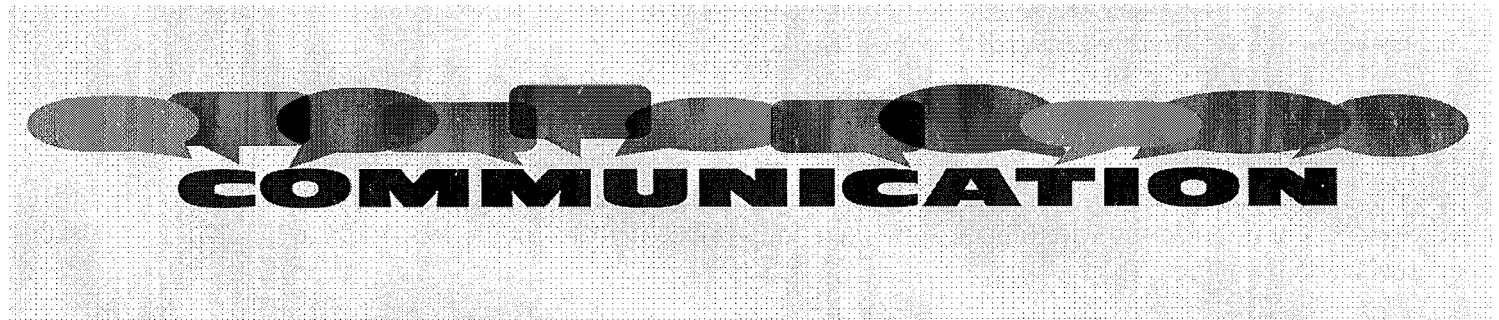


Communication: The Transfer of Information to Produce Greater Understanding

What is Communication?

Being able to communicate effectively is one of the most important life skills to learn. Communication is defined as transferring information to produce greater understanding. It can be done vocally (through verbal exchanges), through written media (books, websites, and magazines), visually (using graphs, charts, and maps) or non-verbally (body language, gestures, pitch of voice, and tone). All of these means of communication are essential *Soft Skills* that are vital for a successful career.



The Importance of Communication Skills

Having strong communication skills aids in all aspects of life – from professional life to personal life and everything that falls in between. From a business standpoint, all transactions result from communication. Good communication skills are essential to allow others and yourself to understand information more accurately and quickly.

In contrast, poor communication skills lead to frequent misunderstanding and frustration. In a 2016 LinkedIn survey conducted in the United States, communication topped the list of the most sought-after soft skills among employers.

1	Communication	57.9%
2	Organization	56.5%
3	Teamwork	56.4%
4	Always Punctual	55.9%
5	Critical Thinking	55.8%
6	Social Skills	55.8%
7	Creativity	55.0%
8	Interpersonal Communication	55.0%
9	Adaptability	54.9%
10	Friendly Personality	54.6%

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 by 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 skill – 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.

Bad 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 to its employees. The company's employees felt dehumanized and subsequently resented the company.

Related Readings

Thanks for reading CFI's guide to communication. CFI is the official provider of the global Financial Modeling & Valuation Analyst (FMVA)[™] certification program, designed to help anyone become a world-class financial analyst. To keep advancing your career, the additional resources below will be useful:

- [Interpersonal Intelligence](#)
- [Negotiation Tactics](#)
- [Networking and Building Relationships](#)
- [Public Speaking](#)

