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WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION CONFERENCE

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Critical non-technical skills

Success in the workplace is not only driven by technical expertise, but also by the ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and lead in diverse environments. Developing strong non-technical skills enhances productivity, strengthens professional relationships, and supports strong leadership.

Key skills include:

- Time management
- Cross-cultural competence
- Active listening
- Critical thinking and decision-making
- Technical storytelling



Time management

Effective time management is essential for maintaining productivity, reducing stress, and achieving professional goals.

Key Practices

- Learn to say no and establish clear boundaries
- Avoid trying to manage everything independently — delegate where appropriate
- Prioritise tasks based on urgency and importance



Rule of Thirds

A balanced approach to time allocation can improve efficiency and engagement:

- **One-third Administration**
Focus on emails, reporting, planning, and essential operational tasks.
- **One-third Away from Your Desk**
Spend time engaging with teams, stakeholders, and site activities to maintain visibility and collaboration.
- **One-third on the Balcony**
Step back to reflect strategically, review the bigger picture, and focus on long-term planning and decision-making.



Cross-cultural competence

Cross-cultural competence is the ability to work effectively and respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds.

Important Considerations

- **The Boss hierarchy** - Understanding different perceptions of leadership and hierarchy
- **Our slang** - Being mindful of local slang, language, and communication styles
- **Work culture interactions** - Recognising varying workplace behaviours and interaction expectations
- **Emotional intelligence** - Applying emotional intelligence to navigate differences respectfully and effectively



Active Listening

Critical communication skill that improves understanding, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens professional relationships. It involves fully focusing on the speaker, understanding their message, and responding thoughtfully.

Key Techniques:

- **Clarifying Method**
Ask questions to confirm understanding and ensure expectations are clear.
- **Acknowledging Their Position**
Recognise and respect the speaker's perspective, even when opinions differ. This promotes constructive and respectful communication.



Critical Thinking and Decision-Making

Critical thinking and decision-making are essential skills for solving problems, managing risks, and achieving effective outcomes in complex work environments.

Strong decision-making requires the ability to assess information objectively, consider different perspectives, and make informed choices with confidence.

Key Elements

- Analyse situations before reacting
- Evaluate risks, impacts, and potential outcomes
- Consider multiple perspectives and available evidence
- Make timely and informed decisions
- Continuously review outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement



Technical Storytelling

The ability to communicate complex technical information in a clear, engaging, and meaningful way. It helps bridge the gap between technical teams and stakeholders by transforming data, processes, and technical details into messages that are easy to understand and relevant to the audience.

Key Elements

- Simplify complex technical information
- Tailor communication to your audience
- Use real examples and practical context
- Present data with a clear narrative and purpose
- Focus on the “why” behind the information, not only the technical details

Benefits

- Enhances stakeholder understanding and engagement
- Improves collaboration across teams and disciplines
- Supports clearer reporting and presentations
- Builds confidence and credibility in communication skills

