

Course	Agricultural Science I
Unit	Introduction to Agricultural Business
Lesson	Personal Skills Needed in Agricultural Business
Estimated Time	50 minutes

Student Outcome

Outline personal skills necessary for success in agricultural businesses.

Learning Objectives

1. Determine which communication skills are necessary to succeed in agricultural business.
2. Describe how an employee relates effectively to others within the organizational structure.
3. Explain the importance of professional development activities.
4. Determine how employee conduct affects career success in agricultural business.

Grade Level Expectations

Resources, Supplies & Equipment, and Supplemental Information

Resources

1. PowerPoint Slide
 - Ppt 1 - Organizational Chart for Joe's Tractor Supply Store
2. Handouts
 - HO 1 - Sample Business Letter
 - HO 2 - Sample Office Memo
3. Activity Sheet
 - AS 1 - Behaviors in the Workplace
4. *Introduction to Agricultural Business* (Student Reference). University of Missouri-Columbia: Instructional Materials Laboratory, 2001.
5. *Introduction to Agricultural Business Curriculum Enhancement*. University of Missouri-Columbia: Instructional Materials Laboratory, 2003.

Supplemental Information

1. Internet Sites
 - Robinson, J. P. *The Workplace*. Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Accessed June 19, 2007, from <http://www.aces.edu/crd/workforce/publications/employability-skills.PDF>.
 - Scott, E. *How To Communicate: Improve Your Relationships With Effective Communication Skills*. Accessed June 19, 2007, from <http://stress.about.com/od/relationships/ht/healthycomm.htm>.
2. Print
 - Agribusiness Sales, Marketing, and Management* (Instructor Guide). University of Missouri-Columbia, Instructional Materials Laboratory, 1997.

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- ❑ Hess, P. M. *Career Success: Right Here, Right Now!* Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, 1999.
 - ❑ Hunter, S., et al. *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills*. Danville, IL: Interstate Publishers, Inc. 1997.
 - ❑ Ricketts, C. *Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, 1997.
 - ❑ Ricketts, C. and O. Rawlins. *Introduction to Agribusiness*. Albany, NY: Delmar Thomson Learning, 2001.
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Interest Approach

Ask students to name three to four agricultural businesses that interest them and list them on the board. Through role-playing, have them identify personal skills or characteristics that an employee would need in each of the businesses. Write the skills or characteristics on the board and indicate these are the topic for the lesson.


Communicate the Learning Objectives


1. Determine which communication skills are necessary to succeed in agricultural business.
2. Describe how an employee relates effectively to others within the organizational structure.
3. Explain the importance of professional development activities.
4. Determine how employee conduct affects career success in agricultural business.

Instructor Directions	Content Outline
<p>Objective 1</p> <p><i>Engage the class in a discussion about effective communication skills. Ask students to identify examples of poor communication and to discuss the consequences. Apply students' comments to sales skills required in many agricultural businesses. Encourage students to consider if agriculture-related occupations require a different set of communication skills than other occupations. Ask them to justify their answers. Explain that there are four general types of communication skills. Each of these four consists of specific skills.</i></p> <p>☰ HO 1 - Sample Business Letter</p> <p>☰ HO 2 - Sample Office Memo</p>	<p>Determine which communication skills are necessary to succeed in agricultural business.</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Eye contact<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Demonstrates credibility and sincerityb. Keeps attention of a large audience and gives individuals the sense that you are speaking directly to them2. Handshake<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Deliver a firm handshake.b. Continue to maintain eye contact to demonstrate confidence and friendliness.3. Listening<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide full attention to the person with whom you are speaking.b. Listen attentively when other people are talking.c. Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking. <p>Verbal skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Coworkers<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Be sincere, direct, and honest.b. Respond effectively - speak clearly and address coworkers' concerns thoroughly2. Employer<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Speak respectfully.b. Settle disagreements privately.3. Customers<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Speak clearly and directly.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Be friendly and courteous to the customer. <p>4. Telephone skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be very clear and descriptive. b. Have all necessary information available. c. Help the caller as quickly as possible. <p>Presentation skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain audience's attention. 2. Speak to everyone in the audience. 3. Use visual aids and eye contact. 4. Be prepared and organized. 5. Think before speaking. 6. Use your voice and facial expressions to stress importance or excitement. <p>Written skills - basic guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know the subject matter you are writing about. 2. Understand why you are writing the document. 3. Choose words and phrases the reader will understand. 4. Present ideas clearly, concisely, and logically. 5. Use professional language in all written business communications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. b. Do not use slang or inappropriate language. 6. Use correct format for different types of documents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. E-mail - Even though it is a casual form of written communication, use professional language. b. Business letter (See HO 1.) - Use proper layout and company's letterhead if applicable. c. Office memo (See HO 2.) - Relate memo to work situations.
<p>Objective 2</p> <p><i>Select one of the three businesses whose means and opportunities were discussed in Lesson 2 and ask students how they think that company is structured. Another option is to select a local agricultural business that</i></p>	<p>Describe how an employee relates effectively to others within the organizational structure.</p> <p>Maintain a positive working relationship with the supervisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete all tasks thoroughly, correctly, and on time. 2. Follow company policies and procedures. 3. Arrive at work on time. <p>Work effectively with coworkers.</p>

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<p><i>students are familiar with and ask them how the company is organized. Who is in charge? Who does each employee report to? How should the employees treat their coworkers, supervisor, and customers? What would happen to the business if the employees did not get along? Explain that each agricultural business has a unique organizational structure and that relationships among employees differ within various businesses. Refer to PPT 1 to illustrate the organizational chart of an agricultural business.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PPT 1 – Organizational Chart for Joe’s Tractor Supply Store</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect rights and opinions of others. 2. Resolve disagreements through discussion and compromise. 3. Do fair share of work. <p>Work as a team to achieve the company’s goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work cooperatively with coworkers and supervisors. 2. Recognize contributions of each employee. <p>Work within the organizational structure, also known as the “chain of command.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify scope of one’s own job. 2. Identify how responsibilities of all employees are interrelated. 3. Identify who is direct supervisor. 4. Recognize what the consequences are if worker does not do his/her job properly.
<p>Objective 3</p> <p><i>Professional development activities are events organized by some companies to motivate, educate, or provide opportunities for employees to interact on a different level than they do during normal working hours. Refer to a job that was discussed in Lesson 2 and ask the class to determine why professional development in that company might be helpful. What are the advantages to the employee?</i></p>	<p>Explain the importance of professional development activities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become exposed to new ideas and experiences. 2. Become more efficient and effective in one’s job. 3. Take training classes or in-service sessions; discuss workplace events. 4. Have an opportunity to speak with others in the same profession and discover strategies they use on the job. 5. Enhance present skills or learn new skills and increase value to company. 6. Keep up-to-date on research, technology, equipment, supplies, and methodologies. 7. Develop an interest in learning more about related fields. 8. Offer opportunities for advancement within the organization; help employees obtain promotion and pay raises.
<p>Objective 4</p> <p><i>Every employee is expected to act responsibly in the workplace. Ask</i></p>	<p>Determine how employee conduct affects career success in agricultural business.</p> <p>Behave appropriately.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An employee who shows respect and understanding

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<p><i>students how a salesperson in a feed store should conduct business. Should he/she publicly announce how much the customer owes for feed? What behavior is appropriate? Guide the students to the realization that the salesperson should work quietly and keep all information confidential.</i></p> <p><i>Point out how students' performance as demonstrated in class relates to their academic success. Discuss how this relationship also applies to an employee's success in agricultural business. To help students distinguish proper behavior in the workplace, have students complete AS 1.</i></p> <p> AS 1 – Behaviors in the Workplace</p>	<p>toward others is more likely to get promoted than an employee who is inconsiderate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Being at work on time and prepared demonstrates responsibility and dedication to the job. 3. Refrain from spreading rumors or indulging in gossip. 4. Do not swear or use vulgar, offensive language. 5. Demonstrate the ability to handle one's own finances responsibly. <p>Maintain personal appearance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good hygiene 2. Appropriate clothing <p>Demonstrate positive attitude toward customers and coworkers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you are nice, others are more likely to be nice to you. 2. Having a positive attitude shows an interest in the job. 3. Being courteous, accurate, and prompt shows customers that their needs are being met. <p>Demonstrate strong work ethic.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be punctual and honest; respect coworkers and supervisors. 2. Perform tasks as requested. 3. Strive for accuracy. 4. Follow the company's policies and code of conduct. <p>Manage company's money carefully.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handle the business' money carefully and conscientiously. 2. Proper management of the company's money demonstrates reliability. <p>Maintain confidentiality.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not disclose their bank balances, customer accounts, etc., to any unauthorized personnel. 2. Respect confidences from supervisors and coworkers. <p>Consequences of misconduct</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oral or written reprimand, which may be recorded in

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	<p>the employee's personnel record</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Dismissal from the company 3. Unfavorable job reference <p>Why employees lose their jobs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bad attitude 2. Poor attendance 3. Incompetence
<p>Application:</p> <p> AS 1 – Behaviors in the Workplace</p>	<p>Answers to AS 1 Answers will vary.</p> <p>Other activities Bring telephones to class and demonstrate how to communicate correctly. Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair with a brief scenario describing a product from an agricultural business and a problem the customer is having with that product. Have students role-play as the employee of the agricultural business and as an unsatisfied customer. After the class has finished, discuss what communication problems, if any, they encountered. How did the employee resolve the customer's problem? Was the customer able to explain the problem clearly and completely? Have a salesperson speak about these topics and explain how they relate to him/her.</p>
<p>Closure/Summary</p>	<p>Being able to communicate by using interpersonal, verbal, written, and presentation skills is vital to employees' success on the job. Knowing how to relate to others within an organization and understanding how the business is structured are critical. Each job relates to another. Knowing this interconnection helps employees work effectively and efficiently because they become aware of the consequences if their job is not completed. Professional development activities expose employees to new ideas and experiences, which increase their value to the company. Employees' conduct affects their success in agricultural business, especially when providing customer service.</p>
<p>Evaluation: Quiz</p>	<p>Answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. b 2. d

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. d 4. a 5. a 6. The student may list any four of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manage money carefully b. Behave appropriately c. Maintain confidentiality d. Demonstrate strong work ethics e. Demonstrate positive attitude f. Maintain personal appearance 7. Students may list any four of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bad attitude b. Poor attendance c. Incompetence d. Spreading rumors or indulging in gossip e. Swearing or using vulgar, offensive language