deal with a completely different type of activity, e.g. cooking, DIY, ironing or washing up. These activities allow us to "turn off" conscious thinking. A good solution is to leave the notebook by the bed and when you "wake up" write down the information provided by your brain during sleep. When we manage to develop enough ideas, we can start to verify them according to our criteria.

## Empathy

Empathy<sup>20</sup> is a well-known word, but do we know what it means to be empathetic? The Greek word "empátheia" means "suffering". In psychology, the term empathy refers to the ability to perceive and empathize with other people's emotional states. Empathy should not be confused with compassion. Compassion puts us above the person we sympathize with, and the ability to empathize is the ability to put ourselves in the shoes of another person.

In practice, empathy is an extremely important social skill. A person with significant empathic abilities understands his own emotions and is able to accurately recognize emotional states in other people. This has a positive effect on the understanding of social dependencies and

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.medonet.pl/zdrowie,czym-jest-empatia-i-czy-mozna-sie-jej-nauczyc--o-czym-swiadczy-brak-empatii-,artykul,1728439.html>



interpersonal relations. Empathetic people are aware of other people's feelings, see the basis of their values and are able to empathize with specific situations. Such perception of the world allows you to verify your own views and admit mistakes, as well as significantly reduce aggressive behaviour. Lack of empathy in the social context is a negative phenomenon because it leads to indifference, difficulties in resolving conflicts and reaching for forceful solutions.

You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their thoughts and feelings. Empathy is important to be able to better deal with colleagues and colleagues, avoid conflict situations, and achieve meaningful goals together.

What makes people have such widely varying levels of empathy? Psychology distinguishes three groups of reasons responsible for building the level of empathy in humans: biological, psychological and environmental predispositions.

Psychologists distinguish two types of empathy:

Emotional empathy is related to feeling other people's emotions. It's understanding that someone is feeling emotions such as pain, old age, anger or anger. A person with emotional empathy understands what causes the feelings of the other person, can imagine them, and can sympathize with these emotions. Directly in the dialogue, this type of empathy facilitates communication and also the natural adaptation of non-verbal language.

Cognitive empathy is the ability to adopt another person's way of thinking and observe reality from their perspective. This skill makes it much easier to communicate also with people who are strangers or come from other cultural groups, because a person who shows cognitive empathy is able to adapt to assumptions of a different value system.

Interestingly, emotional and cognitive empathy may or may not go hand in hand. We can understand the other person, their position and emotions, but not feel those emotions at all. It is also possible to feel emotions but not fully understand the person's position.

Empathy is a product of several factors that we mentioned earlier. This means that to some extent it can be learned, or at least some of the mechanisms influencing human relationships can be understood. Sometimes empathy can be triggered by an event that makes us begin to see the emotions of others. Embracing an animal also helps in developing empathy. Cats and dogs (but also other domestic animals) unmistakably recognize their owner's emotions and can teach us to do the same in relation to other people.

Empathy training should be based on these points:

- attention training - observing the situation, watching its development;
- listening practice - understanding what is being heard, being alert to what the other person calls emotions, focusing on what he or she wants to convey;

- practicing self-awareness - recognizing your own feelings and learning to name them;
- communication exercise - communicating your feelings and naming other people's feelings.

Empathy helps in many situations, facilitates everyday functioning, and allows you to establish good relationships. It is desirable in many professions in which a man cannot cope without empathy. It is also worth realizing that a person deprived of empathy or with a very low level of it may impose his will on others and not notice that such uncompromisingness is a source of conflicts and negative emotions.

#### **Evaluation quiz # 4**

Describe empathic situations absorbed at work or in private life

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Which competences are more important for employers?

Without specific knowledge or skills, working in a given position will not be possible at all. Therefore, in many cases, soft skills and enthusiasm for work alone are not enough. On the other hand, education in a given field of study or extensive specialist knowledge do not guarantee that a given person will cope with, for example, a managerial position. Will he be able to efficiently manage a team, conduct negotiations or resolve conflicts? It depends on whether he has the appropriate soft skills.

Therefore, the answer to the question posed in the subheading is not as obvious as it might seem. Finding an employee who will have the skills necessary to perform the tasks in a given position and the appropriate personality traits is one of the most important tasks for recruiters.

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