Rules and Techniques of Managerial Assertiveness

Michaela Pešková

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky
akademický rok: 2010/2011

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Michaela PEŠKOVÁ**
Osobní číslo: **H08363**
Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Pravidla a techniky manažerské asertivity**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Asertivní chování jako nástroj komunikačních dovedností manažera
Definice pojmu asertivní chování v souvislosti s ostatními druhy komunikace
Charakteristika a rozbor jednotlivých asertivních technik
Shrnutí a poučení plynoucí z popsaných jevů

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Armstrong, Michael. How to Be an Even Better Manager: A Complete A–Z of Proven Techniques and Essential Skills. 7th ed. London: Kogan Page Ltd, 2008.
Hannaway, Conor, and Gabriel Hunt. The Management Skills Book. Hampshire: Gower Publishing Limited, 1995.
Jiřincová, Božena. Efektivní komunikace pro manažery. Praha: Grada Publishing, a.s., 2010.
Phillips, Annie. Assertiveness and the Manager's Job. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing Ltd., 2002.
Vymětal, Jan. Průvodce úspěšnou komunikací: Efektivní komunikace v praxi. Praha: Grada Publishing, a.s., 2008.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Kateřina Burešová**
                                   Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **1. února 2011**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **6. května 2011**

Ve Zlíně dne 1. února 2011

prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.   doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
            děkan   *ředitelka ústavu*

PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby [1];
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 [2];
- podle § 60 [3] odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 [3] odst. 2 a 3 mohu užít své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že
- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako autor.

Ve Zlíně ..3. 5. 2011. ....Pešlová...........

---

(2) Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlížení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.

(3) Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.

2) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:

(3) Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacího zařízení (školní dílo).

3) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:

(1) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst. 3). Odpírá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybějícího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.

(2) Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užít či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.

(3) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jím dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše; přitom se přihlédne k výši výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.

ABSTRAKT

Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je prokázat důležitost asertivního chování a komunikace manažera. V teoretické části je definován termín asertivita, asertivní komunikace je srovnána s ostatními druhy komunikace a v neposlední řadě je uvedena charakteristika a rozbor nejznámějších asertivních technik.

Praktická část představuje výsledky výzkumu, který je realizován pomocí dotazníků sestavených na základě teoretických poznatků. Úkolem výzkumu je zjistit, jestli manažeři považují asertivitu za nedílnou součást manažerských schopností a jaký význam přikládají jednotlivým asertivním technikám.

Klíčová slova: asertivita, manažer, technika, asertivní desatero, komunikace, chování

ABSTRACT

The main goal of this bachelor thesis is to prove the significance of assertive behaviour and communication of a manager. In theoretical part of the thesis the term assertiveness is defined, assertive communication is contrasted with other styles of communication and not least the best known assertiveness techniques are characterized and analysed.

The practical part presents results of a research which is realized by means of the questionnaires compiled on the basis of theoretical findings. The aim of the research is to find out whether managers consider assertiveness to be an integral part of managerial skills and how important particular assertiveness techniques are.

Keywords: assertiveness, manager, technique, assertive bill of rights, communication, behaviour

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest and sincere gratitude to my parents and my whole family for their unlimited support throughout my studies. I would like to thank all of those who gave me the opportunity to complete this thesis. My thanks also belongs to Martina Kolmačková for her friendship and support during my studies at Tomas Bata University.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Kateřina Burešová, for her help and advice during writing this thesis.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Being assertive is considered to be a core of communication skills with numerous advantages in both personal and business relationships. It is especially useful in the working environment, as greater assertiveness can help to get the best out of yourself and other people, yielding returns in all areas of business.

People make business. They are the essence of business, whether they are managers or just staff members. Working as a manager requires to be aware of how to communicate effectively and assertiveness as an effective and diplomatic communication style gives the best chance to deliver an intended message successfully.

The study of assertiveness has become an important aspect of successful communication skills for its enormous benefits in all areas of the organizational environment. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the importance of assertive behaviour of managers connected with assertive, thus effective communication, and to reveal the possible threats resulting from the lack of knowledge of assertiveness.

The theoretical part of this thesis is focused on explanation of the basic terms of assertiveness and the term assertiveness itself because assertive behaviour is often misinterpreted by people. It is illustrated in contrast with other communication and behaviour styles because the nature of assertive communication can best be clarified by contrasting it with other types of communication.

In any business where a large amount of time is spent dealing with other people, assertive communication plays very important role and therefore this thesis examines the question whether the assertive behaviour as one of the most important manager's soft skills can be learnt by everyone or whether people are born this way. Furthermore, the top and most common techniques of assertiveness are presented with their possible use and examples.

The practical analysis applies the information from the theory in the practical perspective by distribution of questionnaires. Two responding groups were involved – managers and students. The analysis aims to illustrate how familiar respondents are with assertiveness and assertiveness techniques.

I.   THEORY

1 ASSERTIVENESS AND COMMUNICATION

Assertiveness is considered to be the core communication skill not only in working environment but in private life as well. Assertive people tend to be more efficient at work and manage to better cope with what is treated as difficult situation.

1.1 The term assertiveness

There are a lot of possible misunderstandings, surrounding the term assertiveness.

There is no exact definition what assertiveness means. Literature offers numerous definitions and different interpretations of assertiveness.

One of the possible definitions used in philosophy says that "it is thinking about the meaning of life, the relationship of a man to the universe, and to the people in particular." (Novák and Pokorná 2003, 4)

Novák and Pokorná, for instance, see assertiveness as:

- "a responsibility for oneself;
- a clear vision where to head;
- a joy of success and the ability to strive for them without an excessive modesty;
- a coolness under fire – coping with criticism;
- a listening to others, communication without aggression;
- a calmness in a crisis." (Novák and Pokorná 2003, 6)

Both authors further note that "advocating the satisfaction only and solely of those rights and demands of an individual which are in compliance with the rights of others is assertive." (Novák and Pokorná 2003, 4)

The content of the definitions above demonstrate the diverse interpretation of the word assertiveness in the professional literature.

The root of the word assertiveness comes from the latin word *assertio* (assertion) or the verb *asserere* (assign, appropriate). (Vybíral 2000, 204)

As English-Czech – Czech-English dictionary states, to assert means "to declare, to claim"; assertive is described as "resolute, vibrant, enterprising". The most frequent interpretations in Czech translations are "healthy, direct self-assertion" or "non-violent expression of self-confidence." (Fronek 2001, 25)

1.2   The purpose of being assertive

Assertiveness is highly correlated with effective and persuasive communication; the one which creates results. Communication is a part of so-called soft managerial skills. With respect to the characteristics of a leader, assertiveness is placed very high on the list of success criteria. It is for this reason that assertiveness is considered to be a key managerial skill nowadays. Assertive managers make results and achieve success for themselves and for the organization. (O'Brienová 1996, 11)

As a consequence of intentional political measures, such as lifting of trade barriers in Europe, or sudden international crisis, the international market creates new circumstances and conditions that managers are forced to react to. Change is a fundamental idea. Successful manager should be able to cope with and live through changes. Managing changes requires the ability to communicate properly and explicitly. Assertiveness represents significant instrument in the process. Good manager of the 21st century uses assertiveness as a key skill to enhance a company performance and to manage requirements of a managerial profession. (O'Brienová 1996, 11-12)

Learning how to behave and communicate assertively can be a powerful tool in helping to resolve conflicts and turn a difficult situation into an advantage. Moreover, the organizational environment represents a challenge with a range of social interactions. Due to this, assertiveness is the most powerful communications tool to manage and solve the diverse situations manager must face in this relationship tangle.

Contemporary organizations need assertive individuals. An assertive person is capable of communicating with confidence with superiors and address apprehension or problems in a precise and correct manner. Furthermore, the person with assertive behaviour knows when and how to communicate with subordinates with respect, empathy and comprehension to offer them supervision and instructions in such a way that the message is well received. These actions will make the manager a competent leader; direct with superiors, empathetic and firm with subordinates.

2 COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR STYLES

Alberti and Emmons (2004, 45) cite Joseph Wolpe who states that "there are three possible broad approaches to the conduct of interpersonal relations. The first is to consider one's self only and rode roughshod over others. The second is always to put others before one's self. The third approach is the golden mean. The individual places himself first but take others into account." However, modern litarature discuss four styles of communication.

Everytime a person decides to communicate with another person, a style of communication is selected. It is important to understand and identify four different styles of communicating with others before learning assertiveness skills. The reason for this is that it is important in order to avoid communicating in less effective ways and in order to recognize those styles in others so to be able to deal with them.

No specific style of communication is used constantly. Moreover, no specific style of communication is explicitly bad. All styles have their proper place and use. Different ways of communicating are being used, depending on the situation or the people. Usually, however, one style best describes an overall behaviour of a person.

Weiten et al. (2009, 232) suggest beneficial way how to distinguish among the communication styles. They propose a distinction in terms of how people deal with their own rights and the rights of others. Consequently, "passive people sacrifice their own rights. Aggressive people tend to ignore the rights of others. Assertive people acknowledge both their own rights and the rights of others."

Communicating effectively is essential to reach goals when interacting with others. So assertiveness, aggressiveness and passiveness can be viewed as functions of working toward a goal.

2.1 Passive

Passive style of communication focuses on pleasing others and meeting others' goals compared to satisfying own values and goals. A passive person tries to avoid conflict and confrontation with others. These individuals tend to agree to do things they do not want to do without negotiating. Consequently, this style makes one feel used and taken advantage of. It may seem that passive style of behaviour does not cause any harm - because passive type of a person does everything not to upset anyone - but it is not true. It lowers an individual's self-esteem and leaves the needs unmet.

Nonverbal components of passive style comprehend for instance lack of gestures while talking or poor eye contact. Passive communicators tend to speak quietly. One has difficulty to say no and problems to accept or give compliments. Because of the repulsion to commit to anything, statements such as "maybe", "probably", "I do not know" or "I suppose" are used. Person with a passive style of communication is a good listener, but experiences problems giving honest, direct feedback. The aim of passive style is to avoid conflicts and to please others. (Hermes 1997, 2-3)

Passive managers can be indecisive, poor mentors and uninspiring. The problem with passive managers is that employees often do not know what is expected of them. A passive manager is someone who is easy to walk over. Moreover, because passive managers do not take things seriously, the employees will not take things seriously, and they might often do what they want despite the company's rules and regulations.

2.2 Aggressive

Aggressive style focuses on pleasing oneself at the expense of others. Aggressive person disclaims other people's rights. The impact of one's behaviour on others is ignored. It is an "I win, you lose" position. Aggressive behaviour includes many forms of domination, intimidation, accusations and direct manipulation. Aggression usually aims at getting control of situations or getting one's goals met no matter what the consequences are to others. "Aggressive behaviour causes two counterproductive reactions: fight or flight. In other words, aggression either breeds aggression, which gets a person nowhere, or it forces people to retreat in a demoralized or dissatisfied way." (Armstrong 2008, 14)

Communicators with aggressive style tend to use steady eye contact by means of staring or glaring at partner. Aggressive person stands close to other people in order to intimidate them. Gestures are overused. Body posture tends to be stiff and rigid. Verbal components comprise loud voice or unfriendly tone. "You" statements are used to blame and threaten others. An aggressor often uses violence or verbal abuse. These communicators easily accept compliments but are unwilling to give them. Tendency to interrupting, leaving no time for others to have their say is present. (Hermes 1997, 3-4)

A manager with aggressive style may deliver good results in the short term, however, over the long term, other team members will feel disrespected and become demoralized which

may lead to their withdrawal. The aggressive manager might generally treat his employees like children.

2.3 Passive – aggressive

This style blends elements from both the passive style and the aggressive style. The rights of others are violated or disregarded. It aims to control and to manipulate others and to avoid direct conflict. This person behaves passively to people's face, then act aggressively when they are not around. Sarcasm is usually used, which often leaves the other people confused about what the real message is. (Hermes 1997, 4-5)

2.4 Assertive

Andrew Salter initially described assertiveness as a personality trait. It was thought that some people had it, and some people did not. But Joseph Wolpe and Richard Lazarus redefined assertiveness as "expressing personal rights and feelings." (Seaward 2006, 221) Examination favors the idea that assertive behaviour is not a personality trait that person is born with. People are not either born assertive or not as people are not born with character traits which are developed throughout the life. On the contrary, it is a kind of behaviour that is usually displayed in certain circumstances. Thus assertiveness is not a personality trait which persists consistently across all situations. Different individuals exhibit varying degrees of assertive behaviour depending on different context, for instance work or social context.

Assertive behaviour is most often mistaken for being aggressive. Some people might consider assertiveness as a way how to defeat and manipulate the other person and to behave selfishly. However, assertiveness is something different. Assertiveness is an effective and diplomatic communication style. It is a balance between aggressive and passive communication style in a given situation. This direct and respectful style of communication considerably enhances effectiveness with others and produces the most positive outcomes. In the majority of cases, assertive behaviour will result in a positive response from others. According to Alberti and Emmons (2001, 6), "assertive behaviour promotes equality in human relationships, enabling us to act in our own best interests, to stand up for ourselves, without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably, to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others."

The assertive style minimizes opportunities to be taken advantage of by other people. Assertiveness is about effective communication and this does not just mean choosing the right words to say in a given situation. It is not only a matter of what is said, but assertiveness is also about how it is said. Intonation, facial expression, tone of voice, volume, gesture and body language all play an important part in the message that is being sent to the other person.

Assertive communicators use direct eye contact without staring, confident tone of voice and appropriate gestures while speaking. Facial expressions match what is said. An assertive person is able to say no without guilt and with respect for the other person. This person takes responsibility for the actions and avoids blaming others. "I" statements to take personal responsibility are used. The goal of an assertive person is to communicate with respect, to understand each other and to find solution to the problem. (Hannaway and Hunt 1992, 194-195; Hermes , 6)

Assertive managers are able to lead, direct and motivate without the need to bang the table or play the dictator. Assertiveness is the key in giving constructive feedback to improve performance and provide direction.

2.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages

Assertive communication is essential for effective performance and well-being in the workplace. The benefits an organization receives from assertive managers are enormous. Montero (2010) states that "leaders with assertiveness skills will have the resources and capacity to challenge and implement strategy, manage emotions in the professional arena, give, process and receive feedback adequately, effectively prevent conflicts, understand different behaviour styles and learn to use them to build productive relationships, improve supervisory skills and face with enthusiasm changes and challenges in organizational life." Benefits of an assertive workplace are:

- Communication becomes simple, straightforward and appropriate, which reduces misunderstandings
- Increased confidence and more effective decision making
- Encourages productivity
- Problems are solved more quickly
- Reduces physical and mental stress
- Increased personal, team and organizational performance

- Individuals are empowered to develop, identify and deliver the best solutions
- Leads to development of mutual respect.

Disadvantages of assertive behaviour are unambiguously outweight by advantages of assertive bahaviour, but there are some:

- One may appear to be arrogant
- It can reflect over-confidence.

2.4.2 Types of assertion

Assertive behaviour does not appear in the same form. Various types of assertion can be employed. (Mikuláštík 2010, 81; Janáčková 2009, 73)

- Basic assertion

This type involves a simple expression of standing up for personal rights, beliefs, feelings or opinions. Requests, appreciations and refusals are included.

- Empathic assertion

This is a very effective type of assertive communication containing of recognition of other person's situation or feelings, followed by an assertive statement standing up for speaker's rights. This type of assertion can be used when the other person is involved in a situation that may not fit with speaker's own needs, and speaker wants to indicate the awareness of and sensitivity to the other person's position.

- Escalating assertion

The individual in this type of assertion begins by making a minimal assertive response, and, if the other person fails to respond to this, gradually increases the degree of assertiveness engaged and becomes increasingly firm. An escalating assertion statement includes a consequence for the other person.

- Confrontive assertion

This type is used when someone's word contradicts his action, when an agreement has been violated. A confrontive assertion points this out as the assertive statement is made.

- I-language assertion

The speaker objectively describes the behaviour of the other person, how this affects the speaker's life or feelings and why the other person's behaviour should be changed.

This is especially useful in expressing negative feelings.

- Defensive assertion

Person is willing to change his mind, attitude in regard to presented arguments.

3 ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

When a person is born, and until the age of about six months, two forms of behaviour are known and demonstrated: passive, dependent on the others, and aggressive, demanding behaviour. As one grew older, one of the first words that has been learnt is "no". It is a way of saying "I can make my own decisions". It is the very first step in commencement to provide independence as a unique individual. (Bishop 2000, 3)

For kids, variation in passive and aggressive behaviour, expressing feelings without restrictions, and saying "no" without feeling guilty feels natural and spontaneous.

Nevertheless, one's behaviour in the early development is shaped and conditioned by people surrounding us during this period of socialization. During this time, people are told what is good and what is bad, what to do and what not to do. Bishop (2000, 3) points out that it is often in one's best interest to please others, because good behaviour tends to be rewarded. However, aggressive behaviour gets its rewards as well. Any attention, even if gained by the aggressive demonstration, is better than being ignored.

Basically, this is how passive/aggressive pattern is built, and the reason why as adults people have a tendency to slide into adapted behaviour to achieve goals or to meet the needs, because passive and aggressive behaviour come naturally. For its naturalness, passive and aggressive behaviour may seem to be the easy option, whereas assertive behaviour requires a cognitive process. (Bishop 2000, 3-4)

Assertiveness training, like social skills training, has its roots in behaviour therapy with its basic premise that inappropriate behaviour can be unlearnt while more appropriate behaviour can be learnt. Assertiveness training is intended to increase competence in social interactions. It emphasizes the value of clear, peaceful, honest communication as a means of establishing relationships in which everyone knows where they stand and no one feels taken advantage of. Nobody is consistently assertive. The goal of assertiveness training is to maximize the number of social situations in which an individual is able to communicate assertively rather than aggressively or passively. Learning to be assertive means that one can choose when and where to assert oneself.

Organizations are becoming more conscious of the need to invest in the growth and development of its human capital. The results of skilled managers are evident in all areas of the organizational environment. By developing a proper degree of assertiveness, a manager will find his job more satisfying and the work will be better done.

3.1 History and development

The historical origins of assertiveness are in behavioural psychology; in the work of Pavlov, Salter and Wolpe. Assertiveness training was originally a technique of behaviour therapy and is still practised as such by some psychologists. Further development has been made by Alberti, Emmons, Lazarus and Fensterheim. As Rees and Graham (1991, 8) state, "this development was based on the observation, analysis and classification of those behaviours which are assertive." The development of effective techniques for teaching these behaviours followed. Both authors further point out that it is obvious that assertive behaviour has not been invented. It appertained to human behaviour long before the term assertive was applied to it.

Andrew Salter is considered to be the founder of assertiveness training, as he published the first book called Conditioned Reflex Therapy in 1949 dealing with assertiveness training; however he did not use that term himself at this point. His book describes number of case studies in which he used primitive assertiveness techniques. He referred to it as techniques of "conditioning excitatory responses". As he says, "they are so interdependent and commingled, that by practising any one of them, the subject, in effect, is learning all of the others." (Salter 1949, 57)

In the concept of assertiveness training, Salter uses Pavlovian discoveries of excitation and inhibition. These are two elements discovered in nervous activity. "Excitation involves heightened activity, including the ability to learn new responses. Inhibition is a process decreasing both activity and the ability to learn new responses." Salter's aim was to increase the excitatory behaviour in a person in order to interact more effectively with people and to learn more effective ways of interaction. Increase in excitatory behaviour leads to increase in excitatory feelings, as the person becomes more assertive. (Rees and Graham 1991, 9)

The term assertiveness training was introduced in 1950s by the behaviour therapist Joseph Wolpe when he began to use Salter's ideas in the treatment of social anxiety. According to Wolpe, a person could not experience two antagonistic emotional conditions at the same time. Therefore an individual could feel either relaxed or anxious, but could not experience these feelings concurrently. In addition, he showed that assertive behaviour in situations of anxiety suppressed the anxiety and resulted in easier way of behaving assertively in these situations. There is no point in contend with the anxiety, assertive behaviour defeats it. (Rees and Graham 1991, 9-10)

Joseph Wolpe influenced other psychologists, Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons. They presented assertiveness training as a "behavioural-humanistic concept for helping persons to gain their perfect rights." (Rees and Graham 1991, 10)

The development and expansion of assertiveness training is by many experts related to mental health and personal growth groups of feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the United States. The approach was introduced to encourage women to stand up for themselves appropriately and to enable them to change some of the limiting habitual patterns of their interactions with others. Courses of assertiveness begun to arise, offering women the comprehension and skills to give them more self-confidence in the world of male-dominated workplaces.

3.2 The assertive bill of rights

Assertiveness carries with it the recognition of legitimate personal rights. These have been described by several therapists, including Andrew Salter. The acquirement of assertive approach is conditioned by clarification and acceptance of fundamental assertive rights defined by the theory of assertiveness. According to Jiřincová (2010, 77), "assertive rights emphasize authenticity, spontaneity, honesty, human freedom, right for own opinion and the opportunity to change it."

Knowledge of assertive rights and their implementation into one's way of thinking is a prerequisite for the ability to act assertively. The aim of application of assertive rights in life is in particular the endeavour not to accept manipulative behaviour of others, and at the same time not to manipulate with others. From the recipient's point of view, these rights represent self-defence principles against manipulation. On the other hand, from the speaker's point of view, the rights express rules of effective communication, fair play. Andrew Salter formulated essential principles into ten rights in 1950. It is interesting that these rights are still topical and have not lost the meaning, even after more than sixty years. The rights are all connected to each other, tied together and complement each other. Legitimate personal rights of assertiveness, according to Andrew Salter, involve the following:

1. "The right to be the ultimate judge of one's own behaviour, thoughts and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon oneself.

2. The right to offer no reasons or excuses to justify one's behaviour.

3. The right to make mistakes, and to be responsible for them.

4. The right to be illogical in making decisions.

5. The right to change one's mind.

6. The right to judge to what extent and how one is responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.

7. The right to say, "I don't care."

8. The right to say, "I don't know."

9. The right to say, "I don't understand."

10. The right to be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them." (Vymětal 2008, 144)

Some authors, for example Doležal et al. (2009, 298), add one more right:

11. "The right to choose whether one will or will not behave assertively."

3.3   Assertive responsibilities

One does not only have rights in face of other people while using assertiveness. Assertive responsibilities need to be considered as well. If one demands only rights, it is not assertiveness, but selfishness. Other people have their rights and responsibilities too. Assertive system would hardly work without mutual cooperation. Novák and Capponi (2004, 43-44) draw attention to the following assertive responsibilities:

1. "Understand other people.

2. Control one's emotions.

3. Allow others to behave assertively.

4. Try to listen to other people.

5. Respect the other people's opinions.

6. Learn to compromise.

7. Admit a mistake and correct it."

4 TECHNIQUES OF ASSERTIVENESS

Just being aware of one's assertive bill of rights is not enough. One must also know how to act upon them. Assertiveness training involves the learning of techniques for resisting manipulation and coping with criticism. Assertiveness techniques help to communicate in constructive and satisfying ways, achieve workable results and resolve conflicts without being aggressive. However, one needs to keep in mind that assertiveness techniques, just like any other social skill which can be learnt, may not be successfully delivered from the very first time as it requires practice. The following sub-chapters analyse the most frequent techniques of assertiveness.

4.1 Broken record

This technique is useful in situations when one wants to say no or otherwise set limits with someone who is having difficulties getting one's message. It helps to enforce justified claim. If using the broken record technique, one's viewpoint is stated and repeated in a calm, relaxed manner. McKay, Davis, and Fanning (2009, 143-144) suggest several steps that should be followed:

1. One needs to clarify in his/her own mind what exactly is and is not wanted. Also, one needs to be conscious of one's feelings, thoughts, rights and about the situation.

2. A short, specific, understandable statement about what is wanted needs to be formulated. If possible, one should keep it one sentence. No offering of excuses, explanations, rationalizations. Avoid saying "I cannot". Rather say "I do not want to". It is more direct and honest.

3. One should use body language that supports the statement. Hence, upright sitting/standing and look into other person's eyes are appropriate.

4. The statement is calmly and firmly repeated as many times as necessary for the partner to understand the statement and to realize that one will not change one's mind.

5. One may briefly acknowledge the other person's feeling or ideas before returning to the broken record statement.

An example of how broken record works may be the following:

> A: You do want your children to learn faster, don't you?
>
> B: I understand, but I am not interested in buying.
>
> A: Your wife would want her children to have them.
>
> B: I understand, but I am not interested.
>
> A: You do not understand, otherwise you would want to buy these for your children.
>
> B: I understand how you feel, but I am not interested.
>
> A: If you do not want to talk to me, I will leave.

The example demonstrates, how speaker B by repeating his statement over and over again sets a boundary with a speaker A who is not listening to him and begins to argue with the speaker B. The statement is repeated that long until the speaker A gives up.

4.2   Fogging

If one meets an obstinate or overcritical person, it may provoke an argument. The technique of fogging may help to overcome such situation. Fogging is used when one is an object of manipulative criticism from other people. This technique instructs a person not to deny any criticism, thus stay calm in the face of criticism and simply respond in a kind way, not to get defensive and not to counterattack with another criticism. (Mikuláštík 2010, 92) A number of principles how fogging works is suggested by Manuel J. Smith (1985, 104-106). "One can agree with any truth in partner's statement (agreeing with the truth). One can agree with any possible truth in partner's statement (agreeing with the odds) or one can agree with the general truth in partner's logical statement (agreeing in principle)." Fogging forces the learner to listen very carefully what the critic says and respond with critic's exact words. Moreover, by fogging, the learner can exhaust the critic. It takes more energy than most people have to persist criticizing someone who will not respond. Phrases typically used when fogging include: "That could be true", "You are probably right", "You have a point there". (Jiřincová 2010, 85)

Here is a scheme of how the technique of fogging works:

REQUEST	RESPONSE
"This is important."	"Of course this is important but not as important as..."
"I need this."	"I am sure you do but it is just not possible now."
"I want it now."	"I can see why you would want that but my priority is..."

4.3   Asserting negatively

The essence of this assertiveness technique is accepting one's faults and errors without having to apologize. Basically, those things that are negative about oneself are assertively accepted. Criticism, either constructive or hostile, of one's negative qualities is sympathetically accepted. (Doležal et al. 2009, 300)

Example of the negative assertion:

A: If you think that, you must be a fool.

B: I admit, I am not the brightest person around.

A: And you are always making mistakes.

B: Yes, I do mistakes ocasionally.

A: And you are lazy.

B: I never claim to be the hardest working person.

4.4   I-statements

I-statements are among the most powerful devices one can use in assertiveness, both for oneself and others. Using "I" rather than "You", "We" or "one" puts the responsibility to the speaker rather than trying to transmit the responsibility on the other person. The application of I-statements helps to minimize negative reactions. For example, compare the following two statements which express the same thing:

(1) It seems that you have been arriving rather late for work recently.

(2) I have noticed that you have been arriving rather late for work recently.

(1) You are always interrupting me.

(2) I would like to finish my sentence without being interrupted.

The first statement gives an impression of an accusation while the second statement is rather observational and less menacing. Assertive statements do not blame and do not attack. According to McKay, Davis, and Fanning (2009, 133), strong I-statement consists of three elements:

(1) The action – the other person's behaviour, one's perspective of the situation

(2) Emotional response – the way one feels about the behaviour

(3) One's desired outcome

The authors also provide an example consisting of all three elements:
"When I think about giving a speech, I get nervous. I've been feeling butterflies in my stomach since yesterday when I told you I would talk at the next general board meeting. I realize that I don't want to give that talk. Please find someone else." (2009, 133)

4.5 Negative inquiry

Negative inquiry is similar to the technique of fogging because they are both ways to deal with criticism in a non-defensive manner. However, negative inquiry is a questioning form. A person who is being criticized prompts the critic for more information in order to avoid automatic defensive response and to avoid being manipulated as well. (Vymětal 2008, 145) Tingley (1997, 49) uses the following example to demonstrate the technique of negative inquiry:

A: "You need to think more strategically and less operationally.

B: What is it about my operational thinking that is problematic?"

4.6 Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure embodies assertively disclosing information about oneself – how one thinks, feels or reacts to the other person's free information. It is accepting and initiating discourse of both the negative and the positive aspects of one's behaviour, lifestyle, personality. Self-disclosure makes relationships exciting and builds intimacy. (Vymětal 2008, 145)

Example of self-disclosure:

> A: Did you come from Liverpool?
>
> B: No, I came from London by train. (Free information)
>
> A: Why did you take the train, it is faster by bus, is it not?
>
> B: I prefer the train. Bus makes me sick even thinking about it. (Self-disclosure)

4.7 Workable compromise

Workable compromise is considered to be the best approach for the satisfaction on both sides. Both sides agree with a suggested solution. However, it requires the art to respect and listen the other people. This technique is a great option one may consider if there is a certainty that one's self-respect is not going to be compromised as a result. The technique of workable compromise is based on the concept that people are always able to bargain for their important goals, unless the hypothetical compromise ends up affecting one's sense of self-respect or dignity. (Doležal et al. 2009, 300; Vymětal 2008, 145)

Palmer and Cooper (2007, 98) mention the following example of workable compromise:

> A: "We are getting desperately behind. Can you come in on Saturday morning and finish the paperwork?
>
> B: I have agreed to take my daughter horse-riding tomorrow morning, and I am not prepared to let her down. However, I can start work earlier next Monday and do the best to get the work finished. Is that OK?"

II. ANALYSIS

5 RESEARCH

Communication is regarded to be Alpha and Omega in social interactions. Effective communication is the essence and the most powerful tool for any manager in any business. Some managers are very aware of the significance of assertiveness in business and the positive outcomes that assertive communication brings into the working environment.

On the other hand, some managers underestimate or even completely resent the necessity of assertiveness while doing business. The attitude toward the importance and effectiveness of assertiveness and assertiveness techniques differs executive to executive.

While the purpose of the first part of this thesis is to collect and work out the theoretical basis dealing with assertiveness from the literary sources, the focus of the second part is to analyse theoretical findings by means of research. The aim was to find out if the selected respondents are aware of the assertiveness and its aspects in business. The second function was to examine how the respondents actually evaluate the importance and effectiveness of the most widely known assertiveness techniques used in business.

The whole analytical part of the thesis is finalized by a recommendation addressed to managers or prospect managers how to improve their assertiveness skills.

5.1 The research methodology

The analysis was carried out by the method of qualitative research by means of questionnaires distribution (appendix P I). The obtained data were consequently evaluated and put into graphs.

5.1.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created on the basis of theoretical knowledge from the first part of this thesis to support its findings. Respondents were asked to answer questions which were discussed in detail in previous chapters. The answers are in the form of multiple choice or preceded by the dichotomous questions. However, fundamental part of the thesis are questions related to the respondents' opinion about the effectiveness and importance of the most widespread assertiveness techniques used in working environment.

For my better evaluation and identification of which respondent belongs to which group, questionnaires for students were distributed via publication on the Internet, while questionnaires for managers were distributed via email or personally. The total number of completed questionnaires is 50.

5.1.2 Human sample

I have chosen two target groups to answer the questionnaires. The first addressed group were university students. Specifically, I targeted students from the English for business administration field of study and students studying at the Faculty of Management and Economics as they all are potential future managers. Moreover, within the scope of sample of students' respondents, I asked for the completion of questionnaires those students, who are somehow experienced in the field of a manager's profession in order to obtain reliable data. The second addressed group were managers themselves. For the purpose of proper evaluation and confirmation of certain theoretical findings, I included the question about respondent's gender into the questionnaire. However, the distinction and comparison between men and women is not the main object of the analysis.

Managers participated in the research were members of different levels of management. Each level of management, i.e. top level, middle-level and first-level, had its representatives. To be specific, general managers, department managers, chief executive officers, foremen, supervisors, facility managers and branch managers were engaged in the research. The reason for this diversity was to collect as many various opinions as possible to get a reliable data.

From the total number of fifty respondents, twenty five of them were managers, twenty five were students.

6 RESEARCH – RULES AND TECHNIQUES OF MANAGERIAL ASSERTIVENESS

In the following sub-chapters, data analysis and results of each question from the questionnaire are presented in the form of figures.

6.1 Do you know what assertiveness means?

Logically, the first question to answer was concerning the awareness of the term assertiveness. The aim was to identify whether students and executives are familiar with the term assertiveness and the behaviour and communication associated with it.
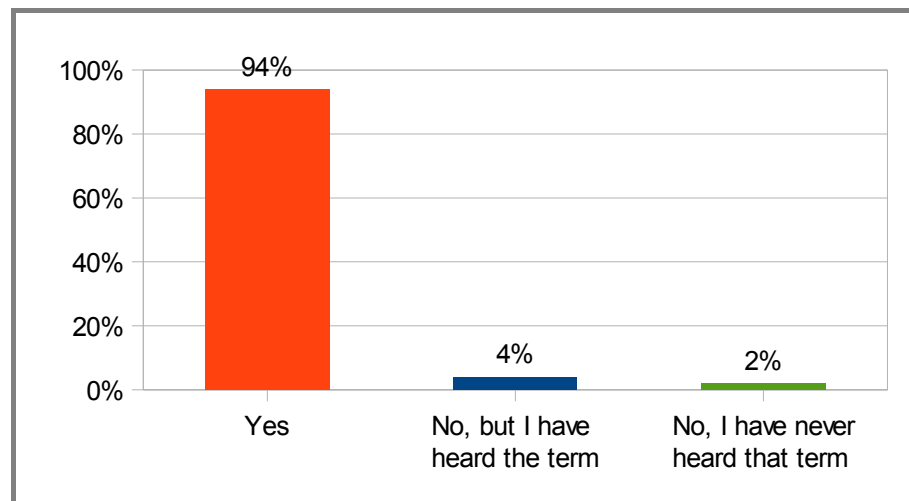

Figure 1 – Knowing the meaning of the term assertiveness

Question 1 in numbers: a) 47 answers (94%)

b) 2 answers (4%)

c) 1 answer (2%)

I was very curious about the answers to this question, considering the widely misinterpretation of the term assertiveness for aggressiveness. Notwithstanding, according to the research, 94% of respondents know what assertiveness means. It is maybe because of the fact that assertiveness is connected with effective communication not only in business environment but basically in every social interaction. In any case, consciousness of the majority of respondents is very positive. Minority of respondents marked the negative answer. 2 of them (4%) claim they have heard the term assertiveness before, however they

are not sure or they do not know what it means. 1 person answered he have never heard about assertiveness thus he does not know what it means.

Unfortunately, from the data obtained we are not able to determine whether all respondents who claim they know what assertiveness means in fact know what it actually means or they just think they know; or they understand it incorrectly.

6.2 Do you consider assertive behaviour to be an integral part of managerial skills?

The aim of the second question was clear - to determine if respondents consider assertive behaviour to be an integral part of managerial skills, that is if a manager needs to be assertive or not. In case they find it to be necessary, they could specify their attitude by the selection of answer relating to the organizational position of a manager. The purpose was to find out if they think that assertive behaviour is limited to managers from the top and middle management only or it is indispensable part of every manager's skills, irrespective of a managers's position in company.
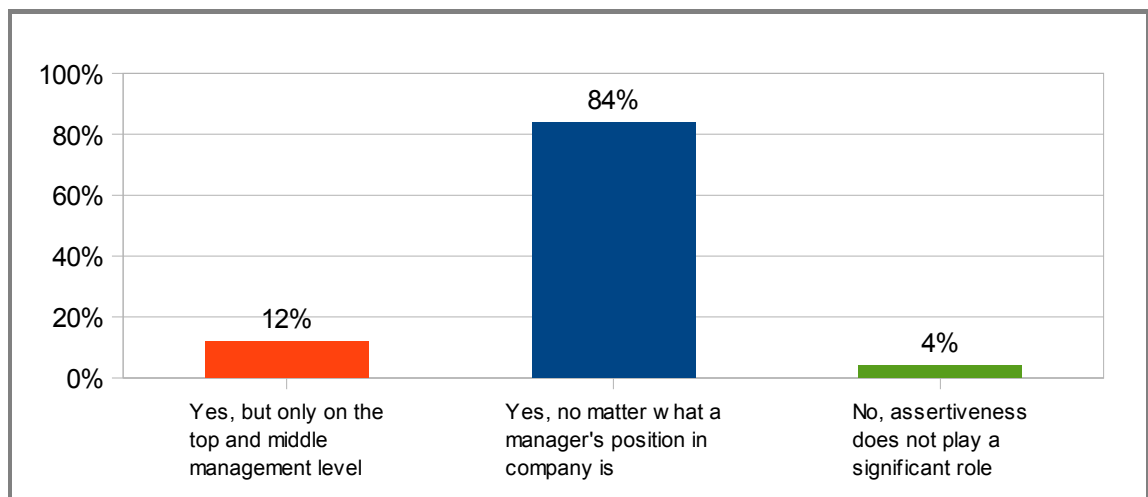

Figure 2 – Assertive behaviour as an integral part of managerial skills

Question 2 in numbers: a) 6 answers (12%)

b) 42 answers (84%)

c) 2 answers (4%)

The result answers were quite expected. Absolute majority find assertive behaviour to be a fundamental part of manager's skills, no matter what his/her position in management structure is. Six respondents stated that assertive behaviour should be taken into account only in case of managers from the top and middle-level management, i.e. presidents, vice presidents, chief executive officers, general managers, branch managers or department managers. The answer of these respondents implies that people in a position of a manager like supervisor, section officer, foreman or crew leader do not need to bother with assertive behaviour and assertive communication while doing business. Based on my experience from a part-time job I had, I do not agree with this. The foreman we had was a typical passive type of a person. He was undecisive and the employees often did not know what was expected of them. Moreover, personnel often violated company's rules and regulation which is something that cannot be accepted.

However, the answer that assertiveness does not play a significant role in business was marked by two respondents. What is interesting about this is the fact that these two students are the same as those who answered negatively in the first question, so I guess it correlates with the fact that they do not know what assertiveness means thus they do not know about its importance in business.

6.3   Have you ever participated in training or course concerning assertiveness?

This question was supposed to explore the potential participation in any educational lecture dealing with assertiveness. A lot of companies today organize educational seminars on various topics in order to enhance employees' qualification or skills so I was curious whether someone took part in one of those.
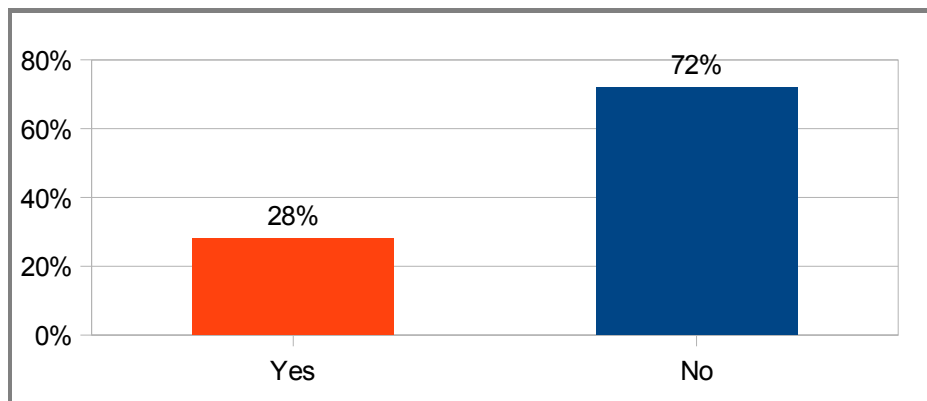
Figure 3 – Participation in training or course concerning assertiveness

Question 3 in numbers: a) 14 (28%)

b) 36 (72%)

The answer results demonstrate that 28% of respondents were engaged in some form of training or course which was concerned with the issue of managerial assertiveness. I wasn't surprised by the fact that all respondents who answered positively to this question were managers. Not even one student responded positively. I think it might be connected with what I have hinted earlier. Organizations are becoming to be more conscious about the need to constantly develop the skills of its human capital and educational seminars are very good method to do so. There are numerous lectures about effective thus assertive communication assigned for managers as individuals or for bigger groups within one organization, offered on the Internet. However, higher price or disbelief in its effectiveness may discourage some people from attending.

For the purpose of supporting the findings worked out of literary sources in the theoretical part of this thesis, I analyzed this question from the perspective of gender. Theory stated that assertiveness training was originally created for women to stand up for themselves and gain recognition it men-dominated workplaces. This hypothesis would mean that majority ot those respondents who answered they participated in training or course concerning assertiveness were women. The results are shown in the following graph:
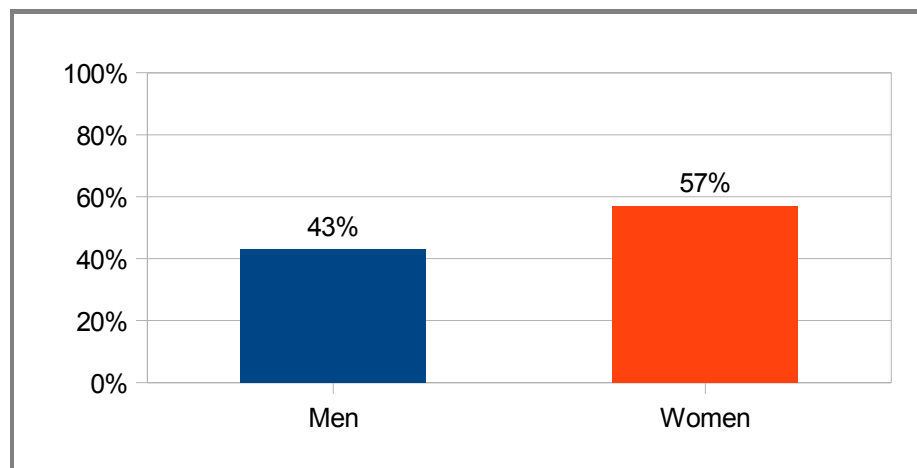
Figure 4 – Gender of participants of assertiveness training/course

<u>Figure 4 in numbers:</u> a) 6 respondents (43%)

b) 8 respondents (57%)

From the total number of 14 respondents who responded positively to the question about their participation in assertiveness training or course, majority (57%) were actually women. But the dominance of women in this question is not outstanding at all. It may be for the reason that assertiveness training or course can be organized by the employer and the employer may require the participation in these lectures by men and women equally.

6.4 Have you studied literature in order to improve your assertiveness skills?

This question is actually very similar to the previous question but it is supposed to further explore managers' attitude toward self-education in the field of effective communication and assertiveness behaviour in connection with it.
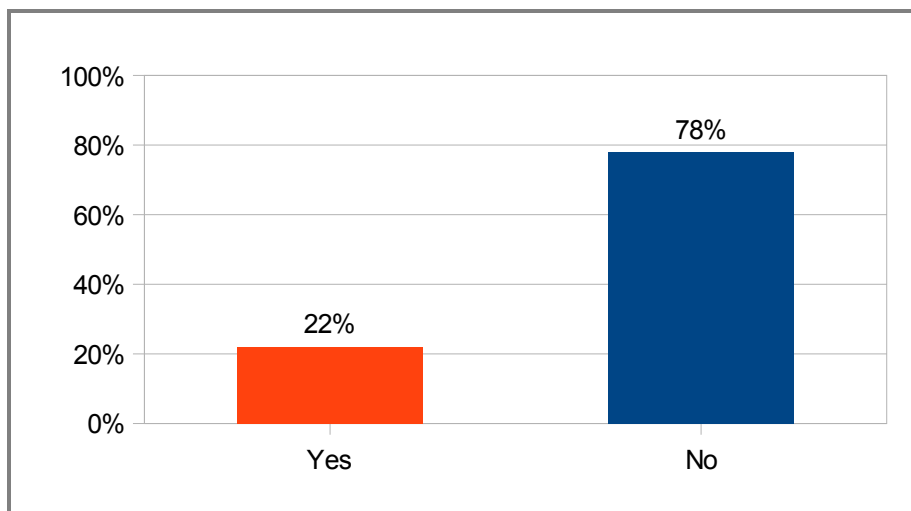
Figure 5 – Assertiveness literature study

Question 4 in numbers: a) 11 answers (22%)

b) 39 answers (78%)

Question number 4 desired to reveal if executives and students are willing to deepen their skills and knowledge by self-education. The positive answer indicates the fact that these respondents find assertiveness behaviour as a prerequisite of effective communication to be an important aspect of manager's competence. This is in fact the second question why I have decided to ask the respondents about their gender, for the purpose already mentioned earlier. The results are shown in the following graph:

Figure 6 – Gender of the readers of literature on assertiveness

Figure 6 in numbers: a) 3 respondents (28%)

b) 8 respondents (72%)

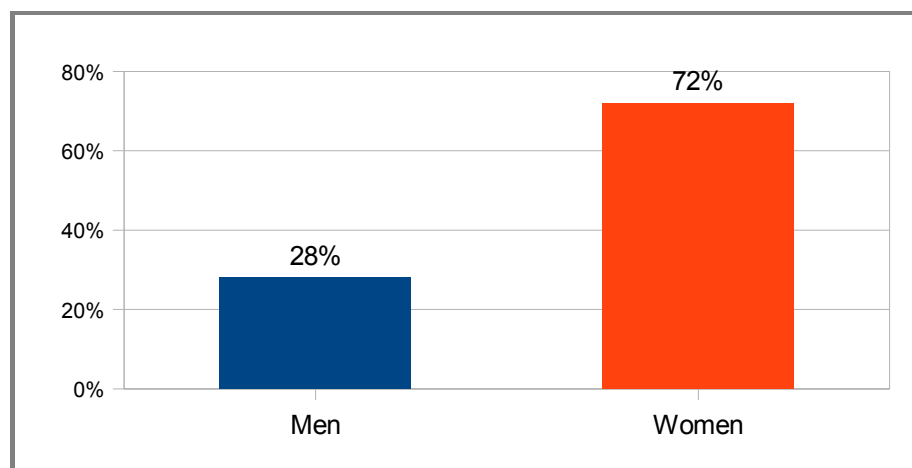From the total number of 11 respondents who self-educated themselves in the field of assertiveness skills via literature, an overwhelming majority was composed of women, which supports the idea that assertiveness training was originally destined for women, and that women still makes majority of those who try to improve their assertiveness skills.

I think it is not surprising, as women need to make more effort to prove themselves and persuade other people about their qualities and establish themselves in comparison with men.

6.5   Are you familiar with your assertive rights?

In case one wants to behave assertively, he/she should know fundamentals of assertive human rights thus this question was supposed to identify whether executives and managers are aware that they have assertive rights and what these rights are.
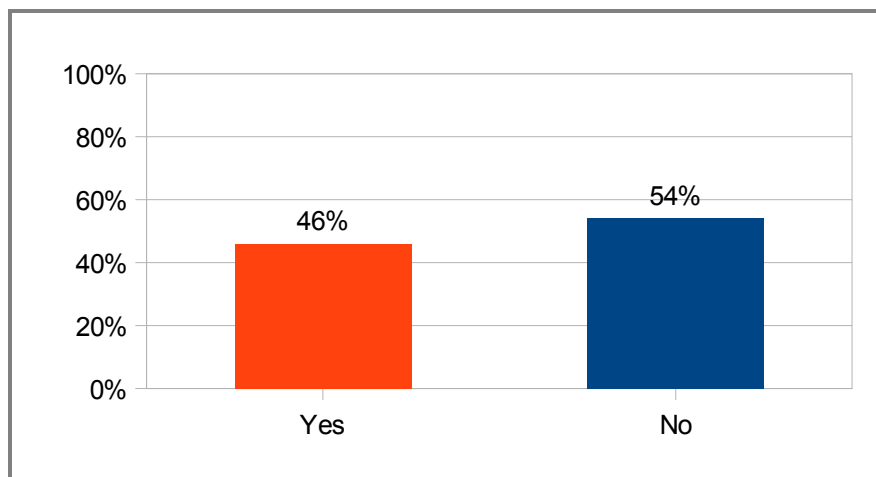

Figure 7 – Familiarity with one's assertive rights

Question 5 in numbers: a) 23 answers (46%)

b) 27 answers (54%)

The results in this case were quite well-balanced. Unawareness of one's assertive rights was predominated by 4 respondents. It is positive that the difference was not that striking because knowledge of assertive rights is prerequisite of assertive defense against manipulation. Assertive rights describe behaviour we do not have to feel ashamed or perceive as aggressive unless we do it with respect to the other peoples' rights. All respondents who marked that they took part in assertiveness training or read special literature in previous questions were contained in 23 respondents within the yes section of this question.

6.6   Which assertive right do you consider to be the most important?

The aim of this question was clearly to identify which assertive right is considered by respondents to be the most important. I know it may be hard to decide because each right is different and the real power is in the compactness of all rights together but I was curious about which right is considered to be the most valuable, which right is the most appreciated. Because each right represents priceless asset, I was expecting diverse answers.
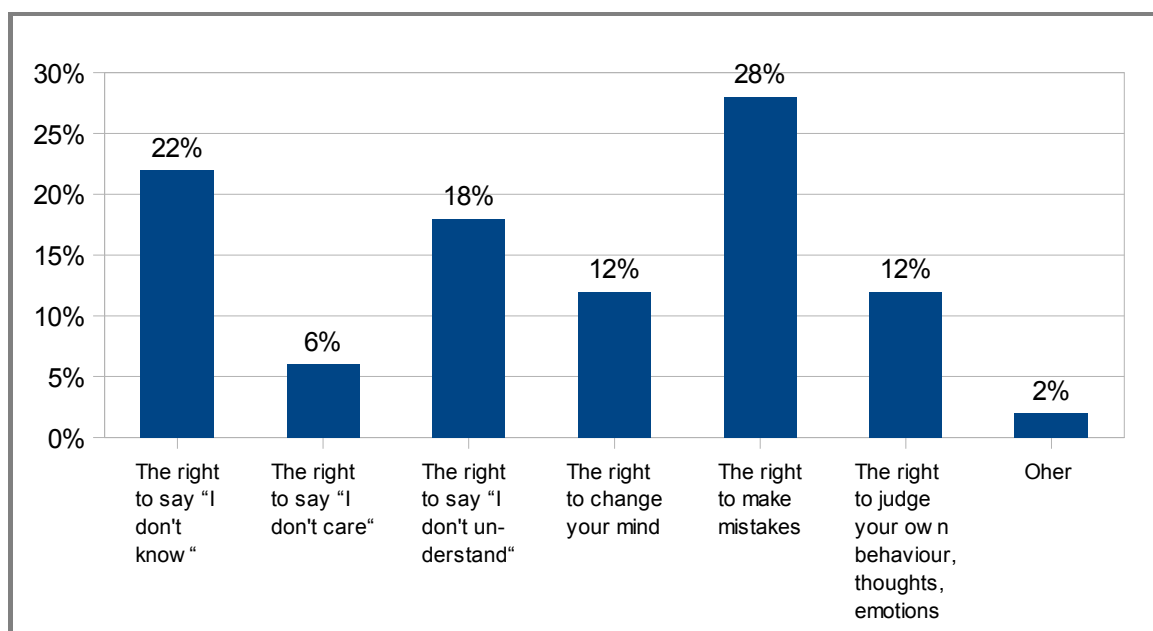

Figure 8 – The most important assertive right

Question 6 in numbers: a) 11 answers (22%)   e) 14 answers (28%)

b) 3 answers (6%)   f) 6 answers (12%)

c) 9 answers (18%)   g) 1 answer (2%)

d) 6 answers (12 %)

As I expected, answers were quite diverse. However, the graph shows that the right to make mistakes and to be responsible for them was selected as the most important assertive right. 14 executives and students (28%) marked this option. To make mistakes is part of the human condition. However, it is important to take a responsibility for them and try to use them as experience for the future. The second most important assertive right was marked the right to say "I don't know" (22%). Many people were told that not knowing was bad because not knowing implies being stupid or indecisive. But it is really not necessary to force yourself into uncomfortable statements to avoid looking strange in the other person's eyes. The right to say "I don't understand" placed the third with 18%. It is quite similar with the previous discussed right. Both the right to change one's mind and the right to judge one's own behavior, thoughts and emotions gained 12% answers. I find the right to be the ultimate judge of one's own behavior, thoughts and emotions important because others may influence my decision, but the final choice should be mine. The least important assertive right, according to the research, is the right to say "I don't care" with 6%.

6.7 Mark the importance and effectiveness of the assertiveness techniques

Substantial part of this thesis is concerned with assertiveness techniques. That is why in the following task managers and students were supposed to evaluate each given option by marks 1 to 10, when the highest mark means the highest importance or effectiveness and the number 1 was used for the opposite attitude. The results were averaged and put into the graph. I believe majority of managers were familiar with assertiveness techniques before, they might only not know the exact terminology.
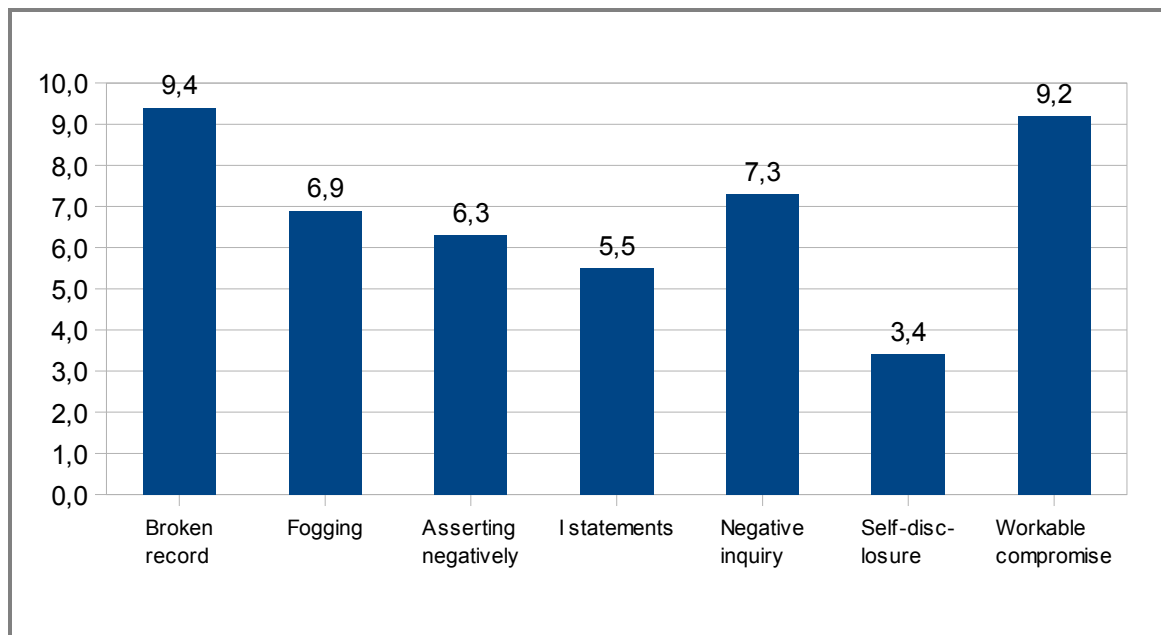
Figure 9 – The importance and effectiveness of assertiveness techniques

As it is clear from the graph 9, the range of valuation is quite diverse, from 3,4 minimum to 9,4 maximum. Nevertheless, it was proven that the most commonly known and used technique is the Broken record with the highest average of 9,4 points. Moreover, this was one of the few techniques known with its exact term. Many respondents made a remark that this technique is very well applicable not only in business but in everyday life as well. The second most effective/important technique was marked the Workable compromise (9,2) which is considered to be an assertive masterhood. It was pointed out by some respondents that this technique is preferred if dealing with close people we care about. This technique is favourite for its positive outcomes on both sides.

The third highest average of points (7,3) gained the Negative inquiry. The effectiveness of this technique rests in the questioning the critic about the negatives which helps to find the reason of partner's criticism. The fourth highest average of points (6,9) got the technique of Fogging. This technique is the best defence against unjustified criticism. It is also technique whose term is broadly known. It is based on not opposing to partner's criticism because any further argumentation would provide the critic with more information and topics for more criticism. We find in discussion anything we may agree with. It does not mean we confirm it is true but we only agree that the critic sees it that way.

The technique of Asserting negatively placed as the fifth most important/effective technique with the 6,3 average of points. In this case, negative things about oneself are

assertively accepted. Maybe that the reason why this technique gained rather lower evaluation is because people do not very like to talk about their negative aspects and what's more, to agree with them.

The last but one evaluation of 5,5 points gained the I statements technique. I was kind of surprised by this because I statements are among the most powerful devices one can use in assertiveness, both for oneself and others. By using "I" rather than "You", "We" or "one" we do not try to transmit the responsibility on the other person. I find this result to be the most surprising.Technique with the lowest average of points (3,4) is the technique of Self-diclosure. It comprises of transmission of personal relation to something, someone, one's feelings, ideas and opinions. Maybe this is exactly why this technique placed that bad among other techniques. People are not comfortable talking about their personal feelings unless with someone really close.

6.8   Have you successfully used any assertiveness technique?

In this task, I was curious about the effectiveness of assertiveness techniques' application.

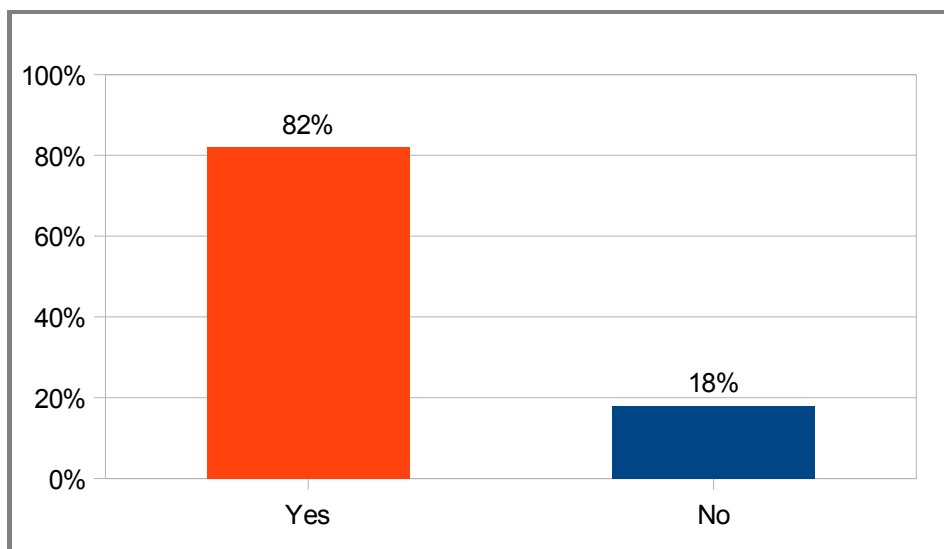Figure 10 – Successful usage of any assertiveness technique

Question 8 in numbers: a) 41 answers (82%)

b) 9 answers (18%)

An overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) have successfully used assertive technique. It is very positive finding. As numerous respondents noted, successful usage of assertiveness techniques is applicable in various situations, it is not limited to working environment only.

7 RECOMMENDATION

In this part of my thesis I would like to express my recommendation to managers and executives what to improve or what to become conscious about.

The thesis proved that absolute majority of managers and executives is aware of the importance of assertiveness in business environment, which I find very positive. Nevertheless, making reference to other people about the positive outcomes assertiveness has in effective communication cannot do any harm. The other thing I would recommend in this connection is not underestimate the importance of assertiveness in the first-level management. With respect to the knowledge of one's assertive bill of rights, there are still some reserves as the half of respondents was not familiar with their assertive rights, so I can only provide a recommendation to look for more information about rules of assertiveness.

As far as the particular assertiveness techniques are concerned, results were quite satisfactory. With the exception of one technique, none of the technique gained less than 5 mark value. In fact, average points of most techniques ranged from 6 to 9, which I find to be very positive because obviously managers have techniques that works for them. So at this point, there is nothing to recommend.

As it was stated in the thesis, assertiveness is a social skill and just like any other social skill it can be learnt. However, it is important to remember that any learning needs its practice. Do not be surprised if desired results are not delivered from the very beginning. For this reason I would like to recommend and emphasize not to get upset or frustrated if the intention to use assertiveness technique, for instance, backfires.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction there was established the main purpose of this thesis - to demonstrate the importance of assertiveness as a core managerial skill of effective communication, and to confirm and analyse the effectiveness of assertiveness techniques used in business. This goal was achieved by information gathered in the theoretical part of the thesis from literary sources and through the research made by means of questionnaires distribution.

The theoretical part of the thesis was focused on collecting information necessary to support the thesis statement. Firstly, the reader was provided with information about the term assertiveness and its wide misinterpretation. In connection with this, different communication and behaviour styles were presented in order to understand the assertiveness. Secondly, the most widespread assertiveness techniques were discussed and provided with examples. I have tried to gather as much information as possible and sort them as good as possible to provide readers with reliable basis to recognise the importance of assertiveness in working environment.

Practical part was carried out by the distribution of questionnaires. The research was supposed to support the theoretical findings about the importance of managerial assertiveness and effectivity of assertiveness techniques used by managers.
The questionnaires were prepared on the basis of knowledge from the theory and spread among the two targeted groups – students experienced with manager's profession and managers themselves. The diversity of respondents was supposed to get more reliable data. The obtained data were consequently evaluated and demonstrated graphically with detailed commentary. The practical part of the thesis was completed by suggested recommendation to managers.

According to my findings from the research I think that the thesis fulfilled its goal to prove the importance of assertiveness in both manager's communication and behaviour and the effectiveness of its techniques. Due to this facts, this thesis could be considered as a successful work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alberti, Robert, and Michael Emmons. 2001. *Your Perfect Right: Assertiveness and Equality in Your Life and Relationships*. 8th ed. California: Impact Publishers.

Alberti, Robert, and Michael Emmons. 2004. *Umění stát si za svým.* Translated by Dana Makovičková. Praha: Portál.

Armstrong, Michael. 2008. *How to Be an Even Better Manager: A Complete A-Z of Proven Techniques and Essential Skills.* 7th ed. London: Kogan Page.

Bishop, Sue. 2000. *Develop Your Assertiveness*. 2nd ed. London: Kogan Page.

Doležal, Jan et al. 2009. *Projektový management podle IPMA*. Praha: Grada Publishing.

Fronek, Josef. 2005. *Anglicko-český česko-anglický slovník*. Praha: LEDA.

Hannaway, Conor, and Gabriel Hunt. 1992. *The Management Skills Book*. Surrey: Gower Publishing.

Hermes, Sheila. 1997. *Assertiveness Workbook: Practical Skills for Positive Communication.* Minnesota: Hazelden.

Janáčková, Laura. 2009. *Praktická komunikace pro každý den*. Praha: Grada Publishing.

Jiřincová, Božena. 2010. *Efektivní komunikace pro manažery.* Praha: Grada Publishing.

Lahnerová, Dagmar. 2009. *Asertivita pro manažery.* Praha: Grada Publishing.

McKay, Matthew, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning. 2009. *Messages: The Communication Skills Book.* 3rd ed. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications.

Mikuláštík, Milan. 2010. *Komunikační dovednosti v praxi: 2., doplněné a přepracované vydání.* Praha: Grada Publishing.

Montero, Ariadna. 2010. Developing Assertiveness in Organizations: Principles and Tools. http://www.qbsteam.com/index.php?src=news&srctype=detail&category=News&refno=653. (accessed March 18, 2011).

Novák, Tomáš, and Věra Capponi. 2004. *Asertivně do života*. 2nd ed. Praha: Grada Publishing.

Novák, Tomáš, and Alžběta Pokorná. 2003. *Asertivita jako lék v profesních a mezilidských vztazích*. Praha: C.H.Beck.

O'Brienová, Paddy. 1996. *Pozitivní řízení: Asertivita pro manažery.* Translated by Jana Novotná. Praha: Management Press.

Palmer, Stephen, and Cary Cooper. 2007. *How to Deal with Stress*. London: Kogan Page.

Phillips, Annie. 2002. *Assertiveness and the Manager's Job*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing.

Rees, Shân, and Roderick S. Graham. 1991. *Assertion Training: How to Be Who You Really Are.* London: Routledge.

Salter, Andrew. *Conditioned Reflex Therapy.* Los Angeles: Wellness Institute, 2001.

Seaward, Brian Luke. 2006. *Managing stress: Principles and Strategies for Health and Well-Being.* 5th ed. London: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Smith, Manuel J. 1985. *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*. New York: Bantam Books.

Tingley, Judith C. 1997. *Say What You Mean Get What You Want: A Businessperson's Guide to Direct Communication*. New York: AMACOM.

Vybíral, Zbyněk. 2000. *Psychologie lidské komunikace*. Praha: Portál.

Vymětal, Jan. 2008. *Průvodce úspěšnou komunikací: Efektivní komunikace v praxi.* Praha: Grada Publishing.

Weiten, Wayne et al. 2009. *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 21st Century.* 9th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

LIST OF FIGURES

APPENDICES

P I   Rules and techniques of managerial assertiveness questionnaire

APPENDICES

P I   Rules and techniques of managerial assertiveness questionnaire

APPENDIX P I: RULES AND TECHNIQUES OF MANAGERIAL ASSERTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

1 **<u>Víte, co znamená být asertivní?</u>**
   a. Ano
   b. Ne, ale už jsem to někdy slyšel/a
   c. Ne, nikdy jsem to neslyšel/a

2 **<u>Považujete asertivní chování za nedílnou součást manažerských dovedností?</u>**
   a. Ano, ale jen na úrovni vyššího a top managementu
   b. Ano, bez ohledu na podnikovou úroveň manažera
   c. Ne, asertivita nehraje u manažera podstatnou roli

3 **<u>Absolvoval/a jste někdy kurz či školení ohledně asertivity?</u>**
   a. Ano
   b. Ne

4 **<u>Studoval/a jste někdy literaturu za účelem zlepšení asertivních dovedností?</u>**
   a. Ano
   b. Ne

5 **<u>Znáte svá asertivní práva?</u>**
   a. Ano
   b. Ne

6 **<u>Které asertivní právo považujete za nejdůležitějši?</u>**
   a. Právo říci „já nevím"
   b. Právo říci „je mi to jedno"
   c. Právo říci „já ti nerozumím"
   d. Právo změnit názor
   e. Právo dělat chyby a být za ně zodpovědný/á
   f. Právo sám/a posuzovat svoje vlastní jednání, myšlenky a pocity
   g. Jiné

7 **<u>Obodujte body 1 – 10 důležitost a efektivnost následujících asertivních technik,</u>** když 1 bod znamená nedůležitost (neefektivnost) a 10 bodů absolutní důležitost (efektivnost).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poškrábaná gramodeska *(opakuji vytrvale – znovu a znovu- to, čeho chci dosáhnout, aniž bych začal/a být naštvaný/á , rozčilený/á či hlučný/á)*										
Technika otevřených dveří *(uznávám všechny partnerovy argumenty, na kterých by mohlo něco být, nepopírám kritiku, nebríním se, nereaguji odvetou)*										

Přijatelný kompromis *(nabídnutí pro obě strany přijatelného kompromisu)*										
Negativní asertivita *(asertivně akceptuji negativní, kritické vyroky okolí)*										
Já-výroky										
Dotazování na negativa *(zjišťuji skutečné a objektivní příčiny kritického, vyčítavého a odmítavého postoje partnera)*										
Technika sebeotevření *(vyjádření kladných a záporných aspektů vaší osobnosti, chování, aktualních pocitů z informací partnera)*										

8   <u>**Už jste někdy účinně použil/a asertivní techniku?**</u>
       a.   Ano
       b.   Ne

9   <u>**Jste**</u>
       a.   Muž
       b.   Žena