

## High Stakes Communications (Code: HSC)

Evolution-U Language & Communication Business Suite

Full Day - Advanced



*The Evolution-U Language & Communication Business Suite is a focused offer of engaging soft skills trainings, providing **usable tools for better & measurable performance** praised by our clients*

### Client Testimonials

"I want to recommend this course to colleagues and other institutions (other consulting firms, IBs, corporates, MBA students, etc). Through the High Stakes Communication training, we were provided with **very well structured techniques to deal with tough situations in a business setting**. It was also helpful to increase the awareness in the subtle micro messages that might have a great impact on the team's performance. The training was effective as we had many group sessions to digest the concept and discuss in a group to apply the methodology into the real business situation- how to discuss sensitive topics, finding common ground via Shared Pool, maintaining safety in a tough situation, etc."

S. Kim, Associate,  
US Management Consulting Group

"This is **very effective tool** to be used on day to day basis."

Mochida, Director,  
US Management Consulting Group

**Useful** ★★★★★ 4.55 (385 responses)    **Easy to Follow** ★★★★★ 4.55 (385 responses)

Collection Methodology available on [www.evolution-u.com](http://www.evolution-u.com)

### Course Outline

This intensive one day training draws on world leading research in the areas of linguistics, coaching, leadership and psychology to bring together powerful content for managing critical communications where the stakes are high, there is a difference of opinions, and emotions have the potential to derail agreement.

High Stakes Communications may include any of the following:

- high stakes outcomes
- business critical content
- emotional risk
- potent disagreements
- conflicting non-verbal indicators
- judgment and bias

### Learning Objectives

By taking this course, participants will:

- develop awareness of the non-verbal indicators known as 'micro messages' which can impact perception and turn conversations into difficult conversations;
- identify the traits of critical communications and learn the Critical Communication Methodology to help avoid conflict, promote understanding, and generate acceptance;
- learn a structured approach for dealing with critical communications; how to make it 'safe' to bring up sensitive or disagreeable material, gather information, promote collaboration and influence the outcome.

This is a one day instructor lead training with video support, individual and group exercises, role plays and tests. Participants will be expected to contribute actively and share ideas during the session.

## Course Content

### Micro Messages Introduction

Micro messages are signals that people send via facial expression, body language, tone of voice and verbal inflection. Micro messages may be subtle, or as is often the case, not so subtle and impact the way we feel about each other by effecting perception. Micro messaging theory has been adopted by many Fortune 500 companies at senior management levels as a tool for enhancing management and team dynamics resulting in improved performance and financial results.

### The Organisation Impact of Micro Messages

Micro advantages can have a significant impact on employee performance, commitment, loyalty, and output – especially when 'bestowed' by those in positions of authority. The study of micro messages therefore lies at the core of organisational performance. Understanding how small changes in personal communication, both verbal and non-verbal can impact perception and performance is a key element of breaking down invisible barriers to performance and improving relationships.

### Identifying Micro Messages

This section of the training introduced the six crucial variables checklist for micro messages and focuses on techniques for developing awareness of our own and others micro messages. Video, role play and case studies are used to develop awareness and draw out the principles.

### Micro Messages and Leadership

Micro messages fall into two categories; Micro inequities and Micro advantages. We naturally bestow Micro advantages on those we like and relate to, we smile, agree, nod, compliment, listen and give them the benefit of the doubt. When we do the opposite however and bestow micro inequities on others, we are often now aware of the damage we are doing and this lies at the root of ineffective leadership. One should never underestimate the impact an unaddressed micro inequity can have on a manager-subordinate relationship. When a hierarchical relationship exists, micro inequities from the senior to the junior are likely to impact the leader's effectiveness as well as the recipient's confidence, involvement and performance. Instructor led discussion and video analysis is used during this section.

### The Critical Communication Model

The root cause of many, if not most human problems lies in how people behave when they enter a critical communication which has any of the following three elements present; high stakes, difference of opinions and/or emotional content. Despite the importance of dealing with such critical conversations, we often back away from them because we fear we'll make matters worse. Research shows that strong relationships, careers, organisations, and communities all draw from the same source of power; the ability to talk openly about high-stakes, emotional, controversial topics. In this session, the Critical Communications Model is introduced and sets the

framework for the remainder of the training. The concept is simply that we don't have to choose between being honest vs. being effective. We can express controversial, even risky opinions and be heard without alienating others or risking relationships.

### The Pool of Shared Meaning

The Pool of Shared Meaning is a crucial concept in building the critical communications methodology. Each of us enters dialogue with our own view, opinions, feelings and experiences which comprise our 'mental set'. Our unique mental set makes up our personal pool of meaning. This pool forms a filter through which we run interactions. It not only informs us, but influences our every action. As others enter the conversation, different pools of meaning may collide. This section discussed how the skilled at dialogue make it safe to add meaning to the shared pool so that we are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, and make better choices.

### Reframing Our Stories

When we observe an action we add meaning to it; we make immediate and unconscious assumptions at the underlying motive driving the behaviour. In effect we tell ourselves a story about the observation and in turn we then respond with an emotion. This intermediate step between what others do and how we feel is why, when faced with the exact same situation, ten people may have ten different emotional responses. Using this understanding, a methodology is taught for understanding the stories we tell ourselves so we can analyse our 'Path to Action'; the process by which our stories create our emotions. If we can find a way to control the stories we tell, by rethinking or retelling them, we can master our emotions and, therefore, master our critical communications. Class exercises and case studies are used to build the theory in this session.

### The Six Steps to Discussing Sensitive Topics

This section introduces a six-step framework for how to speak our minds without making people defensive, pushing too hard, backing off too soon, or regretting that we spoke. Using this framework allows us to be persuasive without being abrasive. Strong communicators realise the only limit to how strongly they can express their opinion is their willingness to be equally vigorous in encouraging others to challenge it, and by inviting discussion deeper understanding and relationships are formed. This section uses extensive video support and video based exercises to help participant develop the skills necessary to use the six step structure for discussing sensitive topics.

### Maintaining Safety in Dialogue

When people feel unsafe in a dialogue, they tend to stray down one of two unhealthy paths. They either move to silence and withholding meaning from the pool, or to violence and force meaning in the pool. This section teaches participants to recognise such shifts, and to "recode" silence and violence as signs that people are feeling unsafe, build safety and maintain dialogue. Use of exercises and case studies facilitate the learning.

## Who Should Take This Course

Business Owners, Management, Sales, PR & Marketing Executives, Human Resources Executives, any and all Customer-facing Staff, anyone dealing with Sales, Negotiation or Mediation, or needing to influence or persuade people on a regular basis will benefit for learning and mastering the techniques introduced in these courses, with immediate results.

**This training course is fully certified by Evolution-U.**

**For more information & reservations please contact Jessica  
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