



Improving your Bottom Line – Communication & Relationship Management

Our current discussion series is focused on FREE and easy ways to reduce business expenses during Covid-19. This session focused on reducing expenses and building loyalty by having crucial conversations with customers, employees, and suppliers.

The Cost of Conflict Avoidance

According to a study completed by VitalSmarts Research of 650+ people, employees waste an average of \$1,500 and an eight-hour workday for every crucial conversation they avoid.

Communication and relationship management skills are vital in all aspects of business! Mastering these skills is critical to effectively partner with and influence leadership, peers, team members, customers, vendors and suppliers. In his book *Crucial Conversations*, Kerry Patterson compels readers to prepare for and seize these opportunities to strengthen relationships, outcomes, and organizations and provides tips for successfully navigating the hazards in these tricky waters. Here are seven steps summarized by Smallbiztrends.com. <https://smallbiztrends.com/2011/10/crucial-conversations-book-review.html>

Crucial Conversations

A 7-step primer on managing crucial conversations

1. **Start with heart.** Ask yourself what you really want and what is at stake.
2. **Learn to look.** Always be asking yourself whether the conversation is defensive or a dialogue. If you or the other party strays into defensiveness, simply say “I think we’ve moved away from dialogue” or “I’m sorry, I’ve been trying to force my ideas on you.”
3. **Make it safe.** Another way to deal with defensiveness in difficult conversations is to create a comfortable situation by apologizing, asking a question that shows interest in others’ views or even taking a time out.
4. **Master your story.** Focus on what happened that made you feel a certain way. Think through your emotions and then choose the appropriate way to respond.
5. **State your path.** Share your facts and conclusions so that the other party can see where you are coming from.
6. **Explore others’ paths.** Find out what the other person is thinking. Make sure that you understand each other and look for areas of agreement.
7. **Move to action.** Come to a consensus about what will happen. Document who will do what by when and settle on a way to follow up.