

Communication

Meaning of Communication

Communication is the act of sharing information from one person to another person or group of people. There are many different ways to communicate, each of which play an important role in sharing information. Communication is the act of conveying information to a recipient who understands the information and provides appropriate feedback.

There are three forms of communication which are verbal communication, written communication and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is also termed as physical communication. It is a form of communication where symbols, signs and gestures are used. Unlike verbal communication which involves the use of sound and the ear for hearing, physical communication involves the use of the eyes for seeing and other parts of the body for gesturing.

Everyone possesses some form of physical communication skills. These include our body posture when speaking, eye contact, facial expressions, touch etc. Even little children know that nodding the head means yes and shaking the head means no. Aside these and some very common gestures, there is more to physical communication skills.

Importance of Physical communication

Physical communication is as important as any other form of communication. Although it is often under-valued, it is equally as essential as being able to speak or hear. It compliments verbal communication and yields marvelous results when combined effectively with it. In certain professions and job positions, your ability to use physical communication is very important.

In sporting games, the ability to use and understand signs and gestures is a necessary skill. Coaches and players use them.

In security agencies, this is a very important skill to possess due to the nature of their operations. The police, navy, military etc. make great use of these skills to avoid being detected by their enemies. Detectives and investigators use some of these nonverbal signs to detect whether a person is lying or telling the truth.

In the mining and construction industries as well as other work places, where extremely loud sounds hinder verbal communication, physical communication is put to maximum use.

Counsellors, motivational speakers, and public relations officers etc. use physical communication skills when addressing audiences. Great orators do not only speak eloquently but they possess physical communication skills that help draw the attention of their audience.

Types of communication

There are four main categories or communication styles including verbal, nonverbal, written and visual:

1. Verbal

Verbal communication is the use of language to transfer information through speaking or sign language. It is one of the most common types, often used during presentations, video conferences and phone calls, meetings and one-on-one conversations. Verbal communication is important because it is efficient. It can be helpful to support verbal communication with both nonverbal and written communication.

2. Nonverbal

Nonverbal communication is the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions to convey information to others. It can be used both intentionally and unintentionally. For example, you might smile unintentionally when you hear a pleasing or enjoyable idea or piece of information. Nonverbal communication is helpful when trying to understand others' thoughts and feelings.

3. Written

Written communication is the act of writing, typing or printing symbols like letters and numbers to convey information. It is helpful because it provides a record of information for reference. Writing is commonly used to share information through books, pamphlets, blogs, letters, memos and more. Emails and chats are a common form of written communication in the workplace.

4. Visual

Visual communication is the act of using photographs, art, drawings, sketches, charts and graphs to convey information. Visuals are often used as an aid during presentations to provide helpful context alongside written or verbal communication. Because people have different learning styles, visual communication might be more helpful for some to consume ideas and information.

How to improve on Physical Communication skills

Sometimes a person's gestures, facial expressions etc. convey a message that is contrary to what they are saying. Everyone wants their physical communication to reflect exactly what they are trying to say. Below are a few tips that can help you improve upon your physical communication skills.

Improve on stress management :- Our bodies react to stress. These signs of tiredness and frustrations etc. are hard to hide. To avoid exhibiting some of these unwanted physical communication signs, take a break in-between work or speeches.

Control anxiety :- Just as people can say the wrong words at an interview due to anxiety, anxiety can cause people to exhibit unwanted physical communication signals. Make sure you deal with any anxiety problem before you begin communicating. If you realize you feel tensed, you can take a walk, take in a deep breath or have a cool drink to calm your nerves.

Eye - contact :- Establish an eye contact with listeners when communicating. It is a way of expressing your confidence. It is also a way of communicating to a speaker that you are paying attention to him.

Ask for meanings :- There are certain body languages that you may never understand until you ask about them. If you do not understand the gestures and facial expressions a person uses, ask them what they mean.

Practice :- Consistently practising your own nonverbal signs and reading other people's gestures will help improve your physical communication skills. We say a person can read people when he understands humans and can interpret their use of gestures.