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Welcome to the newsletter of **Profiles of HongKong** and the **Leadership & Management Development Centre**

### **Breaking News**

**Watch out for our new extended services!!!**

- **new assessment test – Supervisory Skills test. If you are thinking of hiring or promoting and would like to know whether the person is going to make a great Supervisor, try our new Supervisory Skills assessment. It is a very cost effective test with very easy to read report.**
- **e-learning – have you ever wondered how to make learning stick? Try our new e-learning program which can be easily designed to complement each workshop. This fantastic program can be designed to tag onto a workshop to ensure learning sticks.**

**Contact us for more details on these two new tools.**

***Our article for this season:***

### **Assertiveness – an asset for leaders**

One of the traits expected in leaders is 'Assertiveness'. Is it a trait that is inborn or is it like a skill, where it could be learnt? Assertiveness can definitely be learnt and it is not just a trait confined to leaders. In fact assertiveness goes a long way to creating an honest and positive relationship, free of misunderstanding and poor relationships.

Assertive people usually have a certain level of expectations of themselves and they possess self-confidence. They are responsive to people's needs and at the same time can manage their own emotions whilst maintaining a calm yet authoritative presence. Assertiveness is not just stating your opinion or taking a position. It is actually a communications strategy where your message is focused on meeting your needs and that of the other people. The message given has to be clear and given with a strong sense of honesty, respect, appreciation and recognition of the other person. You need to communicate your values honestly and directly. If you hold your values deeply you can more confidently assert your beliefs and your values and genuinely express yourself and your message clearly. You need to be clear what is the message you wish to deliver and ensure that it is aligned with your values.

The next step is to recognize the values of the other person and what is in it for them. To be assertive does not mean just voicing your opinion and your values, it requires acknowledgement of the other person's position. This is what is often called a 'win-win' situation – where both sides benefit from the assertive communication.

The second part of assertiveness is the need for self control. In order to ensure that assertive communication goes on well, you need to control your negative emotions and understand where it comes from. Negative feelings often arise when we feel challenged, intimidated, loss of control and loss of confidence. We begin to feel anger arising, a sense of failure, a sense of losing it which result in negative and destructive emotions. Anxiety and dominating behaviour are the outcomes which further add to a deteriorating situation where we begin to lose it rather than win it through assertive behaviour. We become aggressive and dominating rather than assertive. Some people may resort to a 'flight' behaviour where they give in whilst fuming inside. They become submissive and accepts what is doled out to them. The third choice is to be assertive – to act in an emotionally intelligent way and communicate your message honestly and directly whilst respecting the other person's right to be different. We take responsibility for our feelings

and our actions – we are not here to live to other peoples' expectations and they are not here to live up to yours. You choose to have control of yourself and your feelings and you communicate that clearly.

Assertiveness is an asset for every one and much more so for leaders. Where do we start being assertive??

We start by understanding that assertiveness is about communicating your message to others who might not agree with you. You need to understand that in our world, there will always be conflict and resistance. By acknowledging the other person's rights to their beliefs and communicating your message honestly and directly, we can ensure that communication can continue. Supporting this with an ability to control our own negative emotional reaction to the other person's behaviour, we take responsibility of our own actions.

In summary, our assertiveness strategies include:

- honest and straightforward communication
- build our communication based on our values and beliefs and communicate that message clearly
- know what we want and what our message is going to be
- acknowledge and respect the other person's feelings
- stay in control of our own feelings and be responsible for your own feelings and actions.
- Establish direct eye contact and use a neutral tone of voice.

*"To know oneself, one should assert oneself" – Albert Camus*

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## **Quips and quotes!**

*"Assertiveness is not what you do, it's who you are" - Le Mon, Cal*

*"The basic difference between being assertive and being aggressive is how our words and behaviour affect the rights and well being of others"- Bower, Sharon Anthony*

## **Did you know???**

According to a UCLA study, at age 5, we engage in creative tasks 98 times a day, laugh 113 times and ask questions 65 times. By the age of 44, the number shrinks to 2 creative tasks a day, 11 laughs and 6 questions.

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*Thank you for your support and patience. If you do not wish to receive our newsletter in future, please email us at [info@profileshongkong.com](mailto:info@profileshongkong.com) with your name and company and the message – "Remove" on the subject line.*

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