

## Positive Communication Skills In The Workplace

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### Abstract

*It is a well-known fact that at the workplace, being too authoritative or, in other words, being 'bossy' does not always work. The more coworkers can communicate with each other without hesitation, the better the chances of establishing harmony in the workplace. Hence the researchers intend to focus on the causes of having a poor influence/ negative influence in any workplace and how positive influencing skills help maintain good rapport with coworkers, paving a bridge to their career success. To address these queries, the researchers collected data by distributing a questionnaire to (N=300) professionals who were working in various fields. All the subjects agreed largely with the researchers' hypothesis that positive influencing skills are necessary to begin, sustain, and grow professionally. The findings show that in any workplace, trust, respect, and harmony are needed, which depends on the relationship among coworkers. People can gain trust and respect based on how they influence others through interaction or communication at the workplace. Therefore, based on the findings and the researchers' experience, the paper suggests developing and practicing positive influencing skills in the workplace.*

**Keywords:** Communication, influencing skills, negativity, positivity, profession, workplace.

### 1. Introduction

In almost all professions, communication plays a significant role and with the advancement of technology, the medium of communication has taken on an entirely new dimension. When it comes to conveying information or messages, each of these interaction methods has its role. For any employee, the workplace environment plays a significant role in shaping his/her performance. The physical and non-physical work environments affect the interaction between individuals and the organization where they work (Lukertina & Lisnatiawati, 2020). A good work environment is created when the managers and coworkers positively influence and inspire each other, building strong relationships. It ensures a comfortable workplace where employees can build trust among colleagues and bosses. When an employee knows how to influence others positively, he/she more effectively drives and motivates coworkers toward success. Creating a friendly workplace atmosphere helps everyone feel included and often leads to stronger teams. Talking about positivity in the workplace, Hartel and Ashkanasay (2011) say that positivity can lead to a positive work environment type of social climate that contributes to employee well-being and human flourishing. Livi et al. (2015) state that in work teams, positivity not only enhances individual performance, but others' positivity can neutralize an individual's low positivity, uplifting their positivity and performance.

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Positive influencing skills are necessary to maintain a good rapport with colleagues and coworkers. Companies, organizations, and educational institutions have various types of employees, such as managers, directors, and so on. All of them are different, having different personalities and viewpoints. It is crucial to consider everyone's opinions, regardless of their differences. According to Carnegie and Brent (2011), effective influencing skills mean showing open respect for the values, needs, and desires of others. People from diverse cultural backgrounds hold different values and beliefs, so managers must consider cultural differences and modify their approaches.

The study results from Prastyo et al. (2016) showed that the work environment significantly affected performance. Thalib (2015) stated that the work environment is an important work component. Moreover, Robbins and Coulter (2016) view that a work environment can affect the psychology of the employees, and a good work environment enhances the strength of the employees. In their research, Fisher and Gonzalez (2013) argue that companies look for motivated and productive staff who can carry out their duties effectively and ensure that the business remains profitable. However, for some employees and employers, it becomes challenging to influence colleagues or peers in the workplace positively. They may be efficient and hardworking but fail to influence others. There are several reasons why people fail to influence others at the workplace, such as asserting, poor negotiating skills, inconsistent communication, refusal to adapt, negative outlook, unclear goals, unrealistic expectations, and most importantly, poor communication skills (Musselwhite & Plouffe, 2012). Hence, professional communication plays a vital role in any workplace.

Information communication may be brief and to the point or even lengthy. However, the key factor is to communicate effectively, which is a must for the progress of any workplace. The communication medium can be verbal, nonverbal, written, computer-oriented, or electronic. Regarding verbal communication, face-to-face interaction or telephone conversation play an important role. Similarly, nonverbal gestures, facial expressions, and body position all contribute to transmitting messages. (Keyton, 2010). The delivery method should be accessible and convenient for the audience, including all the necessary information (Birt, 2022). Radovic-Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) opine that communication is creating, transmitting, and interpreting ideas, facts, opinions, and feelings. According to Radovic-Markovic and Omolaja (2009), communication is more than simply talking, writing, reading, and listening. Communication is crucial to any company, organization, and educational institution. Effective and efficient means of communication are necessary for any organization's smooth functioning.

The prosperity of an organization or a company depends on transparent and effective communication among employers, employees and peers. Employees who effectively communicate with peers and bosses are the ones who make a difference in the workplace. In a study, Khan (2019) has shown several purposes why communication is needed, such as (1) avoiding confusion, (2) establishing transparency, (3) creating accountability (4) building productivity and growth. The causes of negative influence in the workplace are listed below:

- It has negative effects if coworkers or employees are forced to carry out unprofessional or unethical actions or if the employees are used as a means to an end.
- Some workplaces have not trained and developed their managers to meet the new demands placed on them and it results in managers disconnecting the employees from supportive relationships.
- If managers thwart the employees' confidence, this can negatively influence the workplace.
- Poor leadership is another factor that leads to negative effects on the workforce. Good leaders communicate objectives, goals, and future visions. However, poor

and incompetent leaders are more than often indecisive and are unable to inspire their teams (Khan, 2019).

- Limited feedback can hurt the whole team. Effective feedback, both positive and negative, keeps the employees on track. Poor communication can severely limit feedback given to employees and hinder their work.

It is evident that when these factors dominate a workplace, it leads to poor communication among members and a chaotic workplace situation.

### **1.1. Theoretical Framework**

Influencing others positively by communication is a skill that sometimes needs to be learned. Webber et al. (2015) support 'Attitude as the most positive workplace habit affecting productivity.' People's attitudes can be determined by how they behave and interact with coworkers and bosses. People must communicate verbally or nonverbally to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Good communication does not mean transferring information only. One should be able to convey a message successfully and, at the same time, fully understand what others say. Good communication is the key to getting the desired result. (Sumaiya et al., 2022). According to Mahajan (2015), 'Effective communication is a natural propensity.' In a workplace, effective communication is essential to build quality working relationships. Hence, positive communication skills are a tool that should be honed and refined from time to time to achieve the utmost success in the workplace.

According to Gupta (1999), Selvi (2010), and Gonzales and Bautista (2019), the key to attaining success in a workplace is the utilization of abilities that contain knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, motivation, and beliefs of people. Apart from these skills, in the 21st century, communication is a skill that is essential for any job. In an era where technology has taken over almost all communication through electronic devices, communication has taken on an entirely new dimension. Nowadays, professionals interact in various ways, i.e., face-to-face or online communication through email, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (social media), and so on. When conveying information or messages, each interaction method has its role. Many employers and employees find communicating and interacting with peers and bosses challenging. Hence, the researchers were interested in conducting a study on why poor communication skills can affect the workplace environment and how positive communication skills ensure a healthy atmosphere.

### **1.2. Research Questions**

1. Why do professionals fail to influence co-workers /employers positively?
2. How can positive communication influence the employees in a workplace?

### **1.3 Literature Review**

There are some seminal studies on effective communication skills and positive influencing skills, but only a few of them have been reviewed here.

In a study by Grauerholz et al. (2020), it is said that professionals spend a lot of time communicating in the workplace, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Communication is the process of transmitting information from one person to another. In a workplace, communication is important to establish and maintain quality working relationships. (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). It is a process through which employees exchange ideas, thoughts, and emotions. Good communication skills need more

than just transferring information. It is an art and must be practiced effectively in the workplace for successful results.

According to Pauley (2010), it is the administrator's responsibility to develop effective communication. Shaw (2011) argues that most people take it for granted that once anyone communicates a message, the receiver can understand it. Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014) discuss two types of barriers in their study: environmental and personal. Environmental barriers, including time, managerial philosophy and supervisor-subordinate relationship, are characteristics of the organization and its environmental setting. The second type of barrier is the personal barrier, which includes factors such as an individual's beliefs and values and lack of empathy. Studies show that a lack of empathy is one of the major obstacles to effective communication. (Eisenberg, 2010).

However, Fisher and Gonzalez (2013) state that there is a change in the role of managers from being responsible for the delivery of work and the day-to-day management of their team members to creating opportunities for companies to grow their businesses. This suggests that to meet the new business challenges set out by stakeholders, managers need to focus on how to get the best out of their team members. They must find new ways to motivate and lead team members to achieve the new challenges successfully. Sampere (2011) suggests that 'influencing others is about the force... that a person exercises over another person to influence them to do or believe in something the other person wants them to.'

According to Couto (2000), influencing is convincing another person to accept one's point of view in a voluntary way and for the right reasons. Similarly, a study by Laker and Patel (2020) suggests that 'those who master the art of influence are often skilled at tapping into the emotions that drive people's actions'. Their study promotes building trust among colleagues and leaders, leading to better understanding and empathy among coworkers. Spreitzer et al. (2012) claim that energy is important in increasing employees' capacity for action, boosting them to do their work more efficiently. Positive practices can give rise to energy, zest, and vitality in work and improve interaction and relationships, leading to cooperation and better performance (Geue, 2018).

However, the most successful managers, directors, or supervisors understand how to communicate positively in the organizational setting. In the study of Radovic-Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018), it is stated that a manager must be skilled at communicating because the success of an organization or institution depends on it. Communication in the workplace is critical. It involves the use of words, pitch modification, and body language. (Sumaiya et al., 2020). Not only does a person need to pay attention to what he/she says verbally, but it is also important to consider the messages he/she sends to others through body language. Being attentive, maintaining eye contact, and avoiding distractions while talking all lead to the positive image managers create in the workplace (Valentina et al., 2021).

Hence, how they influence and persuade people at work impacts managers' performance. All participants in a workplace need to be encouraged to communicate for successful management freely. If the bosses raise their voices or lose their temper with their employees, they cannot be called effective. Managers need to communicate effectively with employees to monitor progress and emphasize goals. Effective managers use persuasive communication to implement change. To bring about some changes in business practice, persuasion is applied. Perloff (2003) defines persuasion as a symbolic process in which communications try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through transmitting a message in an atmosphere of free choice. Skakon et al. (2010) state that empathy and sincerity are the building blocks for successful persuasion. The more favorable thoughts people have, the more persuasion will be effective. Still, the more negative thoughts that people have, the greater chance of resistance to change in a direction opposite to the one advocated.

All these studies have discussed what factors lead to poor communication resulting in the failures of a company/institution's growth, and why positive communication skills are necessary in the workplace. The current study aims to discuss why professionals fail to

influence co-workers /employers positively and how positivity can influence employees in the workplace.

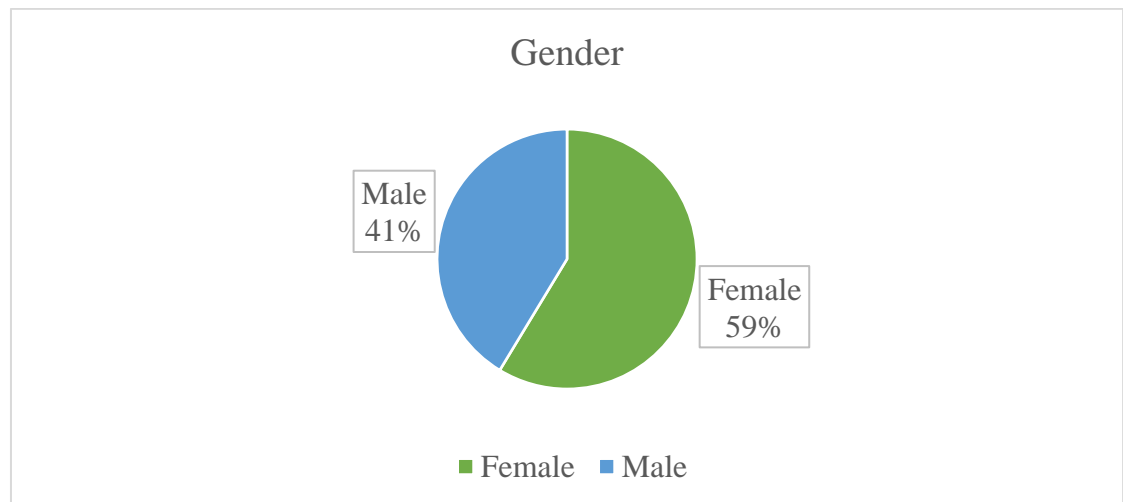
## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Participants

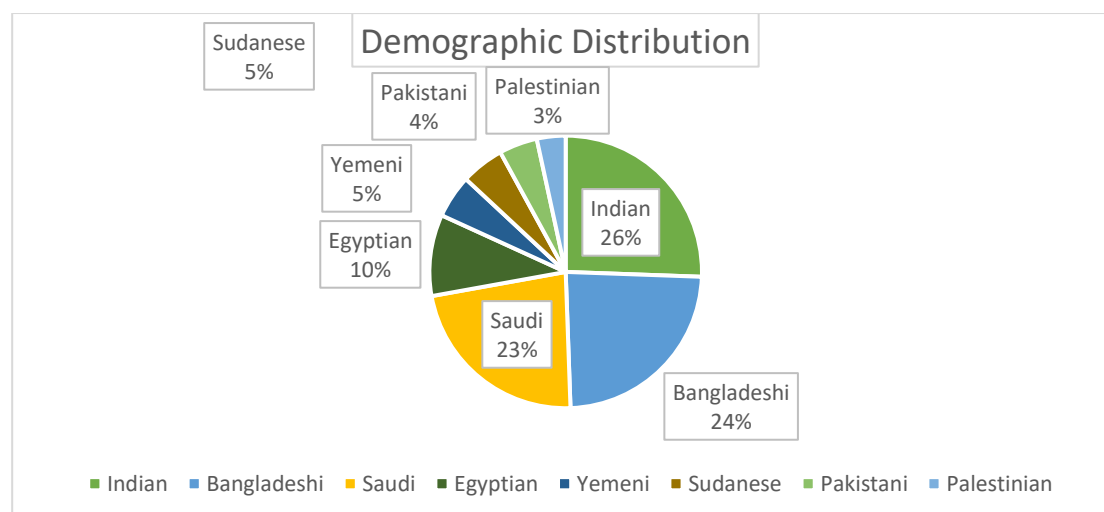
This study involved 300 professionals (124 males and 176 females) from different nations, such as Bangladesh, India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Pakistan, and Palestine. Their number country-wise is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Participants according to gender and their demography.

Demographic Distribution	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Indian	45	33	78
Bangladeshi	42	30	72
Saudi Arabia	40	25	65
Egyptian	17	15	32
Yemeni	9	7	16
Sudanese	9	6	15
Pakistani	8	4	12
Palestinian	6	4	10
Total	176	124	300



**Figure 1.** The percentage of male and female participants separately



**Figure 2.** The demographic distribution of participants

The participants shown in Figure 2 were from different professions, such as schoolteachers, university lecturers and professors, doctors, bankers, engineers, and professionals working at multinational companies. These professionals hold various positions in their respective departments or companies. Some of them are team leaders, managers, bosses, directors, and heads of departments, and others work just simply as employees. They had the experience of working for 5 years and above. For this study, the researchers covered a range of job ranks to find reliable data.

## 2.2. Instruments and Data Collection

A questionnaire consisting of 36 closed items was administered to all the participants. All ordinal variables in the questionnaire were prepared on a 5-point Likert Scale, starting from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was based on the observations and experiences of professionals working in different fields. The researchers compiled the questionnaires with the help of the pre-existing literature. They were valid, as they were judged by five experts in the Saudi Arabian, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Arab contexts. Proper modifications were made based on their comments and to suit the context.

The questionnaire was constructed online in Google Forms. Within two weeks, the data was collected by forwarding the link to the participants through emails and messages on mobiles. The study was conducted in March–April 2023.

The research validated the necessity of positive influencing skills in the workplace. Based on the professionals' observations, attitudes, and experiences, the researchers hypothesized that positive influencing skills ensure a healthy environment at the workplace. If the negative impacts are not resolved, the aims of the whole pedagogy are lost and there are many challenges to overcome them.

## 2.3. Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations. The study was conducted only on the professionals working as doctors, engineers, teachers, bankers, project managers, and officers in multinational companies. The results might have differed if the study had been conducted on more professionals from other fields and other countries.

The names of the participants in the study were kept anonymous. The participants were assured that the confidentiality of the respondents would be maintained. This questionnaire would be used only for data collection and analysis. There would be no pressure if the questionnaire was unfilled.

## 3. Findings

After gathering the data, it was analyzed statistically using SPSS (Version 26.0). A tabulation of descriptive statistics, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, was prepared to determine the professionals' views regarding the necessity of positive influencing skills at the workplace.

**Table 2.** The views and attitudes of the professionals regarding positive influencing skills

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I firmly believe that effective and positive communication is a crucial part of running and progressing a company/educational institution.	4.48	1.122
2. The manager/ director/ boss at my workplace encourages the employees' strengths.	3.77	1.135
3. The management of my workplace doesn't only focus on the failures of the employees.	3.53	1.074
4. I believe managers/ directors/ bosses need to influence and persuade the employees positively.	4.40	1.133
5. Managers/supervisors need to ensure a positive work environment by being positive energizers themselves.	4.27	1.112
6. I am satisfied with my job and the working environment.	3.83	1.020
7. I feel motivated to do my work.	3.87	1.137
8. I play an important role in my team.	4.17	1.085
9. I am recognized and appreciated at my workplace.	3.90	1.125
10. It is important to know about your coworkers at your workplace.	4.23	1.135
11. I get on well with my colleagues.	4.20	1.064
12. I can trust and rely on my colleagues.	3.70	.988
13. I contribute to the growth of my workplace.	4.07	1.132
14. I can lead others when needed.	4.20	1.095
15. I have a sense of belonging at my workplace.	4.17	1.071
16. I can approach authority with suggestions and opinions.	3.93	1.258
17. I feel easy and confident to share suggestions and feedback with my boss at my workplace.	3.73	1.413
18. Positivity and transparency in workplace communication boost my motivation to carry out tasks.	4.30	1.055
19. When I express my opinions, I feel my employer/coworkers actively listen to my opinions.	4.40	1.073
20. My employer/coworkers make the goals and objectives clear with adequate instructions.	4.37	.999
21. My boss/coworkers convey the messages and information on time.	4.10	1.213
22. I am eager to carry out voluntary tasks at the workplace.	3.97	1.129
23. I ask for feedback from my colleagues.	3.83	1.262
24. It is important to be flexible while working in a team.	4.30	1.055
25. My colleagues provide me with constructive feedback about my work.	3.90	1.213
26. I value the feedback provided by my colleagues and boss.	4.27	1.015
27. Working in a team is important for positively influencing the work environment.	4.10	1.213
28. If a coworker helps me, I show my appreciation.	4.43	1.073
29. If I help my coworkers, they show appreciation.	4.07	.980
30. I maintain a positive outlook even if my team faces challenges.	4.03	1.066
31. I hone and refine my skills and expertise to make a difference in the workplace.	4.07	1.048
32. I connect and communicate with my coworkers to share ideas.	4.07	1.048

33. I connect and communicate with others from the same profession to gain knowledge and share experiences.	4.03	1.098
34. I listen to my coworkers and allow them to express their ideas and views.	4.24	1.057
35. When needed, I appreciate and praise my colleagues for building stronger relationships and increasing positivity at work.	4.17	1.147
36. Body language plays an important role in establishing positivity in a workplace.	4.37	.999

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Out of the 36 variables, 25 variables agree that positive influencing skills are essential to create a better atmosphere at the workplace. They support the view that effective and positive communication is crucial to running and making progress in a workplace. It is necessary to know your colleagues and get on well with them. The highest score was seen in variable 4 I firmly believe that effective and positive communication is a crucial part to run and progress a company/educational institution, and 28 If a coworker helps me, I show my appreciation with mean values of 4.48 and 4.43 respectively. This shows that positive communication and colleagues appreciating each other's efforts are vital to the progress of any workplace.

On the other hand, the lowest score was seen in variable 3- The management of my workplace does not only focus on the employees' failures, and 12- I can trust and rely on my colleagues with mean values of 3.53 and 3.70. This shows that the participants believe that management in the workplace plays an important role in encouraging employees and boosting their motivation level. There should be a certain amount of trust among colleagues to improve the workplace atmosphere. Moreover, variables 9 and 21 have scored the same results, which state I am recognized and appreciated at my workplace, and My colleagues provide me with constructive feedback with mean values of 3.90. Similarly, variables 5 and 26 scored the same results. They have 4.27. This shows that the participants agree with the factors that appreciation, constructive feedback and positive energizers lead to effective output, resulting in the progress of the workplace.

Out of the 36 variables, no variables scored less than 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale, which indicates clearly that all the variables agreed with the view that positive influencing helps in the growth of a workplace. This shows that in any workplace, the management works as a positive vibe for the employees. Any negativity, such as focusing on the employees' failures, not giving a chance to the employees to share ideas, not giving constructive feedback, and, most importantly, lack of proper communication, can lead to the failure of the company or the institution. When employees or coworkers are unable to contribute to the decision-making of the management, it demotivates them, leading to not feeling important or welcome in the welfare of the workplace. On the other hand, appreciating and recognizing the employee's contribution, providing constructive feedback, maintaining a positive outlook even in times of crisis, establishing trust and mutual respect, cooperation and flexibility, honing and refining the skills, and above all communicating effectively with peers and employees can tremendously influence the growth and prosperity in a workplace.

#### **4. Discussion**

The results revealed that positive communication is essential to achieving success in any workplace. When an employee expresses his opinion to his coworkers or bosses, he must be listened to (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Making objectives and goals clear is another factor in achieving success in a workplace. This is supported by the research of Pauley (2010), who argues that the administrator must develop effective communication. A similar view is shared by Shaw (2011), who states that most people take for granted that once anyone communicates a message, the receiver can understand it. Most of the time, no one verifies if the message has been conveyed properly. All these factors can negatively affect a workplace.



On the contrary, the results also showed that positivity in the workplace leads to the success of any workplace. Positive practices can give rise to energy, zest, and vitality in work and improve interaction and relationships, leading to cooperation and better performance. The participants opined that the management should encourage the strengths and boost the motivation level of the employees. They must be able to persuade the employees to be positive energizers themselves. This is similar to the view stated by Fisher and Gonzalez (2013), who argue that managers need to focus on how to get the best out of their team members. They must find new ways to motivate and lead team members to achieve the new challenges (Geue, 2018).

Moreover, the team members should have mutual trust, respect, recognition, and appreciation. In a workplace, knowing colleagues leads to establishing trust, which is necessary for the well-being of the workplace. Laker and Patel (2020) also support the idea of building trust among colleagues and leaders that leads to better understanding and empathy among coworkers. They also suggest that those skilled at influencing others can successfully tap into the emotions of others, driving their actions. Skakon et al. (2010) state that empathy and sincerity are the building blocks for successful persuasion. The more favorable thoughts people have, the more effective the persuasion will be. In contrast, the more negative thoughts people have, the greater chance of resistance to change in a direction opposite to the one advocated.

In addition, managers and coworkers must be able to communicate transparently. Similarly, Radovic-Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) opine that managers/ bosses must be skilled at communicating because the success of an organization or institution depends on it. They should be patient, able to listen to each other, and tolerant in times of crisis. If the bosses raise their voices or lose their temper with their employees, they cannot be called effective. This view is supported by Valentina et al. (2021), who claim that communication in the workplace is critical. Not only do you need to pay attention to what you say verbally, but it is also important to consider the messages you are sending to others through your body language. Being attentive, maintaining eye contact, and avoiding distractions while talking all lead to the positive image managers create in the workplace. Therefore, the study promotes workplace positivity through positive vibes, encouragement, cooperation, appreciation, mutual trust, and positive influencing skills among team members.

## 5. Conclusion

For positive management practices, managers can foster a positive work environment by demonstrating to team members how to think and feel more positively and perform better. They can tell success stories and the employees' accomplishments by encouraging them to be optimistic. To have a positive work environment, a positive social climate is necessary. Instead of dwelling on the employees' mistakes, managers can view the mistakes as opportunities for learning. The input of the employees needs to be valued, and their abilities are to be trusted. They need to be given chances and motivated to perform better. In the opinion of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), positivity in organizations is rooted in positive psychology's shift away from what is wrong with people to what is right, good, and makes life worth living. Schein (2000) believes that attention should be given to what is improving and has potential, thus 'to build on what is working and not working.' Based on the findings, the following are the recommendations to create a good rapport with coworkers through positive influencing skills.

- Managers can develop their influence and persuasion skills to manage their employees.
- Managers need to share the benefits of making some changes in the workplace.
- They need to encourage team members to unblock the values and beliefs they hold to develop their skills and performance.

- A discussion is needed among the managers and the team members about the goals of the workplace.
- The managerial team or supervisors must uplift and boost the employees by being positive energizers.
- Even in an environment where the work itself is not meaningful, a solid and positive outlook will enhance the relationship between meaningfulness and engagement in the work context.
- High-quality employee connections with positive regard and emotional engagement can promote energetic networking.
- Employees can be given more autonomy in problem-solving and encouraged to engage more in their work.
- Employees must be encouraged to share ideas and beliefs for the betterment of the workplace.
- If the employees feel useful at their workplace, they feel inspired to set any pessimism aside.

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