

Components of Communication

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson covers verbal, nonverbal, and components of communication in context. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. [Components of Communication](#)
2. [Nonverbal Communication](#)
3. [Written Communication](#)

1. Components of Communication

Oftentimes people think that communication is what you say. What you may not realize is that what you say is influenced by your body language.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** Facial expressions can say a lot. Are you smiling or frowning? If you are frowning you might be saying you are pained.

What are your gestures? Are you nodding your head yes or no? What is your body position? Are you slouched or leaning forward? What is the tone of your voice? Is it sharp and loud or timid and apologetic? These things all tell a lot.

The context of a situation can also give information. Is there a negative history between the individuals communicating? Is the topic being discussed hitting a nerve with you? Is the attitude positive or negative toward the person communicating? Even environmental factors, such as the temperature of the room, can influence context.

There is also the pattern of communication. Does it feel inauthentic? Does it feel like it's being discussed the way it should be discussed? Is the correct emphasis being placed on what you feel is important? Are there leftover feelings from previous conversations? All of these things--body language, pattern of communications, and the context--influence your communication.



THINK ABOUT IT

You could sit in a meeting and not say a word, yet communicate to everyone around the table.

2. Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication includes all aspects of communication but words. This comprises body language, tone of voice, gesture, facial expressions, etc.



DID YOU KNOW

There was some research conducted by a psychologist named Albert Mehrabian in 1967. He indicated that body language accounts for 55% of our communication; our tone of voice, 38%; and verbal, only 7%. This is most relevant in situations where your words do not match your nonverbal communication. Your nonverbal trumps your verbal in situations where your words don't match.

IN CONTEXT

Imagine your employee has said something in a meeting.

"Oh, that's a great idea. We should consider having all management evaluate their staff 3 weeks prior to evaluation."

Team up what is said with the actions on the left versus the right side of the table.

No eye contact	Eye contact
Chuckling	Serious
Nodding head "no"	Nodding head "yes"
Toss pen down on paper	Taking notes

Using the actions on the left side might mean the employee is upset. It would be saying something completely different if you team the phrase with the actions on the right. The employee's nonverbal cues are going to trump his or her words.

This does not mean that you shouldn't choose your words carefully, or that words don't matter. It does mean that it's important to align them with your nonverbal cues.

3. Written Communication

You probably send tons of emails. The reader/receiver does not have the luxury of seeing your nonverbal cues. They don't have access to the tone of your voice. They can't see your body language. There's more emphasis here on the actual words.

You can see here in this email, there's no tone necessarily written here, but you understand that this is a very serious message from the words:

"Good Afternoon Seth,

As you know, it is crucial we are available for our client technical needs. During the client meeting yesterday, it was noted that support was lacking during the hours of 10:00 am and 2:30 pm on three occasions (July 10, July 14, and July 25).

I would like to set up a meeting to discuss solutions between teams to ensure the client is receiving the service for which they are paying.

Sincerely,

Anne Robbins

In many cases, it's easy for tone to be misunderstood in the case of written communication even if the writer is very careful. Sensitive, complex, or highly nuanced topics should be handled in person.



SUMMARY

The **components of communication** are mostly nonverbal cues that, in some cases, trump what is said. **Nonverbal communication** is things such as facial expressions, gestures, body position, tone, and the context. It is important to be careful in **written communication** because it lacks nonverbal cues.

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