
TTI DNA[®] Diplomacy

*A session from
Rx Online*

Diplomacy

Effectively and tactfully handling difficult or sensitive issues.

Why is this skill important?

A person with good capabilities in Diplomacy will tend to look at all facts openly, and will look at others without allowing a class or other group identification to bias a judgment or decision. He or she will be open to the fact that other people don't have the same cultural heritage, background or lifestyle and will be accepting of that fact.

In contrast, a person with poor skills in Diplomacy may tend to identify other people in terms of particular class groups, allowing this identification to predetermine how he or she will react to them. This predetermination will influence their decision regarding that person, regardless of the fact that there is no supporting evidence or basis for such decisions.

Assumptions you make about others based on superficial characteristics such as race, gender or even hierarchical position within your workplace can hurt others and reflect poorly on you. Political correctness has been somewhat over-dramatized recently, but it is absolutely imperative that you conform to politically correct standards as you communicate with others in the workplace.

Everyday we are influenced by people, places, events and situations. In other words, we are continually being influenced by what happens around us. A person with strong Diplomacy skills is good at influencing people just about all of the time. This may be in the form of gaining support, inspiring others, persuading other people to become their champions, engaging someone's imagination or creating relationships.

On the other hand, someone who doesn't possess good skills in this capacity may try to exert influence through coercion and manipulation. This isn't really influencing, but more forcing people to do what they want, often against their will. This does not work!

What skills are associated with Diplomacy?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Diplomacy:

- Effectively utilizes tact and diplomacy in working with people across hierarchical, functional and/or cultural borders.
- Understands cultural, climate and organizational issues.
- Adapts conduct and communication to politically correct standards.
- Effectively leverages networks of influence to get things done.
- Is sensitive to the needs of special interest groups within organizations.

- Builds relationships and networks with key people of influence.
- Provides advice, counsel and mentoring on organizational issues.
- Utilizes both formal and informal networks internally to obtain support and achieve results.

How do you develop your own skills in Diplomacy?

- Make connections with people who are different from you. Ask someone from a different background about her experiences and see her as a unique individual, not a representative for her group.
- Consider the difficulties you would have if you were in a wheelchair, blind or hard of hearing.
- Work to understand the politics and personalities currently involved in your workplace. Use this knowledge to make a positive impact on your workplace culture.
- Balance your needs and goals with those of others in the organization and develop mutually beneficial relationships with individuals across the levels of your organization.
- Treat all of your co-workers, from your supervisor to your employees, as valuable resources worthy of respect and consideration.
- Recognize verbal and non-verbal cues others are giving you. Sometimes gestures and manners tell more than words.
- Identify what resources you have that are valuable to others and be willing to help others.
- Do not give personal criticism in any public forum.
- Practice your teamwork skills. Recognize that every member of the team has something unique and beneficial to offer.
- Be open-minded when others describe their experiences, just because they are different from yours doesn't mean they are any less valid.
- Be empathetic and compassionate with others. Recognize that we all have vulnerabilities and be sympathetic when someone shows he or she is vulnerable.
- Be patient when someone acts out frustrations. Work with the individual to understand the source of the frustration and see if you can help him or her develop a plan for fixing the problem.
- Never forget that there is always more than one way to look at a situation. Just because someone disagrees with you doesn't make him or her less intelligent, less able or even less right than you. Work to reach mutually agreeable compromises.

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Activities

Activity 1: Learning from Others

Write the names of four people that have different backgrounds or experiences from yours on the lines below. Make sure you contact each of those people and make an appointment to begin learning about their experiences. This activity works best if you choose each individual for a different reason (i.e., one who is a different race, one who has a different organizational position, one who is a different gender and one who has a different cultural heritage).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Activity 2: Find a Role Model

Find a role model in your organization or personal life someone who exemplifies the principles of living life with Diplomacy. Talk to him or her about life experiences, outlooks and behaviors. See if he or she is conscious of being Diplomatic or if it is a natural state of being. See what you can learn from him or her about improving your own skills in this area.

Activity 3: Looking Through Different Eyes

Pick a date and for at least an hour during that day, work as though you have a disability. For example, borrow a wheelchair and try to use it at your workplace. In doing so, you may also enlighten your co-workers and managers to the issues you find.

At the very least, discuss with someone you know who has a disability the problems and issues he faces during the day.