



Introduction to Communication Strategies

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Identify common communication problems that may be holding you back
- ✓ Develop skills to ask questions that give you information you need

Introduction to Communication Strategies

Creating Positive Relationships

One winning communication strategy is to always develop positive relationships with people. Most of us want to do well in life and work, and we want to look forward to our day, not get out of bed with a feeling dreadful or apprehensive.

If you add these ten tips to your toolkit, you will build stronger, positive relationships.

1. **Speak to people:** There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. **Smile at people:** It takes 72 muscles to frown, but only 14 to smile.
3. **Call people by name:** The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of their own name used properly and positively.
4. **Be friendly and helpful:** To make a friend, you have to be a friend.
5. **Be cordial:** Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.
6. **Be genuinely interested in people:** You can find things to like in almost anybody if you try.
7. **Be generous with praise,** cautious with criticism.
8. **Be considerate** with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other person's, and the truth.
9. **Be alert to give service:** What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. **Practice your positive sense of humor:** The kind that is about telling funny stories about yourself, not other people.

None of these techniques are rocket science, but our ability to apply them sometimes slips away from us.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your present ability to carry out these 10 strategies on a daily basis?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

anxious. If we are frequently anxious about making mistakes, or looking foolish, we limit our own strength.

Complete the following quiz to shed some light on your feelings.

	Yes	No
I'm concerned that I'm not effective enough when dealing with my supervisor or my co-workers.		
After I've had a conversation with someone, I sometimes worry if I've said anything that could be construed as offensive.		
I am frequently in a position of trying to counteract a bad impression I believe I've made.		
I rarely worry about being considered by others as misinformed or ignorant on things.		
When I'm in social situations, I'm not concerned about following rules of etiquette or being self-conscious.		
I tend to fret that others may think I don't know what I'm doing.		
I fear that others may not see me as adequately disciplined.		
I usually wonder whether my co-workers think that I'm not putting enough time and energy into my job.		
I avoid criticizing someone else's judgment for fear of appearing in the wrong.		
I tend to worry that others will laugh at my ideas.		

There are no right and wrong answers to this questionnaire. It is a tool to give you an idea about how you feel about your communication skills. Throughout the workshop, we will present techniques and tools to help you be a stronger communicator.

Developing Confidence

When it comes to communicating, we can be hampered by our own fears of failure or embarrassment not necessarily because we lack expertise in communication, but because we lack confidence in ourselves.

In order to get better at communicating, there are a few things that we can do to develop confidence.

Fake it until you make it.

Be well prepared.

Learn how to relax.

Be consistent.

Communication Basics

Defining a Skilled Communicator

What is your definition of a skilled communicator?

Think of a time when you are at your best as a communicator. What do you do? How do you act?

Think of a time when you are at your worst as a communicator. What do you do? How do you act?

Think of someone you know who is an excellent communicator. What makes that person stand out to you?

What things are they doing that we could learn from?

Do you see things in them that they could improve to become even better at communicating?

Individual Evaluation

Group Exercise

Experience

Emotions

Background

Attitudes

Culture

Subject Knowledge

Prejudice

Mood

Wording

Education

Noise Level

Ambiguity

Non-Verbal Messages

Hearing Difficulties

Applying the Answers

What are some of the things that can be done in your organization/department to communicate better?

Are these physical or mental activities?

Are these individual or team activities?

If your organization/department were a zoo, what kind of inhabitants would it have?

What can we gain by paying attention to these things?

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Benjamin, Susan F. Perfect Phrases for Dealing with Difficult Situations at Work. McGraw-Hill, 2008.*
- ✓ *Blanchard, Ken, and Sheldon Bowles. High Five! The Magic of Working Together. William Morrow, 2000.*
- ✓ *Boothman, Nicholas. How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less. Workman Publishing Company, 2000.*