



## UNIT 1

# PARTICIPATE IN WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you are expected to:

- Obtain and convey workplace information
- Discuss about the workplace meetings and discussions
- Identify appropriate sources for specific and relevant workplace communication
- Explain suitable medium used to exchange information and ideas

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another. Although this is a simple definition, when we think about how we may communicate the subject becomes a lot more complex. Workplace communication refers to the process of exchanging information, both verbal and non-verbal, within an organization. An organization may consist of employees from different parts of the society. In order to unite the activities of all employees, communication is crucial. Communicating necessary information to the entire workforce becomes necessary. Effective workplace communication ensures that all the organizational objectives are achieved.



## OBTAIN AND CONVEY WORKPLACE INFORMATION

**Workplace communication** refers to the process of delivering information within an organization whether it is verbal and non-verbal. A workplace is the physical location where someone works. Such a place can range from a home office to a large office building or factory. The workplace is one of the most important social spaces other than the home. The most common workplace communication barriers are non-attentive listening, interrupting others, inappropriate reaction, jumping to conclusions, failure to recognize body language synchronicity and gender differences. The first four barriers are self-explanatory, not listening, acting disproportionately to a situation or information, and making a judgment before having all the information. Most persons are aware these are negative actions in the workplace.

However, the last two are more subtle. To be more effective in your workplace communication, you must be conscious of how you are presenting yourself. For instance, body language synchronicity means having your actions match your words and tone. In addition, recognizing and accepting that women and men communicate differently; women gesticulate more to demonstrate what they are saying and use more words than men when communicating.

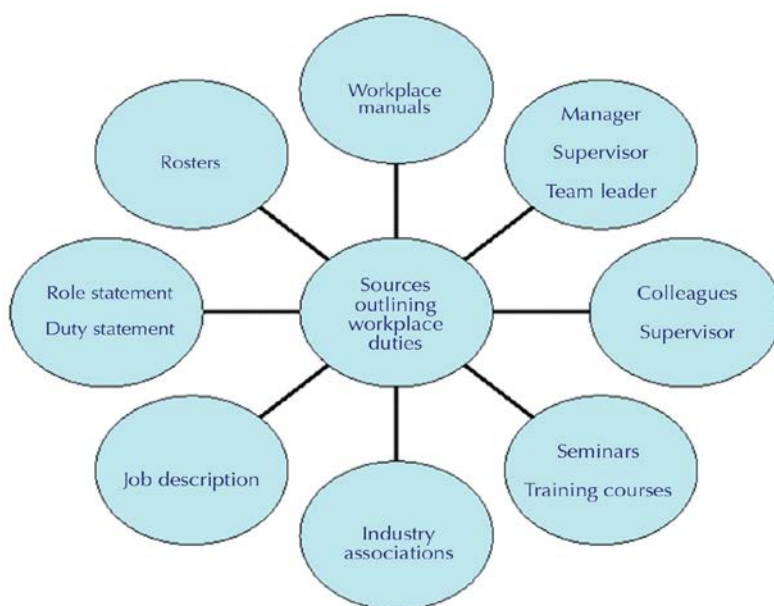
## Specific and Relevant Information is Accessed from Appropriate Sources

Communication is essential for effective functioning in every part of an organization. Although marketing, production, finance, personnel, and maintenance departments may receive direction from corporate goals and objectives, communication links them together and facilitates organizational success. The importance of effective communication for managers cannot be overemphasized for one specific reason: everything a manager does, involves communicating.

Communication is needed to increase efficiency, satisfy customers, improve quality, and create innovative products. One of the most important facts about collecting appropriate information is to remember that the information needs of the business will change with time. This can be due to many different reasons including changes in technology, new directions for the business, a change of customers or increased competition.

Information is everywhere. But you should use reliable sources for effective communication. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of different sources can help you choose the most appropriate and useful material for communication. Here are some common sources:

- Team members: One can get information from their team members.
- Suppliers: Suppliers are also a source of an appropriate information.
- Trade personnel
- Local government
- Industry bodies



### KEY WORD

**Workplace communication** is the process of exchanging information and ideas, both verbal and non-verbal, within an organization.

## ***Effective Questioning***

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Effective questions are questions that are powerful and thought provoking. Effective questions are open-ended and not leading questions. They are not “why” questions, but rather “what” or “how” questions. “Why” questions are good for soliciting information, but can make people defensive so be thoughtful in your use of them. When asking effective questions, it is important to wait for the answer and not provide the answer.

When working with people to solve a problem, it is not enough to tell them what the problem is. They need to find out or understand it for themselves. You help them do this by asking them thought provoking questions. Rather than make assumptions find out what the person you are talking to knows about the problem.



For example: “What do you think the problem is?”

Behind effective questioning is also the ability to listen to the answer and suspend judgment. This means being intent on understanding what the person who is talking is really saying. What is behind their words?

## ***Listening As Part of Effective Questioning***

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Effective listening is a skill that requires nurturing and needs development. Factors that may work against effective listening factors include: A desire to keep control of the conversation. As highly trained professionals demonstrate their intelligence and skills so they often want to give the answer before they have fully heard the question.

Listening may result in hearing the client express feelings and emotions. They think it is not within a lawyer’s role or that it is unprofessional to do so. When we really listen to a client, we begin to hear different levels of communication. Getting to a deeper level of understanding, rather than coming up with an immediate answer, is key to more effective problem solving. Listening in this manner allows the client to come up with their own solution or plan of action.



## Listening Skills as part of Effective Questioning

### *Articulating*

Attention and awareness result in articulation and succinctly describing what we have learned from our client. Sharing our observation clearly but without judgment does this. We can repeat back to our clients just what they said. We can expand on this by articulating back to them what we believe they mean. This helps a person feel heard. For example: “What I hear you saying is . . .”

### *Clarifying*

Clarifying is a combination of asking and clearly articulating what we have heard. By asking questions our client knows we are listening and filling in the gaps. When our client is being vague, it is important for us to clarify the circumstances. We can assist them to see what they can't see themselves by making a suggestion. For example: “Here's what I hear you saying. Is that right? “

### *Being Curious*

Do not assume you know the answer or what your client is going to tell you. Wait and be curious about what brings them to see you. What motivates them? What is really behind the meeting? Use your curiosity so that your next question can go deeper.

Silence Giving the person we are listening to time to answer questions is an important aspect of listening. Waiting for the client to talk rather than talking for them is imperative for an effective listener.

## Active Listening

The way to improve your listening skills is to practice “active listening.” This is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, try to understand the complete message being sent. Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that improves overall understanding.

Of all the skill sets you can bring into the workplace, active listening is by far the most important. Whether it is engaging in one-on-one conversations, participating in meetings or even interviewing a potential candidate, people who master active listening skills will be more effective in everything they do. Why?

It forces attentiveness. It minimizes defensiveness. Active listening is the foundation of crystal clear understanding. It lends clarity to the conversation and ensures that you understand the message the way that it was intended. It focuses on the speaker, so rather than planning your next remark, you are forced to listen and reflect on the speaker's remark.

## Active Listening Skills in Business Situations

Listening carefully when someone speaks to you can help you communicate more effectively. Listening requires concentration, which can be developed into a habit with effort and practice. Because effective listening can improve communication, proficient listening is an important skill for anyone in the small business arena.

When you work to improve active listening skills in business situations, you can enhance your communication with clients, peers and employees.

**Step 1:** Clear your mind of distractions when you need to listen actively. Make a conscious effort to focus only on listening to the person speaking to you.

**Step 2:** Sit or stand so you face the speaker. Make your body language communicate your interest to the speaker. Establish eye contact to communicate your active listening.

**Step 3:** Remove distractions as much as possible. Eliminate background activity and noise to enable you to concentrate on listening. Put electronic devices away and silence music if you can.

**Step 4:** Encourage the speaker with nods and affirmations, as appropriate, so the speaker knows you are listening.

**Step 5:** Stay focused on listening without turning your mind to your response. If you are formulating a response in your mind, you stop listening actively and you may miss important information. Instead, continue to listen while the speaker speaks. When the speaker finishes, take the time you need to formulate your response.

**Step 6:** Notice nonverbal communication from the speaker. You can gain clues about how a speaker feels by observing body language. Wringing hands or flailing arms can indicate high emotion or stress.

**Step 7:** Resist the urge to interrupt. When the speaker finishes or pauses, ask questions or make comments, if appropriate. Look for something to validate about what you just heard because this can help the speaker know that you were actively listening. Another response to active listening may be to reflect or paraphrase what you think you heard to ensure that you understand.

**Step 8:** Continue listening as the speaker responds to your questions or comments.

A conversation with an employee might involve asking questions to get additional information. As you ask careful questions, you gain understanding, which can enable you to offer advice, if appropriate.

A conversation with an unhappy customer may include paraphrasing what you think you understand so you can help solve a problem. When you paraphrase what the customer stated, you help the customer feel validated and understood. This often diffuses a situation.

## *Active Listening Skills*

Do the following for active skills:

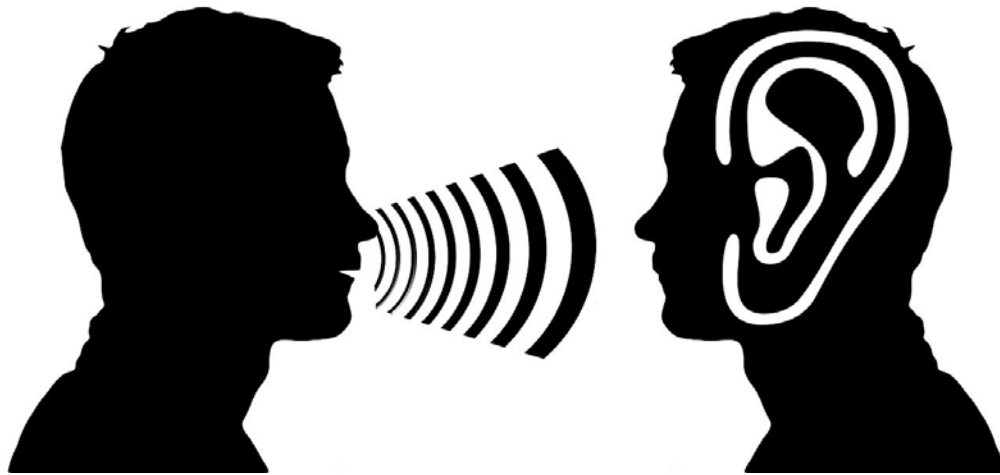
- Discover your interests' field.
- Grasp and understand the matter/content.
- Remain calm. Do not lose your temper.
- Anger hampers and inhibits communication.
- Angry people jam their minds to the words of others.
- Be open to accept new ideas and information.
- Jot down and take a note of important points.
- Work upon listening.
- Analyze and evaluate the speech in spare time.
- Rephrase and summarize the speaker's ideas.
- Keep on asking questions.
- All these demonstrate that how well you understand the speaker's ideas and also that you are listening.
- Avoid distractions.

- “Step into the shoes of others”, i.e., put yourself in the position of the speaker and observe things from his view point.

This will help creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and improve the exchange of ideas in communication process.

### Tips for Effective Listening

If your goal is to fully understand and connect with the other person, listening effectively will often come naturally. If it does not, you can remember the following tips. The more you practice them, the more satisfying and rewarding your interactions with others will become.



Focus fully on the speaker, his or her body language, and other nonverbal cues. If you are day-dreaming, checking text messages, or doodling, you are almost certain to miss nonverbal cues in the conversation. If you find it hard to concentrate on some speakers, try repeating their words over in your head it will reinforce their message and help you stay focused.

Avoid interrupting or trying to redirect the conversation to your concerns, by saying something like,

“If you think that’s bad, let me tell you what happened to me.”

Listening is not the same as waiting for your turn to talk. You cannot concentrate on what someone’s saying if you are forming what you are going to say next. Often, the speaker can read your facial expressions and know that your mind’s elsewhere. Avoid seeming judgmental.

In order to communicate effectively with someone, you do not have to like them or agree with their ideas, values, or opinions. However, you do need to set aside your judgment and withhold blame and criticism in order to fully understand a person. The most difficult communication, when successfully executed, can lead to the most unlikely and profound connection with someone.

Show your interest in what’s being said. Nod occasionally, smile at the person, and make sure your posture is open and inviting. Encourage the speaker to continue Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like “yes” or “uh huh.”

### Speaking Skills

People often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach

## KEY WORD

**Language** is a system that consists of the development, acquisition, maintenance and use of complex systems of communication, particularly the human ability to do so; and a language is any specific example of such a system.

people speaking strategies using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about **language** which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it.

These instructor help learner to speak so that the people can use speaking to learn. Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase.



Instructors can help to develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves:

- Interactive,
- Partially interactive, and
- Non-interactive.

Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner. Some speaking situations are partially interactive, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions



on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood. Here are some of the micro-skills involved in speaking. The speaker has to:

- Pronounce the distinctive sounds of a language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them. This includes making tonal distinctions.
- Use stress and rhythmic patterns, and intonation patterns of the language clearly enough so that people can understand what is said.
- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean, for example, changes in the tense, case, or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.
- Use vocabulary appropriately.
- Use the register or language variety that is appropriate to the situation and the relationship to the conversation partner.
- Make clear to the listener the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, object, by whatever means the language uses.
- Make the main ideas stand out from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what you are saying.

### Appropriate Medium for Transfer of Information

After reaching positive results there is a possibility for creating economic mobile communication facilities, which do not require repeater stations and any equipment for creating channels. The realization of the project can favor the development of the direction of telepathy effect by means of the relevant equipment.

Communication at its most basic is the process of transmitting information from a source to a receiver. The rapid transmission of information over long distances and easy access to information have become vital features of the modern world. Physics and Physicists have been at the forefront of this technological revolution.

In transmitting information from source to receiver, energy is transformed from one form into another. When we use an ordinary fixed telephone, sound waves cause a diaphragm to vibrate in a **magnetic field**. These vibrations are converted into electrical impulses and transmitted along a wire to a receiver. In the receiver the electrical impulses produce variations in a magnetic field which cause a diaphragm to vibrate and reproduce the original sound. Energy has been transformed from sound to mechanical to electrical and then back again from electrical to mechanical to sound.

### KEY WORD

**Magnetic field** is a vector field that describes the magnetic influence of electrical currents and magnetized materials.

There are some appropriate medium is used to transfer information and ideas:

- Memorandum
- Circular
- Notice
- Information discussion
- Follow-up or verbal instructions
- Face to face communication

Transfer information and ideas the communication is a critical component of success in an office atmosphere. As such, it is necessary to learn as much as possible about the different methods and channels available for transmitting information in the workplace. Technology and etiquette protocol provide a variety of options when you are trying to get your point across. The communication media that helps transfer information and ideas in a workplace these are:

## Email

One of the most popular forms of inter-office communication is email. There are a couple of reasons for its popularity. *First*, it allows for information to be sent at lightning-fast speeds, whereas paper communication may take time to deliver. *Second*, it provides a record of all communications between different parties that can be referenced or used for support in times of conflict. *Third*, it allows for the transfer of large files without having to rely on discs, thumb drives or hard copies.

## Presentations

Perhaps one of the most dreaded forms of office communication is the formal presentation. Formal presentations are usually utilized for communication when an idea needs to be “sold.” For this reason, they are usually persuasive in nature and executed under high pressure. However, presentations have high utility as a form of communication.



## Meetings

Meetings are an age-old form of interoffice communication. These usually involve a group

of individuals working on similar tasks and are informative in nature. Meetings can be effective for a couple of reasons. Initially, they allow for a dialog to be established on a subject with immediate responses to concerns, comments or questions. Second, they force members of a group to work together, which historically leads to better productivity in a work setting. Unfortunately, meetings can become hostile if proper communication tactics are not executed. For example, defensive listening can instigate conflict, and a lack of participation can lead to massive amounts of frustration. Meetings only serve as an effective form of interoffice communication if all parties are committed to making it work.

### Appropriate Non-Verbal Communication

Interpersonal communication is much more than the explicit meaning of words, the information or message conveyed. It also includes implicit messages, whether intentional or not, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviors.

Non-verbal communications include facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, **gestures** displayed through body language (kinesics) and the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics).

These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above spoken (verbal) communication.

Non-verbal Messages Allow People to:

- Reinforce or modify what is said in words. For example, people may nod their heads vigorously when saying "Yes" to emphasize that they agree with the other person, but a shrug of the shoulders and a sad expression when saying "I'm fine thanks," may imply that things are not really fine at all!
- Convey information about their emotional state.
- Define or reinforce the relationship between people.
- Provide feedback to the other person.
- Regulate the flow of communication, for example by signaling to others that they have finished speaking or wish to say something.

Unfortunately interpreting non-verbal communication is not that simple. As covered on our Interpersonal Communication page, non-verbal communication is not a language with a fixed meaning. It is influenced and driven by the context in which it occurs. This includes both the place and the people concerned, as well as the culture. For example, a nod of the head between colleagues in a committee meeting may mean something very different from when the same action is used to acknowledge someone across a crowded room, and again when two people are having a social conversation.

### KEY WORD

**Gesture** is a form of non-verbal communication or non-vocal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages, either in place of, or in conjunction with, speech.

Interpersonal communication is further complicated in that it is usually not possible to interpret a gesture or expression accurately on its own. Non-verbal communication consists of a complete package of expressions, hand and eye movements, postures, and gestures which should be interpreted along with speech (verbal communication).

### ***Importance of Non-Verbal Communication***

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When we communicate, non-verbal cues can be as important, or in some cases even more important, than what we say. Non-verbal communication can have a great impact on the listener and the outcome of the communication.

### **Types of Non-Verbal Communication**

The types of interpersonal communication that are not expressed verbally (with speech) are called non-verbal communications. There are many different types of non-verbal communication.

#### ***Hand Gestures***

This area of nonverbal communication depends on the person. Not everyone “talks” with their hands, but integrating hand gestures into communication is a good way to get your point across.

Examples to avoid would be pointing at the listener as this feels confrontational or wild hand gestures that take away from what you are saying. Speakers often use hand gestures to help solidify a point they are making, with a subtle downward hand movement for an emphatic point or expansive gestures when making a large point.

#### ***General Body Language***

Crossing your arms over your chest signifies to a listener that you do not agree with them and you are closed off from what they are saying. Fidgeting while listening also imparts cues that you are not interested in what is going on.

This includes fiddling with your hands or doodling, as well as swinging your foot and crossing and re-crossing your legs. Keeping still while listening may not be easy, but it lets the speaker know that you care about what they are saying.

#### ***Body Positioning***

Body positioning is subtly different from actual body movements. For example, even if you are sitting perfectly still but are leaning backwards, this gives the impression of disinterest or even downright disagreement. Inclining towards your listeners or the person who is speaking to you gives them the impression that you are engaged in the conversation. When people do not get along, they may give off subtle cues in their body positioning by turning slightly away, giving the impression that they want to leave the conversation. Open and engaged body positioning is important in a conversation.

### **Lines of Communication with Supervisors and Colleagues**

Communicating effectively can be difficult and is one of the most underrated workplace competencies to master. Here are some guidelines to help you better communicate and engage with your seniors and subordinates: Remember, you are not the only voice in the room. It is



important to remember that your leader undoubtedly has any number of folks from other direct reports to senior leaders to colleagues demanding his attention just as much as you are. While it may appear that your manager is not listening, likely he is trying to make the best of competing demands, which are each worthy in their own right.

Understand your leader's preferences. Take a moment to think back on conversations that you have had with your leader and identify when you had the best outcomes from your communications.

### ***Work Place Procedure***

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A workplace procedure is a step-by-step description of how a particular task is to be accomplished in a workplace. Workplace procedures are used to provide employees with approved methods of carrying out particular tasks. One way of writing up a workplace procedure is to use the format of a Safe Operating Procedure, or SOP. This can be posted up on a laminated page near the machine. Some companies also use SOPs to verify that the operator has been trained in that procedure by asking them to sign a copy, which is then kept in their personnel file.

More complex safety procedures can be documented in the form of a **Job Safety Analysis (JSA)**, also referred to as a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS). The layout of these documents makes it easier to show multiple tasks and include the responsibilities of different personnel. Particular types of procedures are included in the company's Policies and Procedures Manual. These include tasks such as housekeeping, machine isolation and reporting faults. Some of these are also reproduced in the Employee Induction Manual, so that new employees can be made aware of them before they start work.

### **KEY WORD**

**Job safety analysis (JSA)** is a procedure which helps integrate accepted safety and health principles and practices into a particular task or job operation.

### ***Personal Interaction***

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There are tons of rules in society, some written and some implicit; a red light means stop and most people obey. In the workplace there are established rules of respect as well. For example, if you physically assault someone, steal, or don't show up for work, it's likely you will be fired. For the most part, most employees have grasped those rules, but it tends to be the unspoken, often unwritten rules of behavior that cause the most problems in the workplace.

Here are five guidelines for creating respectful interaction in the workplace. These Rules of Respect are primarily used in our workshops but these rules are so universal they could be adopted and used in a multitude of workplace scenarios to ensure respectful interactions among employees.

- Show curiosity for the views of others: Science has shown us that mirror neurons work to create empathy

among individuals. By taking the point of view of the people we work with we can better understand their motivations.

- Seek ways to grow, stretch and change: Sometimes we tend to think that our view is the correct one, because it's all we know. But there are many sources of knowledge that exist within the workplace and all we have to do is take the time to explore them. Learn about that new co-worker or have lunch with someone in another department.
- Look for opportunities to connect with and support others: When we interact with others in the workplace, it's easier to conquer our differences by finding ways to connect first. Does that co-worker with the different political beliefs also value family as much as you? This allows you to create a connection with the person based on commonality.
- Allow yourself to be wrong on occasion: Often when we assume we are right, we reduce the amount of new information that we take in, because obviously we know it all already! A better approach would be to accept that you may not be right all the time and allow yourself to learn from your co-workers' differences.
- Engage others in ways that build their self-esteem: Discussions of difference or diversity in the workplace can sometimes get ugly with people hurling personal insults at one another. Instead, try to boost the self-esteem of others when discussing such hotly contested topics. Building self-esteem is a major step toward creating a respectful workplace.

By practicing these simple guidelines on a regular basis, you can ensure that respect is not just another corporate slogan in the workplace but an action that all employees participate in.

## SPEAK ENGLISH AT A BASIC OPERATIONAL LEVEL

The skills and knowledge are required to converse in English at a basic operational level in a range of settings within the hotel and travel industries workplace context.

### ***Participate in Simple Conversations on Familiar Topics with Work Colleagues***

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Opening statements start a conversation. They tell the listener the purpose of the interaction and give direction on how to continue the conversation. Properly understanding and responding to opening statements is an essential skill at work. Mastering this skill can leave your co-workers with a great first impression, and failing to do so could leave them confused and upset.

## Opening Statements

Starting a conversation can be one of the most stressful things in life, but also one of the most rewarding. Being good at starting conversations is essential in your career and many other aspects of life. The following are examples of opening statements that can help you get the ball rolling.

Examples:

- How are you?
- How did your shift go?
- How's the weather today?
- Anything new today?
- Are you busy?
- What time do you finish work?
- Good morning.
- Good to see you.
- Nice to meet you.
- Where are you from?

## Comment on Familiar Topics

In the service industry, you will be required to provide assistance to guests or clients. This often includes giving directions, offering advice or taking care of a customer's special needs. While this would be easy in your own language, sometimes it can be quite difficult in English. You are very familiar with the topic, but you must also have the language skills to express yourself.

### ***Respond to Simple Verbal Instructions or Requests***

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When a supervisor or manager gives employee instructions to carry out a task, they expect that it will be done correctly. It is the responsibility of the employee to clarify the instruction or request to ensure no miscommunication of the supervisor's expectations. When you are given instructions it is important to confirm that you understand them and respond appropriately.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The marketing orientation evolved from earlier orientations, primarily the production orientation, the product orientation and the selling orientation

## Confirm Understanding

You should use short responses and body language to confirm that you understand instructions.

## Request repetition or Clarification of Instructions or Requests

People often find it difficult to ask for repetition or clarification

of a request. When English is not your native language, you may feel shy about your level of comprehension.

### ***Make Simple Requests***

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Good customer service starts with attitude. A big part of the way you present yourself to guests or clients is through your use of language. Using polite forms to make simple requests plays an important role in your overall presentation of yourself. When you are polite, you appear gracious, agreeable and pleasant.

#### **Polite forms**

There are many different ways of making polite requests in English. Like many other languages, degrees of politeness exist in English, and you must understand which one to use depending on the circumstances and the person you are addressing. Also take into account what you are asking for. If it is a big request, it will require more formal language.

#### **Thank the person responding to your request**

Expressing gratitude is a language tool that has important social value in English.

### ***Describe Routine Procedures***

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Explaining how to carry out a routine job is a basic English task and can be used on a daily basis in the service industry. However, non-native English speakers can get lost in the sequencing of events and the explanation becomes difficult to understand or even incoherent.

#### **Sequence Markers**

Use sequence markers while giving instructions to indicate an order of the tasks to be performed

Examples of sequence markers include:

- First
- Then
- After that
- Next
- At the end
- Finally.

### ***Describe Exceptions to Routine Procedures***

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In any work situation, unforeseen things occur that make you adjust your plan and disrupt your usual routine. Working in the hospitality and tourism industry requires individuals to be flexible and prepared to handle difficult and surprising situations. As an employee, you



must be able to describe these exceptions in a professional manner and instruct co-workers how to deal with them.

## Adverbs of frequency

Use adverbs of frequency to talk about how often certain actions occur

### *Make Suggestions on How to Improve Routine Procedures*

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The service industry is always changing and evolving. As a member of the service industry you play a role in that growth and improvement. If you have suggestions on ways to improve routine procedures you should share them.

## Ways to Make Suggestions

In order to make suggestions in a professional setting, you must have the language skills to express your ideas without being offensive. Use formal or indirect language to accomplish this.

### *Express Likes, Dislikes and Preferences*

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Expressing your opinion is an important language skill, especially in the workplace. Talking about things you like and dislike is the easiest way to make connections with colleagues and customers, which will improve your professional relationships. You will also use this skill to help customers, giving advice, relaying personal experiences and making small talk. You must be able to what you like and dislike in order to express your opinions adequately.

### *Discuss Preferences and Give Reasons*

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The ability to state preferences and give opinions is a necessary skill for employees in any profession. You have already studied how to express your opinions and state likes and dislikes. After expressing your preferences, however, you must support your statements in a logical, professional manner. A professional opinion without evidence to support it is like a carriage without a horse.

### *Identify Different Forms of Expression in English*

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There are many ways of greeting people, both formal and informal. The speaker's task is to choose the appropriate tone for the situation. It is also useful to know lots of different greetings so as to not repeat yourself when you meet a number of people at the same time.

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- When you express gratitude you evoke feelings of warmth and solidarity. When you fail to express gratitude it can result in negative feelings and consequences.
- Asking for clarification if you have misunderstood or could not hear all that was said, will limit mistakes made due to lack of understanding.

As with any other aspect, you need to be careful about using informal expressions with people who you do not know well or whose work rank or status is higher than yours.

## Formal Expressions

Formal English is a way of speaking that you use when you don't know the people listening to you very well. You also tend to use it more with people who are higher status and who you want to impress. English learners are usually taught formal English in school, and native English speakers are taught to use it in writing and for speeches and interviews.

In formal English, people usually:

- Pronounce words more carefully. For example, in casual speech, people sometimes don't pronounce the "g" sound at the end of words ending in "-ing". In formal speech, people are more careful to pronounce this
- Use more words that originally came from french and latin. For example, in formal english you use words like "intelligent" instead of "smart", or "arrive" instead of "come"
- Don't use as many contractions ("it's", "they're", "i'm", etc.)
- Use more modal verbs to show formality.

## Informal Expressions

When and where are informal expressions appropriate? There are many situations in everyday life where informal English is allowed, even preferred. Some examples include chatting with a co-worker, talking on the phone to a friend, and watching television with your family.

Informal Greetings	Meaning
How's it going?	just another way of saying 'How are you?'
You doing ok?	asked when the person has had some tough experience recently and you want to ask if they 're ok
What's new?	this is an informal way of greeting a friend and asking if anything has happened since you last met
What's up?	the same as above, but the difference is that you're probably not very interested in what news the other person might have
Long time no see!	used when you haven't seen the person for a long period of time and you are happy to see them
Informal Responses	Meaning
How about you?	a typical response to ask the other person the same thing they asked you. You can respond with this counter-greeting in nearly all standard greetings
It's good to see you!	a typical response to a greeting from someone you haven't seen for a while
Can you say that again?	a request to repeat the question if you didn't understand what was said. This can also be used when the person speaks too fast
Good for you	a response to someone telling you about their success or some good news that they're happy about
You're kidding me!	said when someone tells you something that borders on the unbelievable and you want to express your surprise

## PARTICIPATE IN WORKPLACE MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Every workplace will have staff meetings/team meetings, formal and informal discussions. When a business places a proper value on the time spent by people preparing for and attending meetings, it is quickly seen that they are a very expensive exercise.

Have you ever been to one of those meetings where no objectives were met, no actions were agreed upon and generally it was a complete waste of your time? Effective meeting procedures are essential to ensure that the maximum output is gained from a meeting.

Some basic expectations are:

A clearly defined purpose to your meeting – Ask questions such as; Why are we meeting? What are we trying to achieve? Are we meeting for meetings sake? However, consider that at times the purpose of bringing people together for a meeting may be to achieve other important interpersonal objectives like team building, brain storming or group problem solving. Make sure that you clearly communicate the meeting purpose well before hand, this gives attendees time to gather ideas or research issues prior to attending the meeting.

Advise people of the meeting in time for them to be able to attend – It is amazing how often key people are left out of meetings or are not able to attend simply due to a lack of planning and sufficient notice.

Set an agenda – An agenda aims to keep discussions on track and to keep everyone focused on the issues. The agenda should be distributed to attendees before the meeting.

Start and finish on time – Make sure the meeting starts and finishes on time so participants feel that their time is valued and that they can plan for effective meeting participation to fit within their work load.

Manage the participants – It is important that every person feels their attendance and contribution is valued. People must be given the opportunity to express their opinion as well as recognizing they must also listen to others without interruption. Clear conflict management strategies must be in place.

## COMPLETE RELEVANT WORK RELATED DOCUMENTS

How do you think you would go if you are asked to initiate a piece of written communication in your workplace?

What if you were asked to:

- Present written information and ideas in clear and concise language
- Ensure that presentation of written information meets organisational standards of style, format and accuracy

Before writing a workplace document you need to have clear instructions as to the:

- Purpose (why the document is being written, the goals of the document)
- Audience (who will read the document)
- Stakeholders (who may be affected by the document)
- Context (the background as to why the document is created)

Have a think about the documents that you may be required to design and / or complete in your workplace. Whilst it is unusual for an entry level worker to actually design the

layout of workplace documents, it is certainly common for you to be required to fill in the documents in a satisfactory way.

## Forms

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In every workplace you will be required to complete forms. Each workplace will have forms specific to their requirements. You must make sure that you know which forms to fill in, when you need to use forms and where to find the necessary forms.

When filling in a form:

- Read the form carefully
- Fill in all the required details
- Only include necessary information
- Write clearly and simply
- Check that you have completed it properly
- Send or give it to the appropriate person, or file in the appropriate place



The other main form of written communication in your job will be work instructions or work procedures. Work instructions are the most basic tool used in every business or organization to help workers follow a sequence of steps. Inadequate work instructions are likely to result in a variety of problems in the workplace that could range from:

- Returned products
- Loss of materials
- Customer complaints
- Liability issues
- Poor work performance

Work instructions can have a major impact on the effectiveness and productivity of a workplace. If instructions are difficult to follow, workers will make errors in implementing the steps. A good work instruction is a detailed sequence of steps that workers need to follow each time they perform a task. The purpose of a work instruction is to organize steps in a logical and systematic way so that workers can easily follow it independently. This means a consistent format for your work instructions is important. Workers can read the information



faster and absorb it more quickly if it follows a consistent font and format. It also makes the development of further work instructions far simpler as you have a template to follow

### **Effective Work Instructions**

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In the previous sections of this workbook we have stated many times that communication must be effective. You must ensure your communication is clear and properly received. The same applies to a work instruction, as it is a form of written communication. This means that creating effective work instructions needs to be viewed as a process not a one-time project. Remember that for any **communication** to be verified as effective it must be tested. This means it must be implemented and checked over a period of time. There is no perfect template for all businesses. When first deciding on how to design templates you need to consider:

- What format the instructions are currently taking? Look for hand written instructions, instructions taped to the wall or to the bulletin board, or written in the manual or catalogue.
- Do workers have language/literacy or numeracy problems?
- Do any workers have visual impairment?
- Do any cultural differences affect the use of some formats?

### **KEY WORD**

**Communication** is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules.

### **Samples of Work Instructions**

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Every individual on daily basis deals with many types of work instructions. Some examples may include:

- Software manual
- Appliance instruction
- Income tax return
- Job application
- Prescription label
- Recipe
- Directions
- Street sign
- Payroll claims
- Assembly instruction
- Work standards
- Health instruction
- Safety instruction
- Inspection instruction
- Labels
- Equipment maintenance

- Testing instructions
- Product specifications

Work instructions can also be the verbal passing of information from one or more persons to the following shift worker or workers. These are called “handovers” and are common in the health industries as well as in industrial factory situations. Handovers may also be spoken into a tape which is then played to the next group of workers outlining events of the previous shift or of any information that it is considered important for them to know.

## **POINTS TO REMEMBER**

When doing handovers:

- Make sure that all relevant information is passed on
- Check that the next person has understood everything by asking and answering questions
- If using a tape recorder, speak clearly and check the recording
- Don't rush your sentences

