
Yoshiko Aiba
Corporate Officer and Principal Lecturer, Q-Leap Inc.

Communication: A Core Competency in the Global Workplace

6 Core Competencies for All Level of the Organization

1. Adaptability
2. Communication
3. Decision Making
4. Driving for Results
5. Innovation
6. Teamwork

Communication Skills
- Good verbal communicator
- Good writer
- Good listener
- Good public speaker
- Makes good presentations
- Reports always accurate, punctual
- Shares information with team

What impact Do They Want to Have by Communicating Effectively?
- Gain the respect and cooperation of colleagues
- Develop trust with internal partners and external customers
- Build a network of strategic business relationships
- Help themselves and others embrace change
- Resolve interpersonal conflicts
- Provide feedback that helps people achieve higher levels of performance
- Turn difficult customer situations into positive interactions

Analysis of Japanese Business Professionals’ English Proficiency

- Interviewees: 25 Japanese business people working in the US
- Industries: Finance, Trading, Health, Oil & Gas, Medical, Education, Fashion, IT, Consulting, Coaching, Media, Coaching, Art
- Responsibilities: Sales, M&A Consulting, Marking, Management, Phys. Dentist, Licensing, Artist, Wedding planner, Geologist, Trader

Ages When They First Came to America to Work

Most people came in their 20s – 30s

Interviewees’ Average TOEIC® Score: 880
(Japanese total: 512*)
*2013 data from ETS

Major Uses of English at Work

- Email & Meeting account for more than 50%
- All 4 skills are needed
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Listening
  - Speaking

Teaching Strategies for JP Learners Who Pursue a Global Career

- English Proficiency Prerequisite:
  - TOEIC® 880 / TOEIC® SW 340 / TOEFL® IBT 95 / IELTS 6.5 / Eiken Pre-1
  These scores prove the learners’ English proficiency including vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

- Business-Focused Language Input & Output
  - Business meetings, tele-conferences, presentations, negotiation, Q&A, meeting facilitation etc.

- Pragmatics skills (Socio-Cultural Appropriateness)
  Inter-culture & inter-language pragmatics skills including speech acts strategies. e.g. requests, refusals, complaints, apologies etc.

- Sample Lesson
  Goal: “How to Effectively Enhance Self-Esteem”
  Enhancing self-esteem means telling your colleagues or clients that their insights and input make a difference. When people succeed at something or make a valuable contribution, you can enhance their esteem by acknowledging their efforts. This can motivate and energize them as they will know that what they do is valued and appreciated.

- Key Strategies:
  - Be specific and sincere
  - Use the person’s name to make a more personal connection
  - Recognize accomplishments and efforts
  - Acknowledge good thinking and ideas
  - Use context-appropriate language depending on SDI*

- Sample expressions:
  “Thanks so much for finding such a nice venue for our PR event, Maki. I’m sure our guests will be very happy. You’re the best!”
  “Thank you for pointing out this issue, Mr. Sato. I appreciate your taking the time to tell me there was a problem.”
  “Grace, you’re really good at creating high-impact presentations, so thanks for offering to make our proposal. It definitely will attract our potential customers.”

- Role play: Tell your colleague Jack that you appreciate his effort to keep track of everyone’s requests to submit an accurate list to management. → Teacher to give corrective feedback to the speech.

Most Challenging Situations When Communicating in English

- Listening
  When speakers speak very fast or with strong accents
  Tele-conferences (when sound quality is not good)
  Discussion, Negotiation
  Meeting facilitation
  Making complaints & Handling complaints
  Q&A at presentations

- Speaking
  Cross-cultural differences
  Sense of humor, Small talk

- Culture

Contact Information

Ms. Yoshiko Aiba
yoshikoaiba@q-leap.co.jp
http://q-leap.co.jp/