Professionalism & Soft Skills Development

# Assignment: Communication & listening

**Assignment Description:** Read textbook chapter and complete associated workbook pages. Interview someone in your field and write a professional response.

**Assignment Environment:** The students should have access to the textbook, workbook, and additional readings as well as someone in their chosen career field.

### **exercise 1**

Read “Who Can be Helpful to You?” from the LYC textbook Step 2

### **Exercise 2**

Complete the worksheets from the LYC Workbook Step 2 for at least 5 contacts separated by organization

### **Exercise 3**

Interview 1 employee in your area about their career path; or interview someone you meet at a conference about their career path (make sure to get their business card)

Make sure you have enough questions to have at least a 30 minute conversation (use the “Information Interview Questions” - below)

Provide your instructor with their contact so they can be sent a survey to get results on how well you did (use “Interviewee Survey” - below)

### **Exercise 4**

Write a professional "thank you" email to the person you interviewed. Ensure the email follows these points:

* Professional email format, punctuation, grammar, and length
* What you appreciated about the time they spent with you
* What you learned from the experience
* How their time with you is going to help you with your future career decisions

The email should be no more than 300 words, so write it in a WORD document for editing and checking before sending it.

## What to Submit

Submit your professionally formatted email response. Show your instructor your completed LYC worksheets. Ensure your instructor receives the interview survey.

Written Assessment Rubric:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment Dimensions** | Exemplary (4) | Accomplished (3) | Developing (2) | Beginning (1) |
| Critical Thinking | 4 Points  Student’s paper addressed the topic, provided solid support for their point and further explored the topic providing more original thought on the subject. | 3 Points  Student’s paper addressed the topic and provided adequate support for their point. | 2 Points  Student’s paper addressed the topic, but lacked support for their point on the topic. | 1 Point  Student’s paper addressed the topic, but did not provide support or deeper explanation of the topic. |
| Communication | 3 Points  Student’s paper conveyed their thoughts clearly, with few to no grammatical errors. | 2 Points  Student’s paper conveyed their thoughts clearly but had few, noticeable, grammatical errors. | 1.5 Points  Student’s paper conveyed their thoughts but with several grammatical errors and/or incomplete sentences. | 1 Point  Student’s paper does not convey their thoughts clearly or properly. Several grammatical errors and incomplete sentences. |
| Formatting | 2 Points  Student’s paper is in proper APA (latest edition) format with little to no formatting errors. Adequate and proper citation has been provided both in-text and on their reference page. | 1.25 Points  Student’s paper had few formatting issues but provided adequate and proper citation both in-text and on their reference page. | 1 Point  Student’s paper had several formatting issues but provided adequate citation both in-text and on their reference page. | 0.75 Points  Student’s paper had several formatting issues (i.e. lack of citations or citation formatting). |
| Deliverables | 1 Point  Student delivered all parts of their assignments in the proper format and completed. | 0.75 Points  Student delivered all parts of their assignment. | 0.5 Points  Student delivered all parts of their assignment but portions are incorrect or incomplete. | 0.25 Points  Student did not deliver all parts of the assignment. |
| Point Value | 10 | 7 | 5 | 3 |

**Interviewer Evaluation Form—to be completed by the Interviewee**

Please rate the following skills using this scale:

1-Poor 2-Below Average 3-Average 4-Above Average 5-Excellent n/a- Did not observe

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| **Confidence**  Came across self-assured using interpersonal skills, managing personal emotions, nervousness. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Communication**  Effectively communicated ideas clearly and confidently through speaking, emails, etc. Able to articulate thoughts appropriately. No slang, foul language, etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Listening**  Exhibited active listening, were engaged, not distracted by phone/time, asked good questions and followed your story. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Vision**  Able to articulate their personal and career goals. Their “why” and how had purpose, cause, belief. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Professional**  Proper attire, punctual, respectful, managed time well. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Attitude**  Had a pleasant demeanor throughout the meeting. Did not get flustered, lose temper, or act immaturely. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Areas of strength:

1.

2.

Areas where improvement is needed:

1.

2.

Evaluator Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Information Interview: Questions to Ask**

**General Questions About the Career Field:**

1. What are the various jobs available in this field?
2. What is the employment outlook? How much demand is there for people in this career?
3. What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions?
4. What skills or personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this industry?
5. What entry-level jobs offer the best opportunities for learning?

**Questions About the Employer**

1. What products or services are in the development stage now?
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect in the first six months/one year on the job?
3. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
4. Given the dynamics of the industry, how do you see the company evolving over five years?
5. What types of training does your organization provide?

**Questions About Your Contact’s Job**

1. What specifically do you do? What are your duties and responsibilities?
2. Describe some of the most challenging situations you have faced in this job.
3. What do you find most satisfying? Least satisfying?
4. Which other departments, functional units or, levels do you regularly interact with?
5. What projects have you worked on have been particularly interesting?

**Questions About Preparation for the Career Field**

1. What educational preparation do you recommend?
2. Is prior experience necessary and, if so, what kind?
3. If you were a college student again, what would you choose the same path your yourself? Why? What would you change?

**Questions About Your Contact’s Career Path**

1. In what way did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
2. What jobs and experiences have led you to the present position?
3. What are related jobs for which your background would prepare you?
4. Where do you go from here in your career?
5. If you could start over, would you choose the same path? Why? What would you change?

**Questions About Organizational Culture**

1. What do you like most about this company?
2. What kinds of behaviors are rewarded?
3. How would you describe the atmosphere at the company? Is it formal or more laid-back?
4. What values are the most treasured here; what is the company’s vision statement?
5. How does the company recognize the contributions of outstanding employees?

**Questions About Opportunities for Advancement**

1. What are the advancement opportunities?
2. How long does it take to move from one step to the next?
3. What is the typical career path for someone in this field?
4. Where could I expect to be in three years/five years?
5. What is the highest position that someone can hold in this career?

**Seeking General Advice and Referrals**

1. Do you know of other people whom I might contact who have jobs similar to yours?
2. What do you wish you had known before you entered this field?