

How to Improve Your Communication Skills

Here are some pointers to look out for when looking to improve your ability to effectively communicate with others:

1. Listening

To become a good communicator, it is important to be a good listener. It is important to practice active listening – pay close attention to what others are saying and clarify ambiguities by rephrasing their questions for greater understanding.

2. Conciseness

Convey your message in as few words as possible. Do not use filler words and get straight to the point. Rambling will cause the listener to tune out or be unsure of what you are talking about. Avoid speaking excessively and do not use words that may confuse the audience.

3. Body language

It is important to practice good body language, use eye contact, utilize hand gestures, and watch the tone of the voice when communicating with others. A relaxed body stance with a friendly tone will aid in making you look approachable to others.

Eye contact is important in communication – look the person in the eye to indicate that you are focused on the conversation. But make sure to not stare at the person as it can make him or her uncomfortable.

4. Confidence

Be confident in what you say and in your communication interactions with others. Being confident can be as easy as maintaining eye contact, maintaining a relaxed body stance, and talking with concision. Try not to make statements sound like questions and avoid trying to sound aggressive or demeaning.

5. Open-mindedness

In situations where you disagree with what someone else has to say, whether it be with an employer, a co-worker, or a friend, it is important to sympathize with their point of view rather than simply try to get your message across. Respect the opinion of others and never resort to demeaning those who do not agree with you.

6. Respect

Respecting what others have to say and acknowledging them is an important aspect of communication. Being respectful can be as simple as paying attention to what they have to say, using the person's name, and not being distracted. By respecting others, the other person will feel appreciated, which will lead to a more honest and productive conversation.

7. Using the correct medium

There are several different forms of communication to use – it is important to choose the right one. For example, communicating in person about serious matters (layoffs, salary changes, etc.) is more appropriate than sending an email regarding the matter.

Good Communication Skills for a Great Career

Succeeding in your career requires good communication skills. You need to know what you want and how you are going to attain it. Being an excellent communicator can help propel your career.

Good communication skills can aid in helping you land an interview and pass the selection process. Being able to articulate well provides a significant advantage. To do your job effectively, you have to discuss problems, request information, interact with others, and have good human relations skills – these are all part of having good communication skills. They help in being understood well and in helping understand the needs of those around you.

Poor Communication in the Workplace

Communication drives workplace success. Although the detriments of poorly communicating with others may not be apparent in the short term, it has a crippling effect on the workplace in the long term. Here are some signs of bad communication:

- Lack of specific communication
- Using the incorrect mediums to convey important messages
- Passive-aggressive communication
- Lack of follow-through and consideration
- Blaming and intimidating others
- Failing to listen

An example of poor communication would be the RadioShack layoff notices in 2006. The electronics chain laid off 400 employees by notifying employees by email. The company faced significant backlash following the move, with many surprised that it used email instead of face-to-face meetings.

Bad communication by Radioshack resulted from using the incorrect medium of communicating with its employees. The company's employees felt dehumanized and subsequently resented the company.