

Student name: _____ Date: _____

MODULE 24

Demonstrate appropriate skills in communicating with the public.

Objectives:

- A. Demonstrate understanding of the importance of communicating positive information to the public.**
- B. Identify the four basic communication skills and give examples of their use in the workplace.**
- C. Identify the three key qualities of improved communication and their importance in any message being conveyed.**
- D. Demonstrate understanding of the communication process by completing short answer questions and an optional activity.**

MODULE 24: INFORMATION SHEET

***TO THE STUDENT:** Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of this module.*

A key to success at work

To work well with other people, you have to be able to communicate. Communication is the process of conveying a message, a thought, or an idea in such a way that the message is received and understood. Through communication, people share ideas, facts, opinions, and feelings.

List a minimum of five ways you communicate at your worksite:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Eighty percent of the people who fail at work do so for one reason: they do not relate well to other people. One's productivity as a supervisor or manager, nurse or secretary, mental health worker or janitor (custodian), laborer, attorney, physician, clerk or minister is greatly enhanced by the ability to communicate well. In fact, it is difficult to think of a single job in which communication is unimportant.

A mechanical engineer explained, "I thought my engineering training was all I would need. But I spent most of my time on people problems." Communication skills are clearly keys to on-the-job success.

Therefore, good communication is very important in the working world because poor communication can be costly to you and your employer. It's important to ask your supervisor how to perform a task if you're not sure how to do it yourself. Doing the job the wrong way wastes time and money. It's important to write down a telephone order correctly. Printing the wrong letter or number in an order can foul up the order and waste time and money correcting the error. It's important to thank customers for their business. Expressing appreciation will encourage them to continue doing business with you.

Tip: *Avoid telling people you've "been really busy" when reminded that you had promised to do something for them by a certain time. It communicates that you've placed a low priority on their request.* (Nick Kolvalakides, director, visitor services, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 29742)

Four basic skills

To communicate clearly on the job, you need four basic communication skills: listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills. Workers with good communication skills usually have little difficulty succeeding and advancing on the job.

Listening skills involve understanding what you hear. For communication to occur a message must be sent and received. People often fail to listen because:

- a. They are interrupted.
- b. They think they know what's going to be said.
- c. They don't agree with what's being said.
- d. They are having difficulty hearing.
- e. They are distracted by the speaker.
- f. They do not understand the words.
- g. They start thinking about something else.

Speaking skills — How good are your speaking skills? Do you practice the following guidelines when you speak to others?

- a. Speak clearly and distinctly
- b. Speak to the listener
- c. Speak with a friendly and courteous tone.
- d. Use standard English.
- e. Talk "with" the listener, not "at" the listener.

Think about whom you speak to during your work day.

Reading skills — In almost every work situation, you will be expected to read some type of printed materials. Good reading skills can help you save time and find information quickly. Developing these skills will help you read faster and remember more of what you read. The following guidelines may help you become a better reader:

- a. Read with a purpose
- b. Look over the material you are reading first.
- c. Try to read for meaning.
- d. Try to improve your vocabulary.

Think about examples of materials you have read while being employed.

Writing skills — Many employers consider written communication skills one of the most important job skills an employee can have. Why? One reason is that there are so many people who do not communicate well. Poor communication can cause employers to lose business and lose money. Therefore, the ability to write a message clearly and accurately is an important skill to have in the working world.

Different ways we communicate to a group

1. Public Meeting
2. Employee Meeting (Union Meeting)
3. Rotary Function Group Speaker
4. Team leader and explaining a concept to fellow workers
5. Newspaper Article Writer
6. Telephone Communication
7. Resume
8. Job Application
9. Personal/Business Letters
10. Forms -- employment and business sales slips
11. Memos

12. Taking and receiving orders

It is important in all the above communications that you keep in mind the three aspects of every speaking and writing situation.

1. First, there is the speech itself. We learn about the content of the talk, how it must be recreated from our past personal experience.
2. Second, there is the speaker/writer. Here we discuss those attributes of mind, body, and voice that will energize the delivery of the speech.
3. Third, there is the audience, the target toward which the speech is aimed and the final determiner of the success or failure of the speaker's/writer's message.

Tip: *When sending a verbal message, your body language and your verbal language should be harmonious and reinforcing each other.* (Bolten, Robert, Ph.D., *People Skills*, pp. 165-166.)

Three key qualities

No matter how we communicate with one another, skills alone are insufficient. There are three key qualities that foster improved communication: genuineness, nonpossessive love, and empathy.

Genuineness means being honest and open about one's feelings, needs, and ideas. It is a stubborn refusal to let one's real self "travel incognito."

Nonpossessive love involves accepting, respecting, and supporting another person.

Empathy refers to the ability to really see and hear another person and understand him/her from his/her perspective.

These three qualities are essential to constructive communication according to psychologist Carl Rogers. Data shows that teachers who embody or display these qualities foster greater student achievement than teachers who are deficient in them.

Communication flows out of basic attitudes as well as through specific methods and techniques. Communication techniques are useful only in so far as they facilitate the expression of essential human qualities. The person who has mastered the skills of communication but lacks

genuineness, love, and empathy will find his expertise irrelevant or even harmful. Important as they are, the techniques of communication by themselves are unable to forge satisfactory relationships. (*Bolten, Robert, Ph.D., People Skills, p. 273.*)

Dealing with public attitudes

Every organization must deal with public attitudes. To progress, you must identify, anticipate and cope with these attitudes. Here are some suggestions from public relations expert Philip Lesly:

1. Be sure one person in top management is adept at sensing public attitudes.
2. Detect and track new trends and developments that affect the attitudes of groups.
3. Recognize that there are many types and segments of the public--and you must consider them all. There are differences in outlook among women, men, blacks, etc.
4. Know what makes all types of people or groups tick--their motivations and rationalizations, and whether they're due to frustration, rancor, resentment, envy, wishful thinking, ambition, desire for attention, or other things.

(*Source: Philip Lesly, Managing the Human Climate, PR Publishing Company, Inc., Dudley House, P.O. Box 600, Exeter, NH 03833.*)

Think of examples of suggestions your supervisors have "shared" with you in dealing with the public.

Summary: The Fundamentals of Effective Communication

Acquiring the Basic Skills:

1. Take heart from the experiences of others
2. Keep your goal before you
3. Predetermine your mind to success
4. Seize every opportunity to practice

Developing Confidence:

1. Get information about fear of public communication
2. Prepare in the proper way
 - Never memorize a talk word for word
 - Assemble and arrange your ideas beforehand
 - Rehearse your talk with your friends or in front of a mirror

3. Predetermine your mind to success
Lose yourself in your subject
Keep your attention off a negative stimuli
Give yourself a pep talk
4. Act confident

Speaking and Writing Effectively--the Quick and Easy Way:

1. Speak or write about something you have earned the right to talk about through experience or study.
Tell us what life has taught you
Look for topics in your background
2. Be sure you are excited about your subject
3. Be eager to share your information with your listeners/readers

Three Qualities That Foster Communication:

1. Genuineness
 2. Nonpossessive love
 3. Empathy
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HOW TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

In order to survive in today's workplace, people need to know how to get along with their fellow workers and others they may come in contact with on the job.

To get along with others:

- Don't say everything you think. Watch your body language. It may say more than you intend or want it to say.
- Make few promises, but keep the ones you make if you want to be trusted.
- Have empathy. Make merry with those who rejoice; mourn with those who suffer.
- Keep an open mind. If you are the only one coming up with the right answers, something is wrong. Discuss, don't argue.
- Let your merits speak for themselves but be ready to discuss them when asked. Do not talk about another's weaknesses unless necessary.

TREAT EVERYBODY WITH DIGNITY

6. Select from the following list guidelines for preparing a successful presentation. Write an "X" in the blank before each correct answer.

- a. Choose topic that is interesting to audience
- b. Practice your presentation
- c. Explain any new ideas or terms related to subject (topic)
- d. Phrase presentation clearly for your audience
- e. Use technical terms
- f. Practice speaking in a flat voice
- g. Make presentation clear to yourself

Activity 2: Complete the following items using complete sentences.

1. Interview a school secretary about the importance of correctly handling incoming phone calls (for example, answering the telephone and taking a telephone message.) Write a one paragraph summary of your interview.

2. Prepare a three to five minute speech about an area of interest to you and present it to the class.

3. Interview two co-workers. Ask for some specific examples of how they use reading skills on the job. Make a list of the types of materials they must read. Give a brief oral report to the class describing these materials.

MODULE 24: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE**Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)****1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

1.6.11 Speaking and Listening

- A. Listen to others.
- Ask clarifying questions.
 - Synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
 - Take notes.
- C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
- Use a variety of sentence structures to add interest to a presentation.
 - Pace the presentation according to audience and purpose.
 - Adjust stress, volume and inflection to provide emphasis to ideas or to influence the audience.

- D. Contribute to discussions.
- Ask relevant, clarifying questions.
 - Respond with relevant information or opinions to questions asked.
 - Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
 - Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
 - Facilitate total group participation.
 - Introduce relevant, facilitating information, ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.
 - Paraphrase and summarize as needed.
- E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.
- Initiate everyday conversation.
 - Participate in a formal interview (e.g., for a job, college)

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal: Works well with others, including being skilled team members and negotiating with others to solve problems or reach decisions.