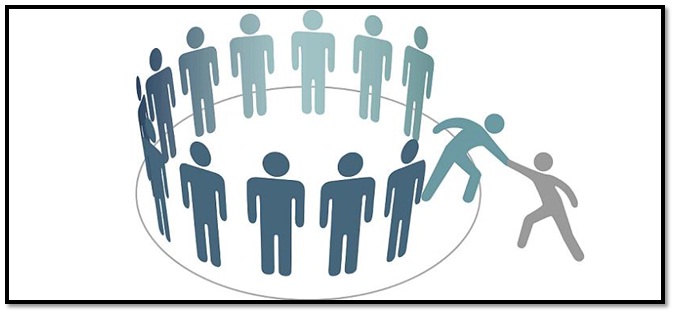
AMIC

Pre- employment

program



Participant Booklet

**WEEK 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Participant Name:** |  |
| **Facilitator Name:** |  |

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# 

# **Introduction to the meat industry**

The post-farm gate contributes about 200,000 direct and indirect jobs in Australia, mostly located in regional areas. Many meat processors are the largest employer in their region, rural and regional communities.

Labour attraction and retention is critical to the sector’s success, and this will only become more important as the types of roles available become more sophisticated.

The meat industry covers a wide range of occupations across various sectors that make up what we call the ‘post farm gate to plate’ supply chain.

Feedlots, processors, smallgoods manufacturers, boning rooms, cold stores, wholesalers, packers, exporters and independent retail butchers.

* 160 red meat processing facilities
* 400 specialist smallgoods manufacturers
* 3,000 independent butcher shops

**Beef, lamb and goat meat**

**Beef**

* Australians eat around 32.5kg of beef per person annually equating to around $6.6 billion to Australia’s economy.
* There are so many tasty and juicy beef cuts of meat...what’s your favourite?

**Lamb**

* Australians eat around 9.7kg of lamb annually equating to around $2 billion to Australia’s economy.
* There are so many tasty and juicy lamb cuts of meat...what’s your favourite?

**Goat Meat**

* Goat meat is the most widely consumed meat in the world and Australians are eating more of it.
* This accounted for approximately 16.9 billion in revenue in the 2020 financial year.
* Did you know the Australian red meat processing industry is the nation's second largest employer by sector?

It's an exciting and innovative field, where you will have the opportunity to build a career, make new friends, develop professional contacts, and shape the future of the industry.

## **The Australian meat processing industry**

Australian meat processors and butchers are passionate about delivering top quality, safe and nutritious products to the market.

The Australian meat processing sector is a world leader in processing beef, lamb and goat meat and processing plants employ the latest technologies to ensure superior levels of meat product.

Australia has approximately 300 abattoirs (including boning rooms). The red meat processing industry is estimated to contribute just under $23 billion of value added to the Australian economy including flow-on impacts, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of Australia’s gross industry value added.

It generates 134,000 jobs equivalent to 1.4 per cent of full-time equivalent (FTE) employment when flow-on effects are taken into account.

## **Careers available in the Meat Industry**



## Careers: Pathways & Job Opportunities

The Australian meat industry is a reliable industry in terms of job security, career opportunities and job satisfaction, it's an industry to be proud of.

Staff at meat processing plants are trained in animal welfare, husbandry and handling, hygiene, sanitation and much more.

**Meat Processors & Manufacturing roles include**: Stockperson, slaughterers, boners, slicers, machine operators, trimmers, labourers, packers, cleaners, tradespersons, laboratory assistants, warehouse operators, forklift drivers, transport drivers’ quality assurance, meat inspectors and much more.

**Smallgoods Manufacturing** **roles include:** Smallgoods makers, labourers, warehouse operators, forklift drivers, transport drivers, cleaners, quality assurance and machine operator. People working in the industry may work in areas such as operating production lines, smoking and drying meat, food safety, logistics, sales and marketing and finance.

**Independent Local Butchers roles include:** sales assistants, customer service, labourers, apprentice butchers, trade qualified retail butchers, smallgoods makers

**Several other industries** also provide services to the Australian meat processing industry.

These include: Meat and livestock industry (farmers and primary producers), Transport industry, Warehousing and distribution industry, Animal feed industry, Veterinary industry, Graphic design industry, Packaging industry, and the Engineering industry just to name a few.

All these positions hold Job Stability and Security, the meat industry also offers diversity in terms of working day variety, specialist roles, and the cultural and social backgrounds of employees

Employers in the industry value competency-based training, so participants can look forward to having the chance to 'earn while you learn’ which allows employees to upskill during their day-to-day work. Be well paid with flexible working hours so you can spend more time with your family and loved ones and work around Australia or even internationally.

# **Key Qualifications in the Meat Industry**

* Certificate II – Abattoirs​
* Certificate III – Boning, Slaughtering, Meat Safety, Rendering, Packing, Livestock, Quality Assurance​
* Certificate IV- Meat Safety, Quality Assurance, Leadership & General​
* Certificate V & VI- Diploma & Advanced Diploma
* Apprenticeship opportunities
  + Smallgoods Maker
  + Retail Butcher
  + Maintenance – electrician, plumber, fitter

# Communication in the workplace

**Communication process**

Communication is a process of transferring information from one entity to another and is commonly defined as "*the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs*".

Good communication is important because it is the act of transferring information from one body to another. The ability to communicate effectively with managers, colleagues, and fellow workers is essential, no matter what industry you work in.

Communication is a process where information is packaged and is channelled and sent to a receiver via some medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender feedback.

All forms of communication require a sender, a message, and an intended recipient.

However, the receiver does not need be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication for the act of communication to occur.

The communication process is made up of seven elements:

* Sender  Feedback
* Message  Channel
* Receiver  Context or setting
* Interference or noise

Text, chat or text message

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**Elements of communication**

There are *verbal* elements such as the words used from a particular language, *vocal* elements, such as speech, song, and tone of voice, and there are *visual* elements, such as body language, sign language, touch, eye contact, through media, that is, pictures, graphics and sound, and writing.

**How to communicate in the workplace?**

Communication is not just verbal there are many ways we communicate including: lights, hand signals, written, Safety signs, Written work instruction, Your Quality manual, notice boards, Posters, signs on walls, talking to one another, Two-way Radio, Email, Phone in for sick days & Pay slips.

* **Verbal:** Phone in if we are sick or can not attend work, if your Pay slip is incorrect.
* **Visual:** Retain tags on a contaminated product, safety signs, pedestrian walkway.
* **Non-verbal** **Proximity:** being physically closer, leaning forward while seated.
* **Orientation:** either face to face or side to side depending on the situation.
* **Gaze:** regular eye contact.
* **Facial expression:** smiling face is more effective for good communication.
* **Gestures:** head nods, encouraging gestures.
* **Postures:** open arms, non-cross legged, gives an expression of openness.
* **Touch:** appropriate touch, perhaps hand on a shoulder or guidance in movement of a particular skill.
* **Para-verbal -** Tone of voice and the way in which we choose our words is important here. When we are angry, we tend to speak more rapidly and at a higher pitch. If we feel someone is attacking us, we tend to respond in short, curt, sentences. You can usually tell if a person is bored by a tendency towards a slow and monotone delivery.
* **Body language:** hand signals / Body gesture body language can be misleading. A person may sit with clenched fists, but this could be done to personal habit rather than anger. A person could have her arms folded just because the room is cold
* **Written:** Holiday application, injury forms

As our industry supports multicultural workforces, we cannot simply rely on verbal communication to get our message across.

To be truly effective, the parties to the communication must have a common understanding of the elements used. Mixed messages occur when the three elements verbal, vocal and visual are out of alignment.

Good communicators, use appropriate listening, questioning and feedback skills as they collect and organise information. Those who are aware of their interpersonal skills are likely to achieve outcomes that are satisfying to everyone.

When you start working it is important you find out who you are going to be communicating with and how this is going to be done.

• Who is your supervisor?

• Who makes decisions in your section?

• Who do you report defects to?

• Who do you tell if there’s a safety problem?

• Who do you report an accident or injury to?

• Who can you discuss training with?

• Who do you talk to if you have personal / sensitive problem?

• Who do you see about holiday / sick leave?

• Who to talk to if you have a good idea?

**Gathering information**

A vital element in the decision-making process is to gather information about the situation or problem you are facing. So where can you get information in an organisation?

There are many sources of information including:

* Electronic (internet/intranet, emails, online newsletters, etc.)
* Written (reports, notices, manuals, training materials)
* Data (raw information provided in reports or spreadsheets, etc.)
* Face to face discussion (managers, peers, team members, specialists, etc.).

***Something to think about……***

***The internet is a prime example of the importance of determining your information needs before you approach an information source.***

The internet offers enormous amounts of information, but less than 1% of internet websites will have any relevance to the problem or issue that you are researching.  The internet can only be a useful source of information if you have put some thought into which websites will provide you with relevant, current and correct information before getting 'lost' in cyberspace'.

**Active listening**

Diagram

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**Active listeners use the below techniques:**

1. Non-verbal skills – make eye contact, face the person, be aware of personal space, and use an open position

2. Silence – be still, let them speak

3. Encouragers – use of conversation openers, invitation to disclose, pausing

4. Questioning skills – ask a few to confirm understanding

5. Reflecting content – paraphrasing, clarifying, showing empathy

6. Reflecting feelings

7. Summarising.

**Three questions about work**

In performing work there are three questions to which we all seek answers.

They are:

* What am I supposed to be doing?
* How well am I going at that?
* What future is there in how I do this?

When you work, if you can reasonably answer these questions then you will have greater clarity about your work, its importance and impact for you. If this is the case, you will feel more confident in contributing more to the doing of the work (assuming the consequences are positive of course). You are also more likely to be able to predict these consequences – i.e. their future is more predictable – which is an important part of your psychological security.

**What are the best ways to communicate?**

* Give clear and accurate information. To achieve this ask yourself, What’s the message? Who is it for? Is it Misleading? ​
* Talk calmly and with respect ​be punctual and reliable
* Use correct words ​
* Make sure the other person/s can hear you​
* Try not to use jargon ​
* Make sure you are understood Language and culture

**Selection interpretation:** **A person swimming in the ocean are they waving or drowning….​**

**Emotions**: motivation / insecurity and theirs. Any action that causes conflict in motivation or trigger yours or other person’s insecurity, will create a difficult or unexpected situation. By proactively trying to put yourself in their shoes before any interaction, you could communicate better and can better manage your reaction to unexpected situations​

**Language and culture:** Japanese tend to remain more silent than westerners when negotiating; some cultures are quite uncomfortable with eye contact. Hand signals mean different things in different countries.

**Australians use terrible English ​**One of the first things you should do when starting to work, is explore the cultural norms of the company.​

**Barriers in Communication**

**Jargon** – Be mindful of jargon and encourage your team members to state things as simply as possible.

**Silence –**Silence The lack of expression sends a message itself, which can create a communication barrier between the sender and receiver. Silence can be used as a threatening tool to ignore and disregard another person’s need for communication,

**Misleading –** Wrong translation of messages received

**Selective interpretation –** It is when someone’s needs, motivations, interests, experiences and past influence what they choose to see or hear

**Information overload** – Too little information is not good, but too much information can cause even more damage to you. Know when it’s time to walk away. Whether your emotions are escalating, or you notice an exchange is getting heated between team members, normalize “taking a break” and returning to that conversation when everyone has had a breather.

**Emotions** – Mental conditions of a person if you feel uneasy or anxious, you might resist the urge to speak up. If you’re angry and heated, you’ll have a hard time receiving information that’s being given

**Barriers to non-verbal communication:**

* Rolling of eyes
* Excessive fidgeting
* Avoidance/over-abundance of eye contact

**Language & Culture –** If you’ve ever tried to converse with someone who doesn’t speak your same language, you know that reaching a shared understanding is difficult. That’s why language can be a major barrier to communication.

**Political Correctness -** Written or spoken language that's intentionally phrased to avoid offending or marginalizing groups identified by certain social characteristics, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability

**What are work instructions or task descriptions?**

Work instructions or task descriptions are specific and clear instructions for performing each job or task in the plant. Work instructions are designed to prevent problems in processing meat.

Workplace instructions:

* describe the tasks to be performed
* identify the order, if necessary, in which operations are to be performed
* detail what should be done if errors occur
* highlight the most important part of the task, if any
* define the standard the job has to be done to.

Failure to follow work instructions can represent a real workplace health and food safety hazard. By following work instructions or task descriptions each worker makes a contribution to the quality of the product.

When work instructions are being developed they should:

* be developed with the assistance of the people doing the job
* be the best way of doing the job
* be written in workplace language.

# **Time Management and Setting Goals**

**Time Management**

Time management often begins with setting goals. These goals are recorded and may be broken down into a project, an action or a simple task list. Activities are This process results in a plan with at task list or calendar of events. Routine and recurring tasks are often given less focus to free time to work on tasks that contribute to important goals.

This entire process is supported by a skill set that should include personal motivation, delegation skills, Organisation tools and crisis management.

**What is Time Management?**

Let’s start by giving you the definition of Time Management.

***‘The ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work.’***

Time management skills allow you to work on a schedule, avoid distractions, and finish projects on time.

Time management is a soft skill, soft skills are related to your personality, so you learn them naturally as you grow up, they can however, be improved through practice.

Your time management skills will help you prove to managers/supervisors that you can work independently and achieve goals on time. They could also eventually lead to benefits like promotion, increased level of work and even pay rises.

**How to Improve Time Management?**

Overcoming procrastination and improving your time management doesn’t have to be difficult. Listed below are five key principles of effective time management skills:

**1.** **Planning:**

Planning is a vital part of good time management skills. Successful planning hinges on the ability to block time effectively. If you continuously achieve tasks in a timely manner, you’re a good planner.

If you give yourself too much time for a task, you’ll end up procrastinating. On the other hand, if you give yourself too little, you’ll end up stressed and chasing deadlines.

**2.**  **Prioritising:**

Time management involves deciding what tasks are the most urgent and handling them first. Important but non-urgent tasks should also be prioritised but can be tackled gradually before their due date. Other tasks can be completed when you have nothing essential on your to-do list.

**3.**  **Decision-making:**

Being able to quickly make a decision is a key time management skill. That’s because procrastinating over a decision is a major waste of time.

Part of decision-making is deciding when you should delegate a task, and when you should handle it yourself. By delegating certain responsibilities to someone else, you save yourself time that can be used for more important tasks.

**4.**  **Self-motivation:**

Key to time management is keeping motivated despite the demons that want you to be unproductive: procrastination, perfectionism, and distractions.

Keeping yourself motivated is not easy. That’s why so many self-help books have been published offering hundreds of strategies for keeping us hard at work.

**5.**  **Organisation:**

An organised filing system reduces the amount of time it takes to find a file. Wasting precious time hunting through folders is exactly that — a waste.

Organisational skills help keep your work on track.

A well-organised worker is an industrious worker. If you know where you’ve filed your documents and saved your work, you’re someone who can manage time effectively. So, time management and organisational skills are fundamental.

**Setting Goals**

Goal setting is critical to effective time management strategies. It is the single most important life skill that, unfortunately, most people never learn how to do properly. Goal setting can be used in every single area of your life, including financial, physical & personal development, relationships and your career. Fewer than 3% of people have clear, written goals and a plan for achieving those goals.

Some people blame everything that goes wrong in their life on something or someone else. They take the role of the victim, and they give all their power and control away. Successful people instead dedicate themselves towards taking responsibility for their own lives and their direction.

***Live in the present: The past cannot be changed, and the future will be a direct result of what you do right now!***

**The Three P’s**

Setting meaningful, long-term goals is a big step toward achieving your dreams. In turn, setting and achieving short-term goal can help you accomplish the task you’ll need to achieve the long-term ones. It is important to make sure that all of your goals use the power of The Three P’s

**PERSONAL:** Goals must be personal. They must reflect your own dreams and values, not those of your friends, family or media. When crafting a goal statement, always use the word “I” in the sentence to make it your own. When goals are personal, you’ll be more motivated to succeed and take greater pride in them.

**POSITIVE:** Goals should be phrased positively, so they help you feel good about yourself and what you’re trying to achieve.

**POSSIBLE:** When setting goals, be sure to consider what’s possible and within your control. Looking to achieve something that is outside your control is only going to set you up to fail.

**The S.M.A.R.T way**

S.M.A.R.T is a convenient acronym for a set criterion that a goal must have in order for it be realised.

**S.M.A.R.T**

**S**pecific

What exactly do you want to achieve? The more specific your description, the bigger the chance you'll get exactly that. S.M.A.R.T. goal setting clarifies the difference between 'I want to be a millionaire' and 'I want to save $50 a month for the next ten years by transferring it straight into a savings account'.

|  |
| --- |
| **ACTIVITY 1**:  Write in your notebook questions you may ask yourself when setting your goals and objective are:     * What exactly do I want to achieve? * Where do I need to be to achieve this goal? * How will I achieve this goal? * When will I achieve this goal? * Who can help me achieve this goal? * Are there any limitations and conditions? * Why do I want to achieve this goal? * Are there possible alternative ways of achieving this goal? |

**M**easurable

Measurable goals mean that you identify exactly what it is you will see, hear and feel when you reach your goal. It means breaking your goal down into measurable elements. You'll need concrete evidence.

Measurable goals can go a long way in refining what exactly it is that you want too. Defining the physical manifestations of your goal or objective makes it clearer, and easier to reach.

**A**ttainable

Is your goal attainable? That means investigating whether the goal really is acceptable to you. You weigh the effort, time and other costs your goal will take against the profits and the other obligations and priorities you have in life.

If you don't have the time, money or talent to reach a certain goal you'll certainly fail and be miserable. That doesn't mean that you can't take something that seems impossible and make it happen by planning smartly and going for it!

**R**elevant

Is reaching your goal relevant to you? Do you want to run a multinational, be famous, have three children and a busy job? You decide for yourself whether you have the personality for it.

If you're lacking certain skills, you can plan training. If you lack certain resources, you can look for ways of getting them.

The main question is, why do you want to reach this goal? What is the objective behind the goal, and will this goal really achieve that?

You may think that having a bigger team will make it perform better, but will it really?

**T**imed

Time is money! Make a tentative plan of everything you do. Everybody knows that deadlines are what makes most people switch to action. So, install deadlines, for yourself and your team, and go after them. Keep the timeline realistic and flexible, that way you can keep morale high. Being too stringent on the timely aspect of your goal setting can have the perverse effect of making the learning path of achieving your goals and objectives into a hellish race against time – which is most likely not how you want to achieve anything.

Another thing that's very important when setting SMART goals, is formulating it using the 3 P’s model. Remember that what you focus on, increases. So, when you focus on NOT doing something, all you think about is that thing. And it will increase. So, don't 'stop procrastinating', but 'achieve a daily discipline'.

**Prioritise Your Goals**

Achieving challenging goals requires a lot of mental energy. Instead of spreading yourself thin by focusing on several goals at once, invest your mental focus on one goal, the most important goal right now. When you are prioritising, choose a goal that will have the greatest impact.

**The Urgent/Important Matrix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Urgent** | **Not Urgent** |
| **Important** | **I Activities.**  Crises,  Pressing problems,  Deadline driven projects. | **II Activities**  Prevention,  Relationship Building,  Recognising new opportunities,  Planning, recreation. |
| **Not Important** | **III Activities**  Interruptions, some calls,  Some mail, some reports,  Some meetings,  Popular activities. | **IV Activities**  Trivia, Some mail,  Some phone calls,  Time wasters,  Pleasant activities. |

***Non-urgent and not important****:* These trivial interruptions are just a distraction and should be avoided if possible – Avoid these distractions altogether. *However*, be mindful not to mislabel things like family and recreational activities.

***Urgent, but not important****:* These chores do not move you forward towards your own goals. Manage these by delaying them, cutting them short or rejecting requests from others – Postpone these chores.

***Urgent and important****:* Activities in this area relate to dealing with critical issues as they arise and meeting significant commitments – Perform these now!

***Important, but not urgent****:* These are success orientated tasks and are critical to achieving goals – Plan to do these next.

**Why is this important to me?**

All these skills can be used on a daily basis and will help you if you use and develop them. These skills will not only help you with work setting alarms to get up and get to work on time, but with your home life setting time aside for family.

|  |
| --- |
| Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence**ACTIVITY 2**:    In your notebook Using the skills you have been shown so far, let’s have a look at your Time Management skills.   * Provide one negative aspect that you believe needs attention and what you will do to address it? * Provide one positive aspect and how you use it? * Using what you have shown so far, develop a short-term and a long-term goal/s that will help you during this program, and describe how these goals will help you during this program? |

**Preparing for work**

Getting up for work in the morning can be difficult. You may not want to get out of bed, or you may find yourself running around to get everything prepared on time. The key to getting ready for work is doing some stuff the night before, so you don't find yourself pressed for time before you have to head out the door.

* Taking responsibility for your personal care how you present yourself in the workplace.
* Travel requirements – How will you get there?
* having a backup plan.
* being ready and on time
* Be calm & confident

**Advising when you are Sick or Late**

**IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO WORK (EG SICK), OR ARE GOING TO BE LATE FOR WORK, PLEASE CONTACT THE COMPANY AND LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH THE OFFICE​ OR FOLLOW THE CORRECT ABSENTEEISM PROCEDURE WITH YOUR WORKPLACE.**

**Absenteeism: Regular attendance at work is essential. Persistent absenteeism without a satisfactory reason may result in disciplinary action.**

# **Relationships at Work & Respect**

Identify the qualities of good working relationships.

There are several characteristics that make up good, healthy working relationships:

**Trust** – This is the foundation of every good relationship. When you trust your team and colleagues, you form a powerful bond that helps you to work and communicate more effectively. If you trust the people you work with, you can be open and honest in your thoughts and actions, and you don't have to waste time and energy "watching your back."

**Mutual Respect** – When you respect the people who you work with, you value their input and ideas, and they value yours. Working together, you can develop solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity.

**Mindfulness** – This means taking responsibility for your words and actions. Those who are mindful are careful and attend to what they say, and they don't let their own negative emotions impact the people around them.

**Welcoming Diversity** – People with good relationships not only accept diverse people and opinions, but they welcome them. For instance, when your friends and colleagues offer different opinions from yours, you take the time to consider what they have to say and factor their insights into your decision-making.

**Open Communication –** We communicate all day, whether we're sending emails and IMs, making phone calls, or meeting face to face. The better and more effectively you communicate with those around you, the richer your relationships will be. All good relationships depend on open, honest communication.

**Self – Awareness**

The meaning of self-awareness is “knowing one’s internal states, preference, resources, and intuitions”.

Self-awareness is all about knowing the one thing in life we have control over:

Our perception.

The Biggest reason why self-awareness is so important is that it allows us to better control our own mindset and turn it into something positive despite negative external factors.

If we know exactly what our internal preferences are, then it’s easier to deal with unexpected situations. More importantly, if we know how our unconsciousness reacts to certain events, we can try to improve the way we react to these things.

Start a (self-awareness) journal, take time to ask why, actively listen, practice meditation clear your mind, ask for feedback

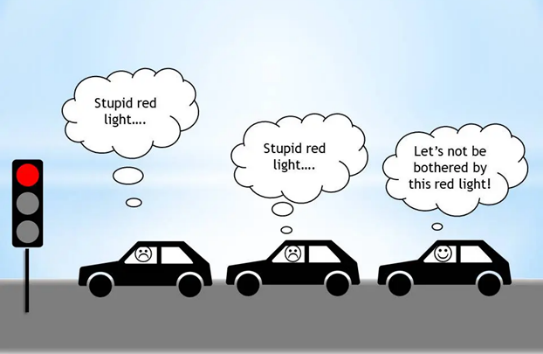
We recently published a study that showed how self-awareness can really improve your state of mind:

We found that people who believe their happiness can be controlled are 32% happier than those who don’t.

**What are some examples of self-awareness?**

There are a number of self-awareness examples that show why self-awareness is so important:

* Being able to focus on something positive when in a negative situation.
* Recognizing a bad habit and the effect it can have on you.
* Learn about your emotional triggers, so you can better deal with negative emotions like anger or hate.
* This might sound like a silly example, but imagine being stuck in traffic after a long day at work
* If you don’t practice self-awareness, you might feel bummed about being stuck in traffic. And that would be that. Your day would be negatively influenced by this traffic, and as a result, you become angry and agitated.
* Now think about the same situation, but then with an added sense of self-awareness.
* Sure, you still don’t like being stuck in traffic. Being self-aware will not magically create an eternal smile on your face. But it allows you to look further than just the direct effect of being stuck in traffic.
* When you are fully aware that being stuck in traffic is not something you enjoy, then you the opportunity to change the way you react to it. You can decide that being stuck in traffic will not bother you. You can decide to focus on the positive things that are still happening in your life.



**What are the benefits of self-awareness?**

Better deal with external factors that cannot be controlled - We can’t control 100% of our lives, but we can often control how we react to the stuff we can’t control.

Anticipate how certain events will influence your state of mind

Better understanding the emotions of the people around you -knowledge about how certain types of people might react to certain events  
Have a positive influence on the state of mind of people around you

**What is self-motivation?**

Self-motivation is, in its simplest form, the force that drives you to do things.

People can be motivated by many things, both internal and external, such as desire to do something, love of someone, or need for money. Usually, motivation is a result of several factors. The ability to motivate yourself—self-motivation—is an important skill.

**The Elements of Self-Motivation**

Research shows that those who believe that they can improve—that is, who have a growth mindset—are far more likely to achieve in whatever they choose. A growth mindset is therefore an important element in a personal drive to succeed.

1. **Personal drive to achieve**

There are two types of mindset, fixed and growth.

Those with a fixed mindset believe that talent is ingrained, and that we cannot change our level of ability.

1. **Commitment to goals**

It certainly makes sense that ‘if you aim at nothing, it is easy to achieve it’, and that most of us need something in our lives to aim towards. Having an awareness of where you wish to be, and an understanding of how you plan to get there, is a vital part of staying motivated

1. **Initiative**

Initiative is, effectively, the ability to take advantage of opportunities when they occur. It is all too easy to hesitate, and then the opportunity may be gone. However, the old sayings ‘look before you leap’ and ‘fools rush in where angels fear to tread’ have a lot of truth in them. It is also important to think things through and ensure that you are making the right decision for you

Those with a growth mindset believe that they can improve their skills through hard work and effort.

1. **Optimism or resilience**

Optimism is the ability to look on the bright side or think positively. Resilience is the ability to ‘bounce back’ after a setback or keep positive in the face of challenges. The two are closely related, although not exactly the same.

# **Working in a high-pressure environment**

**Find supportive people**

Cultivating supporters at work can be invaluable—especially in a high-pressure work environment. These people are in your corner and can provide a much-needed sounding board as well as friendship and advice.

**Laugh More**

How does that saying go—that laughter is the best medicine it’s true!

Remember that potential allies can come from all levels within the organization. Consider managers, colleagues, support staff, and even vendors or suppliers. Once you've identified potential allies, work on building those new relationships, and nurturing new ones.

Laughter has great short-term benefits, including enhancing your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulating your heart, lungs and muscles, and increasing the endorphins that are released by your brain. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and promote muscle relaxation which can help reduce **stress.**

**Understanding workplace stress**

The most common cause of workplace stress is the quality of the relationships we have with our peers and managers. I bet you can all think of a work colleague or an ex-boss who caused you so much grief… we remember them because it was such a negative experience ​

* Workplace stress can come from many sources​
* It can have a positive and negative impact on our performance​
* Negative – panic, frustrated, burnt out, strained relationships ​
* Affects your ability to remember things you already know or process new information

**Check your stress levels**

Stress has multiple causes, it’s often not simply the result of a stressful event alone. What presents as ‘stress’ is usually the product of several factors:

People tend to carry stress along with them – both from work to home and home to work, this means stressful situations at home can contribute to stress in the workplace.

Inadequate personal coping mechanisms and/or support at home can make it difficult to cope and become a source of stress. For most employees, it is not lack of knowledge or skills that causes stress rather, it is the pressure of meeting deadlines and therefore not being able to use the skills they have.

In many situations, it is not lack of time but improper management of time that makes it a challenge to meet deadlines.

A ‘‘Perceived’’ lack of support from supervisors can contribute to stress.

A lack of communication or ineffective communication can also lead to stress.

Stress in the long-term leads to depression, anxiety, hypertension, diabetes and many other health conditions. It is important to manage your stress effectively.

**Possible solutions:**

* Develop time management skills
* Learn simple de-stressing (relaxation) exercises e.g. deep breathing
* Develop appropriate channels for venting emotions and sharing feelings at home/with friends.

**Ways to cope with stress**

Try to identify the source of stress and ask yourself what you can do about it, act where you can

Coach yourself to have a positive attitude

Do not feel isolated, look around, there are colleagues who can be good friends and given the chance, they would be willing to listen to you

Share your feelings instead of becoming angry or defensive, you may be pleasantly surprised

If you must stand up for yourself, do so in a polite manner

Exercise regularly to help release stress and anxiety and to make you feel better able to cope with stress

Learn and practice relaxation techniques. Try breathing exercises or meditation

Eat healthily

Learn time management lack of this skill may lead to stress at the workplace

Learn to say “no” to things that you feel might add stress to your life. You can do this politely

Make time for hobbies and interests that you enjoy

Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events

When you are stressed, do not look for relief in unhealthy food, alcohol, tobacco or caffeine, this will harm you in the long term

Make friends in your workplace and take time out with them.

**Dealing with Change**

Dealing with change can sometimes be uncomfortable, stressful or even scary. Here are some things you can do to make coping with changes in your life a little easier.

Think things through and ask, ‘What’s the worst that can happen?’

We're often scared of change because we’re afraid of the unknown. And a good way to deal with the unknown is to think things through carefully. Imagine all of the different possible outcomes, and then decide what would be your best- and worst-case scenarios. Write them down, if it helps. Another great strategy is to think about the last time you were faced with a big change and got through it okay. Remember how scary it was starting high school or learning to drive? Sometimes it’s not as bad as it seems at first and may just take a little time to get used to.

**Ask yourself how much you can control?**

When a big change occurs, it’s important to figure out how much control over the situation you really have. Understanding your role and how much you can change can help you put things in perspective. For example, if you've just moved out of home, there are many small things you can do to make the process easier. Make a to-do list and check each item off when you complete it.

**Accept and reframe**

If the unwanted change is beyond your control, try taking a reflective approach. Accepting that there are things beyond your control, and choosing to be comfortable with that fact, is likely to bring greater peace of mind than waging an unwinnable war. View change as an opportunity to learn and grow, rather than as a setback.

**Celebrate the positives**

Even though it may be a tough ask, focusing on the positives can really help you manage change. While the positive aspects of a situation might not be obvious to begin with, it’s worth seeking them out – no matter how small they might be. For example, if you’ve moved recently, you might be away from your friends, but it's also a great way to learn how to be more independent. Try to make the best of the situation. You can still call and write to those friends, and plan to visit them.

**Take action**

If the unwanted change is within your control, take an active approach to dealing with it. Try some problem-solving techniques or set some goals to proactively address any challenges. Focusing on the problem at hand, developing a plan of action, and asking for advice are useful active strategies.

**Manage your stress**

Improving your ability to handle stress will go a long way to helping you deal with change. Try practising mindfulness or meditation or engaging in other relaxation techniques.

**Seek support**

It’s perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed if the change you’re facing is really big, or there’s too much change happening all at once. This is when it might be best to seek support. Consider asking friends or family for help or emotional support. Or you can look at some options for getting professional help. Whether you’re coping with your favourite tv series season ending or dealing with something more serious, there are always others in similar situations and professionals available to help.

Working Smarter

Prioritise your work:

* Reconsider the Urgent/Important Matrix.
* Understand and apply a problem solving and coping skills framework to workplace issues.

There are four basic steps in solving a problem:

**1. Define the problem:**

* Differentiate fact from opinion
* Specify underlying causes
* Consult each faction involved for information
* State the problem specifically
* Identify what standard or expectation is violated
* Determine in which process the problem lies
* Avoid trying to solve the problem without data.

**2. Generate alternatives:**

* Postpone evaluating alternatives initially
* Include all involved individuals in the generating of alternatives
* Specify alternatives consistent with organizational goals
* Specify short- and long-term alternatives
* Brainstorm on others' ideas
* Seek alternatives that may solve the problem.

**3. Evaluate and select alternatives**:

* Evaluate alternatives relative to a target standard
* Evaluate all alternatives without bias
* Evaluate alternatives relative to established goals
* Evaluate both proven and possible outcomes
* State the selected alternative explicitly.

**4.** **Implement solutions:**

* Plan and implement a pilot test of the chosen alternative
* Gather feedback from all affected parties
* Seek acceptance or consensus by all those affected
* Establish ongoing measures and monitoring
* Evaluate long-term results based on final solution.

Apply the five ways to wellbeing to the workplace

**The Five Ways to Wellbeing are:**

1. **Connect:**

Humans are social creatures, hard-wired to thrive through meaningful connection with others. Social wellbeing at work has a profound impact on well-being and effectiveness in the workplace. The workplace is the perfect opportunity to build our connection muscles, as we have to learn to get on with people who might not be in our preferred social circle. We have to learn skills of collaboration, negotiation, cooperation, service and more. The workplace can also be a place of much unhappiness caused by poor relationships, whether through personality clashes, bullying, competition, jealousy etc. Poor working relationships can create or exacerbate the problems caused by stress in the workplace.

1. **Be Active:**

The sedentary lifestyle that many of us live in the 21st century is causing terrible harm to health. Research suggests that too much sitting is linked to Type 2 diabetes, obesity, some types of cancer and premature death. Clearly, this is not good for health. It is not good for businesses either, as the associated sickness will impact on employees’ attendance and ability in work. The Australian Medical Association recommends that we get at least 150 minutes of exercise each week and reduce the time we sit.

1. **Take Notice/Be Present:**

Mindfulness is THE big buzzword in workplace wellbeing and in the wellness world in general, and with good reason. The ability to be present in your day is one that is being ever diminished in the modern world with its myriad distraction and demands on our attention.

The practices of mindfulness remind us to come into the present moment, to sit with our emotions rather than numbing them out, and to fully engage with the task at hand or the person we are with. Being mindful and present is a powerful tool for managing stress at work as well as a happier life.

1. **Keep Learning:**

Lack of training for a job is a common cause of work-related stress. You may feel overwhelmed and poorly prepared for a job, leading to undue and unnecessary stress. The correct training to do a job is not only a valuable investment, but it could also be a legal requirement. An employee who causes harm to themselves or another due to insufficient training could cost a business dearly in legal costs.

In addition to work-related training, learning about yourself, learning about the world you live in and to learn strategies to manage your emotions and wellbeing will prove to be invaluable.

1. **Give.**

Kindness and compassion are vital tools for cooperation and harmony in society and in the workplace. A workplace that is based on a culture of giving and cooperation rather than competition and one-upmanship will be a happier, healthier workplace. Some elements of competition can be beneficial in working environment. However, when this competition comes at the expense of good, honest communication, cooperation and collaboration it quickly becomes toxic, stressful and harmful.

**How do you solve problems?**

Some companies have a particular method of problem solving, some only use informal ways of solving problems. Whatever method is used, good communication is the important factor.

All kinds of problems happen at work. They are usually about the production processes or about how people are interacting. In the past, people thought the problem would go away if you ignored it! They thought ‘she’ll be right’. Today workplaces take a more active approach. If something's wrong, it needs fixing. This problem-solving approach can make the workplace a better and safer environment. It can even save lives.

In some companies all employees are encouraged to use a particular problem-solving method. Here is a simple problem-solving method.

|  |
| --- |
| **The 5 steps to problem solving** |
| **What's the problem?**  **What are the causes?**  **What's the best solution?**  **Take action.**  **Check the problem is solved.** |

When there were problems with too many injuries on the slaughter floor, one work team used this method to get a solution that everyone was happy with.

**Resilience**

What Is Resilience?

‘Resilience is the ability to cope with unexpected challenges in your life.’

Resilience is your ability to cope with tough times by applying your inner strength and engaging support networks. Resilience can not only enable you to face difficult situations, but often provides an opportunity to further develop your coping skills. It’s not always possible to prevent stressful or adverse situations, but you can strengthen your capacity to deal with these challenges. Resilience can also be described as:

* Dealing with challenges and still holding your head up
* Being strong on the inside
* Getting back into shape after being bent or stretched.
* Building Your Resilience

Resilience enables you to better cope with challenging situations and helps with your mental wellbeing. You probably already have skills and support networks that help you be resilient. You can build these up even more, making it easier for you to cope with life.

You can build your resilience by:

* Knowing your strengths
* Building your self-esteem – have confidence in your abilities and the positive things in life
* Build healthy relationships
* Knowing when to ask for help
* Managing stress and anxiety levels and
* Working on problem solving skills and coping strategies.

We know from research that the most common causes of workplace stress are the quality of the relationships we have with our peers and managers, and how we manage conflict within those relationships how we manage change and factors within our role such as control/demand and role clarity.

# **What Is Conflict Management?**

Disagreements can arise in any organization. Having people in the workplace who know how to manage conflict is key to keeping turnover low, productivity high and customers satisfied.

Conflict management is the set of techniques required to identify and resolve conflict in the workplace. Since conflict is a normal part of any work environment, conflict management's goal is to detect and minimize the negative effects of conflict rather than eliminating it completely.

Conflict management is used to handle conflicts with fairness and efficiency. In doing so, you can avoid poor communication between colleagues, decrease workplace tension to improve productivity, and also keep the morale of employees high.

**Styles of conflict management**

There are five types of conflict management styles, depending on the personality type you are dealing with, including:

**Accommodating**

This conflict management style is when you give in to accommodate the other person's needs. You can use the accommodating style when the issue being argued is not as important to you as it is to the other person. This can be an appropriate style to use if you wish to keep the peace in the workplace or if you know that you are in the wrong. You can also use this type of conflict management style when you use empathy and put yourself in the person's situation.

For example, a customer is demanding a refund even though they do not have a warranty. You know that you are in the right, but because you want to retain the customer and the product in question is not very expensive, you decide to give in.

**Avoiding**

This conflict management style involves simply avoiding the issue at hand. In this case, you would continually avoid the person or the issue. Use this style when you feel that you do not have time to discuss the issue, or it seems trivial to you.

You can also benefit from using the avoiding style if you are not sure how to respond or you have not formed a proper opinion yet. An example of this type of conflict management is when your colleagues are arguing for a more comfortable dress code, but you are too busy working on end-of-year financial submissions to get involved.

**Compromising**

This conflict management style gives you the opportunity to find a middle-ground solution for everyone involved. Use the compromising style when finding a solution is more important to everyone than having people win the argument. For example, you could distribute duties evenly so that you can finish a project before the deadline.

**Collaborating**

This conflict management style goes beyond finding the middle ground to finding a solution that will make everyone happy. Use the collaborating style when the relationship between those involved is more important than the conflict. One example is finding a solution between shareholders to keep the relationship strong.

**Competing**

This conflict management style involves sticking to your argument and rejecting that of others until you get your way. Use this style when a decision has to be made quickly, a long-term conflict needs to be resolved or you are standing up for your rights or the rights of others.

For example, a customer is harassing one of the employees. In this case, you would reject the person's argument and insensitive comments.

Questions to ask before choosing a conflict management style

Before you choose the type of conflict management style, consider asking yourself these questions:

**1. How much do I value the issue being discussed and the person with whom there is a conflict?**

Determining how much value you give to a person, or an issue will help you choose the best conflict management style for the situation. For example, if the person is a client and the issue is trivial, then giving in may be best for the organization.

**2. Do you know what the consequences are?**

Whether you give in or stand your ground, consequences will follow. Accordingly, it is important to determine what these consequences are so you can make a more informed decision. If a consequence of standing your ground is damaging an important relationship with a stakeholder, then you might want to reconsider pursuing your argument.

**3. Do you have the time and energy to pursue your argument?**

Prioritizing, especially in a busy work environment, is key to being efficient and productive. If the argument is trivial and you have more important things to do, then giving in is the better solution. However, if it is a question of morals, you may want to give the issue your time and energy to solve it and create a healthier workspace.

**Skills for conflict management**

Possessing the right skills is key to effective conflict management. The following are the most important skills you need to resolve conflict in the workplace:

**Communication**: The ability to speak in a polite manner but still being convincing in your argument

**Discussion**: The ability to be open to discussing matters instead of only sharing your opinion with those who agree with you

**Positivity**: The ability to avoid using the blame game and realize that everyone makes mistakes so as to avoid creating more conflict

**Listening**: The ability to actively listen to the other person without jumping to conclusions or making assumptions

**Impartiality**: The ability to separate the conflict from the person to get to a solution

**Patience**: The ability to be patient and not be provoked in unnecessary conflict

**Facilitation**: The ability to bring opposing groups together to find a solution

**Mediation**: The ability to mediate and facilitate the process of finding a solution

**Assertiveness**: The ability to stick to your opinion, stand up for your rights or those of others

**Emotional intelligence:** The ability to control your emotions to avoid them from getting the best of you during an argument

**Empathy**: The ability to put yourself in the other person's place to experience what the other person is feeling

**Open communication:** The ability to be honest during an argument for an easier resolution

**Avoiding criticism:** The ability to present your argument without criticizing the person opposing you

**Responsibility**: The ability to take responsibility for your actions when it is due

**Stress management:** The ability to manage your stress properly so as not to make the situation worse

**Nonverbal communication:** The ability to be respectful with your non-verbal communication by not rolling your eyes or mimicking your opposer

**Humour**: The ability to use humour appropriately to diffuse the situation and make it easier to find a solution

**Problem solving:** The ability to solve problems efficiently

**Perception**: The ability to be perceptive in a conflict to find a solution

**Decision making:** The ability to make decisions about whether to pursue the conflict or not.

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