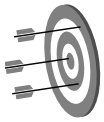


Negative Ten-dency

Word Usage



Goal To examine the impact of specific words on the communication process. Participants will identify words that provoke a negative response for them.

Time Required Approximately 30 to 45 minutes

Group Size Subgroups of three to five persons each



Materials

- One copy of the Negative Ten-dency Worksheet and a pencil for each person



PROCESS

1. Explain to the participants that they will be examining how specific words can affect the interpretation of a message.
2. Distribute a copy of the worksheet and a pencil to each participant.
3. Direct each participant to write down ten words, excluding obscenities, that for them provoke strong negative responses. Allow approximately 5 minutes for individual work.
4. Form subgroups of three to five participants each.
5. Ask the groups to discuss the chosen words and the reasons why they were chosen. Allow approximately 10 minutes for small group discussion.
6. Facilitate a large group discussion based on the following questions:
 - What “types” of words were selected?
 - Are there similarities among the words that were chosen? What were they?
 - What events or experiences led to the negative meaning of the words?
 - When we communicate with others, what assumptions might occur as a result of our word choices?
 - What role does perception (our personal view of the world) play in this process?
 - How does a negative response during the communication process affect the outcome of an interaction? How does it affect conflict resolution, specifically?
 - How can we use this information to communicate better with customers?

NEGATIVE TEN-DENCY WORKSHEET

Directions: List ten words that you feel provoke a strong negative response from you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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