

1.

Select three of the items below which, in your opinion, best contribute to improving communication.

trust

open plan offices

voice mail

e-mail

mobile phones

flexi-time

small teams

strong corporate identity

frequent meetings

staff parties

2. How to Be a Better Communicator in the Workplace

Successfully interacting with others is a key to your professional success.

Whether you are an aspiring leader or in a support role, developing your communication skills can impact your success. First, let's take a look at the complexities of communication. It's more than the words you use. It's how and when you choose to share information. It's your body language and the tone and quality of your voice.

These are things you should consider as you strive to improve your interactions with others:

Know the outcome. Before you begin planning what you will say in an upcoming meeting, consider what you want the outcome of your communication to be. What actions do you want others to take? How will you move people?

Build a reputation. In the workplace, other people's perceptions of you don't form based on a single encounter. But never forget how valuable a good first impression is! In order to gain respect and be seen as a trusted authority, eager team member or dedicated employee, you will need to build your reputation over time.

Avoid flaunting power and intellect. Compelling communicators don't strong-arm people into paying attention or dazzle listeners by showing off how much they know. Leave your ego at the door when speaking to people. While you may be the smartest, most knowledgeable person on a particular topic, wait for the invitation to share your expertise.

Be confident. A wimpy response isn't going to gain the recognition or support you desire. Confidence is queen when it comes to effective communication. Use strong action verbs, avoid filler words, such as "um" or "ah," look people in the eye and sit or stand up straight when called on to speak.

Show awareness of others. Shoving your great ideas or accomplishments down throats of listeners isn't going to work. Building relationships is part of the communication process and is key to your success in conveying your message.

Consider timing. There is a time and a place for everything. When you are aware of the events or emotional state of those you are communicating with, you can improve the timing of your message.

Master the art of listening. The most adept communicators are experts at listening and reading between the lines. Mastering the art of listening isn't easy. You will most likely feel tempted to share your own insights, opinions or assumptions while listening to someone. Avoid commentary or interjecting. Instead, ask open ended follow-up questions.

Earn respect and trust. Earning respect and trust from your colleagues, managers and customers doesn't happen automatically. Your title and role don't give you any special privileges. If you work hard to exceed expectations and deliver with integrity, you are on your way to establishing the right to be trusted. Consistently repeat these steps to earn the right to be heard.

