



The importance of effective communication

Overview

We all know how important effective communication is in the workplace and in everyday life. It could be the difference between a discussion and an argument. It could lose you a potential promotion or secure it. So what are the areas we need to be mindful of when communicating in a work environment?

Communication is much more than the explicit meaning of words, the information or message conveyed. It also includes implicit messages, whether intentional or not, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviours. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, gestures displayed through body language and the physical distance between the communicators.

To ensure you are communicating effectively you must be aware of not only the language/message but also the manner in which it is conveyed.

Some examples:

Face-to-Face

As mentioned above, when communicating face-to-face having open and attentive body language is an important non-verbal indicator that you are engaged and actively listening.

Telephone

There are 5 things you can do to ensure telephone conversations are effective: adopt a positive tone, speak clearly and concisely, be sincere, use their name (but not too much!) and make sure you summarise any actions needed.

Email

Use the BRIEF acronym – Background, Reason, Information, End, Follow-up – to help you keep your emails short without leaving anything out. It's a good policy for both written and verbal communication.

Article/source

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/nonverbal-communication.html>

<http://lifehacker.com/top-10-ways-to-improve-your-communication-skills-1590488550>

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/rhubarb/customer-service-telephone-skills.html>

Supporting source

<https://www.activia.co.uk/communication-skills-test>

Discussion points

Take the above test to find out what kind of communicator you are, think about how you would modify how you communicate with someone else if you knew what type of communicator they were.

Example key questions

- What method of communication are you most comfortable with using? Is this appropriate for every type of information exchange?
- Think about someone else you work with, what type of communicator do you think they are and how would you alter your approach based on this?
- Could you explain the term 'open body-language'?