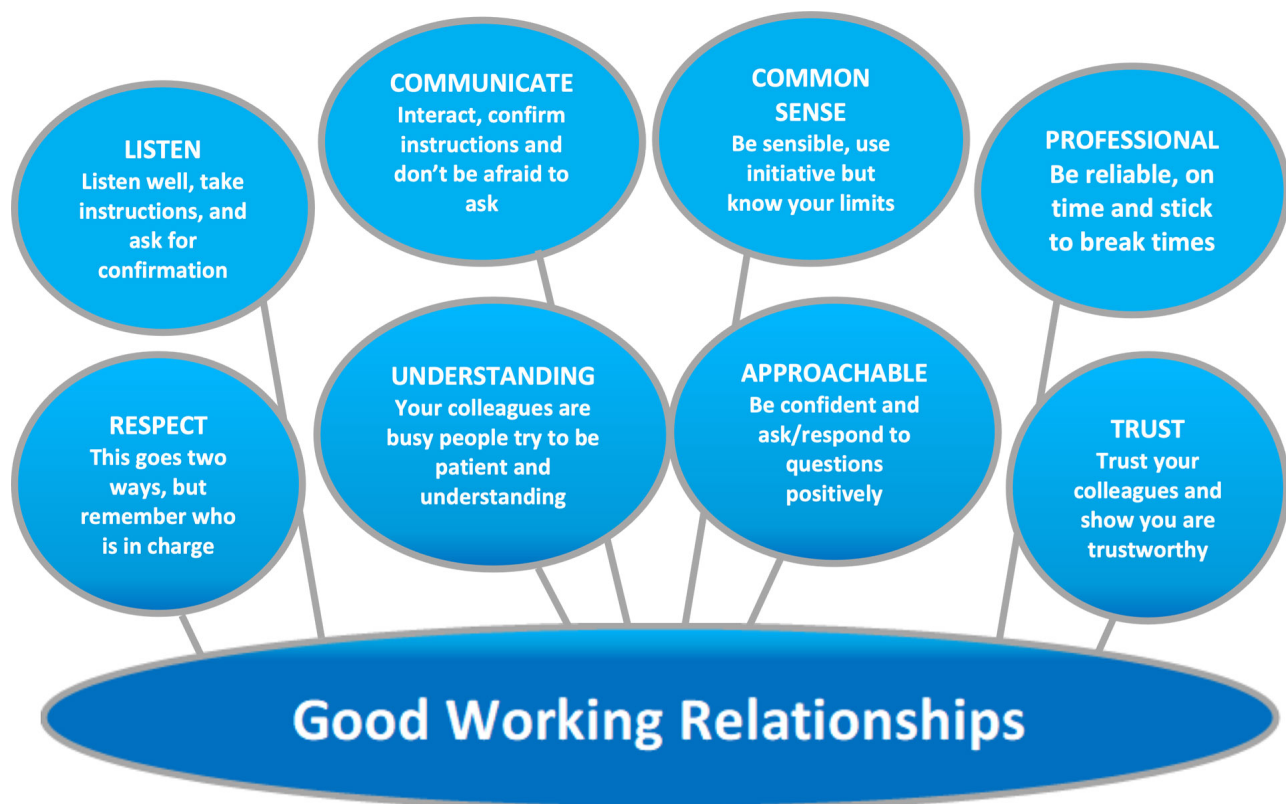


## Lesson 7.6: Workplace Relationships

The aim of this lesson is to help you appreciate the value of effective working relationships and know how to create and maintain them as part of your job role. There are several factors to consider including:

- Your own skill levels
- The company communication protocol
- The working environment
- Your ability to communicate
- Your ability to empathize with others

We do not usually choose the people we work with. However, we are responsible for building good working relationships with them, so we can work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Constructive working relationships need work and effort on everyone's part. To build and maintain them you need to practise and uphold the principles below:





## Communication

Good communication runs through the effective working relationship principles. It is important that information is received properly, understanding is confirmed and if appropriate the information is passed on within the right time scale and in clear manner.

The best way to do this, is to confirm your understanding with the communicator by repeating the information and asking them if your understanding is correct. They will put you right if you have misunderstood.

The kind of information that you will receive as a production machinist will often relate to quality, production targets, work methods or changes in production and will be likely be communicated via:

**Verbal messages**, such as how to carry out a given task. Make sure you listen and confirm your understanding by repeating the instructions. Ask if there is anything you are not clear about

**Samples** are a form of communicating how a job needs to be done. Examine the sample with an eye for detail and aim to produce an exact copy.

**Written messages**, this may be work tickets, specifications, or SOPs. Make sure you confirm your understanding and ask if there is anything you are not clear about.

Occasionally you may be required to pass on information to another member of the production team. Be clear in how you communicate the information, pass on any written detail or samples, and **always** ask them to confirm their understanding by relaying the information back to you.

## Cooperation

Cooperating with management and colleagues will help to overcome barriers and problems together. This really does create a positive working atmosphere, ensuring you are all working towards the same goals. To achieve effective cooperation, you need to:

- Listen to others
- Share knowledge and skills
- Empathize with others but keep focused on the aim
- Be willing to help others if required

## Trust and respect



A good team leader, supervisor or manager is one you trust and respect, and these qualities go two ways to create a good working relationship. Demonstrate that you are trustworthy, reliable and can make sensible decisions, as a result you will gain the respect of your manager and your colleagues. This is extremely important as two-way respect and trust creates a happy, effective working environment and a well-balanced, satisfying working life.

## Common Sense



Common sense is the basic ability to make sound, practical judgment concerning everyday matters.

Common sense and understanding in the workplace come with experience and can develop as your knowledge and skills progress. In time, you should begin to judge situations and know when it is appropriate for a supervisor,

manager, or machine mechanic to be called and when such action is not necessary.

These colleagues may not always be able to attend to your call immediately. Try to understand that they are working under pressure, like you, to produce quality products and meet production targets. Added to this they are responsible for you, your colleagues, and perhaps other departments.

## Conflict



Despite all efforts to get on with colleagues from time to time there may be problems. These may be caused by a misunderstanding, a difference of opinion, a serious disagreement, or a personality clash.

Problems like these make things awkward in the workplace and can cause disruption to production. It is important in situations like these that you firstly admit there is a problem that could affect your working life, product quality or production targets. Then aim to sort things out as quickly as possible and regain a balanced atmosphere. If this proves too difficult, try to recognise this early, and seek assistance before the situation escalates.



## Responsibility

Being responsible in the workplace is about knowing when to deal with a problem yourself and when to report it and seek help. However, whatever the situation, it is your responsibility to work with your colleagues and build positive working relationships. You can work towards do

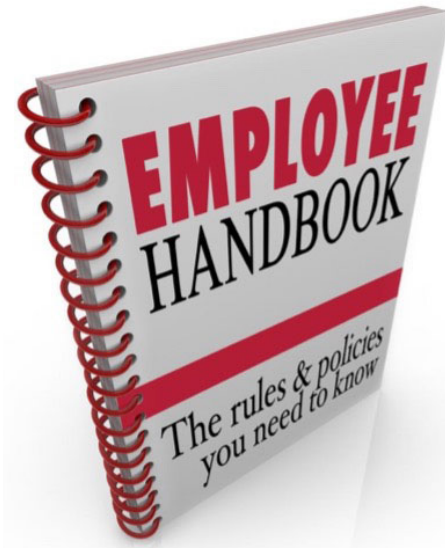
this by following the principles highlighted above, with focus on completing your tasks efficiently, ensuring your own and the health and safety of others and maintaining effective communications.

Remember that you are responsible for your behaviour towards everyone you work with, but what are the limits of your responsibility? The answer to this question would depend on your training, qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience, and the authority given to you in the workplace.

The important thing to remember is that you must not tackle things that you have not been trained to do, even if you think you can, for example:

**Machine breakdown** – If it is not a minor problem that you have been trained to deal with it must be fixed by a qualified and authorised mechanic.

**Badly cut components** – report it and don't try trimming them to fit as you may be altering the size, shape, or finish of the sewn item



## Working relationship problems

We now understand about the importance of effective relations and how they can be achieved by working together. We know that most things mentioned involve personal behaviours that are applied voluntarily by yourself and your colleagues as an integral part of the normal working routines.

In addition, your behaviour when working with colleagues needs to meet the required

standard of your employer. Your company may provide you with standards or rules which are usually found within employee handbook. These standards aim to establish and maintain effective working relationships and list certain expectations including workplace behaviours.

These behaviours are included in the Employability Skills Course Lesson 7.1 and are also relevant to this lesson. The four behaviours below are usually what people are measured against and often lead to difficulties within working relationships:

- Bad Time keeping
- Absence from work
- Poor/slow workmanship
- Bad Attitude

Typically, problems are varied in their cause, but most issues belong to one of the three categories below:

**Communication:** Unclear or lacking instructions, lack of confidence about raising problems, poor listening skills

**Personality or attitude:** personality clashes, aggressive or argumentative behaviour, lack of interest in the job



**State of mind:** preoccupied with domestic problems, irritable or short-tempered because of personal problems

## Resolving working relationship problems

It is in the interest of both the employer and the employee to resolve problems that effect work. Companies often have established procedures for dealing with staff problems that cannot be resolved. These procedures are both formal and informal and are designed to assist in finding solutions and are called grievance, disciplinary and appeals procedures and are covered in Lesson 7.5. in short...

- Grievance procedures deal with issues brought forward by an employee.
- Disciplinary procedures deal with issues brought forward by the Employer

The appeals procedures: deals with an unsatisfactory outcome relating to either of the above procedures.

## Course completion and certification



Congratulations! You are about to complete the final challenge of Course 7 Employability Skills and achieve certification. Well done!

This course is part of the UKFT Production Sewing Machinist Programme. Your certificate validates the skills and knowledge you have gained, it will help secure employment in the fashion and textiles

industry, can be utilised in your role if you are already employed or help advance your career in the industry. To download your certificate, after you have completed the last challenge,

click 'back to course lesson'.

click 'back to course'.

click 'download certificate'.

NOTE: If you have completed your course offline, your tutor will download and issue your certificate.

## Knowledge Challenge 7.9

1. Effective working relationships are key to your success as a production sewing machinist and your 'happiness' at work. To build and maintain your working relationships need to practise and uphold eight key principles. What are they and what do they entail? Fill in the missing words

L \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : take instructions and ask for confirmation.

C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : Interact, confirm interest and don't be afraid to ask

C \_ \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ \_ : Be sensible use initiative but know your limits

P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : Be reliable on time and stick to break times.

R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : This goes two ways, but remember who is in charge

U \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : Your colleagues are busy people try to be patient and understanding.

A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ : Be confident and ask/respond to questions positively.

T \_ \_ \_ \_ : Trust your colleagues and show you are trustworthy



2. Good, clear, and effective communication is important across all levels. To ensure that you receive and understand information correctly you need to–

- Ask the communicator to repeat the information
- Repeat your understanding of the information and ask the communicator if your understanding is correct.
- Carry out the task and then check what you have done is correct

3. Cooperation creates a positive working atmosphere and ensures that you are all working towards the same goals. Effective cooperation includes four key elements, highlight them from the list below:

- Listen to others
- Work independently
- Share knowledge and skills
- Empathize with others but keep focused on the aim
- Be willing to help others if required
- Keep knowledge and information that may help with others to yourself
- Share unconfirmed information and instruction

4. Two-way respect between yourself and work colleagues creates a happy, effective working environment. From the list below what two key qualities will help you to gain this respect:

- Trust
- Meeting deadlines
- Reliability
- Politeness

5. Workplace conflicts can cause serious working relationship problems that can affect productivity. How can you try to ensure conflicts do not escalate? Fill in the missing words

- Firstly, a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ there is a problem that could affect your w \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ life, product quality or p \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ targets
- Aim to sort things out as q \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ as possible and regain a b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ atmosphere.
- If this proves too difficult, seek a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ before the situation escalates.

6. Being responsible in the workplace is about knowing when to deal with a problem yourself and when to report it and seek help. But how do you know what your limits of responsibility are? The important thing to remember is...

- You must not tackle things that you have not been trained to do, even if you think you can
- You must try and resolve all issues independently without bothering management
- You must not report behaviour that causes working relationship problems, ignore them, they will resolve themselves

7. Effective working relationships involve behaviours that are applied voluntarily by yourself or your colleagues, but there are four behaviours that often lead to difficulties and may be addressed in your company rule book. What are they?

- •Bad Time keeping , Absence from work , Poor/slow workmanship, Bad Attitude
- Low performance, working overtime, talking too much, untidiness at work
- Not meeting deadlines, incomplete documentation, in complete work, eating at the machine

## **We appreciate your feedback**

We would appreciate your feedback and opinion. To this end, please complete the short evaluation survey below and add general comments that may help improve the content and course delivery

### **1. The course, was:**

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very Good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very Poor

### **2. The course content was:**

- ☐ Relevant to the production sewing machinist job role
- ☐ Partly relevant to the production sewing machinist job role
- ☐ Not relevant to the production sewing machinist job role

**3. The explanations, examples, videos, illustrations etc were:**

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very Good
- ☐ Good, Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very Poor

**4. The skills and knowledge challenges where:**

- ☐ Too Easy
- ☐ Just right
- ☐ Too difficult

**5. Did you complete any Groundwork exercises?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**6. If yes, where they?**

- ☐ Interesting and useful
- ☐ Not interesting or very useful

Can you recommend any improvements to the course that may help future learners? Thank you, this will help us improve future course content and the learning experience. If you are completing the course offline. Please email the survey section to:

Celia.thornley@ukft.org