



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Bill and Susan Lhota
Office of Alumni Career Management

Marilyn Bury Rice

Kioshana LaCount Burrell

Ankit Shah





Career Management

- **Programs/Resources**
 - Web resources, job board, webinars, programs, career fairs, individual career advising (in-person and remotely).
- **Career Changes:**
 - Launching
 - Transition
 - Underemployment
 - Unemployment
 - Encore Career
- **A Lifelong Process:**
 - Assessment
 - Exploration/Research
 - Personal Branding
 - Networking/Job Search
 - Professional Development





Effective Business Communication

Today we will:

- Define communication in the context of work
- Understand why communication skills are important
- Identify strategies for effectively communicating at work
- Examine some examples of common communication in the workplace
- Q&A



What is business communication?

Communication is the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, and behaviors to express and exchange information – or to express your ideas, thoughts and feelings to others.

In the context of work, business communication is the way you use the above strategies to accomplish things in your day to day job.



Types of Communication

- Verbal communication
(delivering information by the use of spoken word)
- Non-verbal communication
(the use of body language and facial expressions to convey messaging)
- Written communication
(conveyance of information and/or instruction by utilizing the written word)



Strong communication skills in the workplace are critical to creating a positive workflow and accelerating production. Great communication:

- Enables clear direction for team members
- Helps eliminate misunderstandings
- Increases productivity
- Allows for grievances to be addressed
- Empowers everyone to do their best work for the good of the overall team



Techniques for Effectively Communicating at Work

Implementing the following techniques will help you improve your communication in the workplace

Tip One: Use Visualizations

Which works best – telling someone or showing someone how to do something? Because different people learn differently, using visual learning techniques is a great mode of business communication. To make it stick:

- Use graphs and charts to support verbal messaging
- Create infographics to help make facts and figures easily digestible to anyone
- Avoid large blocks of text not broken up with photos or other intriguing elements
- Make good use of white space



Tip Two: Give and Take (Specific/Constant) Feedback

Feedback is not necessarily negative – it should always focus on making improvement and developing mutual trust and collaboration.

When providing feedback:

- Take mental/physical notes of performance and use those when giving commentary
- Be specific in your acknowledgement of things that someone has done well or requires improvement on
- Approach with the intention of leaving the person feeling empowered to improve

When receiving feedback:

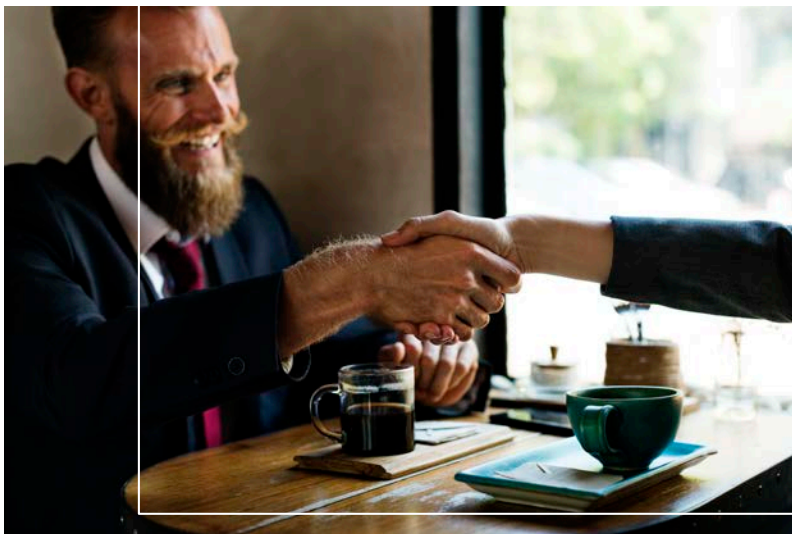
- Don't be afraid to ask for it – remain open to criticism/other ways of thinking
- Provide different ways for others to give you feedback (in person, surveys, email, etc.)
- Be open-minded and consider others' points of view – there is more than one way to do things well



Tip Three: Plan Ahead

Whether this is a presentation in a large meeting, or a one-on-one chat, make sure that you are organized before approaching your talk. This will help you remain focused, and be sure that you are able to touch on all important points.

- Write down your talking points and stay on track
- Be clear and confident
- Use simple words that are easy for everyone to understand





Tip Four: When Giving Constructive Criticism...

There will be times in your career when you will have to give constructive criticism to a team member or colleague. In those cases, it would be most helpful for you to do the following:

- Be sure that your constructive criticism is constructive
- Always have honorable intentions
- Follow the 3:1 ratio (for each wrong thing that you point out, include three things that the person is doing well)
- Listen and be receptive to the feedback that you receive from the other person as well



Tip Five: Consider How to Relay Certain Communications

Different messages require different methods of communication. Sometimes, a simple text is appropriate – other times, you may need to make a phone call or send a more formal email or memo. To determine the best way to relay a message:

- Think about the type of message you are sending, as well as your audience
- Consider how you would want your superiors to relay the same messaging to you
- Provide options for feedback and be a good listener



Tip Six: Communicating in Meetings

When communicating in a meeting setting (such as for policy changes, introducing new information, etc.), do the following:

- Execute an open meeting, so that your audience can not only **hear** what you're saying, but also **see** and **feel** it
- Create a receptive atmosphere – use humor to reduce tension and help others relax
- Be articulate – avoid mumbling and be sure that your message is direct and consistent
- Monitor your body language – move around, gesticulate, and smile! This will help you relax and help your audience pay better attention to what you're saying



Tip Seven: Communicating through Presentations

When giving presentations, some specific strategies to use include:

- Use slides and prepare a handout or other take-away for the audience to refer back to later
- Get to the point: be organized and avoid unnecessary repetition
- Use the appropriate tone of voice
- Be appreciative – thank listeners for their time and attention





Tip Eight: Don't Put Off Difficult Discussions

In the workplace, there is no good reason to avoid a difficult discussion. Problematic situations will only get worse the longer you wait to address them. When dealing with conflict:

- Be respectful and kind, but hold your ground. Don't allow the conversation to be put off for a later date
- Listen and be prepared to allow the other person to vent or display unpleasant emotions
- Try to understand the other person's perspective – be open to a new way of looking at things.
- Be solutions-oriented. Addressing a problem is great – opening up the door to fixing it is even better.



Scenario:

You're a sales rep for a local food distribution company. When you get into the office Monday morning, you have an email from the customer service team: *"Please call Lindsay Bock from Joe's Steak House after 3pm regarding an order for 10 cases of beef."*

You email Lindsay a quote for 10 cases of ground beef, the monthly special, but do not hear from her again. You follow-up with an email a week later asking if she needed additional information and still hear nothing back.

A month goes by and you decide to call Lindsay about her quote to see if she is ready to purchase. She informs you she did not want ground beef, but 10 cases of steak - a much more significant sale. She informs you she has chosen to go with a competitor and hangs up.



Key questions:

- How could you have handled your communication better?
- What steps should you have taken to clearly communicate with Lindsay?
- Where did the communication channels break down in this instance?
- How can you work to better serve customers in the future?
- What written communication and verbal communication could have helped in this instance?



Scenario:

You have been employed at a new company for about six months. A co-worker, David, has been repeatedly sexually harassing you. You finally decide you've had enough and decide to file a complaint with Human Resources. You meet with the HR Director, Monica. During your meeting, she never takes any notes as you speak. She keeps checking her phone and also her Facebook on her laptop. You notice that she is doodling on her notepad. At the end of the conversation, you wonder if she really understood your concern at all.



Key questions

- Has Monica shown active listening behavior? What non-verbal cues has she shown the employee about her level of interest?
- What could Monica do to be a better active listener in the future?
- How do you, the employee, feel after your meeting? Do you feel that your concerns were heard?



Scenario:

You are selected to present the new advertising campaign your marketing team has worked up for a new client. If you can close the deal, it will mean a huge financial win for the advertising firm. You want the presentation to look great to your marketing director, Scott. However, speaking in front of people is a secret fear of yours.

You decide to practice the presentation in front of your team member, Samantha. You talk fast to get it over as soon as possible. You don't smile or make eye contact. You fold your arms and stay as serious as possible. You have a very long and complicated slide presentation that has no focus. Samantha has a hard time listening to your monotone voice. The practice presentation was a disaster. You don't have much time until the real thing!



Key questions

- What did you do during your practice presentation that was ineffective?
- If Samantha were the potential client, would she have hired your advertising firm based on your presentation?
- What should you change and do for the real presentation to make it more effective?
- How could Scott, as your director, help you improve?
- What could your other marketing team members do to help the situation?



Key Takeaways:

- Be clear, concise, and direct with your message
- Use body language and hand movements to support your message
- Consider the most appropriate vehicle to relay your message to your audience
- Ask for feedback often, and be a good listener when receiving it