

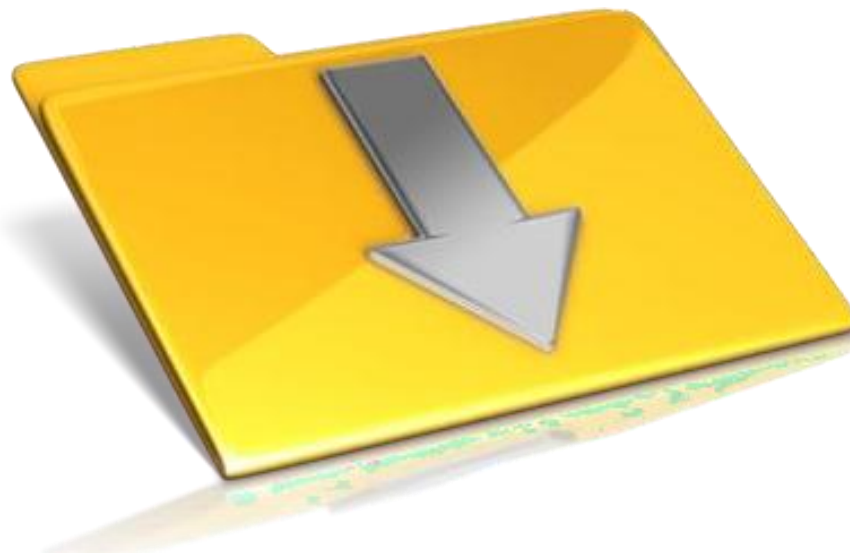
Communicate in the Workplace



Collecting Information

The primary purpose for workplace information is to create an efficient and variable workplace.

The need and type of information depends on what your responsibilities as an employee or a team are, and how that information would assist in achieving your workplace goals as well as enhancing your skills.

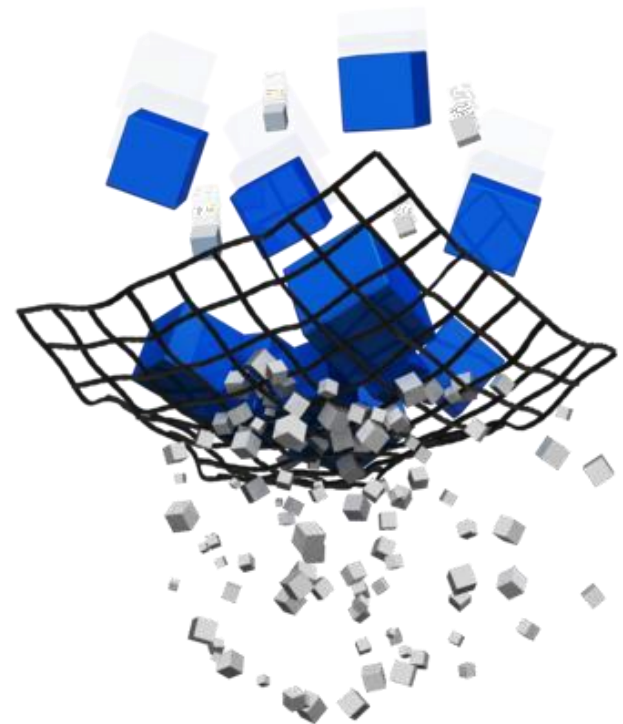


Collecting Information

The sources of information are virtually endless. They can be internal or external to the organisation.

Here is a list of the more common sources:

- Workplace manuals
- Suppliers/manufacturers manuals
- Publication/magazines/newspapers
- Conferences/seminars
- Managers/supervisors
- Colleague/team members



Collecting Information

List continued:

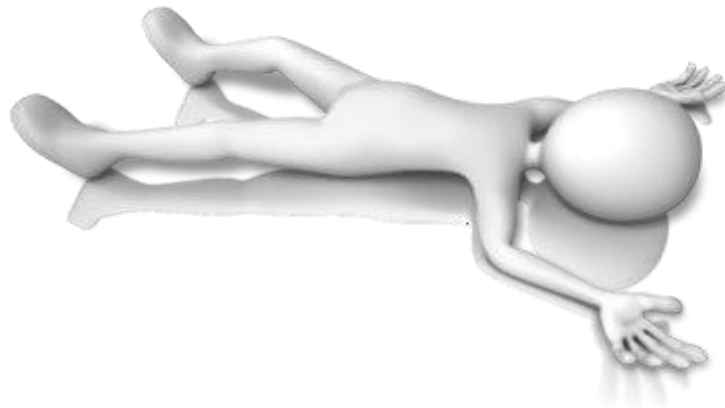
- Family/friends
- Internet
- Training courses
- Mentors/coaches
- Tradeshow
- Advertising materials
- Governmental sources
- Trade unions
- Industry associations
- Multimedia sources
- Competitors



Communicating Information The Body

Your body communicates different impressions to the audience.

People not only listen to you, they also watch you. Displaying good posture tells your audience that you know what you are doing and you are passionate about the subject matter. Also, a good posture helps you to speak more clearly and effectively.

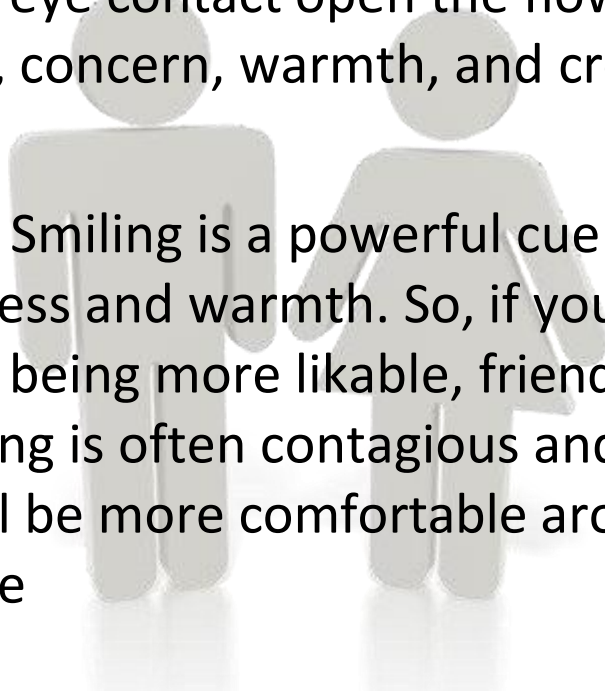


Communicating Information

The Body

Here are some tips to keep in mind when presenting to a group:

- **Eye contact** - This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. Speakers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.
- **Facial expressions** - Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness and warmth. So, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as being more likable, friendly, warm, and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and others will react favourably. They will be more comfortable around you and will want to listen to you more

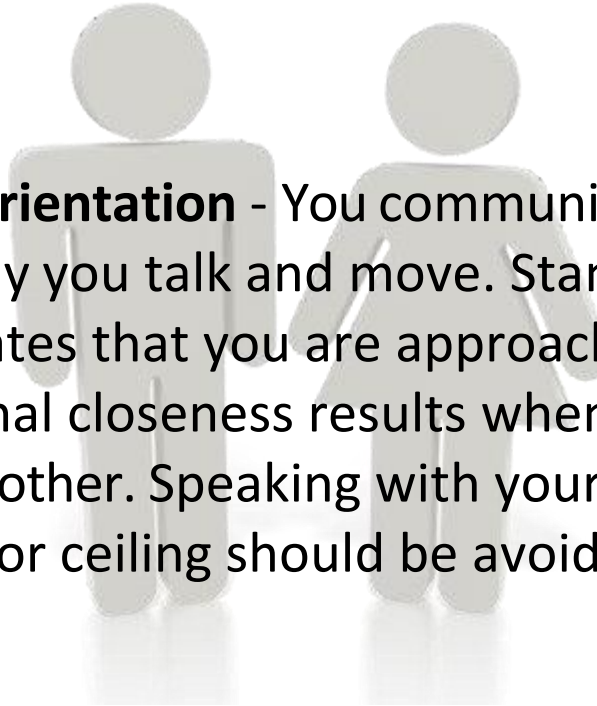


Communicating Information

The Body

Body presentation tips continued:

- **Gesture** - If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures attention, makes the material more interesting, and facilitates understanding.
- **Posture and body orientation** - You communicate numerous messages by the way you talk and move. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates that you are approachable, receptive, and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when you and your audience face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.

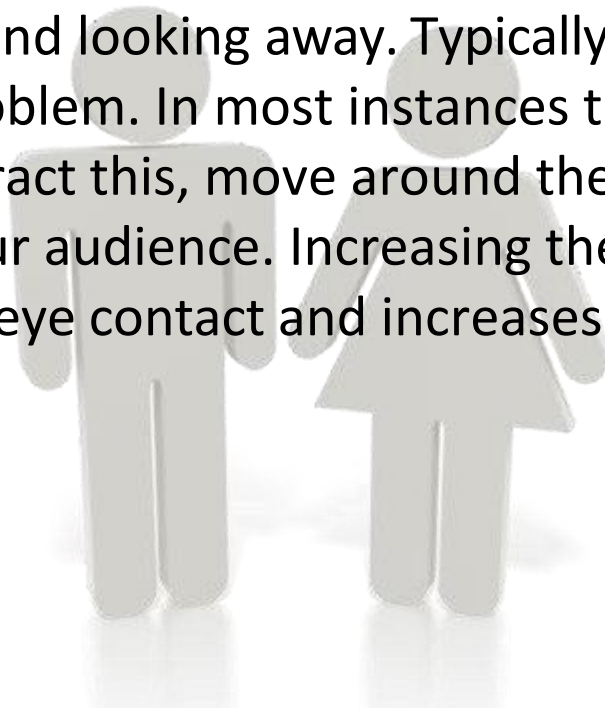


Communicating Information

The Body

Body presentation tips continued:

- **Proximity** - Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading other's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and looking away. Typically, in large rooms, space invasion is not a problem. In most instances there is too much distance. To counteract this, move around the room to increase interaction with your audience. Increasing the proximity enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for others to speak.



Communicating Information

Visual Aids

Visual aids enhance many presentations as well as reinforce the points being made, by being presented in a visual form.

Here are some tips on using visual aids during a presentation:

- If using projectors, video/DVD player or any other piece of equipment, make sure it is in working order before the presentation.
- If you have handouts, do not read straight from them. The audience does not know if they should read along with you or listen to you read.



Developing Oral Communication Skills

Here's 10 tips that presenters use to help relieve nervousness when speaking:

1. Know the environment.
2. Know your audience
3. Know your job
4. Relax. Breathe deeply and slow down your pace.
5. Visualise yourself talking with a customer or the manager



Developing Oral Communication Skills

Tips continued

5. Realise that people are not communicating with you to make you nervous
6. Don't apologize.
7. Concentrate on the message
8. Turn nervousness into positive energy
9. Gain experience, which is the key to effective oral communication



Developing Oral Communication Skills

Have you ever ask yourself these questions:

- Do I speak to fast?
- Do I mumble?
- Do I sound nasally when I talk?
- Do I sound monotonous?

Right

Um

Eh

Ahh

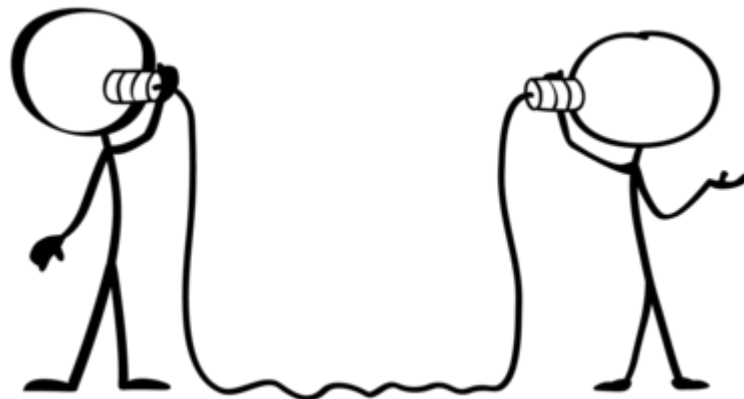
Look for habits that if eliminated will improve your oral skills. The most common bad habit is the constant use of filler words or unnecessary words.

Developing Oral Communication Skills

Listening skills are equally as important as speaking skills.

Listening is an active process. If a person does not listen they will not receive the message properly and this will lead to a breakdown in communication. There are four types of listening:

- Attentive Listening
- Encouraging Listening
- Reflective Listening
- Active Listening



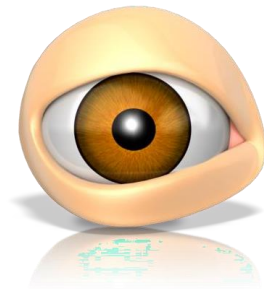
Developing Oral Communication Skills

Attentive Listening

Attentive listening focuses on the speaker through eye contact, posture and body language.

Encouraging Listening

Encouraging listening provides feedback that invites speakers to say more and to disclose more of their thoughts and feelings. Use body language such as nodding in agreement or brief comments such as 'I see', or 'That's interesting', or 'Really?' Ask open-ended questions that encourage the speaker to share more information.



Developing Oral Communication Skills

Reflective Listening

When you restate both the feeling and the content of the message and ensure that the speaker knows you understand, you are using reflective listening.

Active Listening

The most intense form of listening is active listening. The only thing that the listener does is listen. The listener avoids directing the conversation or leading the conversation in a certain direction, and gives the speaker their undivided attention.



Distractions

The most difficult part of proper listening is avoiding the distractions.

Distractions can include:

- Someone interrupting you
- Trying to get your attention while with someone else
- Noisy environment
- Boredom



Internal and External Sources

Workplace manuals –would be ideal for learning and understanding workplace policies, procedures, ethical statements, company mission statements, corporate goals and overall company structures.

Suppliers/manufacturers manuals - would be ideal for learning and understanding the features, uses and operations of business equipment including, office equipment, food preparation equipment, warehouse handling equipment and office computer systems.

Publications/magazines/newspapers – this would include books, papers, trade magazines, newspapers, conference papers, training manuals and so on.



Internal and External Sources

Conferences – conferences or seminars are a useful arena to learn specific information on a wide range of topics. These can help build confidence, knowledge and skills to assist you in being more efficient at your job.

Managers/supervisors - would be ideal for learning and understanding your responsibilities, current and future workplace goals, performance feedback and future workplace opportunities.

Colleagues/team members - would be ideal for learning and understanding simple or complex workplace procedures, policies and even operational issues including office equipment. They are also good for feedback

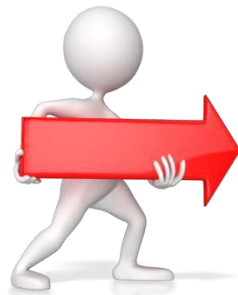


Internal and External Sources

Family/friends - would be ideal for encouraging supportive views on matters relating to the job, the employer and the industry as well as possible information on competitors.

Internet – the Internet has become a massive repository of information in the form of documents, reviews, instructional information as well as sourcing training courses, and information on competitors and products.

Training courses - would be ideal for learning and understanding processes associated with building skills and acquiring knowledge on a wide range of subjects in vocational areas.



Internal and External Sources

Mentors/coaches – your mentors and coaches will provide you guidance and help strengthen your skills in many areas of your career and career growth.

Tradeshows – this is an ideal place to learn about new products, services, as well as information about any competitors and changes in the industry sector you may be working within.

Advertising materials - this is another good source of information about new products, services, competitors and changes in the industry sector.

Competitors – your competitors can tell you a lot about the business weaknesses, strengths and new opportunities in the industry sector.



Internal and External Sources

Multimedia sources – this could be information presented on CD Rom, DVDs, video cassette, Web streaming video, TV, radio – on a wide range of subjects that are of interest or required by you.

Governmental sources - would be ideal for learning and understanding statutory requirements, laws, regulations and government support/assistance programs related to your industry.

Trade unions - would be ideal for learning and understanding wage/salary awards, health and safety issues, and new industry benefits being introduced to the employee.



Industry associations - would be ideal for learning and understanding new and existing lobbying efforts being undertaken by the association on behalf of the industry.

Organisational Requirements in Questioning

Professional oral communication skills require confidence.

Many of the workplace situations in which you will need to use your oral communication skills are impromptu. You need to respond to phone calls, answer questions, deal with fellow staff members, speak with management – all without the opportunity to rehearse or plan what you are going to say.

Feeling some nervousness is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But too much nervousness can be detrimental.

However questioning techniques should be used.

Questioning Techniques

To be able to understand a speaker's/sender's message, you may need to ask some clarifying questions. There are three types of questions:

Closed-ended questions require very quick and short answers, mainly Yes or No, and often begin with 'Do', 'Does', 'Can' or 'Will'.

Open-ended questions require a more extensive answer, and generally begin with 'How', 'When', 'Where', 'Why', or 'What'.

Reflective questions do not require a Yes or a No answer, and always require some reflective thought to come up with an answer.

Questioning Techniques

Paraphrasing what you have heard and repeating it back will inform the speaker whether or not you understand what was said.

Examples:

Closed-ended Questions

- Is this what is required?
- Can you meet the deadline?
- Will you need that delivered today?



Questioning Techniques

Open-ended Questions

- Were you going to the staff meeting?
- When did you need to documents by?
- How do you feel about the terms?

Reflective Questions

- Do you think that if we close the colour copier more of the staff would use it?
- What are you thoughts on the new company logo?
- Are you happy about the article in the newsletter?



Clear and Concise

Technical report writers aim to be as ‘concise’ as possible. The term concise means to express something in writing using the least amount of words as possible. In other words, they get to the point quickly.

Examples:

Non concise

The lathe the company has been looking for was found and purchased from ABC Pty Ltd because it had the all the features that the company was looking for. Concise A lathe that had the required features was purchase from ABC Pty Ltd.

Clear and Concise

Concise

Report writers avoid using long sentences, especially when the message can be explained in far fewer words.

They also avoid long paragraphs. The simple rule is to have a paragraph address a single topic. The topic is introduced by the leading sentence of the paragraph and with a concluding comment made in the last sentence of the paragraph.



Clear and Concise

Not clear

The trial revealed new ways of saving material on the cutting line.

Clear

The trial revealed a method of reducing stainless steel waste on the cutting line.



Correctness

Proof reading the report is highly suggested. This will reveal any spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, and grammar problems. Many writers will leave the proof reading until the next day. Fresh eyes seem to pickup more mistakes. Also it is recommended that another person read the report.

They are able to find areas where the text may be unclear, or confusing as well as other spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.



Drafting and Editing

Writing a report usually requires a number of drafts to ensure a consistent high standard and that the report's objectives are being met. Drafting and editing include the following steps:

Revisions – There will be many revisions to ensure that the reader's needs and the report's objectives are being met. Revisions are an ongoing process, happening while the information is being gathered, as well as when the report is being finalised.

Selective – Only the essential information should be used in a report. The information should be constantly checked for relevance, accuracy, currency and usefulness.

Drafting and Editing

Structural – The information should be developed at several levels – sections, paragraphs and sentences.

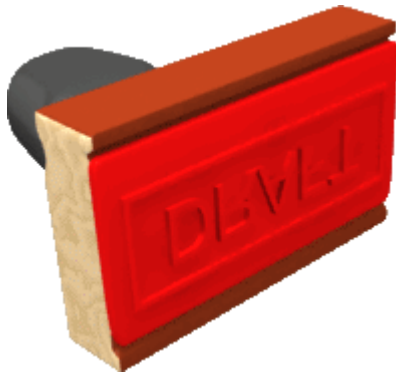
Professional reports usually have a summary or overview statement at the beginning of each section. Well written paragraphs start with a ‘topic’ sentence and deal with only a single idea.

Bullet points are widely used in reports for highlighting and/or emphasising information.



Drafting and Editing

Editing – There are some professional tricks to editing technical reports. First a systematic editing process should be used. The report should be set aside for at least 24 hours before editing. It has been proven that fresh eyes find more errors.



Drafting and Editing

Have someone else review the report, preferably with some knowledge of the subject matter. Ask them for comments and criticism.

Go back and review the requirements and objectives of the report and ensure these have been met.

Look at other reports written by professionals and compare their writing style with yours.

Ensure that the timetable for writing and presenting the report includes adequate amount of time for editing.

Conveying Information Through Presentations

Presentations are a way of communicating ideas and information to a group. A group can be defined as two people around a desk, several persons around a boardroom table to a large group in a meeting room or conference hall. A good presentation has:

Content - It contains information that people need. Unlike reports, it must relate to how much information the audience can absorb in one sitting.



Conveying Information Through Presentations

Structure - It has a logical beginning, middle, and end. It must be sequenced and paced so that the audience can understand it.

When reports have appendices and footnotes, the presenter must be careful not to lose the audience's attention when wandering from the main point of the presentation.



Conveying Information Through Presentations

Packaging - It must be well prepared. A report can be reread and portions skipped over, but the audience is at the mercy of a presenter.

Human Element - A good presentation will be remembered much more than a good report because it has a personality attached to it. But you still need to analyse the audience's needs and ask yourself if it would not be better met if a report were sent instead.



The Voice

The voice is probably the most valuable tool of the presenter. It carries the majority of the content that the audience takes away.

There are five main terms used in defining vocal qualities:

Volume - How loud the sound is. The goal is to be heard without shouting. Good speakers lower their voice to draw the audience in, and raise it to make a point.



The Voice

Tone - The characteristics of a sound. A voice that carries fear can frighten the audience, while a voice that carries laughter can encourage the audience to smile.

Pitch - How high or low a note is.

Pace - This is how long a sound lasts. Talking too fast causes the words and syllables to be short, while talking slowly lengthens them. Varying the pace helps to maintain the audience's interest.

Colour – A colourful voice mixes projection and tone variance – creating sadness, happiness, excitement, fear, solemnness, etc.

Questions During a Presentation

Always allow time at the end of the presentation for questions. After inviting questions, do not rush ahead if no one asks a question.

Pause for about 6 seconds to allow the audience to gather their thoughts.

When a question is asked, repeat the question to ensure that everyone has heard it (and that you heard it correctly).

When answering, direct your remarks to the entire audience. That way, you keep everyone focused, not just the questioner. To reinforce your presentation, try to relate the question back to the main points.



Report Writing Process Overview

There are four main steps in the report writing process:

- Clarification
- Investigation
- Planning
- Drafting and Editing



Structuring a Report

A technical report is quite different from other types of writing. As earlier mentioned a report is likely to be read by a diverse audience.

- Title page
- Summary
- Acknowledgement
- Table of Contents
- Listing of tables, illustrations, etc.
- Definitions
- Introduction
- Body – sections, subsections
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices



Non-Discriminatory Language

A technical report must at all costs avoid any possible discriminatory language. Words used in the report must not:

- Stereotype
- Patronise
- Discriminate because of gender, race, religion or status



Terminology

The report loses its effectiveness when its terminology is beyond the reader's comprehension. Many times the writer will use industry terminology or 'jargon' that is well understood by persons in the industry, but forgets that the audience may not be from within the industry.

Some terms or words can have very different meanings in one industry compared to another.

Example: 'Stress' and 'strain' to a mechanical engineer has completely different meaning than it would to a medical professional.

Use of Abbreviations

Abbreviations and acronyms are commonly used in technical reports. Abbreviations are read out as letters, whereas acronyms are pronounced as words. Examples:

Acronyms

- LASER (light amplification by simulated emission of radiation)
- CAD (computer aided design)

Abbreviations

- KM – Kilometre
- LPG (liquefied petroleum gas)
- CNC (computer numerical controlled)

Respect, Courtesy and Sensitivity

It is important to be aware of the influence your body language has on others.

Being aware of your own thoughts in a situation can help you manage your own body language.

For example, if you feel anxious in a situation, consider what message your body language is conveying to the other person.



Respect, Courtesy and Sensitivity

Also, communication skills are particularly sensitive to cultural differences, thus care should be taken in adapting the following to different cultures.

For instance the following can be taken very differently from cultures to cultures:

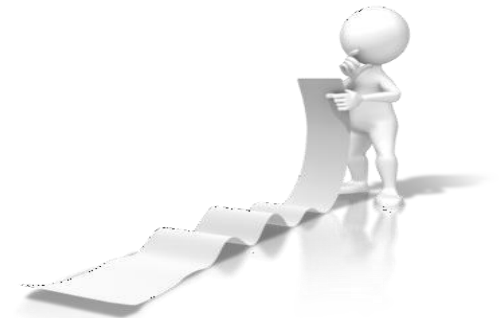
- Tone of voice
- Hand gestures
- Body language
- Eye contact



Respect, Courtesy and Sensitivity

Jurisdiction describing respect and courtesy may vary from state to state, however they all have an equal aim.

For example:



Queensland – ‘Dealing with [clients and colleagues] fairly and courteously and ... respecting their rights as citizens and members of our community’

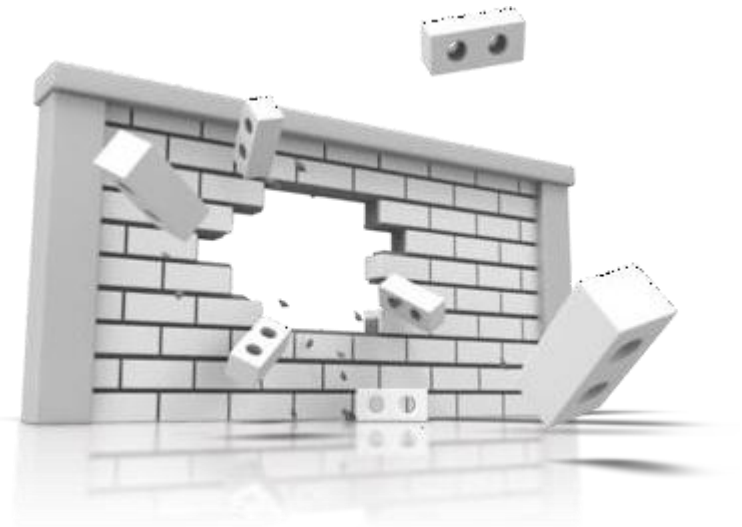
Victoria – ‘Treating others fairly and objectively and ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying’

Verbal Consideration

How a person says something can have as big an impact on the listener as what is said.

A voice can vary in:

- Volume
- Clarity
- Emphasis on words
- Speech habits (filler words)
- Tone (can often illustrate emotion)



Non-Verbal Consideration

Non-verbal communication sends messages to others through our **actions, facial expressions, gestures, posture and appearance**. Some examples are:

Body Movement – Movement of the hands, feet, head, legs, posture, eyes and facial expressions.

Physical Characteristics – Body shape, physical appeal, body and breath odours, weights, and hair/skin colour.



Non-Verbal Consideration

Vocal Qualities – How something is said, rather than what is actually said. Tone of voice, pitch level volume control.

Space – Personal space, the non-verbal message is generally how the person reacts about being close to or having someone else within their personal space.

Accessories – Clothing, accessories, eyeglasses, hairstyle and colour, jewellery, make-up and perfumes. These are used to convey non-verbal messages about self-concept, image, mood, feelings or style.

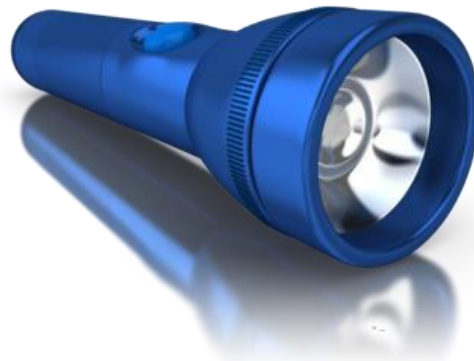


Non-Verbal Consideration

Touch – Stroking, hitting, holding or guiding the movements of another person by touching them.

Environment – Office layout, training room, surrounding noise, temperature, lighting, colour, furniture and artwork. The environment can greatly affect the communication process.

Others – Specific sounds, smells, touch and tastes. These are widely used in the retail and hospitality industries.



Communication Flows

Communication in the workplace flows in the following ways:

- Internal and External
- Horizontal and Vertical
- Formal and Informal



Communication Flows

Internal – Within the company or social group

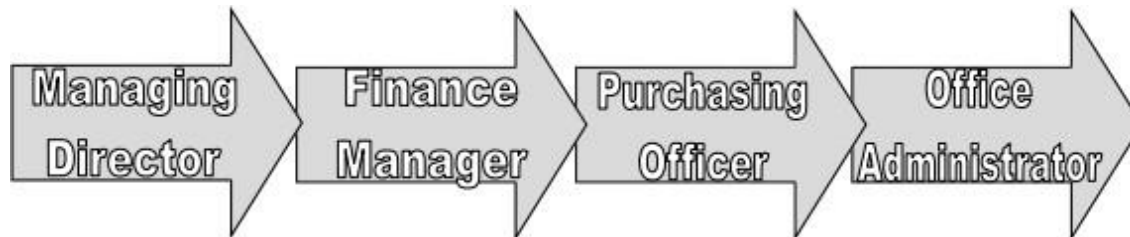
Eg. Employee to employee, or office manager to accounts manager

External – Outside the company or other social groups

Eg. Business manager to customer, or assistant manager to suppliers

Horizontal – Between staff at the same level or peers

Eg. Employee to employee, or customer account manager to customer account manager



Communication Flows

Vertical – Between staff or colleagues at different ranks in the line with lines of authority

Eg. Part time staff member to area manager, or managing director to full time staff member



Communication Flows

Informal – Using colloquial (informal) written skills/formats/speaking skills.

Eg. Written telephone message for staff member, or telephone call to other departments to enquire meeting schedules

Formal – Using formal written skills/formats/speaking 'conventions' appropriate to the receiver

Eg. Letter to management, formal letter to government department or telephone call to director of company



Strategies to Overcome Language Barriers

Some strategies may include:

- **Face the speaker 'squarely'** – adopt a position that indicates involvement.
- **Adopt an 'open posture'** – generally seen as a non defensive posture. Crossed arms and legs can be seen as closing yourself up to the other person.



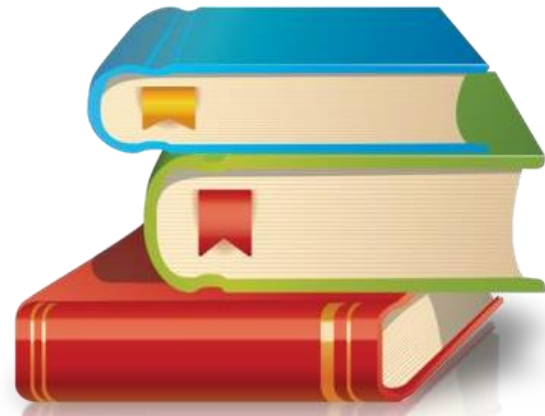
Strategies to Overcome Language Barriers

- **‘Lean’ towards the other person at times.** This is an indication of interest in what the person is saying.
- **Maintain good ‘eye contact’.**
- **Try to be relatively ‘relaxed’ or natural in the above behaviours.**



Additional Guidelines

- Avoid conversations that can cause concern for others.
- Remember this is a work environment and personal conversation shouldn't dominate. The work is the priority.
- Many conversations happen when others are around. Keep private conversations private
- Be aware of non-verbal reactions.
- Be sensitive, compassionate and respectful regardless of anyone's personal opinions.



Acceptable Speech in the Workplace

In your everyday routines outside your employment, the way you talk may not be acceptable in the workplace.

Just as you may answer your home phone with a simple 'Hello', on the job you will be required to be more professional.

When you are speaking, people need to hear you properly. Do not mumble. Speak clearly and at a reasonable volume level that is appropriate to the situation.



Acceptable Speech in the Workplace

Professionalism in the workplace also requires you to choose the right language and etiquette.

Select your words carefully. 'Street language' is not usually accepted in most businesses.

There are certain categories of words that are used today.



Acceptable Speech in the Workplace

Some of which are not acceptable in the workplace:

Standard words – are professional and socially acceptable in any situation.

Colloquialisms – are sometimes acceptable (depending on the business) but are more appropriate for informal environments.



Slang – is appropriate only for extremely informal situations. It is unacceptable when dealing with customers/clients or superiors/management.

Profanity – sometimes known as swearing, swear words or improper language. This is totally **unacceptable** in any situation

