

Soft Skills for Business Negotiations and Marketing Strategies
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Lecture - 21
Specialised Skills (Contd.)

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The slide features a white background with the title "Specialised Skills" in red. A list of eight skills is presented in black text, each preceded by a bullet point. To the right of the list is a video inset showing Prof. Uttam Kumar Banerjee, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and red tie. At the bottom of the slide, there is a blue banner with the IIT Kharagpur logo on the left and the NPTEL Online Certification Course logo on the right. The text "3 of 4" is visible in the bottom left corner of the slide area.

- Process Improvement
- Professional Ethics
- Reaching Targets
- Research
- Retreating
- Scheduling
- Setting Targets
- Technology Savvy

Good morning friends. Now, I am discussing a little more about specialized skills. Process improvement, every individual is working in a group with a system by the process that has been already worked out by the organization, by the team. Now, what happens is in this process, which has been worked out tested over time and then converted to something called work manual or working manual.

Now, everybody is supposed to work with that, but rarely you will find some people who are intrigued to improve the process. Everybody keeps on working because thinking that if I start improving now then this is going to disturb the work and it is true it does. But there will be some people working in the team following the process coming to an end, but still thinking can this process be improved. This is a very specialized skill.

Innovators, thinkers, entrepreneurial thinkers such people are generally they are endowed with this kind of skill and they start thinking. This is fine, this process is fine we agreed to it we are working with it, but if we improve something at this particular stage probably our benefits are going to be more, result is going to be achieved in a very earlier time

short a time, we can reduce the total working time. It can reduce the cost it can be beneficial for some other. Actually this process improvement skill of individual has really resulted into all kind of innovations, all kinds.

You remember that I have talked about some engineer who is used to enter into a store and then pick up some of the chips and work in his own home in the night, which was reported by the storekeeper to the boss. And the boss then allowed this person to take that particular item not calling this as pilferage, but calling this as take this on loan do something. You know basically what he was trying is he was doing his job all through the person who was taking that particular chips out everyday maybe whatever chips. He was basically working with the process, but he was working like anybody else working in the process. He is endowed with that specialized skill in which he was thinking I think the process can be improved further.

So, what he was he knew that if he asked for permission the boss will not give that because it is going to hamper the targets or even the products, it will reopen a pandoras box of the process of the work. So, he would not do that understood that this gentleman is not doing it not taking that particular chips out to sell it to the market for his personal gain. Probably he keeps saying some he is thinking something different something beyond the process.

So, he may be doing something great, so given him that opportunity and the liberty, not making it public and ridiculing him in public. So, given that opportunity that person when he got a little bit of comfort that he is no longer going to be questioned on picking up which chips he wants. And then he works out in his home and ultimately comes back and comes with a product which is much superior to what the product they were developing over the years. This is how things work and this is innovation. Many innovation as I said has come out of the specialist thinking of skills of thinking about process improvement.

Professional ethics as I said business ethics it is similar. In business you are trading; in profession you are working together or maybe you are interacting with others similar same thing what I have similar things what I have discussed earlier.

Reaching targets is a specialized skill. This if you work in a team you realize that when you are given certain responsibilities, you have been given a time frame within which

you have to work and there is a target. And you try to excel, you try to do good, but one thing happened you know if you are trying to make it excel then more precision more precise works you try to do. In the process, you tend to lose the targets in your mind that when by when up to what extent we are supposed to give. So, reaching target is also a specialized skill, not everybody has it and not necessarily that even what he should have it not necessarily.

If in the team there is one or two persons who are specialists in it who can foresee the targets and who can always join at every point of progress that where it is likely to disturb the target then he comes up with the solutions, and modifications to the process and that ultimately reaches the target. Otherwise, if everybody tries to reach the target then who is going to innovate or improve the quality of the services, it is always better than let to three persons think about the targets rest keeps on improving their qualities. And improving the qualities is boundless, endless.

If you are the decision maker and you are trying to reach the target and now you get bogged down with improving the qualities and making it more precise more improved more improved then you are likely to miss the target. So, there should be somebody in the team who is going to tell you that ok you are missing the target and he also has to come out in a solution or some kind of suggestion that how improving the quality you still reach the target. So, it is specialist skill.

Research is very, very mindset you know intrinsic, you have a conjunction, you observe something and then you find that if you have observed something you have a feeling you have a contention you have a conjecture. You have a hypothesis in your mind you have a research question in your mind and then you keep on pursuing that is a specialized skill. It is because of which everybody is not a researcher.

And if everybody was a researcher then there would not have been anybody called worker. Worker I am not talking as a social class, I am saying worker means who works who ultimately execute everybody cannot be a researcher that is why in a big team, there are certain sets who are identified and assigned jobs for research. There is another said who were executing the works implement in the works everybody is important, but the researchers are specialized.

Research skill to a great extent is supported by the academic qualifications. So, quite often what happens is we consider the somebody who has demonstrated his ability to do research by qualifications or skill we take him in the team, and then allow him to pursue research which is our product specific or business specific. That means, there is a demonstration already, but not necessarily every researcher has to have a qualifying Ph.D degree or D.sc degree or maybe post doc. Degree, no, not necessarily research is the mindset. You see you observe a problem you find out a gap and then you work out the process by which you try to dig into it and try to see what is happening.

In the whole research, you know some time you might have perceived something, you are thinking this is my question, this happens because of this. And in the whole process of researching then you find, no, it does not happen because of this, you thought it is because of this that is also research. That means, you are now establishing effect by process saying that what I visualized what I had a question thinking this happens like this, it does not work that way that is also productive research.

Retreating I have said earlier as well. The exiting is moving out and delinking. Retreating is temporarily coming back backward. Quite often retreating is very helpful, but every time retreating is negative. Retreating means if you see the progressing at this point one-step further is going to be counterproductive then you go one step backward watch I have already explained. It allows you to buy time, allows you to make strategies, allowed you to make team works, allows you to work the next steps.

Then scheduling it is a specialized skill. Scheduling if you try to do with respect to the time required then it becomes a mathematical exercise. This work this much time, this work next is this much time this much time is very easy, it is mathematical plus, plus, plus, plus and this, but actually scheduling is a mind game. Whenever you are in the business are in the profession, you will find that quite often you have multiple ones which are going parallely. And individual scheduling your own personal day scheduling work scheduling is very, very, very specialized skill. I will have more discussion on this which is very specific to the scheduling when I will talk about the time management, but every individual anyhow knowing or unknowingly is doing the scheduling.

People who are slightly you know flexible, you do not think that they have not schedule, they are also scheduling only things they are flexible in their schedules. And if suppose

they had of action a followed by action b, and then followed by action c, and then he works out and finds out that action b can be now deferred for some time and c can be brought forward. So, he does it immediately.

You do not think that he is indecisive, you do not say that he is something you do not say that he is indecisive you do not also say that he cannot make a proper schedule. Basically he is a very strong schedule experts, he knows exactly when to swap one activity with other one. So, this swapping is going to help.

So, this is the kind of scheduling that you are doing. So, scheduling means you are working out the sequences of work assigned with certain time constraints or time frame, targeted with certain deliverables or received that means, either you give or you get. Scheduling is one very specialized skill. As I said again I will repeat it is not a mere mathematical exercise of time required and then adding it up, no.

Setting targets every individual sets targets for their own life, when it comes to business when it comes to profession. Setting targets is very specific. If we are in this business today, you set the targets. And setting target is a good skill for this you require a strong forcing power, strong forecasting power, strong teamwork which is going to help you in reaching that particular targets. So, you set the target. Blindly to setting the target is very unwise.

If somebody sets a target that I want to with this then it may appear to be daydreaming. But if somebody sets a target analyzing his strengths and weaknesses, and then he sets this is what we would like to achieve, setting target does not mean simply declaring what you want to achieve. You also have to now declare by what time, by what sequence, who are the team players, how do you do it, how do you finance it, what kind of qualification you do require, what qualities you do require, what expenses you have to bear with it, what is the chances of getting loss or what is the chances of your profit. You know setting targets is this. It is not simply saying we want to achieve that way everybody a free time can always save the targets, but that is not really the setting targets. Setting targets with all constraints limitations and the trends.

So, basically you know we say that when you set the targets, you use your spot analysis, strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. Opportunities is up benefits; threats is the negatives the loss; strengths is what you can do; weakness is what you cannot do. Now,

you can strength you can strengthen the strength and you can reduce the weakness by strengthening it further that means, now you set your target for achieving a business. Now, you just connect everything.

A person who is very aware of the business trend, now he sets a target I want to do this business that is how he starts. He has nothing it is only his mind that is triggering him to think based on the facts and figures that he had acquired from the newspapers of the media or from the other sources or from eavesdropping whatever he has acquired some information. And now he wants to do some business. Once he decides that he wants to do the business then immediately he does a SWOT analysis of his strengths his himself rather and his organization.

Starts analyzing that ok for doing this kind of business what kind of qualities or qualifications we do require. What manpower we do have, what qualities and qualifications I do personally have. Can I do this, can I do this alone, how many persons do I require as a support, which are the kind of experts I do not want them to be in the team, who may be the impediments in the team in terms of progress. He is thinking about everything, then he is thinking about if I do not have this manpower how to hire this manpower, who are the authorities or who are the organizations who can help me in hiring we know manpower's.

Then what will be my cost always I will tell you for any business we always try to see the benefit cost ratio. If your benefit cost ratio is positive then it is good. And if your benefit cost ratio is negative then it is better than you drop that target. So, do not be over estimating your benefits and do not underestimate your cost. So, your b by c is a very critical indicator, and how much foresight you have that will govern this. So set your targets accordingly.

This is a specialist skill, which is being technology savvy, I have used this somewhere again earlier. Technology savvy is like if the whole system is now having a enormous technological change. Since, I think 1997 or 96, there is a you know see change in the whole technological approaches, technological catches, technological tools and the networking the wireless, worldwide www system - world wide web, the network all these have become such a item today that it has become a part of our lifestyle. If I cannot communicate with somebody in the absence of a cell phone, I start feeling handicapped.

People are you know throwing away the landline phones that means, the whole system technology has changed such, it is always for the positive. Since, I am a positive thinker, I am not ready to listen to somebody who is saying that the technological advancement is also negative, everything has negative, but the thing is look at the positive side of it and make best use of it. So, being technology savvy is very important. I guess I cited certain example earlier it is if you are technology savvy when you do the business and your technology savviness is exposed then you earn a respect. You know otherwise what happens is people think that you have a dream, but you are handicapped.

You have to depend on your colleagues who are technology savvy. My point is individually the specialists are very technology savvy that does not mean that they can write programs and codes, no I said that earlier also. It is not that. It is any technological tools or gadgets which are available you at least know how to operate it.

I remember one situation in one of the other countries. My experience you know one of the other countries European countries. We were having a presentation and suddenly the laptop pin was connected to the LCD projector, it was not projecting, it was blank screen. You must have noticed one thing, we jokingly say this whenever in need of some gadgets, the gadget starts malfunctioning at the point of when you are really going to use. Laptop worked, LCD worked, the moment you have fixed everything for presentation then you find nothing works. It is a very common thing people say that it does not work in the right time, but whatever about there are about say 20, 25 people all were experts many of them technologically very savvy.

But however, the person who is responsible for the LCD and this laptop interfacing, he is I considered him to be the most technology savvy for that particular operations. He was also not being able to do something. Then my friend on whose invitation I went to that country, he was sitting opposite to me. He also tried nothing worked this somehow he just asked them can you try I said they are experts, I am not, but let me try. I had a feeling that there is one button if I press it is going to link and I did that the function something function f some key. You know you would not believe it the moment I did it the whole screen had all projections, I got a clap that made me you know then after everybody started thinking I already technology savvy. I was technology savvy like anybody else only thing is at that point tutorial, I retrieved that this is a kind of problem I faced earlier as well. And the moment I pressed function and that key f something, it

worked this it impressed everybody and then it just broke eyes between all of us this is something which is which are very, very specialized thing which comes up it is not very common.

So, I stopped here up to this discussion, again I will continue with few more points on these specialized skills. Idea is if you want to be a specialist then you have to demonstrate that you are specialist, being a specialist and keeping within yourself makes no sense. If you really want to do something demonstrate express like, I will just take queue from here. Process improvement is your intrinsic skill. So, you can be treated as a specialist, because you have a mindset for every time improving the process without hindering the progress number 1.

Number 2 is reaching targets. Whatever best quality you do have, whatever best quality you possess, you should always be a specialist in reaching the targets in time the quantity in between suppose you have to sacrifice or compromise on a little bit of quality that nobody is going to notice, but everybody is going to notice that how much days you have delayed.

So, you should know that where you are going to compromise which is unnoticeable and not really contrary to the objective of the project and in reaching the targets. Researching is by virtue of your mindset that how you do it. Setting targets is your vision, which is going to help you in setting the targets. So, vision is one terminology which I have never used in this. Vision you should be able to envision things.

We say that people see, but do not observe some people see everybody sees everything, but some people do observe that means now seeing and then trying to analyze is the matter of intellection. Now, here setting targets is a very strong thing where you are your visionary power will help you? And all visionaries they can only see the result of it once they start envisioning it and execute it and reach the target and see the results that is how you should look at all these skills. Now, next points when I will discuss then I will give us some very discussion on this the next day.

Thank you very much.