

# **How to Speak Business ...** *A Translator for IT Professionals*



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**FREDERICK'S OF HOLLYWOOD**

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# frederick's OF HOLLYWOOD

- American Brand - 1946
- Embracing Women of All Backgrounds, Sizes, Ages and Tastes
- Making them Feel Beautiful and Supported
- Everyday Wear to Special Occasion



*Fredericks for Women with Style!*

# My Background



- 25+ Years in IT
- IT Management/Leadership & Consulting
- Worked in Different Industries:
  - Biotech
  - Legal
  - Government
  - Manufacturing
  - Retail

# Observations



- IT professionals are still experiencing a sense of isolation from the rest of the company
- We experience this as being left out
- We are feeling like foreigners at work

# Premise



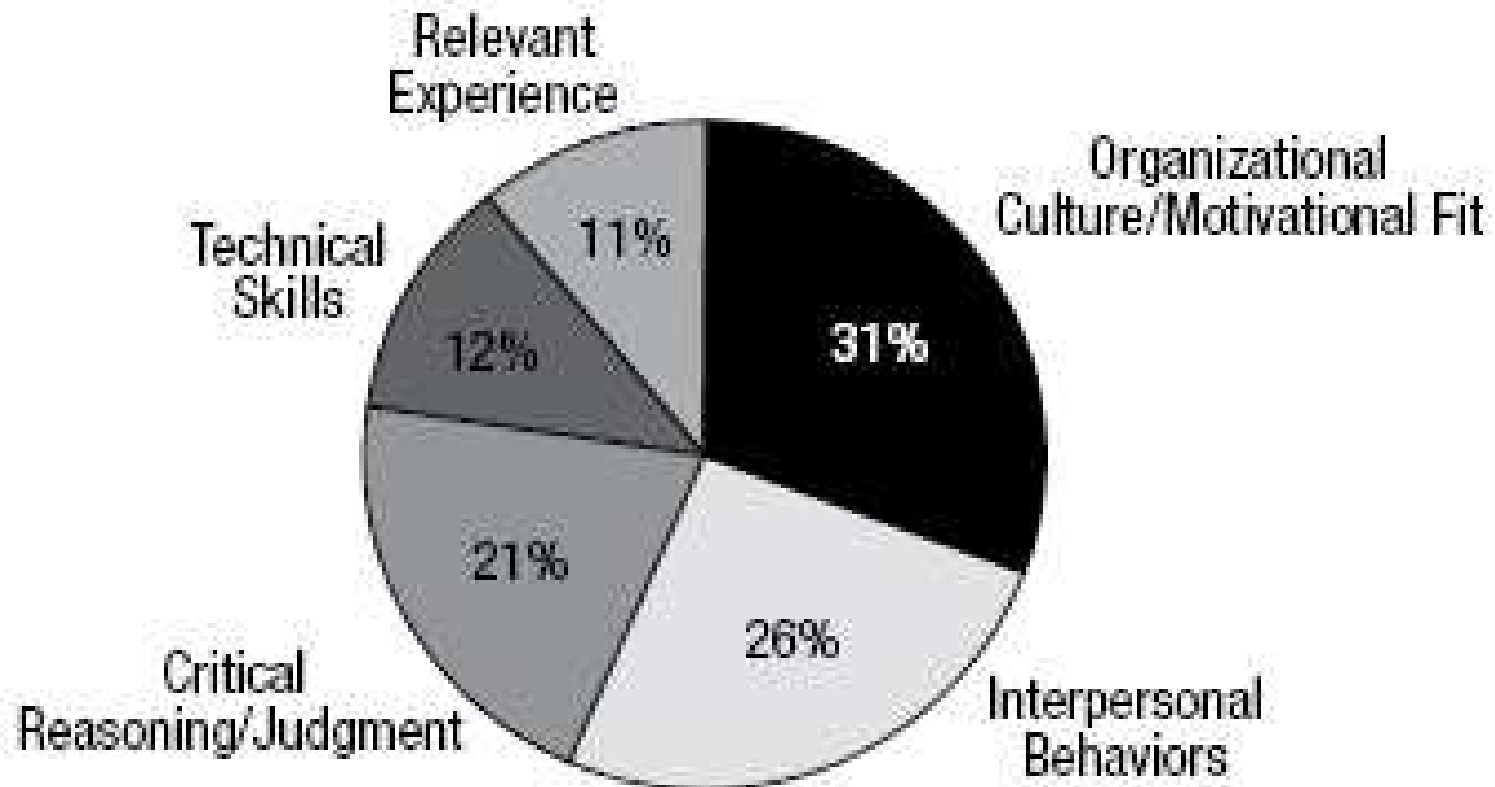
- We are foreigners at work
- We need to learn to assimilate
- Assimilating into the corporate culture requires more than learning business language
- Language is also about context and cultural norms.
- We don't believe we need to learn the language or the culture
- We have been trying for years to get the business to learn our language

# Objective



- Convince you to take a different approach
- Resistance is futile and career limiting
- Reinforce the value of soft skills
- Teach you some skills around emotional intelligence
- Give you some tips
- Show you how to assess yourself and continually improve

## Figure 1—What Contributes Most to Accelerated Performance



Right Management online poll of 895 North American senior leaders and human resources (HR) professionals 2010 from ISACA Journal, 2011, Volume 1

# Interpersonal Behaviors



- Helps rather than hinders
- Some to seek out or avoid
- Positive or negative attitude
- Flexible and adaptable
- Easy to work with
- Good problem solver
- Working with you is a pleasant experience



# Master's in Knowledge Networks



***The Master's in Knowledge Networks combines the deep critical and historical thinking skills of the humanities with technology and project management expertise in order to prepare a new kind of innovator and communicator for a challenging future.***

***HASTAC- Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory***

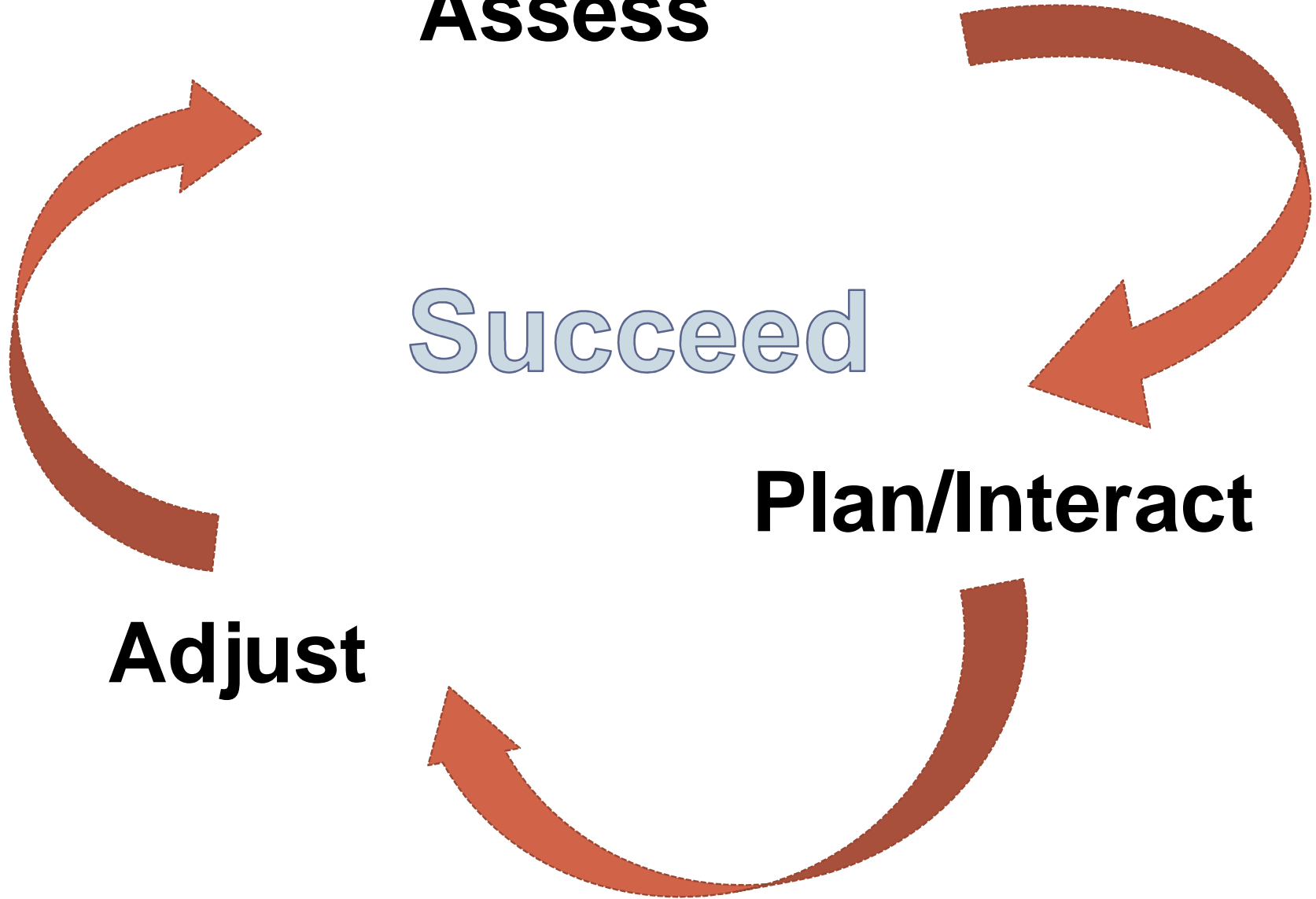
*<http://hastac.org>*

**Assess**

Succeed

**Plan/Interact**

**Adjust**



# Are You Being Left Out?



1. Do you get invited to critical meetings?
2. Are they looking at their cell phone when you present?
3. Are they making eye contact with you?
4. Do they cut you off or hurry you up?
5. Do they contain/control their interaction with you?

# Why You Are Being Left Out



- Business is tough and rapidly changing
- The problems aren't only technical
- Technology is useful when it solves the right problem
- Business people understand company targets, context, acceptable boundaries
- If it takes too much work to communicate with you, you will be sidelined

# IT is About Matching the Business Problem with the Right Technology



- Understand and discuss the problem as a business person
- Understand how the technology will solve the problems
- Communicate your solution and make it relevant to your audience

# Including You is a Logical and Easy Decision Because ...

You are a great partner in solving problems and are easy to work with!

**BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE BUSINESS WANTS**

# Order of Operation



- Lead with your **Soft Skills**
- Follow with your **Business Skills**
- Deliver with your **Technical Skills**

## **SOFT SKILLS**

**Five tips for developing the soft skills IT pros need – Tech Republic**

**IT soft skills are in as much demand as ever – Mary E. Shacklett, Transworld Data**

**Working with Emotional Intelligence – Daniel Goleman**

**The Hard Truth About Soft Skills  
– Peggy Klaus**



# Skill: Learn About the Native People



- Area of responsibility
- Normal behavior vs. stress behaviors
- Level of knowledge of IT
- Need for control
- Formal/informal relationships
- How much support do they have?

# Skill: Emotional Intelligence



- 1. Perceiving emotions accurately:** body language, facial expressions, tone of voice
- 2. Reasoning with Emotions:** Using the emotional content of things to prioritize importance and your response

# Emotional Intelligence



- 3. Understanding Emotions:** Correctly interpreting emotions and understanding that emotions have a wide variety of causes and meanings
- 4. Managing Emotions:** Regulating emotional responses to your emotions and the emotions of others



There is a wave of energy and emotion  
that runs through people



Emotionally Intelligent people  
know how to ride it



Energy + Emotion = Action

# Skill: Business Skills



- Know your company's business
- Industry trends
- Key drivers
- Key business processes
- Key initiatives
- Challenges
- Know how to translate into financial terms



# Skill: Interaction



- In Person, Email, Phone, Presentations
- Making a good impression
- Demonstrate your business knowledge
- Understand communication objective
- Develop a clear message that fits
- Avoid emotionally charged language
- Make your knowledge accessible
- Learn to facilitate and negotiate



# 4 Keys to Managing Impressions



- Credibility
- Likeability
- Attractiveness
- Level of Dominance

Success Signals – A Guide to Reading Body Language



Build Bridges to Your Business Partners

# What Are You Trying to Say?



- Decide on your **message**
- What **outcome** are you hoping for?
  - Inform (project update, a decision made)
  - Create agreement (Plan, Direction, Strategy)
  - Decision
- Assess the **level of conflict** this might create
- Decide on your **strategy**
- **Build a common ground**

# Making Your Knowledge Accessible



- Learn to use **analogies**
- Point out the **key issues and solutions**
- Explain the **benefits hard and soft**

# Don't Use Emotionally Charged Words



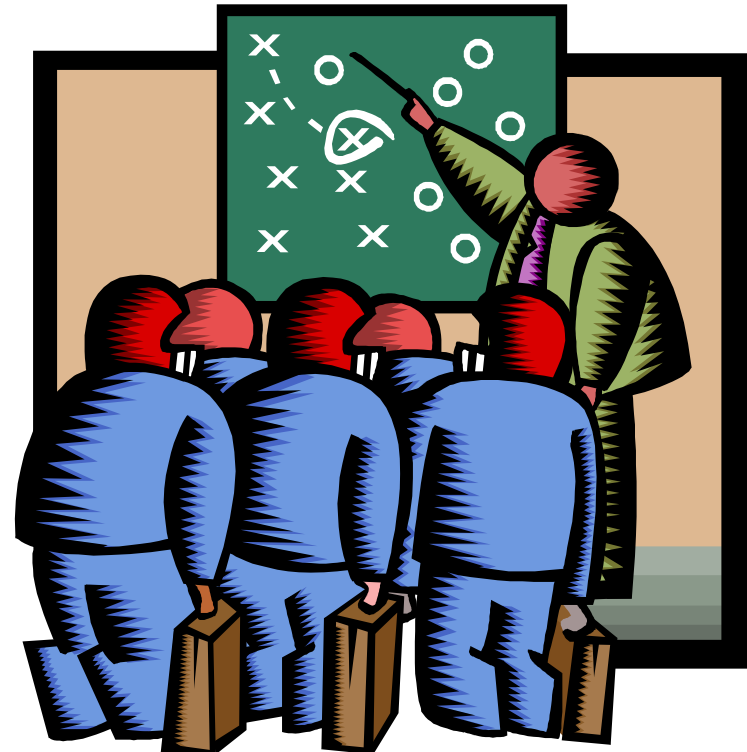
- Your always, you never
- You should have, you've got to, you must
- I hear you but ...
- What you fail to/should understand
- You're confused
- You're wrong
- Remember last time when I told you to ...

# MALORIE'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

15 minutes –  
“C” Level  
(CEO, COO, CFO)

30 minutes –  
Vice Presidents

60 minutes –  
Top time for  
Everyone Else  
**EVER!**



# Presentation Tips



- Better to make it short and sweet than too long
- Cover the basics from the audience's point of view
  - benefits for them
- Get your audience to the point where they're asking the questions
- Answer the questions they ask, don't go off on a tangent

# Planning the Interaction



- Craft the message
- Adjust it based on the audience
- The communicator is responsible for getting the message across
- Apply Malorie's rules of engagement
- Remember the interaction tips



# Skill: The Delivery



- Check the mood – What is going on with people
- Timing is important – Is this a bad time?
- Conflict - Move to facilitator/negotiator role
- Adjust the delivery based on feedback
- Deliver the message

# Skill: Assessment of the Interaction



- What went well?
- What was unexpected?
- What didn't you understand?
- What info did you need that you didn't have?
- Did you get what you came for?
- Did everyone have a positive interaction?
- What were the agreements/disagreements/decisions
- What are your next steps?

# Assessment of Yourself



- Where are your strengths?
- Where do you need knowledge?
- Where do you need to build skills?
- How are you going to fill the gap?