Sense-Making in the Workplace:
Understanding Complexity, Interpreting Uncertainty, and Taking Action

The purpose of the course is to equip learners with the skills and mindset to recognize patterns, interpret complex situations, and make better decisions through structured sense-making.

Course Objectives

- Define sense-making and explain its relevance in modern work
- Apply sense-making frameworks to real-life challenges
- Distinguish between information, interpretation, and action
- Facilitate collective sense-making within a team
- Make clearer, more adaptive decisions in uncertain conditions

Target Learners

- Professionals, team leads, and mid-level managers
- Individuals working in dynamic, cross-functional, or high-change environments
- CEFR B2+ level English learners needing to communicate and collaborate effectively under ambiguity

Module Breakdown

Module 1: What Is Sense-Making?

Focus: Introduction to the concept of sense-making and why it's important in business today.

Topics:

- Sense-making vs. decision-making

- The role of perception, meaning, and narrative

- Sense-making in fast-paced and complex environments

- Basic introduction to Karl Weick's view of sense-making

Module 2: The 7 Properties of Sense-Making (Based on Weick)

Focus: Understand the characteristics of real-time, iterative sense-making in teams and individuals.

Topics:

- Identity and social context

- Retrospection and plausibility

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- Ongoing construction of reality

- Cues and enacted environments

Module 3: Tools and Frameworks for Practical Sense-Making

Focus: Learn usable models to apply sense-making in business settings.

Topics:

- The Cynefin Framework (Simple, Complicated, Complex, Chaotic)

- Mapping systems and identifying appropriate response types

- "What's going on here?" as a strategic question

- Ladder of Inference and decision-making traps

Module 4: Collective Sense-Making in Teams

Focus: Facilitate shared understanding and team alignment in uncertainty.

Topics:

- Team perception gaps and mental models

- Creating psychological safety to enable curiosity and dialogue

- Making tacit knowledge visible

- Sense-making rituals: check-ins, debriefs, narrative rounds

Module 5: Acting on Sense-Making

Focus: Moving from understanding to action under uncertainty.

Topics:

- How to act with partial information

- Testing hypotheses and safe-to-fail probes

- Building narrative coherence for decision-making

- Learning loops: sensing, responding, adjusting

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Format:

- 5 Modules (60–90 min each)

- Blended delivery (classroom + LMS compatible)

- Includes discussion, frameworks, case work, and reflection activities

Also available as Speaking Clubs, 1 Day Workshops or Individual classes

Contact us:

support@softskillsworkspace.com