Lecture 7 - Attire, behavior and personal development

1. Attire/Workplace etiquette/Working from home etiquette

For an engineer, the suitable attire is very important.

The specialists consider that you have 7 seconds to create a first impression for people, and this first impression is the most important. If the first impression people make about you is a positive one, you can easily maintain it over time, but if the first impression is not very good, you need to put a lot of effort to improve it in people's eyes.

The first thing that people will see will be your appearance: your attire and your smile.

When you have a professional meeting, you have to be clean and neat. Males should be shaved or should have a well-groomed beard and haircut. The meeting can be face-to-face or online. In both cases, if there is no other rule stated, it is preferable for you to have a business attire.

For the online meetings, please make sure your desk is located in a suitable position, so that the background that the people see is a professional one, clean and simple. It is not appropriate to enter in an online meeting having behind a messy bed or kitchen, or your housemates to pass around looking for objects, or talking to you. In case there is noise in the house (children, noisy housemates, pets, as so on), please use headphones and try to minimise the noise, and when you don't speak in the meeting, keep the microphone on mute.

To have a nice background, some software applications have the option to add a background. As long as your face is the only one in front of the computer (the software application uses the face recognition as a detection method), the software will see only you and the chosen background.

2. Interpersonal skills

- Be polite.

- Be humble, never be arrogant, no matter how good you are professionally.

- Understand that everybody is good at something and don't look down on people.

- Be helpful with your teammates and with other people.

- Don't do good things for people expecting a reward from them.

- Don't try to force your point of view; instead, find ways to persuade people, give them solid reasons and use modern tools (such as visualisation tools) to highlight the advantages of your idea. Also, be realistic about the downsides, to show that you made a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of your idea.

- Don't try to forcefully change people's mentalities. Changing the mentality sometimes takes years, even if your idea is great. Also, be open minded to the fact that each person has a different view about the same problem, based on their upbringing, educational background, previous experience and expertise and other factors. Your idea might be great, but also consider the option in which your idea might not be the best fit at that particular moment in time and accept other people's ideas with professionalism and respect.

- Create a pleasant work environment.

- Don't argue with your co-workers or your boss.

- When you go to work, keep your workplace clean and tidy, with very few objects on your desk, because having many things creates a messy image, distracts and reduces your work efficiency, and the efficiency of others around you.

- When you are in the office and have an online meeting or a phone call, talk with low voice, to avoid disturbing your colleagues.

- Be friendly with your colleagues, communicate with them, help them and kindly ask them for help when you need.

- When you make a mistake, be honest and don't be afraid to admit the you did a mistake: admitting that you did a mistake is a proof that you understood the situation and there are fewer chances to repeat that mistake. It is a wrong approach to try to blame someone else for the wrong things that you did, or to try to find excuses for your mistakes.

- Take care how you express your ideas. Some expressions that are very polite in your culture might not be appropriate here in Australia. For example in some cultures "I request you to do something" is very polite. But some people here in Australia might find this expression impolite, because it sounds like you are demanding things, not like you are asking nicely. Instead, you can say: "I would like to kindly ask you to do this for me, please."

3. Personal Development

To be a good professional, you have to consider the personal development, as well. A happy person works much better, and delivers the work in less time.

- Develop your attention to detail, because this is a very important skill, not only in the workplace, but also in the society, with your teammates, housemates, friends, etc.
- Accept as many challenges as possible - going beyond your comfort zone helps you improve yourself as a professional, and as a person
- Be always willing to learn new things - learning keeps your brain active. Attend online courses and read books every day
- Before going to sleep in the evening, ask yourself if you did something to improve yourself during that day. If you find something, that's great!
- Also, before going to sleep, have a clear plan for the following day, in terms of work and study. This will help you start the day knowing exactly what you have to do, and therefore you are much more efficient.

- Take small steps and be realistic when you make the plan - don't underestimate the time it takes to complete a task when you do your planning, to avoid being disappointed that you didn't finish it in the allocated timeframe.

- Good habits are important. There are good habits and bad habits. Drinking a glass of alcohol every evening is a bad habit. Waking up at 6 am and running for 30 mins every morning, is a good habit. Good habits help you be healthy and in a good mood. This means that you will be able to work more and better, to have good results and to feel accomplished.

- Plan your career ahead. Try to see the big picture: where you want to be in the future, what job you want to have. Then try to find the path to get there.

- Focus on the positive aspects of your life, and you will attract positive things.

- Improve your English skills - this is a process that takes a long time, and a good engineer must have very good English, both verbal and written.

To improve your English language skills, go on LinkedIn learning (www.linkedin.com/learning) or Udemy (www.udemy.com) and search for "English". Don't forget to select FREE courses.