



Module 4:

Basic Communication Skills

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Train for Employment

Module 4: Basic Communication Skills

Importance

Without clear communication you will not be able to deliver your message and achieve your communication goals. Unless communication goes properly, there are many problems and troubles that occur that can cause miscommunication.

Learning Objectives

- Define effective communication
- Discuss the body language
- Define the power of listening

Part 1: The meaning of communication

I. What is communication?

Exchanging of information by speaking , writing or using some other medium

II. The Communication process:

Communication happens between two parties, which we call the Source & Receiver.

The Source sends their encoded message to the Receiver. In return, the Receiver decodes the message, understands it, and then sends their encoded feedback/response to the sender.

The encoding system used between the sender and the receiver is called language. That's why language is considered to be the first and the most important barrier to communication.

The second barrier to communication is noise. If the communication process is surrounded with noise, there is no hope that the messages between both parties (Source & Receiver) will be delivered clearly. This will cause the message to be cut off and will cause Miscommunication.

III. What is Effective Communication

Conveying your message to other people clearly sending and receiving information to others with as little distortion or barrier as possible

IV. Barriers to Communication

In our day to day communications, we experience barriers to effective communication. Some examples are:

- Language
- Values, traditions, and customs
- Level of understanding
- Specialization
- Difference of level
- Gaps of geographic distribution
- Excessive communications
- Emotional barrier
- Conclusion
- Quick fix decision
- Chaos
- Distortion of message (omission or addition)
- Background (receiver/sender)

- Bad listening habits

V. Courtesy and Etiquette

There are many complexities around communicating effectively, but we can improve our communication by practicing some of the simple rules of courtesy and etiquette. We can:

- Select positive words and avoid negative ones
- Avoid the use of jargons
- Portray a positive attitude (always be proactive)
- Demonstrate respect for your receiver's perspective
- Use the receiver's name
- Avoid interruption

Part 2: Basics of effective communication

I. Elements of Communication

We communicate with them in three ways:

1. **Verbal:** The words that shapes the message
2. **Visual:** The non verbal cues used in presenting the message. Body Language is one of the ways we communicate visually
3. **Vocal:** The tone, pitch, and volume used in presenting the message

II. Verbal Communication

In the business world, as in other aspects of our lives, most communication occurs verbally or by voice. Talking is a skill we learn early and practice frequently. Talking is also a very effective and quick way to communicate.

Unless mechanical media is used, verbal communication usually occur face-to-face, providing immediate feedback to the speaker. This situation encourages the receiver to participate in the communication and allows the speaker to determine if the message has been fully understood. If the message is not understood, the speaker can immediately provide more information, respond to the receiver's feelings, or clear up any misunderstandings.

Also, an expression of feelings from either side allows the other person to respond with feelings, creating a more natural communication than occurs in writing.

However, verbal communication lacks permanence. As thoughts or directions are verbally transmitted from one person to another, they often are filtered or distorted by the receiver. They cannot be verified later against an original source.

Characteristics of Effective Verbal Communication

- **The vocabulary fits the listener, not the speaker.** Don't use long words or industry jargon the listener does not understand. Use positive words like (please, thank you , how can I help you, I apologize for you..... etc)
- **A strong message sends a clear message.** Clear, concise sentences framed in good grammar are easy to understand. Don't lose the listener in rambling statements.

III. Nonverbal Communication and Body Language:

Though it is often overlooked, nonverbal communication occurs all the time. In fact, more than 65% of a message, except in written communication, is carried non-verbally. Consciously or unconsciously, we use nonverbal cues all of the time. Nonverbal communication can be expressed by body language.

Body Language

Body language is the main communicator of the visual element and includes:

- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Head movements
- Gestures and body movements
- Posture and stance
- Proximity and orientation

Characteristics of Effective Nonverbal Communication

- **Eye contact shows that you are interested in the person.** Wandering eyes make the other person suspicious about whether you are telling the truth. Excessive eye contact can produce anxiety in the other person. Good eye contact lies somewhere between a fixed gaze and “shifty eyes.”
- **Nearness indicates approval and respect for the other person.** Distance between you and the other person may relay disapproval, disinterest, or lack of concern. Move comfortably close. Remove any physical barriers, unless you want to establish your authority behind a desk. Remember, appropriate nearness is determined by cultural norms. In the United States, a “personal space” of about 18 inches is appropriate.
- **Use an open body position to indicate acceptance of the conversation.** An open position shows that you are relaxed and attentive. A closed or rigid body position indicates tension. It’s best to use a relaxed, asymmetrical position.

IV. Vocal and Voice communication

- **The volume, inflection, and tone of voice help carry the verbal message.** Speaking in a calm, relaxed manner reassures the other person of your own comfort with the conversation. Use the appropriate level of loudness, not too soft or too loud. Yelling isn’t appropriate unless you’re alerting someone to a dangerous situation. Avoid both monotone and highly modulated inflection.
- **The rate of speech is adjusted to the listener.** If the other person speaks slowly, then slow down your rate. If the other person speaks quickly, then speed up your rate.

Part 3: Listening for power

Introduction: Listening to Customers

When we listen it:

- Shows respect for our customers
- Makes our customers feel cared about because their human needs are acknowledged
- Helps us understand our customers' needs
- Diffuses angry or upset customers
- Leads to successful resolution of issues
- Builds trust and rapport, enhancing customer loyalty

Risks and Consequences If We Don't Listen

If we don't listen:

- It puts us at a disadvantage
- We miss important information
- Issues can escalate
- Customer loyalty is damaged

I. Difference between listening and hearing

Hearing versus Listening

Hearing is...

- A purely physical function
- A simple activity (you just hear sounds)
- Automatic; does not take effort
- A natural function (unless hearing is impaired)
- A prerequisite for listening

Hearing is one of the five basic senses. Hearing happens when sound waves are transformed into audible impulses. ***In other words, hearing is the physiological event of noise coming into your ear.***

Listening ...

- Requires an extra effort – attention and long-term concentration
- Is a mental and emotional experience (using feeling)
- Is a complex activity (requires analysis, interpretation, and translation)
- Is a learned skill
- Isolates sounds and looks for specific meanings and ideas
- Can be difficult and tiring
- Is something few people are excellent at

- Yields personal and career benefits

II. Levels of listening

1) Levels of Listening

In his book, the **7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, Stephen Covey talks about the five levels of listening. They are:

- **Ignoring**

The listener ignores the speaker and does not pay attention to him.

- **Pretending**

The listener pretends that he is listening while he is really interested in something else.

- **Selecting**

The listener selects what interests him and drops irrelevant issues.

- **Attentive**

The listener gives his full attention to the speaker and listens with a high level of concentration.

- **Empathetic**

The listener is not only fully attentive while listening to the speaker. He also understands the speaker's position and values by using his mental and emotional feelings to connect with the speaker.

2) Types of Bad Listeners

Unfortunately, people practice some bad listening habits as well as good ones. Are you guilty of any of these?

- **Mind Reading and Rehearsing:** You'll hear little or nothing as you think, "What is this person really thinking or feeling?" .Your mental tryouts for "Here's what I'll say next."
- **Filtering:** Hearing only what you want to hear.
- **Dreamer:** Drifting off during a face-to-face conversation.
- **Identifier:** You refer everything you hear to your experience.
- **Derailer:** Changing the subject too quickly tells others you're not interested in anything they have to say.
- **Placate agreeing** with everything you hear just to be nice or to avoid conflict does not mean you're a good listener.

III. Effective Listening Techniques

The job of the receiver in the communication process is to listen, watch, and interpret the message. This process looks easy, and we all assume that we are good listeners. However, good listening skills take years to develop. Here are some techniques that good listeners use:

Characteristics of an Effective Listener

1) Look at the speaker's eyes

- This shows that you actually care about what they are saying
- Avoid interruption and wait to ask at the right time
- Let the speaker finish their point. Wait for a pause to ask for more clarification.
- Ask open-ended questions if you need to know details.
- Ask closed-ended questions if you don't want more details and want to listen to specific answers.

2) Be Prepared to Listen

- Clear your mind of distracting thoughts and noise
- You may find yourself thinking of what you should be getting done in that moment, so just listen and after you finish listening think

3) Be open-minded and patient

- Always remember the three Js for being open-minded:
- No Judging: Judging the matter before you listen to it can cause you to respond inappropriately.
- No Justifying: Don't justify what others are saying listen to know to their own justification.
- No Jumping In: Be patient and try not to figure out what you think the speaker is trying to say

4) Practice the Art of Mirroring

- A good listener knows how to mirror the same energy or emotions as the speaker by responding with matching expressions.

5) Give Positive Non-Verbal Feedback

- Your facial expression is a clear indicator of your thoughts and mood.
- Be conscious of your body language and avoid negative gestures.
- Look at the person talking, point your body in their direction and sit up straight to show that you're present and attentive.
- Smile and listen closely.

How to Listen Actively

CARESS Model

The Caress Model of Listening teaches you how to develop active listening skills by using these 6 steps:

C..... oncentrate
A..... cknowledge
R esearch
E..... motional Control
S..... ensing
S..... tructure

■ **Concentrate**

On what the speaker says in order not to miss any information

■ **Acknowledge**

Acknowledge what you are listening to so you can benefit from it

■ **Research**

The subject so you will be able to know how logical, realistic, and possible it is

■ **Emotional control**

You have to control your emotions while listening to make sure that you are listening actively without being affected by your feelings towards the speaker or towards the subject itself. Emotional control means controlling your negative and positive emotions

■ **Sensing**

Use your sense in judging and evaluating what you have listened to

■ **Structure**

After listening to the whole subject, start mentally structuring it to have the complete picture, then start responding to the speaker

Summary

During this module you were able to:

- Define effective communication
- Discuss the body language
- Define the power of listening