



Foundational Skills

Hammond Educators' Foundational Skills courses empower professionals with the practical tools needed to think clearly, act decisively, and communicate effectively in today's fast-paced work environments.

Through focused training in problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, and creative thinking, participants learn to approach challenges with confidence and innovation. They gain the ability to analyze complex issues, generate strategic solutions, and make well-informed decisions that drive results and strengthen organizational performance.

In addition, courses on managing risks, time management, presentation skills, and communication help participants operate with greater efficiency and impact. Learners discover how to anticipate potential obstacles, prioritize effectively, deliver persuasive messages, and collaborate with clarity and purpose.

Together, these essential skills form the foundation for professional success—enabling individuals to contribute more strategically, lead more effectively, and achieve lasting results for themselves and their organizations.

Our offerings include:

1. Problem Solving and Decision Making (1 day)
2. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving (2 Days)
3. Creative Thinking and Innovation (2 Days)
4. Managing Risks (4 Hours)
5. Adjusting to Workplace Changes or a New Work Environment (4 Hours)
6. Managing Multiple Workloads / Priorities (4 Hours)
7. Time Management (4 Hours)
8. Making Successful Briefings & Presentations (2 Days)
9. How to Become a Better Communicator (1 Day)
10. Developing Your Interpersonal Skills (1 Day)



Problem Solving and Decision Making (1 day)

To take full advantage of the fast pace of technological change and opportunity, professionals must constantly seek new and innovative solutions to the challenges facing their organizations. This workshop is designed to provide the skills that they will need to accomplish this.

Participants will improve their ability to correctly and quickly identify and define problems. They will become more efficient in generating and weighing alternative solutions and communicate the preferred solution in an organized and concise manner.

In this course we use an IS-IS NOT Matrix to find the causes of a problem. It isolates the What, When, and Where, aspects of a problem, keeping the focus on the elements that have an impact on the problem and eliminating the elements that do not. The result is participants learn to uncover the root cause(s) of problems and to solve them correctly and quickly.

Critical thinking will improve a person's ability to recognize opportunities for improved business performance, to choose from a wide variety of resources to solve problems, to anticipate problems in project planning and to promote the continuous involvement of others in the improvement process.

Lastly, participants will explore how the methods used in class can be incorporated into their organization's processes and procedures. We use small lectures, discussion, individual and small team activities and lots of practice.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this workshop participants will be able to:

1. Use the IS-IS NOT Matrix of problem-solving (Kepner-Tregoe Method)
2. Identify cause(s) of problem
3. Write well-defined objectives
4. Use evaluative techniques for solution alternatives
5. Assess adverse consequences and decrease their effects
6. Use skills and techniques of creative thinking
7. Lead problem-solving and decision-making groups
8. Reduce the time it takes to solve a problem



Critical Thinking & Problem Solving (2 Days)

Each person's ability to think critically and think well is critical to success, both personal and organizational. In fact, critical thinking is at the root of all that we do well. Unfortunately, thinking effectively is hard work. The mind – left on its own, can ignore logic, refuse to look at the facts, generate ludicrous ideas and be overwhelmed with emotion – just when quality thinking is needed the most. It is often just easier to rely upon past patterns and habits.

The course employ numerous methods to accomplish the objectives including: discussion using the Socratic method, demonstration, individual, team and class activities, role plays, self-evaluation, learning instruments, video, and short reading and writing assignments.

The result is students get the skills that they'll need. They will learn to ask the right questions, discover and mitigate personal bias, challenge assumptions and see others' viewpoints with clarity and to identify and eliminate those psychological and personal barriers that block full use of their thinking potential.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify problems and opportunities; formulate problem and objectives clearly and precisely
2. Draw upon a full repertoire of thinking skills, tools and techniques to do the right thinking at the right time.
3. Identify the skills necessary for critical thinking and provide a critical perspective to their thought process.
4. Develop an awareness of their own thinking processes and the impact of those processes on their behavior and on others.
5. Explain the difference between convergent and divergent thinking and the growing need for more effective divergence need
6. Skillfully use questioning techniques to gather and assess relevant information
7. Challenge assumptions: recognize and assess the existence of assumptions and point of view in themselves and others
8. Generate and evaluate alternatives
9. Recognize and assess the existence of assumptions and point of view in themselves and others
10. Evaluate conclusions and solutions against meaningful criteria, requirements, and constraints
11. Assess and mitigate the risks of planned actions
12. Work effectively with others to figure out solutions to complex problems
13. Develop a personal action plan to transfer workshop concepts to the workplace and continue self-development



Creative Thinking and Innovation (2 Days)

To take full advantage of the fast pace of technological change and opportunity, professionals must constantly seek new and innovative solutions to the challenges facing their organizations. This workshop is designed to provide the skills that they'll need to accomplish this.

Creative thinking will improve the professional's ability to recognize opportunities for improved performance, to choose from a wide variety of resources to offer the best solution to the organization. Lastly, participants will learn to identify and eliminate those psychological and personal barriers that block full use of creative potential.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between convergent and divergent thinking
2. Provide proof that creative thinking is a skill that can be taught
3. Use the following methods to generate and evaluate ideas:
4. Brainstorming
5. Striker's "Morphology"
6. Affinity Diagramming
7. Mind Mapping
8. Discussion 66
9. Delphi Technique
10. Paired Comparison
11. Weighted Decision Model
12. Plan and lead an ideation session
13. Develop an action plan designed to overcome their barriers to creative thinking
14. Develop an 'action plan' to enhance their creative thinking ability



Managing Risks (4 hours)

People in organizations come up with good ideas all the time. Ideas that will improve efficiency and effectiveness. When pitching their ideas they often think of the costs and benefits to implement the idea, but often do not consider the risk. Or they do consider risk and avoid projects of high risk because it is a more comfortable proposition. Yet it is often the endeavors of high risk that have the most payoff.

To get the most from their ideas, risk (inherent in all endeavors) needs to be properly considered and properly managed.

This means, as Dr. Warren McFarlan (considered to be the father of project risk) suggested, innovation is avoided. Also, for projects undertaken

1. failure to obtain all, or even any, of the anticipated benefits
2. costs of implementation that vastly exceed planned levels
3. time for implementation that is much greater than expected
4. technical performance of resulting systems that turns out to be significantly below estimate

Learning Objective:

In this 1/2 –day workshop, we will explore the meaning and nature of risk and why an understanding of specific project risks is of utmost importance to decision makers. Participants will also learn the skills and techniques necessary to how to identify and communicate risks, to plan for, and how to manage risks as they occur during project execution.



Adjusting to Workplace Changes or a New Work Environment (4 Hours)

Change is inevitable. In fact, in today's fast-changing world, change is one of the few constants. And, unfortunately, so is the natural resistance to workplace changes and adapting to a new work environment. The good news is that most, if not all, of the negative consequences of resistance to change can be avoided.

Recent research on change indicates that it is possible to reduce, or potentially eliminate, this resistance if we address the human side of the change equation and help employees successfully navigate these changes. Failure to address the people side of change is unfair to the employees, harms morale and ultimately delays the successful implementation of the proposed changes.

This highly interactive workshop addresses the psychology of change, explains how people react to the stresses of change, and guides participants in developing and strengthening their personal resilience. Participants will be given tools and techniques to enable them to successfully adapt to the new work environment and respond positively to the pressures and demands of changes in the workplace and a new work environment.

Resilient people can turn the challenges and stresses of a new work environment into opportunities to increase their personal effectiveness and overall workplace satisfaction. The primary objective of this workshop is to enable participants to persevere and thrive, rather than just survive, when faced with obstacles and setbacks during changes in the workplace. These skills will serve them well in both their professional lives and their personal lives.

Class Objectives

At the successful conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Manage their emotional responses particularly when under pressure during challenging times created by workplace change.
2. Identify the obstacles that hinder their personal resilience and apply techniques to overcome these obstacles.
3. Select and implement strategies to manage the uncertainties posed by workplace changes and to respond positively and effectively.
4. Build and strengthen relationships with colleagues to better cope with the stresses of the new work environment.
5. Learn how conflict can drain their resilience and apply techniques to successfully address any conflict associated with workplace changes.
6. **Create a personal action plan to maximize personal growth / development and transfer ideas from this workshop back to the workplace.**



Managing Multiple Workloads / Priorities (4 Hours)

Having “too much to do” is a constant complaint in today’s fast paced environment. The demand to do more with less has become constant. Every priority claims to be urgent and demands our immediate attention. Many of us find ourselves pulled in multiple directions, with competing deadlines, urgent requests, and limited resources.

The challenge is how to get it all done - or at least do the best we can with the time we’ve got. It’s not just about being busy, it’s about being effective. The ability to manage multiple workloads while maintaining a sense of clarity, purpose, and well-being is a skill that can significantly impact both performance and satisfaction at work.

This highly interactive, results-oriented, workshop will help participants increase personal effectiveness and improve operating efficiencies. Participants will be given tools and techniques to balance an ever increasing To Do list that is subject to constantly changing priorities. Participants will develop and practice the skills necessary to assess priorities, organize tasks, and respond more strategically to shifting demands. Participants will also learn how to identify and address common productivity traps, such as multitasking, procrastination, and poor communication around priorities. The overall goal of the workshop is to enable participants to lessen the number of crises they experience, create a less stressful work environment and feel more in control.

Class Objectives

At the successful conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate tasks and goals using the lens of urgency and importance to effectively schedule and prioritize critical tasks and projects.
2. Learn the core principles of prioritizing tasks and effectively apply a variety of techniques which can be adapted to different situations.
3. Select and apply strategies which will enable you to modify inefficient behaviors, defeat personal procrastination and
4. remain in control of their workload.
5. Recognize personal and organizational time-wasting habits and practice strategies to minimize or eliminate them.
6. Apply techniques to maintain mental well-being and energy levels when responsible for managing heavy or shifting workloads and changing priorities.
7. **Create a personal action plan to maximize personal growth / development and transfer ideas from this workshop back to the workplace.**



Time Management (4 Hours)

Having “too much to do” is a constant complaint in today’s fast paced environment. It seems as if every new task is presented as critically urgent and demands our immediate attention. A common plea from employees is “if I only had more time.” Our challenge is how to get it all done, or at least do the best we can with the time we’ve got.

Time management is about self-control. To manage our time is to manage ourselves. The control you have is over your own behavior. Everyone has the same amount of time. Each week contains 168 hours, no more, no less. What we accomplish is all dependent upon how we utilize these 168 hours. Time management is really priority management. If we do not have enough time to accomplish a task, it is because we chose something else as a priority. It’s not just about being busy, it’s about being effective.

This highly interactive, purposeful, workshop will give participants proven tools and techniques to effectively organize tasks, respond strategically to shifting demands, and reduce the stresses associated with poor time management. Participants will also learn how to identify and address common productivity traps, reduce personal procrastination, and prioritize their workload. The overall goal of the workshop is to enable participants to maximize their personal effectiveness, create a less stressful work environment and achieve balance in their daily lives. Mastering time management is a crucial strategy to achieve personal success and well-being.

Class Objectives:

At the successful conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- **Identify and prioritize tasks by applying an** urgent / important matrix to ensure that their time is spent effectively.
- Understand the root causes of procrastination and apply proven tools to overcome this common productivity barrier.
- Learn and apply methods to create realistic schedules and effective planning frameworks that enhance productivity and reduce workplace stress.
- Select and implement mindfulness practices to manage stress, improve focus, and foster a balanced approach to time management.
- Apply techniques to effectively and diplomatically manage interruptions and manage ‘shifting’ priorities.
- Analyze their workload to identify and apply time-saving shortcuts.
- Create a personal action plan to maximize personal growth / development and transfer ideas from this workshop back to the workplace.



Making Successful Briefings and Presentations (2 Days)

In this workshop, participants learn to plan for, structure, prepare and deliver briefings that achieve the intended result. They will learn practical techniques to communicate and reinforce their message, by focusing on the audience's needs and objectives, how to avoid distracting mannerisms, and how to take advantage of non-verbal communications to make their points. They will be able to cope with difficult situations and with difficult people. And they will learn how to incorporate various visual support materials into the presentation.

The key to this workshop is practice. Video feedback is used during class and a copy is given to the student.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have not only the skill, but also, the poise and confidence to deliver clear concise briefings that achieve the intended result.

Objectives

1. Capture and maintain audience interest and attention
2. Discern and address the attitudes and needs of the audience
3. Respond to difficult questions and objections
4. Deliver presentations that are concise and clear
5. Organize ideas and information to achieve the briefing objective
6. Capitalize on non-verbal communications to make the point
7. Minimize distracting behaviors
8. Establish rapport with the audience
9. Describe how and when to use humor
10. Plan the briefing
11. Prepare for a briefing
12. Design and use visuals effectively
13. Create and use notes effectively

*Class size is limited to 15 participants to provide each participant time to present and receive feedback on their presentation.



How to Become a Better Communicator (1 Day)

Success in an organization requires effective communication skills. Whether the audience is an entire organization or a single individual, effective communication requires bringing together different points of view and relaying information without losing clarity or focus. By the end of this course, participants will have gained the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to become a better communicator in both their personal and organizational lives.

Participants learn practical tools and techniques to develop effective communications skills, improve their people skills and expand their ability to influence and gain commitment from colleagues, subordinates and superiors and put an end to miscommunication. Participants will practice strategies for opening the lines of communication to end energy-draining feuding and infighting between individuals and within teams and departments.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize barriers to effective communication and select strategies to overcome them.
2. Adapt their natural communication style to different audiences and contexts.
3. Listen and respond effectively to others using active listening skills and probing questions to increase understanding.
4. Effectively use body language, facial expressions, and gestures to improve communications and exhibit an awareness of cultural differences in non-verbal communication.
5. Express empathy and manage emotions to build productive relationships.
6. Apply techniques to influence peers, managers, subordinates, customers and other stakeholders.
7. Apply effective skills to initiate and navigate difficult conversations, resolve conflicts constructively and handle specific challenges like delivering bad news.
8. Develop the trust, credibility and rapport needed to deliver superior results, build consensus and achieve employee buy-in and team commitment.
9. Transfer the skills learned in this course to the workplace and maximize personal growth and development through the development of a personal action plan.



Developing Your Interpersonal Skills (1 Day)

Developing and exhibiting interpersonal skills is crucial in achieving organizational success. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships within your workplace enables associates to work together collaboratively and effectively. Good interpersonal skills enable people to nurture and maintain positive workplace relationships. People with good interpersonal skills exhibit behavioral flexibility to deal with each person and situation differently.

This course enables participants to analyze both the effective and potentially self-destructive behavior patterns in their interpersonal relations with colleagues to improve their personal effectiveness. Participants will practice techniques to open the lines of communication between individuals to enhance personal effectiveness.

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify different personality styles among colleagues, assess the best approach to enhance interpersonal relationships among various personalities and break-down the common barriers among people with different styles.
2. Cultivate empathy by encouraging participants to recognize and understand others' perspectives, emotions, and experiences, fostering deeper connections and mutual respect.
3. Respond diplomatically to difficult people in a variety of tough situations.
4. Build trust and rapport with others by emphasizing authenticity, reliability, and mutual respect as foundations for healthy relationships.
5. Increase awareness of nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, enabling participants to convey messages more effectively and interpret others' emotions accurately.
6. Foster emotional intelligence by helping participants recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions and those of others, leading to more empathetic and emotionally aware interactions.
7. Promote collaboration and teamwork by emphasizing the importance of cooperation in achieving shared goals, both within teams and across organizational boundaries.
8. Apply effective strategies to manage and resolve conflicts constructively, promote open dialogue, work collaboratively and achieve win-win solutions.
9. Transfer the skills learned in this course to the workplace and maximize personal growth and development through the development of a personal action plan.