

**THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:**

**U.S.A.I.D. SECRETARIAL  
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM - LEVEL I  
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ON THE JOB  
DESKTOP AIDS**

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## THIS BOOKLET - DESKTOP AIDS

This booklet contains 11 "DESKTOP AIDS." It is used in the A.I.D. Secretarial Certification Program Course, "**Interpersonal Skills on the Job, Level I**" in these ways:

First, the DESKTOP AIDS contain materials and information which will be used in the training program. In this sense, this booklet is a companion document to the PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK used in training.

Second, this booklet can be used on the job when employees who have completed training need to recall a process or procedure learned in the training and how to apply the ideas on the job. In this sense, it is a useful resource book.

Third, in the training program, employees master and display in the classroom specific skills. Back on the job, trainees demonstrate to their supervisors that they can display on the job the skills learned in the classroom. This booklet lists and describes the skills to be displayed on the job. In this sense, this booklet is a manual of job skills.

## **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ON THE JOB, LEVEL I**

### **COMPETENCIES TO BE DISPLAYED IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON THE JOB**

- Displays a service orientation toward users of A.I.D. services and A.I.D. personnel.  
  
DESKTOP AID #1 - page 1  
DESKTOP AID #2 - page 2  
DESKTOP AID #3 - page 3
- Uses problem-solving techniques with users of A.I.D. services.  
  
DESKTOP AID #4 - page 4  
DESKTOP AID #5 - page 5
- Uses problem-solving techniques with co-workers.  
  
DESKTOP AID #6 - page 6
- Uses problems-solving techniques with supervisors.  
  
DESKTOP AID #7 - page 8  
DESKTOP AID #8 - page 9
- Displays professional office behavior.  
  
DESKTOP AID #9 - page 10  
DESKTOP AID #10 - page 11
- Accepts and adapts to change.  
  
DESKTOP AID #11 - page 12

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ON THE JOB - DESKTOP AIDS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>DESKTOP AID</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
DESKTOP AID #1	SERVICE IS THE TOP PRIORITY .....	1
DESKTOP AID #2	THE DO'S OF SERVICE ORIENTATION .....	2
DESKTOP AID #3	THE TABOOS AND DON'TS OF SERVICE ORIENTATION .....	3
DESKTOP AID #4	GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING .	4
DESKTOP AID #5	PROBLEM-SOLVING: USERS OF A.I.D. SERVICES .	5
DESKTOP AID #6	PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CO-WORKERS .....	6
DESKTOP AID #7	PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH SUPERVISORS .....	8
DESKTOP AID #8	IMPROVING AND PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL OFFICE BEHAVIOR .....	9
DESKTOP AID #9	WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL OFFICE BEHAVIOR? ...	10
DESKTOP AID #10	FOCUS OF THE MONTH .....	11
DESKTOP AID #11	KEY WAYS TO HANDLE CHANGE EFFECTIVELY ..	12

<b>COMPETENCY:</b> Displays a service orientation toward users of A.I.D. services and A.I.D. personnel.
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## DESKTOP AID #1:

### SERVICE IS THE TOP PRIORITY

"We believe a powerful new wave is about to hit the already turbulent business world. It's a wave of service....People are getting more and more critical of the quality of service they experience in their everyday lives, and they want something done about it." (Preface, Service America)

#### 1. PROFESSIONAL

- ◆ Attitude, voice, and appearance communicate competence.
- ◆ Listening/speaking skills uncover the real need.
- ◆ Precise questions/summary statements ensure accuracy.

#### 2. PERSONAL

- ◆ Concern and care make professionalism human.
- ◆ Compassion hears and responds to emotions in others.
- ◆ Empathy assures people that they have been understood.

#### 3. PATIENT

- ◆ Anger and frustration are accepted but not returned.
- ◆ A raised voice does not get reflected in the response.
- ◆ Gentle understanding helps to solve any problem.

#### 4. PRACTICAL

- ◆ Solutions must be realistic and on-target.
- ◆ Plans include considerations of what, by whom and when
- ◆ Expectations must be clear and precise.

#### 5. PROMPT

- ◆ What can be done now must be done now.
- ◆ Unnecessary delays only make the problem worse.
- ◆ Unexplained delays add insult to injury.

<b>COMPETENCY:</b> Displays a service orientation toward users of AID services and AID personnel.
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## DESKTOP AID #2

### THE DO'S OF SERVICE ORIENTATION

Some problems take only a minute to solve; others take a much longer time. Some require very little help; some a great deal. The following suggestions will apply to most situations but to each in a very different way. In providing services or in a service relationship:

1. Put aside all distractions; deal with the customer's problems.
2. Deal with the person seeking help as the top priority.
3. Agree on an alternative time if "now" is not possible.
4. Convey the attitude: "You have come to the right person."
5. Keep an open mind to whatever is said.
6. Convince yourself you are there to help, not to judge.
7. Listen and take notes with pencil and paper.
8. Presume nothing; clarify all that is not crystal clear.
9. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
10. Respond with the same interest you would give to a friend.
11. Appreciate the person's anger without judging it at all.
12. Accept anger as part of problem-solving.
13. Get all the important information needed.
14. Clarify exactly what the other person thinks is needed.
15. Let the person know what you think should be done.
16. Explain step-by-step what you intend to do.
17. Get back to the person step-by-step as you do it.
18. Give people a chance to respond to your progress reports.
19. Be prompt in doing what can be done now.
20. Be clear about anything that will require additional time.
21. Let people know ahead of any change in time schedule.
22. Make sure that what was supposed to happen, happens.
23. Contact the person at the end for a final response.

<b>COMPETENCY:</b> Displays a service orientation toward users of A.I.D. services and A.I.D. personnel.
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### DESKTOP AID #3

#### THE TABOOS AND DON'TS OF SERVICE ORIENTATION

Here are some "don'ts" which apply to the help-giver in most service situations.

1. Don't respond to people as though they interrupted you.
2. Don't make people feel that they have interrupted you.
3. Don't half-listen and then ask people to repeat.
4. Don't refer a person to another if you can help.
5. Don't refer to another until you clearly explain why.
6. Don't refer until you give information about the referral.
7. Don't deal with problems as though they are unimportant.
8. Don't respond to people without using their name.
9. Don't use a person's first name unless you know them well.
10. Don't let people's importance determine how you behave.
11. Don't express anger even if it's invited.
12. Don't be sarcastic or flippant or defensive.
13. Don't get intimidated into giving information you shouldn't.
14. Don't suggest solutions that generate more problems.
15. Don't promise something that you can't deliver.
16. Don't leave the person without a plan of what comes next.
17. Don't over-explain in your effort to keep informed.
18. Don't raise people's expectations unrealistically.
19. Don't set timetables that are not realistic.
20. Don't fail to get back to people when you say you will.
21. Don't decide the problem is solved until the person does.

**COMPETENCY:** Uses problem-solving techniques with users of A.I.D. services.

#### **DESKTOP AID #4**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING**

- 1. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?**
  - ◆ Consider the problem.
  - ◆ Value the problem.
  - ◆ Prioritize aspects of the problem.
  
- 2. WHAT'S BEHIND THE PROBLEM?**
  - ◆ Diagnose the root cause.
  
- 3. WHAT COULD I DO ABOUT IT?**
  - ◆ Generate options.
  
- 4. WHAT WILL I DO?**
  - ◆ Select the best alternative.
  
- 5. WHAT STEPS WILL I FOLLOW?**
  - ◆ Set the ultimate goal.
  - ◆ Determine the steps that lead to the goal.
  
- 6. WHAT HAPPENS IN FOLLOWING THE STEPS?**
  - ◆ Follow the steps that will lead to the goal.
  
- 7. WHAT SUCCESS DID I HAVE?**
  - ◆ Monitor progress in terms of the goal.

**COMPETENCY:** Uses problem-solving techniques with users of A.I.D. services.

## **DESKTOP AID #5**

### **PROBLEM-SOLVING:USERS OF A.I.D. SERVICES**

#### **1. WELL BEGUN IS HALF DONE**

- **FIRST IMPRESSION:** "You have come to the right person."
- **FIRST IMPRESSION:** "Your problem is important to me."
- **FIRST IMPRESSION:** "I'm going to help you."

#### **2. ACTIVE LISTENING**

- "Let me make sure that I have the right name & address."
- "Tell me how I can help you."
- "Of course." "What else?" "When did that happen?"
- "Yes." "I understand." "Go on." "Right."
- "I didn't want to interrupt while you were talking but
- "Let me ask a few questions to make sure I understand."

#### **3. EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING**

- "That must have been very frustrating."
- "I'm so sorry that happened."
- "I can appreciate that." "Of course you were angry."
- "Thank you for telling me all that."
- "I can imagine how difficult that must have been for you."

#### **4. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS**

- "Let me explain exactly what I'll be doing to help you."
- "What I can't do, I'll get someone else to take care of."
- "I'll keep you posted on everything from start to finish."

**COMPETENCY:** Uses problem-solving techniques with co-workers.

## DESKTOP AID #6

### PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CO-WORKERS

1. **LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT.**
  - ◆ People get offended by little things said and done.
  - ◆ What is unimportant for one may not be for another.
  - ◆ Blaming has never solved a single problem.
  - ◆ Taking initiative to create small changes helps.
  
2. **THERE IS NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT.**
  - ◆ Problems unfaced just get bigger.
  - ◆ Putting off until tomorrow is only an excuse.
  - ◆ Do what you can do today.
  
3. **TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.**
  - ◆ Consultation is a good place to start.
  - ◆ Explain the work problem to a trusted, wise person.
  - ◆ Discuss alternative ways to handle it.
  
4. **I'M NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN.**
  - ◆ Problems are different and so are their solutions.
  - ◆ Look for solutions before deciding there are none.
  - ◆ Talking to the problem person is often the solution.
  
5. **IT TAKES TWO TO TANGLE.**
  - ◆ There is no sense to talk if the intention is to blame.
  - ◆ Presume that you are part of the problem.
  - ◆ Describe the difficulty as a problem you are having.
  - ◆ Explain that you are coming to the person for help.
  - ◆ Give the person a chance to respond.
  - ◆ Leave yourself open to hear what the person says.

## **DESKTOP AID #6 (CONTINUED)**

### **PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CO-WORKERS**

- ◆ Try to appreciate the other person's point-of-view.
- ◆ Ask clarifying questions that help you understand.
- ◆ Refuse to become defensive.

#### **6. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?**

- ◆ Thank the other person for honesty and frankness.
- ◆ Express your desire to find a solution.
- ◆ Ask what you can do to turn things around.

#### **7. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

- ◆ Explain what you will do differently.
- ◆ Ask for continued feedback in order to do it better.
- ◆ Be willing to make changes even if the other is not.
- ◆ Express your sincere gratitude for the other's help.
- ◆ Plan to get together again if agreeable to both.

**COMPETENCY:** Uses problem-solving techniques with supervisors.

## **DESKTOP AID #7**

### **PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH SUPERVISORS**

- **HOW TO DEAL WITH EVERYDAY PROBLEMS**
  - ◆ Maintain a respectful/honest/open on-going relationship.
  - ◆ Arrange for regular supervisory meetings.
  - ◆ Clarify the supervisor's expectations of you/of the job.
  - ◆ Get a clear understanding of all work assignment.
  - ◆ Get the supervisor involved in establishing priorities.
  - ◆ Give regular progress reports noting any problems.
  - ◆ Raise questions and concerns as needed.
  - ◆ Ask for feedback on a regular basis.
  
- **HOW TO DEAL WITH A CONFLICT SITUATION**
  - ◆ Avoid panic or over-reaction if confronted.
  - ◆ Give explanations/answer questions as needed.
  - ◆ Try not to respond in any angry or defensive way
  - ◆ Deal only with what is necessary at the moment.
  - ◆ Talk to a trusted and wise mentor or friend.
  - ◆ Think and plan what needs to be said and done.
  - ◆ Arrange for a good time to see the supervisor.
  - ◆ Be assertive but not aggressive.
  - ◆ Describe strong feelings rather than acting them out.
  - ◆ Explain the situation without blaming the supervisor.
  - ◆ Apologize for your part of whatever went wrong.
  - ◆ Be prepared to handle the supervisor's response.
  - ◆ Use the present situation to your benefit in the future.
  
- **THE DO'S AND DON'TS**
  - ◆ Think like your supervisor; put on his/her shoes.
  - ◆ Don't assume the supervisor is "out to get you."
  - ◆ Don't blame the supervisor for the problem.
  - ◆ Take the initiative to develop an action plan.

**COMPETENCY:** Displays professional office behavior.

## **DESKTOP AID #8**

### **IMPROVING AND PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL OFFICE BEHAVIOR**

- **HOW TO IMPROVE JOB BEHAVIORS**
  - ◆ Observe those with good job behaviors.
  - ◆ Ask clarifying questions.
  - ◆ Watch co-workers
  - ◆ Consult with a mentor
  - ◆ Listen to supervisors
  - ◆ Learn from performance reviews
  - ◆ Read informational publications
  - ◆ Attend training workshops
  
- **HOW TO PRACTICE JOB BEHAVIORS**
  - ◆ List the most important behaviors (not only technical job skills) for your job
  - ◆ Evaluate yourself in terms of these behaviors
  - ◆ Prioritize the ones you need to practice
  - ◆ Assign a different behavior to focus on each month
  - ◆ Devise a plan to learn and practice each behavior
  - ◆ Formulate this plan based on the suggestions above
  - ◆ Review the plan with an experienced person
  - ◆ Change the plan to make it more effective
  - ◆ Use the plan each day to evaluate your progress
  - ◆ Get monthly feedback from the experienced person

**COMPETENCY:** Displays professional office behavior.

## DESKTOP AID #9

### WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL OFFICE BEHAVIOR?

1. Makes wise decisions.
2. Uses time effectively.
3. Works co-operatively with others.
4. Completes all job requirements on time.
5. Pays attention to detail.
6. Takes initiative on a regular basis.
7. Handles responsibility effectively.
8. Communicates clearly with supervisor.
9. Communicates clearly with co-workers.
10. Relates in a friendly and cordial way.
11. Maintains suitable work place appearance.
12. Pays attention to detail.
13. Requires a minimum of supervision.
14. Provides leadership when required.
15. Follows directions carefully.
16. Manages tasks effectively.
17. Projects a professional image.
18. Dresses appropriately.
19. Pays attention to detail.
20. Arrives punctually.
21. Attends work regularly.
22. Solves work problems in a mature way.
23. Handles job-related stress effectively.
24. Follows directions carefully.
25. Shows respect for supervisor.
26. Shows respect for co-workers.
27. Consults with supervisor and others as needed.
28. Uses criticism in a productive way.

COMPETENCY: Displays professional office behavior.

DESKTOP AID #10

FOCUS OF THE MONTH

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

<b>COMPETENCY:</b> Accepts and adapts to change.
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## DESKTOP AID #11

### KEY WAYS TO HANDLE CHANGE EFFECTIVELY

1. **DON'T FIGHT CHANGE.**
  - In the long run you never win.
  - Fighting change is exhausting and frustrating.
  - Fighting change only gets you old, faster.
2. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IN A CHANGE TO HANDLE IT.**
  - You've handled changes before that you didn't like.
  - Give it a chance.
  - Let yourself be open to new possibilities.
3. **LET GO OF THE PAST.**
  - With eyes on the past you miss seeing present/future.
  - Remaining in the past invites isolation.
  - Make a conscious effort to move ahead.
4. **KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR.**
  - Humor counteracts the pain of change.
  - Humor keeps us in contact with others.
  - If you take yourself too seriously, no one else will.
5. **KEEP A POSITIVE POINT OF VIEW.**
  - Concentrating on the negative loses perspective.
  - Accentuating the positive opens new possibilities.
  - Things often look better given time and patience.
6. **EXPECT TO SUCCEED.**
  - Keep faith in your ability to handle the change.
  - Remember your past successes in similar situations.
  - Take pride in the quality of your everyday work.

## **DESKTOP AID #11 (CONTINUED)**

### **KEY WAYS TO HANDLE CHANGE EFFECTIVELY**

#### **7. DEVELOP A PLAN TO SUCCEED.**

- Deal with only one day at a time.
- Develop clear daily goals and objectives.
- Accentuate out-of-work activities that you enjoy.

#### **8. LET OTHERS HELP YOU HANDLE CHANGE.**

- Two heads are better than one.
- Talking with someone restores perspective.
- Sharing a problem makes you more patient with it.