Neal Whitten: No-Nonsense Soft Skills
for Workplace and Career Success

Instructor: Neal Whitten   **Length**: 2 days
                                                PDUs: 14

Level: Applied

Primary Topic: Leadership Development

Subtopics: Leadership Development, Influencing, Leading

Course Description

This course identifies the most important soft skills to master on projects and in the workplace. These soft skills are used virtually every day and are required to perform your best. As your performance improves in these areas, your value to your team, organization and career can correspondingly improve as well. Everyone can benefit from the lessons presented in this course.

The soft skills and knowledge areas discussed include: Behaviors that Lead to Exceptional Performance; Dealing with Difficult People; Are You Too Soft?; Behaviors to Master When Dealing with Your Leaders; What Makes a Team Member Valuable?; Effective Time Management to Getting More Done Every Day; Actions to Building Your Self-Confidence; Effective Negotiation Skills; Achieving the Elusive Work-Life Balance; Creating a Successful Mentoring Experience; Successful Conflict Management; and Self-Assessing and Improving Your Performance Maturity. Also included is an open period where attendees can obtain advice on related problems that they are experiencing in their workplace.

Course Benefits & Objectives

- Identify the most important soft skills to master
- Participate in multiple skill and knowledge area training sessions within a single course
- Utilize self-assessment instruments
- Handy takeaway summary sheet on each soft skill described

Course Agenda

- Welcome
- Course objectives
- Presentation of the most important soft skills

- Course quiz
- Top takeaways identified by attendees
- Course wrap up

Course Outline

Behaviors that Lead to Exceptional Performance

- Describe behaviors
    - Manage daily to your top three priorities
    - Never avoid necessary confrontation
    - Don't make it personal or take it personally
    - Think like a leader
    - And more…

Dealing with Difficult People

- Seven important points
- Definition of "difficult person"
- Why people can be difficult
- Why people are difficult
- 15 actions to employ to stay in control
    - Take time to pause
    - Examine your behavior
    - Put yourself in their shoes
    - Be willing to listen
    - Be candid about the issue
    - Project calm
    - And more…

Are You Too Soft?

- Definition of "too soft"
- Why project managers fail
- Examples of too-soft behavior
    - Holds back from providing constructive criticism
    - Avoids escalating to higher levels of management
    - Unwilling to passionately defend the *right* project plan
    - Behaves as if there is little to no authority to support their responsibility
    - Evades taking a position on an issue rather than alienating others
    - And more…
- Why we are too soft
- Behavior of an effective and successful project manager

Behaviors to Master When Dealing with Your Leaders

- Describe behaviors
    - Don't dump and run
    - Make it brief
    - Don't complain
    - Wear one face
    - And more…

What Makes a Team Member Valuable?

- 16 examples are discussed in three stages each:
    - Introduction of behavior
    - Example of behavior positively applied
    - Brief discussion of example
- 16 examples
    - Fully participate
    - Ask for help
    - Be truthful
    - Be reliable
    - And more…
- Discussion of shared values

Effective Time Management to Getting More Done Every Day

- Self-assessment quiz
- Benefits of good time management
- 10 fundamental time management principles
- 5 foundational steps to effective time management
- Time management tips
    - Learn to accept "good enough"
    - Meetings
    - Emails
    - Me time
    - And more…

Actions to Building Your Self-Confidence

- Definition of self-confidence
- Six tenets of self-confidence
- Example actions to building self-confidence
    - Examine moments of low self-confidence
    - Prepare and practice
    - Express yourself through body language
    - Do not be controlled by what others think about you
    - And more…

Effective Negotiation Skills

- Definition of "negotiating"
- Six introduction points on negotiating
- Widespread need for negotiating
- Reasons why people avoid negotiating
- Benefits of effective negotiating
- Identifying the top 10 primary negotiation tips
- Identifying important supporting negotiation tips

Achieving the Elusive Work-Life Balance

- Definition of work-life balance
- Why so important
- Self-assessment quiz
- Assessing the score
- Actions in achieving work-life balance
  - Create a vision
  - Set your priorities each day
  - Track your time
  - Learn to say "no"
  - And more…

Creating a Successful Mentoring Experience

- Definition of "mentoring"
- Benefits of being a mentee
- Benefits of being a mentor
- Benefits to the organization
- 5 Steps in finding and working with a mentor
  - Step 1. Determine how you can benefit from a mentor
  - Step 2. How to find a mentor
  - Step 3. The first meeting
  - Step 4. Maintaining a productive relationship
  - Step 5. How to wind down
- Challenges in a mentoring relationship

7 Steps to Successful Conflict Management

- Definitions of conflict and conflict management
- Identifying the causes of conflict
- The need for conflict management
- Conflict management strategies

- 7 Steps to resolving any conflict
- Ground rules for negotiating conflict
- Personal tenets that can help you in resolving conflict
- Characteristics of a mediator
- Actions for changing the conflict culture in your organization

Self-Assessing and Improving Your Performance Maturity

- Identifying 27 behaviors related to performance maturity
- Using assessment instrument, assess proficiency in key behaviors
- Exercise to identify your top three inhibitions
- How to development performance improvement plans
- How to routinely improve and fine tune your performance maturity

No-Nonsense Advice for What's on Your Mind

- Open Q&A session
- List of over 10 Q&As class can discuss if attendees run out of questions

Course Quiz

Top takeaways identified by attendees

No-Nonsense Soft Skills for Workplace and Career Success
PDU Breakdown

	Technical	Leadership	Strategic	Total
PMP®/PgMP®	1.00	12.00	1.00	14.00
PMI-ACP®	1.00	12.00	1.00	14.00
PMI-SP®	0.00	12.00	1.00	13.00
PMI-RMP®	0.00	12.00	1.00	13.00
PfMP®	0.00	12.00	1.00	13.00
PMI-PBA®	0.00	12.00	1.00	13.00

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