

Communication & Customer Service

Verbal Communication - Is the sharing of information using speech. Aspects of verbal communication include voice tone, voice speed, voice volume, and word choice.

- Practice changing any one of these aspects to affect the meaning of the message.

Nonverbal Communication - Is the unspoken sharing of information through visual, auditory, or physical channels. Aspects of nonverbal communication can include eye contact, posture, facial expressions, or the distance between individuals.

- Practice normal verbal communication and change aspects of nonverbal communication. Why does changing nonverbal cues change the meaning of a conversation?

Hearing - Is the natural act of detecting sound, while listening is the effort you put into paying attention to and understanding another person's verbal and nonverbal communication. When listening remember to:

- Maintain eye contact
- Repeat what is said to you
- Ask clarifying questions if you don't understand
- Avoid getting distracted

Practicing good listening skills can mean the difference between being an appreciated employee and an employee that needs babysitting.

Customer Service - Is an essential function of any workplace as it is the assistance and advice provided by a company to those people who buy or use its products or services. Research shows that it takes six times more effort to attract a new customer than to keep a current one. When communicating with external customers:

- Treat every customer with respect and courtesy
- Pay attention to the needs of the customer that go beyond basic service
- When you can't give the customer what they are asking for, try to provide them with the next best thing
- Surprise your customers by going above and beyond what they may have expected

Where external customers are those who purchase products or services, internal customers are usually those connected to an organization - like employees, board members, or shareholders. When communicating with internal customers:

- Be friendly and introduce yourself
- Give the person talking your full attention
- Learn everyone's name
- Greet people with a genuine smile
- Maintain confidentiality and build trust
- Be service oriented rather than self oriented
- Give lots of kudos to fellow internal customers