

Soft Skills for Business Negotiations and Marketing Strategies
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Lecture – 11
Innovative Skills

Good morning. So, far for this course we have gone through two weeks of lessons, two weeks of this course - Soft Skills for Business Negotiation and Marketing Strategies. Now, from today we will have the third week running. So, far what we have discussed we have discussed about the fundamentals of hard skills, and soft skill and the soft skill sets we which I have started under the soft skill sets the personal skill has come forward. What happens you know in the whole skill set when you are going for any kind of interaction in the business negotiations or marketing or sales or whatever, in that to first thing that plays a role is your personal skill. But there are many other skills, because you are interacting with people, you are interacting with situations, you are counteracting various situations.

Now, in such kind of cases what happens is that though I have focused my entire discussion considering that whoever is listening to me, they are basically they are going for either interview or job promotions or business opportunities or even for marketing, but mind it the same set of soft skills which I have listed very elaborately as personal sets are also holds good for the person whom you are meeting. That means, personal skill is very much valid not only for you it is also for the person you are going to meet, but every individual has to prepare himself or herself with that personal skills set.

Now, once you go for further under the soft skill sets there is another set that comes in innovative skills. Now, innovative skills here it has a little different connotations. Even if I said everything about the personal skills with a little bit of bias towards individual innovation always played a very important role. If you really list out the entire set and go through it, and then you will find there are some more skills, which you do require which really you know enriches your personal skill they are all innovative skills. So, I am going towards this a little more in detail.

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In the innovative skills quite often it is also identified as a creative skills, but creative and innovative this was slightly different. Creative is you are creating, but innovating you are you are creating something but in innovation what happens is you are innovating a process. You may be innovating a product you may be innovating a system. So, innovative skills, I found is a better idea about such kind of skills that you have. The first one that comes in our mind of course you know that my entire list is always in alphabetical order. In this alphabetical order, the first thing comes is the artistic sense.

Now, one may ask me this question that in the sales and marketing and business promotions and such other things, where is the role of arts in it or art in it. The point is you know when you are interacting with somebody you are conversing with somebody basically it is an art of conversation that we talk about. Art of interaction that means, it is a kind of something which gets generated gets created which has some reffiness in it. Your artistic sense helps you whenever you are trying to go forward with this kind of works. Artistic sense by this I do not mean that you become a good painter no how you present it, how you create it, how you visualize it. Let me put it in the order how you visualize it, how you created it, how you presented it, and then how you come back with it. You know in the entire process the sense of arts or artistic sense works very, very strongly. When I will talk about the conversations in my fourth model lecture fourth weeks lecture in which I will go very much in detail with this aspects.

Next is creativity the creativity is not really related to only your product creativity of creating a good product or creating a good software or creating a good process. The creating is of the entire thing. You are trying to go for a sales, sales promotion your creativity will tell you exactly how you should plan for the whole thing, and how you are going at. Product might have been developed by your own company, you are only a person who is supposed to go for marketing it. Now, once you are planning it you have creative sense or creative skill, which is highly dependent on your innovative skill is going to guide you how should you do it.

An example let me tell you a product that is manufactured or produced by your company and you are one of the five salesperson, no clue, no guidance is given to every individual of you by the company that how you select. They only give you a backup data with respect to the technical details of the product. You know a bit of technical details of the product, you know the price, you know what is the importance of it and everything. Now, just push this five people out of your office and then you see each person will go to different persons and it is naturally since five of you are going from the same office, you are not going to bump into the same client.

You will be divided into different zones. Once you are going to different zones you will have the different clients. One person comes back with say three sale from sale orders. Another person comes back with one sale order; I do not know maybe you will come back with five sale orders. And one person comes back with no sale order. What happens the product is different, no, the products is same.

Then where is the creativity, creativity is that how you are marketing whom you are meeting, at what time you are meeting, how did you fix up your appointment and how you really go ahead with it that is what matters and that is the creativity. There you would be really creative for which you do not have to justify anybody. If in your company is not interested to know how do you do it company is only interested to know that you have been given a target and you came back with certain number of orders. So, this creative skill is very, very intrinsic. It is personal no doubt about it, but what happens is that this personal skill requires a strong innovative backup that is why it is under this category.

Critical thinking is a part of innovative skills. How you think, think about the entire stuff, think about your products, think about the market, think about the clients think about the approach think about the utility of the product that you are selling and think about the consequences of if you do not sell. I heard many of my sales you know friends they say if I do not sell and come back with no order, then of course, I am going to lose my job and the company is going to kick me out you know the point is it is a critical thing. It requires a critical thing you must know every consequence and everything see. For salesperson, there is a very standard thing that maybe that he will be given a set amount of salary and then after that the rest is all based on incentives, how many orders you get per order, you get some much of incentives.

So, somebody really accumulates a good amount of incentives, many fall more than the actual basic salary, how did he achieve it just like that, no, thought critically about every step of it there is innovation in it. Innovation that simply does not mean that you produce something new or produce some other process which is new, here every step is innovation; design sense, designing the product, designing the system, designing the team, designing the timing - when you going to do it, designing the timing for sales promotion designing the time or the opportunity for publicity. Even designing the publicity brochures designing the publicity materials, the content, what would be the content, what would be the text, how would be the size sizes of the fonts you know all these they all call for your design sense. And if you have that I can tell you that you really be rewarded by the company.

Ideating is something very very internal ideating does not really show products or outcomes. Ideating is in the mind. You sit quietly think about the entire thing think about the entire process, thinking, you are thinking basically you are giving a shape in the mind. Then once you have ideated the whole stuff then immediately sit together with a piece of paper and a pencil. Do not leave it for the next day. My sincere suggestion is that do not leave it for the next day, because many of the thoughts which you have ideated at this point of time just simply may you know fizzle out from your mind, from your brain from your memory. Tomorrow, when you sit today, I am going to do the work what I thought which I ideated yesterday then many of the points will just go out.

Ideating is you know having a full picture, trying to configure a full picture which is maybe hypothetical at this moment. Many of why we say ideas, ideas are something like

you know you think of something which might not be really existing, many of the scientists who have invented or discovered lot of things basically they have first ideated it. So, the idea came in the mind to give a shape to the idea or to see the end result of the ideating, they started working of the research, it may took say for some people it might have taken say about 10 years or ages. For some it have a few days or weeks, but the thing is ideating is your innovative skill that you should have.

When I am saying all these things innovation itself is a path in the innovative skill innovation means every time you innovate. See from your company a product is being developed and then every time you are selling, do you really follow the same process every time or every year maybe you will just innovate the next process, the next process, the next process. As you are doing it for your own sales and all because I am focusing on this people who are developing this products they are also innovating.

Sometime what happens is when you go to your client, and you have sold your product, you have gone for servicing. You have been requested to go for servicing and then you take the feedback from the client and client tells you something that these are the limitations which if it were they were not there, the product could have been better. Then you innovate there itself how do you innovate as a salesperson, you innovate thinking that ok. Whom should I give this information back, and what is a real problem my client is expressing, take that together and work it out.

Do not even hesitate if you think that you do not want to rely on your memory, take your small notebook out and the pencil note down the way you are thinking. And if necessary maybe you talk to the clients upfront and get his points and generates innovate that how it could be improved. This innovation sense or skill of everybody that really has guided in getting so many shapes of the same material something like mobile phones or several shapes or color or displays or the sizes of say desktop monitor or keyboards. Every time say keyboard works pick up any keyboard will work, but the thing is innovation will call for you know understanding there are certain basic things I told you in the first day that your keyboard has certain keys, and exactly in the same place universally same.

But then also you find there are so many designs of the keyboards, where do things have changed things have changed for various other small, small, small, small things. People might have thought that only the keyboard and the alphabets and the figures of numerals

and the top may not be enough, then there they have been a numerical keyboard on the right hand side. And where how which of the keys should be there, these are all innovations. And then when a multimedia thing came in more strongly, then people started thinking my keyboard also should have all multimedia features that means, people are innovating, every time this innovation is all you can also say it is a design innovation no problem, but the design innovation came because you have an innovative mind. So, innovative skill, which we have said in these different terms you must have a full fledged, you know innovative mindset that is what is important.

This point oblique thinking you know this is a very serious issue oblique thinking is what you are always used or habituated or trained to think in one line for anything you are thinking. Have you ever looked into this particular thinking track, whether it is right or wrong or could have been better for which what you do is mentally take yourself out of this particular track, go on the sides, look at it from the side. Oblique means from sides when you see from different angles. So, the idea when you say in our discussions quite often we say can we think of this point in different angle, basically this is a different angle is oblique thinking.

And oblique thinking, people who do it I also tell you one thing from my experience, people who do oblique thinking you know they really innovate, because otherwise everybody is following the same track and they remain you know in the track of you know the mundane stuffs, and they always create run of the mill products. they always follow that or trade the paths of everybody what they are doing, because they learn from their seniors learning from the friends. But people who have the oblique thinking in their mindset that is skill you know they will always find out an alternative way of doing it. Alternative way of doing it is only valid when it gives you a better result, but quite often I have also found people who are habituated in oblique thinking, they might become an impediment to the work.

So, when I am saying the good paths of it, something is also coming my mind that I am thinking in this line. I have a time target and suddenly if I start thinking that I will be doing an oblique thinking then you are putting a break on it, trying to see on this side, you are losing your time you are losing your target. So, oblique thinking should never be an impediment in your work. If you have time, if you have time then what you do is you use that additional time that you have at your disposal for oblique thinking, but oblique

thinking is a great, great skill not everybody possesses. Everybody is fearful of this oblique thinking, thinking that if I think differently then definitely my process may be disturbed actually it is not, but however, there are so many such so I am discussing.

Problem solving is one innovative skill somebody who does solve problem, you know they are highly regarded in the company, because when there is a problem nobody has anticipated it, suddenly everything falls you know falls out nothing is going on wrong. You will find one soul out of your group will come forward and say ok, let me look at the whole stuff let me look at the situation. Let me see how it can be resolved, he solves the problem not necessary he will solve the problem to the best possible manner, but at least for that time being when things have collapsed, his problem solving would be very, very effective. Now, problem solvers are quite respected.

And who is the problem solver is there somebody who is designated as a problem solver, no, you know the problem solvers generally you know gets created from the group suddenly, there is a chaos in your entire activity at point of time. There are multiple members who are really they do not know the headway of solving this suddenly one soul he says let me try let me try. And you may not have much of you know confidence on him, but maybe he will solve the problem. So, we do not require somebody as a designated problem solver in fact problem solving skill is in each one of us only the degree varies. If you can point out the problem, you can always solve the problem. Most often people fail to point out the problem and they beat around the bush, beat around the problem they cannot pinpoint the problem and ultimately it is not solved.

Securing is one innovative skill. This is very surprising some of my students always say that what is there in securing, what we are trying to secure. Securing is a very strong innovative skill I will tell you what is securing I mean by. Suppose, you are trying for a product promotion, you have been given a target, every company gives a target. You are going towards various clients. There is a background research which is done by your own people. You know the potential clients, potential buyers, potential markets, everything is fine everything is given to you, you are backed with lots of data background research data fine. You go for sales. If you can secure the sales, then you are respected; and securing the sales is not that easy. Ask any of your salesperson friends if in the first shot if anybody has won a contract, then he is very either very talented innovative or lucky. Securing simply means that you have to have that innovative skill

that you ensure that you have gone for something and you got the contract or you got the offer. Or even for students you have gone for an interview there are fifty others there are two posts there are fifty others, you secured your one of the two positions secured it, this is innovative you know it requires a innovative skill.

So, innovative skill is quite some often psychologists say that it is intrinsic, it is there in the in it in yourself. And you may not learn it that people say I somehow feel innovative skill also can be hold, it can be nurtured, it can be created, it can be injected because every individual has some degree of innovative skill only thing is how it is trained. Somebody who can play cricket, give him a bat or ball at the young age, he may be doing a little bit of bad or poor performance. But if you train him or her, you will find that that person will become a great cricketer. Every sports person, every artist, if they have been trained by somebody, their innovations has gone manifold higher.

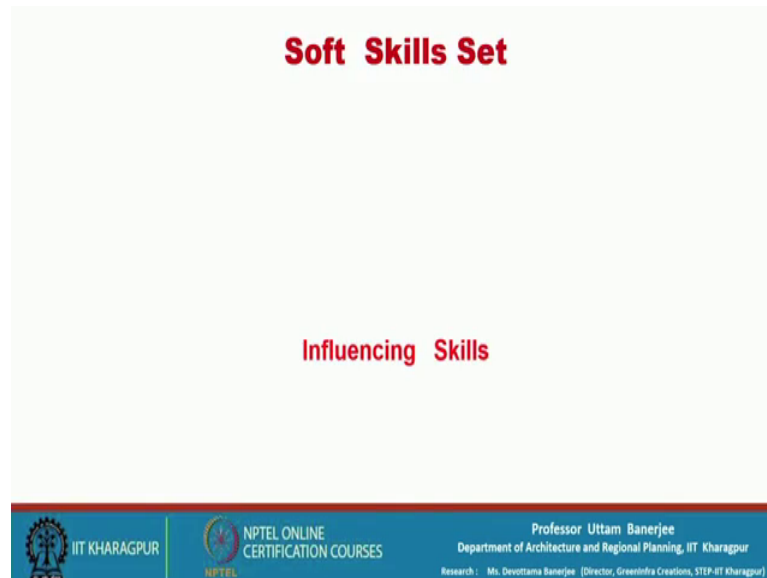
I am not talking about those people who are born talented, a born innovator, but I am not very sure that are they really born innovators, are born talented. Probably they got it they saw around looked around the products or the kind of things or the kind of you know games or kind of paintings, got you know interested in it and then started developing. So, innovative skill is a little special kind of skills.

For those who are trying to hire people, I have a suggestion, people who can innovate they cannot behave like common people. If you take 10 engineers out of which 10 engineers are qualified, they can do the same kind of works, but not 10 need not be innovator. But for those who are employing people who are hiring people or leading a group, I have a suggestion that try to identify each a free individual you analyze test and see who has the innovative skill and to what degree it is your responsibility to find out whether individual has the innovative skill that is important. This innovation skill has to come forward you know.

And if you can really track them and give them a little bit of boost, you know they will become a great innovator and a real asset to your company. So, it is not really you know one can draw, one can sing, one can play, one can create, one can make some products no every time there is something new or new or new. All the great you know scientists they are innovating, you know all the great say I would say who are even think who have developed various networking mechanisms or different other you know websites and all

they are innovating every time. So, it is a very special skill which individuals have to a certain degree. So, for some it may remain dormant throughout their life because they did not get an opportunity. So, innovation skill even if it is there it never got you know furnished and others who force themselves to innovate and innovate and ultimately get lots of products.

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Next in this is influencing skill. See, now you look at this. Personal skill is your own skill, innovative skill is also your own skill, but a little different from personal skill, it can be encouraged, it can be you know allowed. I remember a few of these cases that a company was running an electronics item business. I am not naming, I am not naming for very obvious reasons. The chief manager was reported or somebody complained to the chief manager saying that I saw a person every time in the evening, he enters the store in some pretext and he leaves with some of the small, small chips in his pocket, he leaves the factory and then goes home. I think he is pilfering, he is pilfering these items. And that is bad for the company of course, it is bad for the company, if it is being pilfered it is bad for the company.

Now look at the thing chief manager said keep a watch, what he is pilfering. So, there was a kind of watchdog who watched and found that he is taking small, small you know circuits and all such kind of things, transistor, circuit and all that. It was reported to the chief manager that these are the things which is pilfering one by one which can go into

the pockets, it is not a big thing. Then the chief manager called that gentleman without any minutes you know he did not humiliate him. He said I know that you are creating something and you required some items for that particular creation and which you do not get everywhere we have, I am giving you freedom to pick up any item from the store and take it, you do not have to really write it down.

If you want you can write it down I am giving you freedom to take that particular item do what you are doing at your home, you do it bring back, what you are generating, do you know what was the result. The person is an innovator engineer he was doing day to day work in the factory in the shop. And but he had an innovative mind he had a creative mind and he knew that what I am doing today is or every day I am getting salary for this. But there could have been a better thing which I could have done.

But if suppose he had gone to the boss and said I want to do something different boss by protocol would not have allowed. So, he would have lost that zeal. So, what he did is you know unfortunately of course, unfortunately that he pilfered. Now, the chief manager when he said that no, no, you do not have to pilfer, you take it, you take it. And told the storekeeper that when he is there, do not lock the store, do not lock, let him take what he wants to take. You know what happened after a few months that gentleman came back with all those items he had pilfered from the store, and ultimately he assembled and made one machine which has now become world famous, this is innovation.

Now, the point is let me put the same thing first in the in the place of the person who is innovator. If he was not of enough not having innovative skill he would not have developed something which has become now a very favored or coveted product of the world. We would have missed it. The world would have missed, we the technical people we the users common users would have missed that particular item a printer we would have missed it. But the thing is now you look at the responsibility of the other person, the chief manager, chief manager is watching and he knew that this person has an innovative skill which is not same as all others, they all are good, but he has something special.

So, he allowed him that much of liberty and the freedom to do this, because he knows that if this gentleman innovates something. He will not go out to the market and do whatever he wants, he will come back to us and it will be beneficial for the company this

is where the thing is innovative skill try to identify. Personal skills is one set but always try to see if innovative skill is there, then comes influences skills.