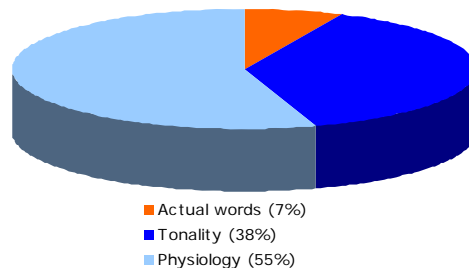


Top 10 Tips of Clear Communication

Clear communication skills will help you in your personal and your professional life. Communication is both verbal and written, with verbal communication being face-2-face and over the telephone. It is important to remember that clear communication has many aspects.

We build our own internal world of communication, where we define our preferred method. This may be visual (images), auditory (sounds), kinaesthetic (touch and internal feelings), gustatory (tastes) and olfactory (smells) senses. Thus an auditory person may say 'I've been hearing good things about it', whereas an olfactory person may say 'Smells like a winner to me.' A kinaesthetic person may interpret both of these statements differently.

Research shows that communication is comprised 7% of the actual words used, 38% is the voice tone, and 55% of communication is physiology. It's important to understand that the body communicates constantly in ways that go far beyond our words.



Communication is more than the words we are using.

Another element of communication is our interpretation of the words we use. We learn the use of words from our parents, our peers, our teachers, and whether we are learning the language as our first language or a second, or third language.

1. Audience research.

Talking in an individual conversation allows you to focus clearly on what is happening in the exchange. Talking in a group doesn't allow the opportunity to focus clearly on each individual; some may not participate verbally at all.. Presenting to a group or writing may not provide much feedback on the audience's preferred types of communication.

2. Avoid using slang, figures of speech or colloquialisms in your communication.

The interpretation of words and phrases is learned from the people in our early years of life – our parents, our peers, our teachers. Therefore a particular word may have a particular meaning for you, but may have different nuances for the person or people you are communicating with.

3. Be aware of non-verbal signals

It's important to pay attention to someone's physiology (eye contact, gestures, posture, and body movement) and tonality (tone of voice), as these may convey information that is beyond the words they are using. Be aware of incongruent behaviour – the person you are talking with may convey one thing in their physiology and tonality, whereas their words may express something else.



4. Be aware of the non-verbal signals you are giving out
Similarly, the reverse may occur.
When communicating by telephone voice tone becomes particularly important, as this contains the non-verbal communication signals.
5. Hands.
Many people use their hands when talking. This may become more obvious when we are presenting. It's important to be aware of hand and arm gestures as these may have different meanings in different cultures.
6. Use non-verbal signals to make your communication more effective and more meaningful.
The conscious blending together of verbal and non-verbal skills creates more effective and meaningful communication. This is especially useful when talking to a group or presenting.
7. Consider the context of your communication.
The situation and the context in which your communication occurs is important. Some situations require more formal communication patterns, which might lead to very different interpretations in a more personal context.
8. Include only relevant information.
To keep communication clear, it's necessary to include only relevant information. Vital in business communication, this also makes an important difference in personal situations.
Written reports, for example, should include only that information that is essential evidence leading to the conclusions.
9. Be aware that communication can be misinterpreted.
Even aware and thoughtful communicators can still be misinterpreted. If you notice misinterpretation in a verbal conversation, you can work to resolve it. When this happens in written communication, the opportunity to address the misinterpretation may not occur.
10. Practise, practise, practise!
It's true when they say 'practice makes perfect'. Approaching a learning opportunity in a casual, unfocussed way, means we are unlikely to perfect it. Repeatedly working at a process in a conscious and intelligent way makes for skill and proficiency.

Barbara J. Dalpra FECI
www.nyasa.biz barbara.dalpra@nyasa.biz
© 2007 The Nyasa Partnership Limited. All Rights Reserved