

Essential Elements of Effective Communication

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Overcoming contributors to ineffective communication

Clarify and/or simplify your message.

Identify and eliminate contributors to poor reception.

Would a different time, place, or method of delivery make a difference?

If there is a lack of comprehension, be more explicative and provide necessary background information for basic understanding.

People receive and process information differently...gender, personality type, learning style, and age can all factor into reception, comprehension, and retention.

Major considerations when communicating Face-to-Face

Physical Contact – A professional handshake says I trust you, and goes a long way in establishing a first impression in their mind. An “innocent” hug may or may not be appropriate.

Proximity and Geography

- Where are you (your office, their office, a hallway, or a conference room...who has “home field advantage”)?
- Is there a barrier between you (desk, counter, glass)?
- If you’re in a private place, is the door open or closed?...it makes a difference!

Your goal is to engage “the other person(s) in as many ways as possible

Eye contact will increase their engagement and reception

Use visual aids if possible

Be mindful of their body language (This will give you clues...Not answers!)

Make sure your body language is consistent w/ your message

Try to control outside interruptions

When you're communicating by phone

Raise your energy level

You may want to “test the water” to see if this is a good time to talk (in other words, do I really have your attention?).

Be more explicative with descriptions, word pictures, and points of reference to which they can relate.

Remember that you don't have eye contact and body language working for you, so...

Listen closely to voice inflections, speech patterns and even background noise

When communicating in written-form (whether electronic or old-school)

Maak shure itz misstaque frea!

Read through it - make sure it is cohesive & understandable

Email

- * Turn on your Auto-Spell Check
- * Include a Re:/SUBJECT on every email
- * Make it easy for them to read... “Less is (usually) more.”
 - Leave white space
 - Not too many abbreviations
 - If it requires a LONG email, consider a phone call
- * Remember the unwritten rules of email etiquette
- * Include your contact information

Fax

- * Use a cover sheet (especially if it is not going into their email)
- * Write legibly
- * Be thorough on the coversheet, (but if you have a lot of info to include, a phone call prior to sending might be better served)

***Be mindful that most likely, at least one other person will read the message you write on the cover sheet.

Hard Mail/Old Mail/Snail Mail

- * Use letterhead
- * Neatness is an indicator of your professionalism
- * Utilize spell check and grammar check (You may even want to have someone else proofread it.)
- * Always include a business card