

Soft Skills for Business Negotiations and Marketing Strategies
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Lecture – 04
Discussion of Soft Skill (Personal Skill)

Good morning, friends. Till the last class I discussed about various aspects of hard skills and soft skills, today onwards I will be discussing about the soft skills first. There is a big list of soft skills which one should invite, one should acquire for having a successful business as well as negotiation. I will go one by one. Since, it is a big list and the time is limited I will not be able to elaborate on each one of them, but in the course of the entire structure the course whenever each of these soft skills will come up, I will elaborate as necessary.

Here, now, I am going to give you some idea about the soft skills. The point is last time when I was discussing I was mentioning an issue whether there is a requirement of training and preparedness for the soft skill? Yes, it is. The reason is the soft skill is sometime generic it comes in, it comes through hereditary, it comes through acquaintances, comes to experience and exposure. Sometime it will be taught every individual mind it every individual is endowed with some level of intellection. The intellection what does it mean basically the intellectual capability by which one can always analyze something. Analyze what? Analyze something which he has observed. So, he has observed something then analyzing it and comprehending it.

So, this intellectual capacity everybody has only thing the degree varies a little more or less. In fact, when you are going for business negotiations or creating marketing strategies or even for interviews or even going to the class meeting somebody this soft skills would always help you. So, there is a requirement of training to a certain extent and preparedness training can be given by somebody who can explain to you exactly what is to be done, but the preparedness is your own action you must be prepared with the soft skills.

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If we try to see the soft skill sets there are it can be categorized in these, but mind it, these set which I will tell you now, they can also be sub categorized. There is no point you know arguing on or contesting this could have been structured in that or there is or this does not come under this. Basically, what happens is the entire set is in front of you categorize the way you want you invite the way you want you practice it.

So, the one is the personal skills. What is this personal skill? Every individual inherits there may be an intrinsic capability of you there may be an inherent quality in you which you are trying to express through various soft skills, but whatever it is this set of soft skills is very person centric. You have to invite yourself, you may tell somebody, you may teach somebody, you may train somebody, but the thing is you own it. So, this skill is very important.

The point is this skill is important when you are manifesting, you are going to somebody, you are trying to socialize, you have to mix, you are going to sell, and you are going to negotiate whatsoever it is. This is a personal set which is a long list and not that every item or every skill you would have or you would have to practice and invite, not necessary. There are certain skill at certain point of time is required, and then there is another set of skills that is innovative skills.

This innovative skill, some people say it is a creative skill. I would like to use the term called innovative for a reason. Creativity is something which you are making something.

Innovative is you know it just comes up at some point of time when you are trying to have some actions you innovate the way you do it, creativity is a part of it, artistry sense is a part of it. Then, comes social skills; this social skill is basically you know when you are mixing in the society there is beyond you there is another person. It can be one or it can be many and social skill is basically you are trying to interact with people. How do you interact, how do you communicate, what kind of behavior you should have, what is the kind of ethics that you should follow all these are under these. So, the social skill is when you have to communicate in the society, what kind of skills you must possess.

Then comes, influencing skill. Here comes the real business thing in it. Every individual thinks of something, believes in something, learn something and now he has to communicate and influence somebody else; that means, here you do not influence yourself, you only imbibe, you are influencing somebody else; that means, there is somebody else in front of you. It may be one or came any and you are trying to influence them on something. Various issues will come in your life; various. Sometime you might have to you know resolve an issue sometime you might have to stop a fight which is going on between 2 you know many such things will happen. So, influencing skill is another this influencing skill can also include persuasion skill; that means, you are influencing somebody basically you are persuading somebody, to do something, to buy something, to sell something or to have some kind of actions. So, influencing skill is very important.

Then comes a very serious matter; specialized skills. Here, people make you know a kind of comparison myth they say whether something learned and getting a degree it is a specialized skill. So, the conflict between the terminology of hard skill and the soft skill comes here, but as I explained earlier there should not be any conflict the reason is the hard skill has to be learnt and it has to be certified. One simple liner of divisions is it has to be certified. Soft skill need not be certified. You may draw a fantastic painting, need not be certified, but if you claim that you are an artist of qualified artists then you have to have a certificate, you have to have a finest degree; that means, the certification will make it hard skill, but in both the cases you are specialized. There are artists who have learned things by doing themselves we call them as talented self learned artists and basically he or she is also specialized.

So, specialized days basically sometime it can be used as professional skills; that means, you take this as a profession. Why I am not using the term called profession the reason is proficient means people think that that is the occupation, no, not necessary. Specialized as you like it, you would like to do it for yourself not necessary you are selling your product, not necessary you are getting something in return of your skill. You are specialist in that you are expert in that. So, that is a set of skills.

Then comes people skill. People skill is something where you are dealing with people. Sometimes there may be a confusion that whether social skill and the people skill are same. In fact, it is not. Though there are many things which are common they are overlapping, but there is a fine line divisions within the social skill and the people skill. In social skill, you would love to meet a friend once in a week the same friend the next week, the next week, the next week that is social skill, that is not people skill.

People skill is something when you are not focused with only one. There may be many in front of you essentially political leaders are having strong people skill. They can immediately motivate a large mass of people and you know motivate them and make them believe the idea that he or she believes you know that is how it is. So, people skill is important.

And, the last one I have kept it at the last though quite often I think it could have been the first, but I kept it the last because in one of my lecture module I will be dealing with this very much in detail though there are not many you know competence in it, but it requires a lot of discussion so, I kept it at the last. My suggestion is that do not try to even order them; order them means which one is first personal? Communication? People? Social? Influencing? Innovative? No. My suggestion is do not try to even categorize them, do not try to even order them in terms of priority. I personally feel if you are in the business, if you are in the marketing, if you are in the profession, if you are in any kind of occupation, try to invite as many of these as possible.

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Personal Skills

- Action
- Adaptability
- Agreeable
- Aggressiveness
- Amicable
- Appearance
- Asking Good Questions
- Assertiveness

1 of 6

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So, now, I am going to the list individually. So, I am discussing the soft skill sets focusing on personal skills. Under personal skills first is the action; whenever how do you understand the personal skill all these items which I will be discussing over here or narrating not necessarily that for each I will give an example not necessary. I will try to elaborate briefly that what it is about and if necessary I will just bring in 1 or 2 examples from my stock.

Action: the first personal skill that you probably could have is the action; that means you take action if you are inactive then nothing goes on. Another note of you know cautioning here when you are trying to understand this. Every item that I will talk about essentially I have listed them in a positive tone, each one of these items will have the opposite of it. If it is action then can be in action if there is ethics there may be un ethics. The point is I will not talk about such negatives in my list, I will talk about the positives, but at some time for some of these items some of this each set I might caution you against some negatives because my intention of offering this course to you is essentially make you a positive person.

A positive person did not have all the skill sets not necessary but whatever skills they have they are positive and I can assure you dear friends if you are positive then wherever you go whichever path you trend you will definitely have success. Success may not be to the level of your expectations, but it would be. So, the action is first skill one of the skills

is take action. There is a danger that if I keep on listing all these you might think that I have listed them in terms of priority, no. Since there is a danger that you might treat this as a priority what I have done very judiciously is I have listed them in alphabetical order you will see this action first adaptability next.

Alphabetical order each list now my suggestion is when you reread this list first you will list 10 to me I will explain them to the extent required, but when you read the whole list you will find there in the alphabetical order. Which one is important, which one is first, which one is a priority that you decide? You decide depending on the context of the situation, you know why. Quite often you are any one of the skill sets would be just you know triggered depending on the context depending on the situation. So, you do not bother about which one first which one second. So, the best and the safest way is list them in the order of alphabets action you must have a nature a skill of taking action this is number one. If you take action there may be mistakes, there may be pitfalls, there may be failures, but the thing is unless you take action you just simply cannot guarantee that there will be successful or there will be failure. So, take action, one skill set.

Adaptability; you should be very strong in adaptability, do not be judgmental, do not guess in your profession of negotiation business marketing since I am focusing my entire lecture in terms of business negotiation and marketing strategy I will be always giving examples or focusing on these kind of examples. In your life you know other things also the same thing is valid, but I will always give reference to this. You should be adaptable you meet a person for business, either you are looking for business or somebody is looking for business.

Whatever is the situation you should be adaptable, you should not be rigid, you should not be judgmental, have adaptability. You know why the adaptability sometime changes your mindset you might be having some global judgment about something. If you are adaptable somebody suggests you something somebody gives you some information then you will find, if you are adaptable then you might find this particular solution very much suits me is for my benefit or maybe this other solution is detrimental for me it may be discouraging. So, if you are adaptable if you are not rigid, then you will always get the benefit.

Agreeable; try to be agreeable, when you find that you are not right and the person in front of you is right, agree. None of us are really endowed with the whole stuff knowledge that is available in the universe, no. You might have your some feeling or some information or some you know mindsets or some beliefs based on the exposure and the experience that you had, good or bad. But, the moment you hear something is telling you some point which is not matching with you and if you find there is a fairness in it, agree and if you agree I can tell you in business if you really agree then you get business many more. Not of cautioning, I am not saying that you agree, though you disagree. No, do not do that. You agree if you feel it is right because that takes you one step forward.

If you disagree then what happens is the person takes back himself he holds himself if you disagree when you disagree you disagree when you think what he is saying is wrong or you disagree because you think you are right you think your right is a dangerous phenomena. It may so happen that you are thinking you are right, actually you are not right. How do you know that you are right? So, the point is if try to analyze this is where your intellection power is going to help you. If you are open, means open minded then if you listen to some suggestions then what will happen is immediately will say I agree and the moment you agree the person finds a comfort and once the opponents or the opposite side person is made comfortable then he or she comes forward with more solutions to benefit you. So, be agreeable.

Aggressiveness: in some context is dangerous and negative. But I am saying in terms of business aggressiveness it is a good point. You know aggressiveness is going to take away your fear, be aggressive. Sometime I feel aggressiveness is learned by observing. It is something like in a game a junior player is watching the senior and trying to see that the senior player is being very aggressive in manifesting the whole game plans or game playing, this junior might not have learned on experiences. So, now, he is learning and he is watching the senior and trying to find out, Oh! If you be aggressive then you go one step forward.

But, this aggressiveness should not be treated as a negative; that means, do not be aggressive for negative purposes means being aggressive if you think that you can win over the other person that is wrong. So, whenever there is a contest; that means, there is a force coming in towards you and you have to now resist, be aggressive. If you do not be aggressive that force is going to take you backward that is negative. But the

aggressiveness if you do not have then every time whenever there will be a force coming towards you will always be retreating, that is bad. So, have aggressiveness as your soft skill.

Amicable: a very strong point. Every business person must be amicable, must be polite, because you do not know who is sitting in front of you I will give up brief example you are sitting in a waiting hall in a railway registration and there is another person may not be looking as smart as you or in your opinion is not looking that smart and you think that the person is less in everything like caliber, your money power and everything you think so and you start talking to him and the way you talk as if you are superior. You do not know maybe that person is a millionaire; his lifestyle is that, he is simple, he is not opening up himself, and he is not giving an idea of how great or what big money power he has. You are thinking that you earned few lakhs and you have a strong money power.

But, you do not know that this gentleman has crores. You may be earning few lakhs in a year and he is earning crore in a year. The point is you can win his heart being amicable. This is I think one of the quality every business person must have, be amicable. Be amicable when you are disagreeing, be amicable when you are refusing, be amicable when you are not through negotiations during negotiations, be amicable if you are not agreeing to the terms and conditions, be amicable if you are retreating and leaving the place.

You have gone for sales to somebody the person asks for such favor which you do not want to care and neither it is ethical to give in such cases I will still say be amicable. Be amicable and tell him; sorry, I cannot do it, I cannot help you. I do not mind losing this opportunity I do not mind losing this business but, I am quitting, say that in a very soft tone amicably. I can tell you one thing, I assure you one thing if you be amicable and refuse it the person opposite to you who might have demanded for a very you know unethical favor he will change his position, he will say ok, do not bother, do not bother about what I said. Let us talk business let us do something, so, be amicable. One of the strong quality each businessman will have.

If you ever had opportunity to meet any of the chairman of the large companies when you talk to them, in fact, you are nobody in front of that particular chairman in your quality, academic knowledge in your money power, positions, but you will be amazed to

see how amicable they are. If you go for a favor if you go with a request you will find that they will refuse you strongly, amicable. So, be amicable.

Another important thing, in fact, you know each one of them is important. Appearance, when you are going for a business, when you are going for a negotiation, when you are going for a sales, when you are going for marketing, whenever you are approaching somebody else your appearance must be very perfect. It may not be that you have all branded dresses, let me clarify very categorically. Some of these points you know in my future lectures it will come up. I will elaborate more, when I will talk about the body languages, when I will talk about the nonverbal communications at that time I will elaborate this more, but here I am just giving you a taste of it your appearance should be very pleasing, your dresses should be sober, your dresses should be ethical, your dresses must reflect culture, your dresses must look appropriate.

One day, in your appearance suppose, you met somebody an example let me give you suppose you met somebody with you know suited, booted and all that. First time he is impressed with you not only because of your personality, but also for your appearance. The next time when you meet he looks at you he finds you in a very casual dress, I can tell you it will make a hell of a lot of difference. It will make a difference that does not mean that every time you will be decked up with the suits and boots, no. Not necessary, but the thing is your dresses your look, your overall appearance should be proper, properly attired.

This attire is important; he should not be casual because you are in business. I am not talking with a personal life, I am not talking about your personal way of living, I am talking about the business domain within which you are performing because all these soft skills I am going to talk is for business. So, you wherever you meet somebody you have a good appearance. You know once I had given a clue to some people a group of my management students and initially they laughed at it. But, later on when they graduated and went to the profession they called me up and said, Sir, what a point you have said and we are following it and we are getting the benefits.

You know what you go for meeting a person for business, you have come by a vehicle maybe public vehicle and you are sweating I suggested that before entering that particular chamber of the person with whom you have an appointment if you are

sweating you go to the washroom. Go to the washroom wipe out all your sweats take care of your hairs, take care of your dresses, you look normal and good appearance there is no harm that here come by public vehicle and you had the kind of you know you have the kind of you know trouble it does not matter. The thing is you must look good when you are going to him. So, you must appear in a proper appearance, this is important.

Then, asking good questions whenever you are in company with somebody then you ask good questions you are always free to ask questions because in discussions questions will always generate either somebody asks your questions you have a have to give an answer or you ask questions. During seminars, during workshops you will find that there are some people who always asks questions, anything any topic somebody's any speaker is speaking that person resisted and if you ask anybody has a question. I found that 1 or 2 persons are marked, they always will raise the finger and say I have a question and naturally all the questions are not good, some are very stupid questions and I have also seen a situation when the chairman of that workshop who is moderating it he may also say you have asked 3 – 4 questions, now you please sit down I have to give opportunity somebody else because, this person had been asking bad questions, irrelevant questions.

What he was looking for when he was asking questions not the knowledge he was trying to make himself appear in front of everybody and marked that I am also here that is dangerous. So, when you are in groups you only ask questions when you have a good question otherwise you do not ask questions, keep quiet. It does not matter you are quietest does not mean that you are ignorant or you are not interested, pay attention to the speaker whoever is speaking and then ask a question, if you really want to learn something or know something in addition to what has been spoken and ask a good questions. Asking a good question is a good quality.

Assertiveness: assertiveness quite often by the marketing people used wrongly they assert, they are selling their own products, they are explaining what is the quality of the products and all of the technical details and then they keep on asserting would you like to take it? I will give an example. All these examples that I have been giving either it is from my own personal experience or I have borrowed from other friend's experience. But, I will not name if I have borrowed from others because this makes it very sensitive. Assertiveness, give an example. You know when digital printers were coming in the market plotter since I am an architect I have experience of that initially we still draft it

through the hand, when the plotter was coming to the market if just before plotter came in which does the entire set of plotting there was one gadget which came up in the market. That gadget was you have a t square you fix the gadget over there, it has a keyboard just like a typing board and you type and then press a button it will just write the whole thing.

A pair of salesperson came to us we are sitting in the room and they were giving a demonstration. Somehow I had a good idea about that particular object because I have seen in some other places and I knew the minus of that also, good and bad, both part of it, but my other colleagues they were not exposed to this. So, they were highly excited and it was visible they were excited, they said oh my god, it is excellent, it is fine. It will solve my all problem. I do not have to write. They kept on, the more they kept on expressing their excitement the person who was selling he was sitting next to me the immediate question he asked, Sir, when are we getting the order? He almost took it for granted that since everybody is excited about it so it is sold. The deal is going to be closed. I knew the technical difficulties of that, but what I did not like is the assertiveness.

He was assertive; he could have waited for the entire team. He could have waited for the final reaction of the group and he could have then got the order, but he was asserting. He asked me, Sir, when are we getting the order, I said sorry, said when are we getting the order. So, he wants to know exactly when he is going to get the order. He is not really interested to know whether it is really fitting our purposes. This is what assertiveness is.

My friend I will tell you, if you want to sell your product show them 10 times, show the client the product 10 times, but do not assert. You do not show that you are keen to sell it. You try to make a situation when you create a situation that the client tells that he is eager to buy it then only it will become proper. So, do not be an assertive whether for business, whether to your clients, whether to your colleagues, whether to your friends. If you understand these then I will go to the other points.