

Slide 1



Welcome to Module 2, Lesson 1: Effective Communication. Communication plays a coordinating and integrating role in the management of the affairs of any organization, whether it is in the functions of planning, organizing, staffing, or leading. Effective communication in an organization increases productivity, decreases turnover and improves office atmosphere. Not everyone, however, comes from strong communication backgrounds, so it is important to make certain everyone representing the organization has effective communication skills. This lesson will provide examples and suggestions for delivering effective communication.

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Lesson Objectives

After participation in this lesson, you will be able to:

- Determine appropriate methods to effectively communicate both verbally and in writing
- Identify strategies for effective verbal communication
- Identify strategies for effective listening



Module 2, Lesson 1 – Effective Communication 2

There are three objectives for this lesson. First, you will be able to determine appropriate methods to communicate both verbally and in writing. Second, you will be able to identify strategies for effective verbal communication. Third, you will be able to identify strategies for effective listening.

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Know Your Audience

Audience Analysis:

- Who is my audience?
- What do they need to know?
- How best should I relay this message to this audience?



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To communicate in a consistent and effective manner, the methods used to reach people can take many forms. Before you develop your message, it is important to engage in audience analysis, or the process of assessing the audience to make sure the information provided to them is at the appropriate level and utilizes the best methods.

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Audience Analysis



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Audience analysis is an extensive process that will help you to develop and present your message successfully. Although complex in nature, understanding the analysis process is as simple as A. U. D. I. E. N. C. E. Here are more detailed tips regarding audience analysis in a format that you can easily remember.

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Analysis

**Who is my audience?
What is the purpose of my message?**

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A is for Analysis. As we discussed previously, analyzing both your audience and the purpose of your message are critical steps of communication. Audience analysis involves gathering data about or research into details about the audience. Who is my audience? Having knowledge of a specific audience will allow you to best cater your message to reach them at their specific level. Also, defining the purpose of your message will allow you to decipher what information needs to be included to successfully meet your goals. What is the purpose of my message?

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Understanding

What is my audience's knowledge and understanding of the subject?

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U is for Understanding. What is my audience's knowledge and understanding of the subject? Ask yourself questions to be able to decipher the perspectives of your targeted audience and the information that is already understood. For example, is background information necessary? Are there key issues that must be discussed? Are there misconceptions concerning your topic? This step will help you to further determine the information that you will need to assist your audience to reach specific conclusions.

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Demographics

**What are my audience's demographic characteristics,
for example, age, gender, race/ethnicity,
family, and education?**



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D is for Demographics. As a volunteer, you must be mindful of the diversity that exists within our society to be able to serve as a change agent for a wide range of people. Thus, it is important to consider a demographic profile analysis of your audience. What are my audience's demographic characteristics, for example, age, gender, race/ethnicity, family, and education? Knowing the demographic characteristics of your audience can help determine approach and content of your message. Paying attention to these background aspects of the audience can also help you avoid any remarks or topics that the audience would not relate to or appreciate.

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Interests

**What are my audience's interests?
Why are they reading my document or listening to my
presentation?**



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I is for Interests. Analyzing your audience for their interests is a difficult yet important step in audience analysis. What are my audience's interests? Why are they reading my document or listening to my presentation? Knowing your audience's current motivation and interests related to your message will help you to better reach their objectives. This will also help you to facilitate conclusions or actions, which will come after being exposed to your message. Gaining interests will require emotional and/or inspirational triggers that will motivate your audience to consider and respond to your message.

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Environment

What are elements of the environment that I should consider?

What are their hearing abilities, language differences, and cultural sensitivities?

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The first E in AUDIENCE is for Environment. Understanding the social situation and environment that will accompany your message will be important to consider when crafting your delivery and your approach. Environment can be defined in many ways. In this discussion, we are referring to the physical and social environment. Physical refers to elements of the location, such as lighting, acoustics, and space. What are the elements of the environment that I should consider? Where will my audience view or listen to my message? Social environment refers to things like interaction and feedback regarding your audience. Ask yourself, what are their hearing abilities, language differences, and cultural sensitivities?

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Needs

What are my audience's needs associated
with the topic?

What do they need to know, learn, do?



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N is for Needs. Evaluating the needs of your audience is important to help you to address the content. What are my audience's needs associated with the topic? What do they need to know, learn, and do?

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Customization

What do I need to do to customize my message to my specific audience?

What specific needs/interest should I address?



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C is for Customization. Customization is an important factor of audience analysis, because it allows you to interject innovative and defined approaches that will meet your specific audience. What do I need to do to customize my message to my specific audience? Consider using specific and unique elements for your audience to gauge their attention and include relevant examples and topics to which your audience can relate. Customization can also relate to your layout and delivery. How best will you customize your information to get your audience's attention? What specific needs/interests should I address?

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Expectations

What are my audience's expectations?

**What does my audience expect to see,
hear, and learn?**



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Last, the second E is for Expectations. Understanding your audience's expectations is an important perspective to consider; unmet expectations can leave your audience uneasy, confused, and wanting more information. What are my audience's expectations? Determining the audience's expectations is a great foundation for your message that will act as a spring board for your presentation or your writing. For example, what does my audience expect to see, hear, and learn? Expectations are the lens through which the audience hears, interprets and values your message.

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Analysis – Who is my audience?

Understanding – What is the audience’s knowledge and understanding of the subject?

Demographics – What are my audience’s demographic characteristics?

Interests – What are my audience’s interests?

Environment – What are elements of the environment that I should consider?

Needs – What are my audience's needs associated with the topic?

Customization – What do I need to do to customize my message to my specific audience?

Expectations – What are my audience’s expectations?



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It is important to quickly recap the components of audience analysis. Audience analysis is all about the A. U. D. I. E. N. C. E. Through this process, your message will be aimed at the intended audience and you will have accounted for their knowledge, opinions, needs, and wants.

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Communication



- Sending and receiving messages
- Building trusting relationships
- At the heart of everything that we do



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Good communication skills, including sending and receiving messages, are the basis of how we build trusting relationships and make certain what we say and hear is understood correctly. As an Extension professional or volunteer, the more clearly we send or communicate our message, the easier it is for people to make sound decisions. Effective communication does not happen accidentally. It requires time and resource investment and is a well crafted and coordinated process. Communication is at the heart of everything that we do and it starts with you as a volunteer!

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How We Communicate

<p>Verbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Phone callsOne on OnePresentationsWebinarsVideo-conferencingLeader of MeetingPart of a Group	<p>Written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">EmailsLetters and flyersNewsletters/brochuresNews articlesSocial mediaBlogsWebsites
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We communicate in various ways. This can include verbal communication, such as phone calls, face-to-face communication, presentations, or group meetings. This can be as part of a group when someone else is presenting or leading and your main responsibility is to listen and understand. This can also include written communication through methods such as emails, letters, newsletters, and news articles.

Although this list is broad, the information provided by Extension volunteers needs to originate from research-based, non-biased sources. With all methods of communication, we need to keep this mission in mind.

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Communication Fundamentals



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No matter what the method of communication that is being used, there are some fundamental skills or suggestions that may help us make our messages clear or help us hear a message accurately.

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Be Attentive!



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Are these people actively listening to the speaker? One of the most important skills in communication is learning how to listen. Listening is hard work. As a volunteer, you will want to employ active listening, which is a more structured form of listening. The key to active listening is being focused and attentive to the speaker. This means using your whole body to listen, facing the speaker, maintaining eye contact and avoiding interruptions.

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Active Listening Elements



- Acknowledge speaker's thoughts and ideas
- Repeat in your own words
- Ask open ended questions
- Summarize
- Give your opinion when appropriate



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Acknowledge the thoughts and ideas of the speaker. This can be done by simply nodding or saying 'yes' or another affirmation. Paraphrase or repeat in your own words what the speaker is saying, when appropriate. Be careful if you paraphrase not to add your own ideas and thoughts. Simply reword what the speaker said. It is also important if you do not understand what a speaker is saying to ask him or her for an explanation. You might want to ask open-ended questions as well. Good words to use in this type of questioning are "how", "please explain", or "could you please describe that". Next, you might want to summarize or clarify what the speaker has said. This gives the speaker the opportunity to know if you have heard the information correctly. The final component of active listening is contributing your opinion. Relaying your opinion is not always appropriate or may not be desired. Be cautious and understand the impact that your opinion may have during a conversation– thus, offer your opinion when appropriate.

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Communication Strategies

Eye Contact



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Using appropriate eye contact is another basic communication skill that is very important. Eye contact is important when you are speaking and being spoken to, both in one-on-one situations and in groups. Maintaining eye contact is a skill and one that takes practice.

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Communication Strategies

- Allow others to finish their thoughts
- Do not assume that you know what the person is going to say
- Use plain language that is clear and simple, but not simplistic or patronizing
- Use examples, when appropriate



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Allow others to finish their thoughts. Be sure to show that you respect others' thoughts, feelings, and opinions by letting them finish what they are saying. Do not assume you know what the other person is going to say. Another communication strategy is to speak or write simply, so your audience can understand. We have probably all been in a situation where we were listening to someone and, at the end, had no idea what they actually said. Usually, when you are a speaker or a writer, you know a reasonable amount regarding the subject at hand. Avoid assuming that your audience is knowledgeable regarding certain information. Keep your points simple and direct and when appropriate use examples to showcase your message.

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Communication Strategies

Consider A or B – Which language is more direct and easier to understand?



A: Volunteer as a family. Show your children how important it is to help others.

B: Undertake community activities with your children and family members. Demonstrate to them the significance of assisting others.



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Take a few minutes and review this example of writing simply. These two sentences say basically the same message. Which do you think is easiest to understand? Version A) Volunteer as a family. Show your children how important it is to help others. Or, Version B) Undertake community activities with your children and family members. Demonstrate to them the significance of assisting others. Not only is A easier to read and write, it also is more likely to be remembered.

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Communication Strategies

Train your mind to focus!

- Keep your attention focused
- Remove distractions:
 - Music
 - Cell phones
 - Electronic devices
 - Word puzzles



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A final basic communication strategy is to train your mind to focus. Keep your attention focused when you are speaking or listening. Active listening can help with this focus. Removing distractions can also help. Turn off music. Silence your phone. Keep focused.

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Communication Strategies

- ✓ Learn to listen
- ✓ Maintain appropriate eye contact
- ✓ Be polite
- ✓ Consider the opinions of others
- ✓ Allow speaker to finish
- ✓ Talk or write simply
- ✓ Focus

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Here is a list of strategies to enable you to improve your communication. Now, take a few minutes to explore more about written, verbal, and nonverbal communications.

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Written Communication

- Use plain language
- Watch punctuation and tone
- Keep messages and sentences simple
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations
- Stay focused and to the point



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Many of the strategies already mentioned are important in writing. Keep your message simple and polite, while staying focused on the subject. Here are some other ideas for written communication. Remember, the reader is unable to detect your tone, so limit sarcasm, jokes, or distracting materials. Also, do not assume that your audience will read materials with the same mood as you may have intended while writing. Keep messages and sentences simple. Complex words and wordy sentences often get in the way of the message. Finally, avoid jargon or abbreviations. Your message can be lost in its entirety if people do not understand the key points.

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Form, Font and Style

Consider the presentation of your written materials:

- Typed, paper or electronic view
- Handwritten
- Font Size and Style

Always consider the recipient!



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As a volunteer, when creating written materials, it is so important to always consider the recipient's ability to see and read the lettering of hand-written and some computer fonts. Here are three writing tips to keep in mind: 1) typed rather than hand-write; 2) if hand-written, be sure to print clearly and legibly; and 3) use basic font styles such as Times New Roman and always use at least a 12 point font.

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Written Communication Activity

Use your background knowledge about written communication to review an example email from an extension volunteer.

On the following slides, consider: *What would you change about Darlene's communication?*



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Communication Activity: Use your background knowledge about written communication to review an example email from an extension volunteer.

On the following slides, consider: *What would you change about Darlene's communication?*

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Written Communication - Email

Date: Mon, 21, May
From: Darlene Aget daget@mmm.org
Address Book
To: My Friends
Subject: CANCELLED

HELLO EVERYONE....

THE PROGRAM FOR SATURSDAY IS
CANCELLED. NOBODY SIGNED UP IN TIME SO I
CANCELLED IT. THOUGHT YALL WOULD LIKE IT
BUT I GUES NOT.

BBFN,
DARLENE



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This is an example of an email that a volunteer developed to cancel a program scheduled for Saturday. Do you see anything that needs to be changed? The next slide will identify some key areas to change for more effective communication.

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Use both upper- and lower-case letters.

Fully list email recipients or listserv

Avoid jargon and abbreviations



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Darlene’s approach to cancel the program through this email was not effective. First, it is best to fully detail email recipients’ names and email address when sending professional emails. If using a listserv, choose names wisely, making sure to name them effectively. Next, use both upper and lower case letters to communicate your message. You can see from this example, by using all uppercase letters, one may infer that the writer is yelling or angry. Avoid jargon or abbreviations. “BBFN”, “Bye Bye For Now”, is not an appropriate closing; it is even more inappropriate when used as an abbreviation. Good manners are important, particularly when you are writing. In this case, bad manners are used, and the receiver only sees the written words and not the tone with which it was written, so it is important to write with a positive feeling.

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BBFN,
DARLENE

Always proofread

Write with a positive tone

Keep your language professional and offer solutions or alternatives.



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In your opinion, should anything else be changed in this written communication? This message is very brief and should include more detailed, comprehensive information. For example, the title and logistical information regarding the specific program should be listed. What if there are a multitude of programs scheduled for this weekend? More information should be incorporated including how people were to sign up, purpose of this program, and alternatives/suggestions for rescheduling, changing the focus/information, or how to deliver this program through other methods. Finally, always proofread and utilize spell check. Grammar and spelling errors can be very detracting. Additionally, if this message had been proofread, hopefully the writer would have noticed poor tone and unprofessional language.

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Written Communication

- Use descriptive words
- Use active voice versus passive voice
- Use a professional, yet friendly, conversational tone



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Use descriptive words, instead of vague words to help your audience to visualize the message. For example, instead of “a lot of people”, say “ten or fifteen people.” Use active voice, instead of more passive language, so the subject is doing the action. For example, use “Family & Consumer Sciences proposed new regulations” as active language and not “New regulations were proposed” which represents more passive language. Active language is a direct form of communication and uses less words to relay a message. It also eliminates ambiguity about responsibilities and clearly identifies who is responsible for certain actions. Last, always use a professional, yet friendly, conversational tone that is inviting to your audience.

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Written Communication

- Avoid long sentences
- Be gender neutral
- Write with a positive tone
- ALWAYS, “aLWAYz” proofread



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In all communication, avoid overly long sentences. Be careful to be gender neutral whenever possible, and try to write with a positive tone. If you are copying and pasting from other documents, check to make sure that the content is relevant. And finally, always, always, always proofread.

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Written Communication

Seek expertise when developing:

- Brochures
- Flyers
- Announcements
- Formal letters



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If you are expected to create and/or update written materials such as websites, letters, brochures, and announcements, make sure that the materials are designed in a professional manner. To maximize effectiveness, seek guidance and reviewers to assist to create eye-catching and motivating documents.

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Verbal Communication
Phone Calls



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What are these phone call images conveying? Phone calls are another important communication tool. Think about phone calls you have made to try to get information from someone. You definitely form an opinion about someone or someplace from a phone call. A phone call has an advantage over email, in that you can hear the tone of voice. Keep the following tips in mind on phone calls: be polite, listen, and allow speakers to finish their thoughts. The upcoming slides will discuss further suggestions for communicating with others, specifically over the phone.

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Verbal Communication
Phone Calls

- Speak clearly and directly into receiver
- Use a pleasant tone of voice
- Identify your name and organization
- Ask before placing a caller on hold



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Speak clearly, and speak directly into the phone. Use a pleasant tone of voice. Try talking with a smile on your face. It really does improve your tone. This is not just true over the phone, but also in face-to-face conversations. Always identify yourself; people need to know to whom they are talking. If you need to put someone on hold, be polite and ask the caller if this action is acceptable. Make sure that you are considerate of your caller's time, as long wait times can make a caller feel unimportant and hinder building rapport.

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Verbal Communication
Phone Calls

- Return calls as promised
- Allow speaker to finish thoughts
- Avoid eating and chewing gum while on the telephone



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Always return calls as promised. As with all conversations, try not to interrupt the conversation of your caller. Sometimes, this is a difficult task on the phone because someone pausing is often confused with stopping. However, if you are really listening, you should know if the speaker has finished his or her thoughts. Avoid answering the phone if you are eating or chewing gum. This can be very disturbing and can prevent effective communication with your caller.

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**Verbal Communication
Phone Calls**



- Be sure to minimize background noise
- Be prepared to leave a detailed voice mail message that provides necessary information
- Make sure that your message is accurate and spoken slowly and clearly


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Before beginning a phone conversation, be sure that you have time so that the call is not rushed. Listen attentively to the caller to be able to understand his or her questions, requests, and/or concerns. During the conversation, avoid shuffling through papers, typing on the computer, or making other noises. Also, have a message prepared when you call someone in case you are connected to their voicemail; this prepares you for what to say during your message. If leaving a call back number on a voice mail, speak slowly and repeat the number before disconnecting.

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Verbal Communication
Phone Calls



- If you dial a wrong number, explain your error to the caller
- Taking messages: record date, time, caller's name and phone number

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If you dial the wrong number, be polite and explain that you have made an error. Do not just hang up without explaining your error. Secondly, if you are taking a message, make a note about the message, the date and the time of the phone call, the name of the caller, and his or her full contact information as provided. If you are unable to understand his or her name, ask for the correct spelling for accuracy.

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Public Speaking

- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Practice in front of a mirror, a mock audience or using a video camera
- Contact a local organization to aid in the development of your public speaking skills



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Another activity where an Extension volunteer may be asked to speak is at a presentation. It is well known that some people are very fearful of public speaking. As a volunteer, before delivering your message, it is important to practice, practice, practice. There are several methods to practice your materials. For example, you can practice in front of a mirror, a mock audience, or using a video camera. Contact a local organization, such as Toastmasters, that can also assist you to gain key public speaking skills and to remove the fear out of the experience.

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Verbal Communication Presentations



- Get audience attention (humor, story)
- Include introduction and summary
- Maintain eye contact



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Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind when you are doing a presentation. First, grab the attention of the audience. This can be done by telling a story, a joke (if relevant and tasteful – jokes are not for everyone), or something to get them interested. Have an introduction and a summary or conclusion, not just a bunch of facts for your presentation. A presentation needs to be organized and have a direction, so the audience can follow it easily. Maintain appropriate eye contact. This means looking at the audience, but be careful not to stare at one person.

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**Verbal Communication
Presentations**

- Use examples and visual aids, when possible and appropriate
- Use short sentences
- Speak slowly, clearly, use a pleasant voice



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Use examples and visual aids when possible. If done correctly, these tools help the audience remember. Plus, it adds interest to the presentation. Use short sentences. People can get lost when the sentences are too long. Use a pleasant voice, speak slowly and clearly.

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Verbal Communication
Presentations

RULE OF 3S

- Use the Rule of 3s
- Involve the audience
- Make sure you can be heard

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Remember to try to use the “Rule of 3s.” This rule suggests that people find things more enjoyable and easier to remember if presented in groups of three. Think about all the things that are in threes: 1) Go, Fight, Win; 2) Blood, Sweat, Tears; 3) Stop, Drop, Roll. There does seem to be something special about groupings of threes. A series of three often creates a progression of learning– your audience can easily remember your first, second, and third point. Also, it is important to involve your audience, whenever possible. This could be in the form of asking questions, including an activity, or having some sort of discussion group. Finally, utilize a microphone if one is available, or speak loud enough to be heard. Confirm with the audience that you are being heard clearly.

Read your audience for cues. If they look bored or tired or lost, you need to regroup. Maybe take a break, include some kind of activity, or try to explain things in a different way. Be prepared for and use a variety of approaches to help your audience to learn your material.

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Verbal Communication Presentations



- Read your audience for cues
- Avoid filler words; silence is acceptable
- Be prepared for and use a variety of approaches



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When conducting presentations, it is important to be aware of your audience’s engagement with your message. Read your audience for cues. Craft an engaging presentation to limit boredom or confusion. Avoid filler words such as “um” and “uh” as they are distracting to the flow of your message; a little silence is acceptable. Good public speakers are prepared and equipped to use a variety of approaches to gain the audience’s attention and to be able to reach a wide variety of people. A variety of approaches also helps when you may ‘lose’ your audience. Even with sturdy practice, you may need to regroup and try another approach to deliver your message to be able to meet the needs of your audience.

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**Verbal Communication
Presentations**

- Show your personality, try not to read
- Handle issues with poise and grace
- You do not have to know all the answers...just be willing to find them

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Show your personality. Try not to read. This is hard, particularly if you get nervous, so practice, practice, practice. When you are presenting, pretend you are talking to a friend. Plus, remember you know the subject, so you will be fine. If something goes astray during your presentation, be sure to handle issues with poise and grace. People will almost always remember how you handle a rough situation. Consider light comedy or quote that is fitting for the error. Lastly, do not think, as the presenter, that you have to have all the answers – you just have to be willing to help people find the answers.

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Nonverbal Communication

	Eye Contact Facial Expressions Interpersonal Space Tone of Voice
Body Gestures Posture	

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The final topic regarding effective communication is nonverbal communication. There are many ways we communicate without words: eye contact, facial expressions, personal space, how we move our bodies, and our posture. I am sure you can name others. Our nonverbal language tells an audience a lot. Typically, if our verbal language says one thing and our nonverbal language says another, people believe the nonverbal. Be careful to always send positive, nonverbal cues.

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In Review

Written Communication

Verbal Communication

Non Verbal Communication

