



Law Firm Communication Skills Curriculum

Overview

Welcome to Exec|Comm, a leader in communication skills training for attorneys. Professional expertise gives lawyers the tools they need to be effective, while strong communication skills often make the difference between a good and a great practitioner.

If an attorney cannot convey what they know to someone else in a way that's meaningful to others, that knowledge ultimately loses impact. That's where we can help.

Interactions with colleagues, adversaries, and clients often hinge on the ability to communicate a clear message. Exec|Comm's Law Firm Curriculum lets Professional Development leaders see how our menu of solutions helps you bring the best out of your attorneys – at every level and at every point in their careers.

Junior Associates

Foundations for Effective Communication

Communication skills are essential for successful attorneys. Exec|Comm's half-day *Foundations* session prepares attorneys to project confidence, poise, conviction, and clear thinking in various presentation settings from formal stand-up to less formal sit-down situations.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Maintain strong eye focus to connect with listeners
- Understand the impact of their Personal Communication Style
- Quickly organize information they share to get buy-in
- Respond to questions smoothly and thoughtfully

Hit Send with Confidence

Attorneys communicate by email more than any other medium. Although they spend hours revising contracts, briefs, and other legal documents, they often don't pay enough attention to this key form of written communication. Exec|Comm's *Hit Send with Confidence* helps attorneys write clear and concise emails as they also build both internal and external business relationships.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Get to the point in a professional manner
- Use plain language instead of legalese
- Create reader-friendly emails
- Organize thoughts effectively
- Define clear action steps

Mid-level Associates

Dynamic Interactions

At some point early in their careers, associates realize that their long-term success at the firm depends as much on developing client relationships as churning out billable hours. Providing them with the know-how to run a successful client meeting therefore becomes vital.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Focus on others during client meetings
- Prepare in advance to use time more effectively
- Increase their professional presence and self confidence
- Ask helpful questions and improve listening skills
- Present information clearly
- Manage pushback skillfully

Clear and Convincing Writing

Attorneys write more today than ever before. Emails, memos, and opinion letters are just a few of the documents people must write on a regular basis. How do you write quickly AND clearly while also striking the right tone? Exec|Comm's *Clear and Convincing Writing* helps attorneys organize their thoughts and so they communicate clearly and concisely.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Calculate the readability and clarity of their writing
- Write more concise documents
- Know when to write concretely and when to write abstractly
- Organize information quickly and effectively
- Design reader-friendly documents
- Learn to adjust their style for each document's purpose and recipient
- Revise productively

Senior Associates

Managing Professionally

As associates gain seniority, their responsibilities evolve. Because of partners' busy schedules, more experienced associates often are expected to help guide and develop junior attorneys. Exec|Comm's *Managing Professionally* program help these seasoned attorneys build management and supervisory skills by teaching effective ways to delegate assignments and methods for communicating performance feedback.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Develop more productive work relationships with junior associates
- Understand how to identify the Personal Communication Style of another and adapt to that style
- Project an open and approachable manner
- Practice focused listening skills
- Delegate assignments successfully and give helpful feedback

Negotiation Skills

People tend to think of negotiation strictly as a competition. Yet ongoing business relationships require a different approach. They demand that we move beyond merely competing—to cooperating and even collaborating. Exec|Comm's *Negotiation Skills* program introduces attorneys to a process and adds skills that build confidence and lead to creative solutions, measureable results, and maintaining long-term professional relationships.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Understand the six stages of negotiation
- Discover the value of collaboration and practice techniques to encourage it
- Organize a strategy before, during and after a negotiation

- Learn to use currencies appropriately and effectively when negotiating
- Gain confidence in their ability to negotiate difficult agreements
- Adjust their approach to negotiating when circumstances demand flexibility

Senior Associates & Partners

Presenting with Impact

As a speaker, how can you consistently project poise and conviction when the stakes are high? If you seem nervous or uncomfortable, your credibility drops. That's why presentation skills are essential for successful attorneys, whether they present from the front of the room, the head of the table, on a videoconference, or as part of team for a "town hall" meeting. Calm, confident and credible presenters adapt to the environment and form an immediate and lasting impression with their audience. Exec|Comm's *Presenting with Impact* program helps you successfully manage your presence, information and audience so your credibility stays strong.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Present a polished, professional manner
- Speak fluently and gesture naturally
- Quickly organize a message or presentation for greatest audience impact
- Engage with compelling visuals
- Interact with the audience comfortably

Perfecting Your Pitch ("Winning the Beauty Pageant")

As their careers evolve, the demands on every attorney's time and focus change. It's no longer enough to be an excellent practitioner or even a subject matter expert. Effective attorneys also must speak comfortably, and persuasively about the work they do to build business. Exec|Comm's *Perfecting Your Pitch* program helps attorneys practice and utilize these important business building skills.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Refine their professional presence
- Engage in small talk comfortably in networking situations
- Develop a value proposition that's meaningful to potential clients
- Differentiate the firm from other similar firms
- Tell a story that highlights the best qualities of themselves and the firm

Leading with Executive Presence

Solid executive presence is the net effect of how you act, look and communicate. It puts professionals in the driver's seat of their own success. Exec|Comm's *Leading with Executive Presence* workshop helps attorneys recognize their greatest strengths and qualities as leaders, connect with an audience, and share their talents and expertise with the world.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Understand how they are perceived by others
- Practice mindfulness to stay in the present moment while under stress
- Use relational body language to connect with other people
- Map out stories in a simple, logical format to gain buy-in
- Speak to others genuinely to build stronger professional relationships

Managing the Media

Whether it's good news or bad, interacting with a reporter is challenging. Before an interview, you need to feel prepared for the array of questions that might come. That preparation requires a consistent message and the communication agility to bridge back to that message. Exec|Comm's *Managing the Media* program gives you the skills to face reporters feeling calm and confident by practicing every aspect of a hard-hitting interview.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Project a professional and credible corporate image appropriate for any situation
- Quickly organize thoughts for media interviews
- Understand media relations and a reporter's intent
- Control hostile and off-putting questions
- Adjust responses and demeanor appropriately for various audiences and issues
- Create and bridge to an effective corporate message
- Control the flow and direction of an interview

Conducting Performance Reviews

Today's most effective firms know how to train and develop their associates on an on-going basis. Low retention rates, poor performance and staff conflicts all negatively impact a firm's bottom line. Exec|Comm's *Conducting Performance Reviews* seminar prepares partners to successfully develop their attorneys by providing direct and timely communication on performance.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Develop more productive work relationships with their associates.
- Understand how their Personal Communication Style and the style of others impacts an evaluation session.
- Project an open and approachable manner.
- Practice focused listening skills.
- Acquire techniques to strategically plan for a feedback session.

All Attorneys

Conducting Effective Interviews

To be a premier firm you need to attract top talent. When you interview a candidate, how do you ensure that the right person gets hired – or avoid hiring the wrong person? Ultimately your time, money, productivity, and morale hinge on your ability to hire the people best suited to succeed at your firm. Exec|Comm's *Conducting Effective Interviews* program gives recruiting managers and hiring attorneys a proven step-by-step process they can use to ensure successful hiring decisions.

When participants complete this course, they will:

- Follow the five steps of effective interviewing
- Determine if a candidate is a match using your firm's success profile
- Ask the right questions and listen for cues during the interview
- Position the firm to attract interest

One-on-One Private Coaching

Global law firms and Fortune 100 companies have used Exec|Comm to conduct privately coached sessions since its inception in 1982. During this time, our consultants have worked with thousands of people to better prepare them to communicate effectively at work. Although sessions vary in length and objective, participants leave Exec|Comm coaching sessions with skills that allow them to connect, collaborate, and convince when they interact with others.

Coaching Methodology

We personalize the coaching process as follows:

- Assess needs
- Establish goals
- Use exercises to build the skills needed
- Record role plays so people see their growth as they practice.

People leave the coaching sessions with comprehensive reading materials tailored to their specific needs. They also receive a video recording of their development during the time spent in the program and a post-engagement plan for reinforcement.

Possible Coaching Topics

Because each professional's needs are individual, the coaching for each person is unique. Topics covered may address skill gaps in any of the following areas:

- Enhancing professional presence in all interactions
- Managing Relationships: internal and external
- Clarifying ideas and using plain language to connect with others