

AHC Learning Ltd.

CASE STUDY:  
Effective  
Communications

## Effective Communications and Improved Conversations

95% of learners would  
recommend the  
workshop



Improved conversations  
between managers and  
colleagues



Reduced need to  
involve HR in disputes





# Summary

When the client first approached AHC Learning Ltd. they had identified communications as an area where the business could improve. We designed the Effective Communications workshop in order to help develop this key area. The audience was first-level supervisors through to senior managers, and the course was initially delivered as a full-day workshop. An additional workshop was later also requested by the company and is now part of their offering.

## About The Client:

They are a leading global energy service provider, delivering technical assurance, testing, inspection, and certification within the energy and utility industries. Their people and knowledge are at the core of their business, with 4000 employees deployed globally.

## The main areas of focus for the workshop:

- Understanding effective communication
- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Understanding communication styles
- Communicating during challenging situations

*"We have two ears and one mouth, so we can listen twice as much as we speak"*

*– Epictetus*



# Challenges

One of the challenges the client had identified was that there was a large amount of miscommunication between colleagues and failure to set expectations for people within the business. This had resulted in an unhappy workforce with a high number of grievances.

In this industry, people tend to be very straight-talking and direct. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but can sometimes cause offence to some people, even though it may be unintended.

The workshop was designed to help managers make small bite-size changes to their approach, which could lead to more effective communications between colleagues, especially during challenging situations. For this, we used real-life examples (such as a project not going to plan, a change of deadline, team members not doing what was expected of them, and delivering feedback) to make the workshop relevant to the learners taking part.

## What We Did

AHC Learning Ltd. have experience over a wide range of industries which we are able to draw on and adapt our approach to suit the needs of the client. When the client reached out to us, not only did we have many years working within corporate organisations we also had been working in the energy industry for a few years, which helped us stand out from other training providers.

We always ask the client what success looks like to them, and what difference they hope to make by taking the workshop. One of the key things for the client was that they still wanted to have a jovial office environment, but really focus on the boundaries of

what was and wasn't appropriate. They were also keen to ensure the workshop had a relaxed atmosphere to put the learners at ease.

The word "appropriate" was mentioned repeatedly; this is both in relation to chat within the office and workspace, and also about communicating appropriately in terms of the right time and place to have a conversation. One example was that managers would often conduct difficult conversations in front of other staff members. We emphasised the importance of taking someone aside for a quiet chat, especially if that person was being given feedback or criticism relating to their work. Another issue with working on-site is that it can be a noisy environment where team members often wear ear protectors, so automatically people are shouting without realising it. Again, we discussed moving the conversation to somewhere more appropriate.

# Results / Feedback

The top feedback score of 5/5 was given in 78% of the evaluation criteria, including:

- Course content
- Trainer's responsiveness
- Trainer's knowledge
- Trainer's delivery of the course
- Quality of visuals and materials
- How beneficial the course was overall
- Overall rating

The verbal and non-verbal communications element of the workshop really resonated with the learners, as many had never considered the importance of non-verbal communication and the fact that it can contribute to as much as 93% of how a message is initially received. We also discussed a five-stage model for dealing with difficult conversations, which is a great resource for the learners to take away.

During the additional workshop, we worked with a group of seven managers who manage the same team members on various shift patterns. We identified during the workshop some of the team members would often play the managers off against each other, to get out of doing particular tasks, or for their own personal benefit. One of the actions that the managers were able to take away from this was to spend more time together as managers and to get everything aligned in their approach. This again ties back into having effective conversations.

The feedback from this was that the managers are now able to take responsibility themselves instead of picking up the phone to HR all the time. It is about people dealing with situations in the moment, rather than later down the line.

*"I enjoy an informal facilitated workshop which is designed around developing the knowledge of my delegates. I ensure a high return on investment for my clients by pushing the learners to get as much out of these events as they can, and providing meaningful take-home resources to help with the learners' future development... Ultimately, I sit down every time and create a workshop around that client, so everything I do is bespoke."*

*- Alison, AHC Learning Ltd.*

95% of attendees across both days (full day and half day) would recommend this workshop.

"Excellent trainer who kept the delegates engaged throughout."

"I think that all managers should attend this course."

Does your organisation need to improve its communication skills?

Since 2001, AHC Learning Ltd. have excelled in delivering personal and professional learning and development workshops. We aim to make a real difference while forming true and lasting partnerships with our clients, enabling us to deliver the right solution at the right time.

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