

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Communication is extremely important, especially in the workplace. How we communicate, both verbally and non-verbally can set the tone for our experience in the workplace. These tips are designed to help you communicate effectively.

Forms of Communication

Verbal: Verbal communication is what we say with our words.

Non-verbal: Non-verbal communication is what we say with our gestures, tone, facial features and body language.

Studies show that the majority of communication comes from non-verbal cues and behaviors

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY (IN-PERSON)

1. Listen...listening is the first step in fully understanding. When we listen to understand, we do away with listening to answer. When we are only listening to wait until our turn to speak, we're not listening actively and may miss verbal and non-verbal cues.
2. Use non-verbal techniques for communicating: Smile, make eye contact*, talk with your hands, avoid pursing your lips, watch for other's non-verbal cues.
3. Think before you speak.
4. Seek to understand. Ask questions.
5. Use reflective listening. Restate the information just communicated to show you're listening. "What I hear you saying is...". See the worksheet on Reflections, which accompanies this guide (1).

**Keep cultural norms in mind when evaluating non-verbal communication. Different cultures have different beliefs about ways to show respect (such as not making eye contact).*

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY (IN WRITING)

1. Decide if written communication is the best medium for the topic. Should this be done in person, or is written communication ok? Avoid misunderstanding by communicating in person when the topic is emotional, requires clarity or can be misunderstood in writing. Remember that others assign tone based on their circumstances.
2. Provide clear, succinct information. When drafting an email, think "What's the bottom line? What am I trying to communicate?"
3. Be proper in formatting written communications. Use common courtesy and address the person to whom you are writing, create a body for the information being presented, then close with a respectful salutation.
4. Check for grammatical errors or missing information (sometimes attachments don't attach).
5. Review written communications before sending. If you're unsure if it clearly communicates your thoughts, ask for someone else to read it before sending.



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TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY ON VIDEO CALLS

1. Listen to learn. Taking notes can help you stay engaged, as well as fidget tools for focus.
2. Stay focused on the information being presented; don't multitask. Put phones and distractions away. Unless you're waiting on an urgent call, stay focused on the speaker/topic being presented.
3. Stay muted until the need arises to un-mute. Again, we want to limit distractions.
4. When possible, keep your video on. This allows for non-verbal cues to be sent and received and keeps the conversation engaging. Pay attention to what you're doing when on video. Refrain from eating (in formal meetings) and remember that others can see you, so try not to be a distraction.
5. Use the chat sparingly. It can be a distraction to others, so pay attention to how often you chat and the relevance of the chat.

References:

1. Hill, C. E., & O'Brien, K. M. (2004). Helping skills: Facilitating exploration, insight, and action.



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