

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral Communication -- Expressing ideas effectively in individual and group situations (including nonverbal communication); adjusting language or terminology to the characteristics and needs of the audience.

Many jobs require people who can speak effectively. The focus is on the form of the communication, not the content.

Oral Communication focuses more on informal day-to-day expression of thoughts, ideas, and information. Oral Presentation is more appropriate for jobs that require frequent formal and/or planned presentations.

Key Behaviors:

- Presents ideas in a clear, concise, organized, and persuasive manner.
- Speaks at the appropriate speed, volume, tone, and pitch.
- ~~Uses words and phrases correctly.~~
- Maintains eye contact with audience.
- Effectively uses nonverbal communication (i.e., gestures, posture, facial set, and mannerisms).
- Listens attentively to others.
- Has a good vocabulary.
- Easily explains laws or regulations to citizens.
- Notes issues needing follow-up.

Key Words -- communication, verbal response

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Oral Presentation -- Presenting ideas effectively to individuals or groups when given time for preparation (including nonverbal communication and use of visual aids); targeting presentations to the characteristics and needs of the audience.

Some employees must make prepared presentations. Generally such presentations are planned and can be given before large groups (business briefings) or individuals. The key to the presentation's success is that the speaker has time to prepare. The presentation must follow a logical sequence, develop issues and ideas succinctly, state needs and recommendations clearly, and address the listener's goals and levels of understanding.

Key Behaviors:

- Responds to the audience's needs, interests, attitudes, and level of awareness.
- Presents ideas in a clear, concise, organized, and persuasive manner.
- Maintains eye contact with the audience.
- Uses words and phrases correctly.
- Speaks with the right speed, volume, tone, and pitch.
- Presents ideas logically.
- Seems interested, involved, and committed throughout the presentation.
- Refers to notes when appropriate.
- Uses effective nonverbal communications (gestures, posture, facial set, and mannerisms).
- Listens attentively to others when they ask questions and contribute to discussions.
- Impacts the audience in a positive manner.
- Uses prepared visual materials effectively.
- Checks to make sure ideas are understood.
- Tailors presentation to fit the needs or characteristics of the audience.
- Prepares for the presentation.
- Keeps within time schedules.
- Lists unresolved issues and addresses them.

Key Words -- stand-up, formal presentation, public speaking

Why Give Feedback?

- So others know whether they are meeting goals / standards
- Reinforce desired behavior
- Correct or point out undesired behavior
- To build high performing teams / organizations
- To improve /develop individual performance
- Provide skills for next assignment
- Give to others what we want for ourselves
- Build relationships
- Show you are invested in another's success
- Motivate
- Recognize / Reward
- That's what effective, successful leaders do

-
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

How to Give Non-Threatening Feedback

Focus feedback on:

- The issues and the behaviors – not personality or emotion
- Descriptions not judgments
- A specific situation rather than generalizations
- Here and now, not there and then
- Perceptions and feelings rather than advice

Don't:

- Give people more than they can understand and absorb at one time
- Force feedback
- Compromise your or the receiver's integrity or self esteem

Giving Feedback Using the DESC Framework

The DESC Framework allows you to give difficult feedback in a non-threatening, yet assertive manner.

D = Describe:

- The situation or the behavior you are reacting to in objective, simple, and concrete terms
- Behavior, not intentions, motives or attitudes

Use:

- *When you...*
- *When I...*
- *When...*

Think of a real example of feedback you would like to give someone. Describe the situation: _____

E = Express:

- Your feelings about the situation or behavior
- The effects the other person's behavior has on you
- Empathy with how the other person feels
- Your own feelings about a particular behavior or event, not some global situation

Use:

- *I feel...*
- *Then...*
- *I understand that you may feel...*
- *Let me give you an example...*

Based on the example you gave above, give an example of how you would express... _____

Giving Feedback Using the DESC Framework (Cont'd)

S= Specify:

- The behavior you would prefer from the person
- What you want or need from the situation
- What the offending behavior is

Use:

- *I would prefer...*
- *I want...*
- *I need...*

Based on the example you gave above, what specifics would you cite? _____

C = Name the Consequences:

- If the preferred behavior does happen
- If the preferred behavior does not happen
- Both positive and negative
- In a way that is non-threatening and non-coercive
- In a way that let's the recipient know that the choice to alter behavior is his or hers
- Highlight the impact on the business and on others

Use:

- *If you do... then...*
- *If you do not do... then...*
- *I realize that if we...*

Based on the example you gave above, what consequences would you offer? _____

Content Outline (Listening Skills)

I. Distortions in Communication

The messages one person sends to another are often distorted or refracted by the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental conditions that influence the "climate" of the conversation. These are some conditions that block and alter the content and intent of messages as they are sent and received:

- A. Preoccupation - An individual who is focusing on internal stimuli may listen in such a way that none of the message comes through or so little of it does that he or she cannot grasp the message appropriately. His or her response may indicate that the message was blocked.
- B. Emotional barriers - Anger, depression, or other emotional states can cause a listener to block the message or respond inappropriately.
- C. Stereotyping - A person may see similarities among individuals in a group and ignore the differences. This interferes with his or her ability to communicate with an individual as an individual.
- D. Inarticulateness - Lack of verbal skills may distort the intention of the sender.
- E. Defensiveness - An individual's insecurity tends to distort questions, turning them into accusations and turning replies into justifications.
- F. Status - People may be preoccupied with impressing the person who is in power, or threatened by a powerful individual.

The ways to alleviate conditions that interfere with the communication process are as varied as those who deal with them. The key is to become aware of the conditions that are distorting the messages sent and received and to modify one's behavior so that the messages become less altered in transmission.

II. Listening Techniques

- A. Active listening - listening to understand and participate
- B. Interpreting - translating client words so that you understand what is meant

III. Active Listening

- A. Definition: The listener must take an active responsibility in understanding the content and feeling of what is being said. He or she can then respond with a statement, in his or her own words, of what he or she feels the sender's message means.
- B. Active listening allows people to paraphrase, empathize, reflect feelings, test the accuracy of inferences, and check assumptions to produce clearer communication with each other
- C. It is not simply repeating words; it involves empathy for the sender's point of view
- D. It can lead to acceptance and trust when people communicate, as well as facilitate problem solving
- E. It is not intended as a way to manipulate people to think as others think they should
- F. It is not appropriate to use if another person's behavior is the problem

G. Active listening techniques

1. Reflection
 - a. Of feelings - Allows one to express one's own observations and perceptions of another's feelings ("You seem angry." "It looks like you've been sad lately." "I can tell that made you feel pleased.")
 - b. Of content - Allows one to acknowledge one's attention and to restate what the other has said ("So you finished a bit late. Then you took a break.")
2. Clarification
 - a. Paraphrase - Restating the content in different words allows the individual to check the accuracy of his or her understanding of another's words ("You ended up with unsatisfactory results - is that right?")
 - b. Check assumptions - Can be used with paraphrasing ("Am I correct in assuming that...?" "You say... Does that also mean...?")
3. Use of attending behaviors
 - a. Attentive body language - Sitting forward, using eye contact, and avoiding extensive fidgeting are examples of attending behavior
 - b. "Continuers" - These words allow you to avoid taking sides and to remain neutral ("Yes, un huh, oh, I see")
 - c. Periodic summarizing - This behavior pulls together all previous remarks and is another method of checking accuracy; it also allows for transition
4. Showing "ownership" and understanding of problems
 - a. Send "I" messages rather than "you" messages ("I feel nervous about finishing on time" instead of "Why are you sitting around doing nothing?")
 - b. Describe behavior - This is better than accusing or labeling ("When you interrupt while I'm reading, I get confused and frustrated" instead of "Don't interrupt me when I'm reading" or "You're a real pain in the neck... leave me alone")