

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Almost everything that happens in our lives involves communication in one form or another. Effective communication not only involves conveying your ideas and opinions, but also includes the ability to absorb and listen to what another person is saying. Whether you are involved in a business meeting or a relationship discussion, communication is the most essential component of any interpersonal relationship.

Forms of Communication

In "The Business Communication Handbook," Judith Dwyer defines communication as having forms: **verbal, nonverbal and graphic**, and types: **intrapersonal, interpersonal, public and mass**.

Messages can be communicated **verbally, with words or sounds; graphically, through pictures**, and via the **written word using letters, email, brochures and faxes**.

Additionally, communication occurs on a **nonverbal level via facial expressions and posture**.

Interpersonal communication involves communication with others, while **intrapersonal communication** involves what you say to yourself.

Public or mass communication is the dispensing of a message to the public via a form of mass media such as television, radio or printed media like a newspaper. In every form of communication, it is essential to have the ability to communicate in an effective manner.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication skills are important in the workplace, at home and with family and friends. Most people think of communication as merely speaking, yet **communication is multifaceted and involves listening skills and nonverbal communications** as well.

Most people are unaware that when they are speaking, it is just a replay of something they have been taught to think, right or wrong, healthy or unhealthy. Furthermore, **when people are listening, they are usually thinking about what they are going to say next, not paying attention to what the speaker is saying**.

Clear and assertive speaking skills and the ability to convey a message in a direct yet non-confrontational manner are important communication skills. However, many people forget that it is also vital to have the ability to listen to what another person is saying. **Truly listening to and**

focusing on what another person says can eliminate ambiguities and avoid miscommunication or potential disagreements.

WHY IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SO IMPORTANT?

In other words, why have your companies paid to send you to this seminar?

In business, being able to communicate effectively can mean the difference between success and failure, profit and loss, and gaining new clients or losing existing ones. People who have poor communication skills often get stuck at a certain level in their career.

Having good communication skills is generally a requirement in any career. Assertiveness and clear speaking skills, such as knowing what you want to say in a simple, straightforward manner, are vitally important in business.

Being able to listen and to tune in to nonverbal communications are also beneficial if you are in a leadership position, as is the ability to manage and effectively resolve conflict in relationships with employees, co-workers and clients. And it is just as important if you are a staffer not in leadership. We all want to succeed and grow in our jobs, to please our supervisors, to get along with our co-workers and maybe even get promoted. Maybe we'd like to rise through the ranks at work and become leadership members, too.

I interviewed the secretary of Ted Thompson, the Packers' general manager, and she is a very genteel lady named Jeanne Bruette. This was a few years ago so I'm not sure if she's still there. She made a point in another interview I spotted in a women's magazine that stands out to me still. She quoted a passage from Swanson's *Unwritten Rules of Management* that suggests how far friendliness can take us in the workplace and everywhere else: "*A person who is nice to you in the office but rude to the waiter – or others – is not a nice person.*" Are you that kind of person? Is your boss that kind of person? If you know that's you, you can make a change. If your boss is that type, there probably isn't much you can do about it other than model good behavior.

Nonverbal Communication

Speaking clearly and developing good listening skills are important components of effective communication. However, since communication occurs on a nonverbal, often subconscious level, it is important to be tuned into nonverbal cues as well. Being consciously attuned to another person's body language during a conversation not only shows that you are on the same level, but that you are truly interested in what is being said. Communicating effectively at the

nonverbal level means **being aware of your posture**, such as keeping your legs uncrossed and sitting or standing in a **relaxed position** and **maintaining eye contact**. **Subconscious actions** such as leaning away from someone when they approach or showing signs of distraction by fidgeting or looking around the room are all signs of poor communication skills. Checking your phone for e-mails and texts, fiddling with your hair, tapping your pen on the desk – all signs of inattention, all rude. **Some body language displays aggression and hostility**. For instance, a man who sits with his legs splayed with women present is a hostile man. A person whose arms are crossed tightly during a meeting may be delivering a message, too, consciously or unconsciously. What is it? Have you ever seen exchanged glances between people at meetings, eye rolls, winks? Clenched fists? Pounding on desks? Throwing things?

Techniques for Effective Communication

In every situation where you are trying to get a message across, being assertive without being pushy is important. Furthermore, during difficult conversations or confrontations, **self control** is vital so that the situation doesn't get out of control. Active listening techniques can help in this area and are useful communication skills that anyone can develop. Techniques such as mirroring and **reflective listening**, in which you reflect back to another person what she has just said using **clarifying statements** such as, “If I am hearing you correctly, what you are saying is...”, are useful in avoiding miscommunication and show that you have genuine interest in the other person.

Read more: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/81305-importance-effective-communication/#ixzz1n42mRFiJ>