Interpersonal Communication in the workplace

Presented by:
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Human Resource Services

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Objectives
1) Identify key characteristics of verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication.
2) Cite the three criteria of effective communication.
3) Define distinct steps and types of listening.

com·mu·ni·ca·tion
the process of transmitting an idea or information to someone to develop a common understanding of the message
The Communication Process

Transmission (The Message)

The Medium (Frame of reference, rules, noise)

Feedback (The Reaction)

Sender
Cultural factors
Personal factors
Situational factors

Receiver
The Communication Process

The Medium
(Frame of reference, rules, noise)

Feedback
(The Reaction)

Receiver

Oral Communication

- Speech is Interactive
- Speech is Adaptive
- Speech has Content and a Relational Dimension
- We Cannot not Communicate
- Be Aware of Listener's Vocabulary

1)
2)
3)
One-Way: 
Sent from one source to another 
without opportunity for feedback 

Two-Way: 
Sent by one source to another with immediate 
opportunity for acknowledgement, response or 
other feedback.

Basic Principles of Two-Way Dialogue 
in the Workplace 

1) Explore 
• Set a positive climate 
• Establish rapport 
• Be open minded 
• Be subject oriented
Basic Principles of Two-Way Dialogue in the Workplace

2) Conduct Business
   • Convey empathy; be a good listener
   • Reduce your defensiveness
   • Acknowledge differences; maximize mutual gains
     o Use collaboration to reach agreement
     o Strive for a Win-Win resolution
     o Allow for “saving face”

3) Conclude
   • Know when to stop!
   • Summarize progress, outcome, and/or agreements
   • Plan for any follow up that may be necessary

Basic Principles of Two-Way Dialogue in the Workplace

4) Tips on Dialogue
   • Probe do not cross examine
   • Inquire do not challenge
   • Suggest do not demand
   • Uncover do not trap
   • Draw out do not pump
   • Guide do not dominate

Note: be conscious of paraverbal and nonverbal impact
Nonverbal: *how we communicate without using words*

Paraverbal: *how we say the words we say*

- Intonation
- Pitch
- Volume
- Pace
- Emphasis
- Word choice
- Word usage
Paraverbal
- Strong, firm voice indicates...
- Weak, shaky voice indicates...
- Fast speech, rapid pace indicates...

Paraverbal Form

Paraverbal
- Strong, firm voice indicates... confidence and honesty
- Weak, shaky voice indicates... hesitance, fear, and insecurity
- Fast speech, rapid pace indicates... anger or excitement

How we say the words we say
Paraverbal

Included among the most common voice problems are:

- Breath control
- Pitch and intonation
- Articulation
- Pace

I heard someone say that as much as 70% or 80% - or even 90%!!! - of communication is paraverbal or nonverbal.

Golly, can this be true?!

“When there are inconsistencies between attitudes communicated verbally and posturally, the postural component should dominate in determining the total attitude that is inferred.”


55% = Body Language

38% = Tone of Voice

7% = Spoken Words

Five Areas of Nonverbal Communication

- Proxemics (space)
- Artifactual (image)
- Eye Contact
- Tactile (touch)
- Kinesics (body language)
Proxemics

Space and distance influence communication and help to define relationships.

Proxemics

- **Intimate Space** (0” – 1.5’)
- **Social Space** (4’ – 12’)
- **Personal Space** (1.5’ – 4’)
- **Public Space** (12’ +)

Proxemics / Territoriality

4/13/2018
Proxemics and Personal Space

We all have varying definitions of what our “personal space” is, and these definitions are contextual and depend on the situation and the relationship. Scholars have identified four zones for US Americans, which are public, social, personal, and intimate distance. We can see how these zones relate to each other and to the individual in image below:

**Zones of Personal Space**

Even within a particular zone, interactions may differ depending on whether someone is in the outer or inner part of the zone.

**Public Space (12 Feet or More)**

Public and social zones refer to the space four or more feet away from our body, and the communication that typically occurs in these zones is formal and not intimate. Public space starts about twelve feet from a person and extends out from there. This is the least personal of the four zones and would typically be used when a person is engaging in a formal speech and is removed from the audience to allow the audience to see or when a high-profile or powerful person like a celebrity or executive maintains such a distance as a sign of power or for safety and security reasons.

**Social Space (4–12 Feet)**

Communication that occurs in the social zone, which is four to twelve feet away from our body, is typically in the context of a professional or casual interaction, but not intimate or public. This distance is preferred in many professional settings because it reduces the suspicion of any impropriety. The expression “keep someone at an arm’s length” means that someone is kept out of the personal space and kept in the social/professional space. It is also possible to have people in the outer portion of our social zone but not feel obligated to interact with them, but when people come much
closer than six feet to us then we often feel obligated to at least acknowledge their presence. In many typically sized classrooms, much of your audience for a speech will actually be in your social zone rather than your public zone, which is actually beneficial because it helps you establish a better connection with them.

**Personal Space (1.5–4 Feet)**

Personal and intimate zones refer to the space that starts at our physical body and extends four feet. These zones are reserved for friends, close acquaintances, and significant others. Much of our communication occurs in the personal zone, which is what we typically think of as our “personal space bubble” and extends from 1.5 feet to 4 feet away from our body. Even though we are getting closer to the physical body of another person, we may use verbal communication at this point to signal that our presence in this zone is friendly and not intimate. Even people who know each other could be uncomfortable spending too much time in this zone unnecessarily. We can easily touch the other person as we talk to them, briefly placing a hand on his or her arm or engaging in other light social touching that facilitates conversation, self-disclosure, and feelings of closeness.

**Intimate Space**

As we breach the invisible line that is 1.5 feet from our body, we enter the intimate zone, which is reserved for only the closest friends, family, and romantic/intimate partners. It is impossible to completely ignore people when they are in this space, even if we are trying to pretend that we’re ignoring them. A breach of this space can be comforting in some contexts and annoying or frightening in others. We need regular human contact that isn’t just verbal but also physical. Being close to someone and feeling their physical presence can be very comforting when words fail. There are also social norms regarding the amount of this type of closeness that can be displayed in public, as some people get uncomfortable even seeing others interacting in the intimate zone, while some people are comfortable engaging in or watching others engage in PDAs (public displays of affection).

**Territoriality**

Territoriality is an innate drive to take up and defend spaces. This drive is shared by many creatures and entities, ranging from packs of animals to individual humans to
nations. Whether it’s a gang territory, a neighborhood claimed by a particular salesperson, our preferred place to sit in a restaurant, our usual desk in the classroom, or the seat we’ve marked to save while getting concessions at a sporting event, we claim certain spaces as our own. There are three main divisions for territory: primary, secondary, and public.

- **Primary territory:**
  A person’s house, yard, room, desk, side of the bed, or shelf in the medicine cabinet.

- **Secondary territories:**
  Don’t belong to us and aren’t exclusively under our control, but they are associated with us, which may lead us to assume that the space will be open and available to us when we need it without us taking any further steps to reserve it. This happens in classrooms regularly. Students often sit in the same desk or at least same general area as they did on the first day of class. There may be some small adjustments during the first couple of weeks, but by a month into the semester, we don’t notice students moving much voluntarily.

- **Public territories:**
  Open to all people. People are allowed to mark public territory and use it for a limited period of time, but space is often up for grabs, which makes public space difficult to manage for some people and can lead to conflict. To avoid this type of situation, people use a variety of objects that are typically recognized by others as nonverbal cues that mark a place as temporarily reserved — for example, jackets, bags, papers, or a drink. There is some ambiguity in the use of markers, though.
Artifactual

The image one projects
- Attire (type, cleanliness, fit)
- Physical fitness
- Personal hygiene

The first thirty to sixty seconds –

Eye Contact

Ordinary level: 30% - 60%

Increases with:
- Confidence
- Interest

Decreases with:
- Uneasiness
- Disinterest

Can indicate dominance

Tactile

Defines relationships
Shows dominance
Check appropriateness
Kinesics

Includes:

• Gestures
• Movements
• Positioning
• Expressions

Shows attitudes, thoughts and feelings

A General Guide to Body Language

“Closed” movements/positions:

• Crossed arms
• Pointing “at”
• Leaning Away

• Clenched fists
• Turning away

A General Guide to Body Language

Open” movements/positions:

• Open arms, palms
• Leaning forward
• Jacket unbuttoned
A General Guide to Body Language

Dominant positions:
• Standing “above”
• “Showdown” position
• Taking another’s possession

Evaluation positions/gestures:
• Finger tightly under nose
• Finger alongside face, pointing to eye
• Loose “fist” on bridge of nose, close to eyes, eyes closed
• Chin cupped in hand, on loose fist

Confident positions/gestures:
• Leaning back with hands clasped behind head
• Steepling with hands and fingers
NOTE: Although the general interpretations of the following are cited, remember that any given nonverbal clue must be evaluated with reference to context (environment, history, relationships), clusters (other nonverbal behaviors), and congruence (do the spoken words match the tone and body language?). Also, be aware of any possible cultural influences that may impact the meaning of any given gesture or expression.

ANKLES LOCKED
   Tension and anxiety

ARMS CLENCHED/CROSSES
   Suspicious, doubt, closed negative attitude, defensiveness

BACK TOWARD
   Closed, shutting out

BODY FORWARD
   Eagerness, readiness, anticipation of something pleasurable, openness

BODY SLUMPING
   Boredom, disinterest, lack of attention

BODY FACING TOWARD ANOTHER
   Openness

BODY FACING TOWARD EXIT
   Feelings of being “trapped”, disinterest, wanting to leave

EYE CONTACT (DIRECT)
   Positive, interested, “wanting” interaction

EYES SQUINTED
   Doubt, suspicion, accusatory

EYES OPEN, “TWINKLING”
   Anticipation, openness, positive attitude

FINGER RUBBING SIDEBURNS
   Uncertainty, thinking it over

FINGER RUBBING EYE
   “I can’t see it”…don’t understand, doubt

FINGER STROKING NOSE (pointing to eye)
   Evaluating, “I think I can see the point”

FOOT TAPPING
   Impatience, disgust, boredom

FIST (tightly closed)
   Aggression, anger

FROWN
   Frustration, disgust

GLARE
   Reprimanding, disgust, irritation

HAND IN POCKET (entirely, tightly)
   Closed, tense, unaccepting, defensive

HAND IN POCKET (loosely with thumb out)
   Confidence, authority

HAND RUBBING BACK OF NECK
   Bewilderment, thinking it over, uneasiness

HAND STEEPLING
   Confidence, control
HAND TO CHEST
A sign of openness, loyalty
acceptance

HAND WRINGING
Tense, anxious, nervous, anger,
hostility

HANDS ON HIPS
Anticipation, aggressiveness,
readiness, closed, defensive

HANDS OPEN or WITH PALMS UP
OR FORWARD
Openness, goodwill, acceptance

HANDS LOCKED BEHIND HEAD
Relaxed, reassurance

HANDS RUBBING EACH OTHER
Anticipation: something good, a job
to be done

HEAD NOD
Positive response, agreement,
encouragement

HEAD IN HAND
Tiredness, contemplation

HEAD TOSS
Anger, refection, indifference

HEAD TILTED
Openness, acceptance

JIGGLING OF MONEY (etc) IN POCKET
Impatience, nervousness; concern
with temporal goods

LEGS CROSSED
Nervousness, defensiveness,
tenseness, closed

LEGS DRAPED OVER CHAIR
Indifference, rejection

LEGS STRADDLED OVER CHAIR
Superiority

PACING
Nervous, anxious

POINTING AT
Aggressiveness

ROLLING EYES
Disbelief

SMILE (Western cultures)
Goodwill, acceptance

SMILE (Asian cultures) nervous

STARING
Too much interest, possible
hostility

THUMB HOOKED OVER BELT
Control – often received negatively

TONGUE OUT
Concentration; avoidance of
something unpleasant, distasteful

TUGGING PANTS
Anticipation, readiness, “here we
go” feeling

YAWN
Boredom, indifference, tiredness
– Body Language –

a guide to some of the more common gestures

**READINESS**
- Hands on hip
- Hitching up trousers
- Sitting on edge of chair
- with hands on knees

**COOPERATIVENESS**
- Sitting on edge of chair
- Hands to face
- Tilted head
- Unbuttoning of coat

**DEFENSIVENESS**
- Palm to back of neck or hair
- Straddling a chair, leaning on chair back
- Crossed legs (convincing)
- Crossed arms (high on chest area)
- Lack of eye contact
- Clenched hands with thumbs rubbing together
- Crossing legs
- Hand stroking hair

**CONFIDENCE**
- Leaning back with hand behind head (can also read as defensive)
- Steeping with hands and fingers

**OPENNESS**
- Coat unbuttoned
- Arms uncrossed (spread)
- Hands open, palms up, forward
- Sitting on edge of chair
- Leaning toward or forward

**BOREDOM**
- Drumming on table
- Head in palm of hand
- Clicking ball point pen
- Drooping eyes

**SUSPICION**
- Sideways glance
- Pointing shoulder
- Touching nose
- Arms crossed and body turned away
- Feet or entire body pointing to exit
- Rubbing back of neck with palm

**FRUSTRATION**
- Rubbing hair and back of neck
- Kicking ground or imaginary object
- Tightly clenched hands
- Short breaths
- Pointing index finger
- Clearing of throat
- Fidgeting in chair
- Tugging at ears or pants

**EVALUATION**
- Hand to cheek
- Hand to cheek, index finger under nose
- Moving towards, touching or aside nose
- Pacing the floor (head down, hands behind back)
- Stroking chin (beard)
- Glasses or pencil in mouth
Active Listening
The active, conscious process of receiving, understanding, and remembering the spoken word.
Listening for Comprehension

1) Hearing
   Is the message audible?

2) Receiving / Attending
   Is the receiver paying attention?

3) Understanding
   Is the receiver interpreting the message in the context in which the sender is relaying it?

4) Remembering
   Can the receiver paraphrase the message and retain essentially the same meaning?

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”
- Stephen Covey

Levels of Listening

1) Passive
   Your documentary television face . . .

2) Verbal Attends
   Really? You’re kidding! Gosh! You don’t say . . .

3) Door Openers
   Tell me more! Then what? How did that make you feel?

4) Active/Reflective Listening
   The act of mindfully hearing and attempting to comprehend the meaning of words spoken by another in a conversation or speech.
Levels of Listening

Active/Reflective Listening

- Acknowledge the person’s feeling state
- Paraphrase briefly what the person has said
- Do not impose judgments or solutions

Who really controls the communication process?

Sender
Receiver

Who is Boss?

Role of the Listener

Listener has key role and responsibility

- Checking comprehension
- Providing feedback
Deflecting blame from the “problem person” while emphasizing a focus on the behavior at hand.

1) Appropriately address the person
2) Describe how the behavior makes you feel
3) Describe the behavior itself
4) Explain why it causes you to feel this way
Moving from “YOU” to “I”

For each of the “YOU” statements below, apply the “I Statement” formula to rewrite the message in a more positive, less accusatory way.

1) “You showed up late for your shift again today.”
   Address
   I feel
   when you
   because

2) “You should answer the phone this way instead of the way you have been doing it so far.”
   Address
   I feel
   when you
   because

3) “You don’t seem to understand the importance of this particular task.”
   Address
   I feel
   when you
   because

4) “Your mistakes have created a lot of headaches for the rest of the department.”
   Address
   I feel
   when you
   because
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
- George Bernard Shaw

Thank you!

If you attended this live training session and wish to have your attendance documented in your training history, please notify Human Resource Services within 24 hours of today's date:
hrstraining@wsu.edu

This has been a WSU Training Videoconference
On the following pages are several personal characteristics which are potential obstacles to effective communication. Work through this exercise as described below to determine your personal obstacles and to begin identifying remedies to these behaviors.

**Step One:** For each characteristic, color in the circle that most applies to you as a sender or receiver in a work context.

**Step Two:** When you have finished coloring in a circle for each characteristic, place an asterisk ( * ) by the two sender obstacles that are most significant for you.

**Step Three:** Similarly, place an asterisk ( * ) by the two receiver obstacles that are most significant for you.

**Step Four:** Discuss with a colleague the likely sources of the sender and receiver obstacles you consider most serious. That is, try to identify causes or conditions that bring on the obstacle.

**Step Five:** Finally, discuss with your colleague how you might be able to remove these obstacles and begin your own personal communication improvements.
## SENDER OBSTACLES

1. **Giving a hard sell.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
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   Source: Techniques for change:

2. **Killing enthusiasm by being indifferent or overly critical.**

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   Source: Techniques for change:

3. **Not being attentive to listener reactions to ensure clarity, feedback.**

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   Source: Techniques for change:

4. **Choosing wrong communication medium for the message (i.e., sending a memo when face-to face is needed, or calling a meeting when a memo would have been more efficient)**

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   Source: Techniques for change:

5. **Inefficient or incorrect use of medium selected.**

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   Source: Techniques for change:
### SENDER OBSTACLES

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<th>6. Communicating too much or too little.</th>
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<th>7. Not organizing the message for maximum clarity (i.e., presenting facts in the wrong order).</th>
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<th>8. Failure to adapt message to receiver’s frame of reference.</th>
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<th>10. Cutting off questions or feedback from listener.</th>
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## RECEIVER OBSTACLES

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<th>B. Cutting in to anticipate what sender will say.</th>
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<th>C. Not giving message full attention because of an unrelated train of thought, planning your reaction, or other distractions.</th>
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<th>D. Not asking questions when something is unclear.</th>
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### F. Giving feedback on areas not in the sender’s control.

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### G. Being too vague

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### H. Turning off message because of poor attitude to sender

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### I. Blowing your cool.

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### J. Not expressing helpful feedback.

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