

XCEL Points

For Leadership Success

Campus Center and Student Activities Department

Communication Tips

Communication is the foundation of almost every organization, because members must be able to effectively convey their goals and objectives for an organization to flourish. This skill is also a valuable tool for every organization, as it can be used in meetings, campus wide e-mails and everyday life.

Communication usually takes place in, but is not limited to, the following ways:

- Personal Meetings
- Organization Meetings
- E-mail
- Instant Messaging
- Phone Call/Discussion
- Blogging/Website
- Advertisements
- Body Language

Electronic Communication

Computers have opened an entire new range of communication options, most importantly instant messaging and e-mail. You must be careful when using these forms of contact as it is easy to instantly respond. While this is a great way to quickly gather or disperse information, it can also be detrimental to an emotional issue. Refrain from using any sort of electronic communication if you are upset or angry, and give yourself some time to gain an objective perspective. Here are some tips to help you utilize electronic communications on a professional level in your organization:

Instant Messaging:

- Use for quick questions or updates
- Avoid humor, sarcasm, and any other non-verbal cues
- Avoid acronyms such as LOL or BRB
- Never put confidential or personal information (like personal feelings about an individual) in away messages or profiles

Blogging/Website

- Use to reach a wide audience
- Never blog about personal quarrels
- Allows for lots of updates without swamping inboxes
- Practical way to distribute high-bandwidth content, such as photos or videos of organization activities

Bulk/Professional E-mail:

- Relevant and meaningful subject line
- Short and concise message
- Proper spelling and grammar
- Stay objective, this will help keep the message clear
- Avoid bringing up personal issues

Personal/Small Group E-mail:

- Keep e-mail short by outlining key points, unless a long e-mail is necessary
- Copy points you are replying to, this will reduce confusion
- Proper spelling and grammar
- Limit discussion of personal issues



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Personal Communication

Personal communication is comprised of two aspects, verbal and non-verbal, or “what you say” and “how you say it.” When communicating with the members of any organization you should always be aware of how your words and actions may be interpreted by others.

Verbal

Positive	Negative
<p>Recommending, Providing Solutions “Have you tried...”, “What do others think...”</p> <p>Persuading, Instruction “There may be an easier way...”, “This manual should help...”</p> <p>Questions, Active Listening “What...”, “Where...”, “When...”, “Why...”, “Who...”</p> <p>Praising, Evaluating Positively “You are right...”, “Excellent work...”, “Good job...”</p> <p>Supporting, Excusing “It is not so bad...”, “Do not worry...”</p>	<p>Directing, Ordering “You must...”, “It would be best if...”</p> <p>Warning, Threatening “You will or else...”, “If you do not...”</p> <p>Preaching, Obliging “It is your responsibility...”, “You should...”</p> <p>Persuading, Lecturing “Yes, but...”, “That is not right...”, “Here is why you are wrong...”</p> <p>Diagnosing, Interpreting “What is wrong with you is...”, “What you mean is...”</p> <p><i>Adapted from Bowling Green State University Exclamation Points - Communication.</i></p>

Non-Verbal

- Eye Contact:** Signals interest in others and helps to increase the speaker’s credibility.
- Facial Expressions:** Smiling will help you appear more friendly and approachable.
- Gestures:** Nodding your head shows agreement and understanding, but aggressive gesturing, like wildly waving your hands or menacing stares, can make you seem threatening.
- Body Posture & Orientation:** Standing or sitting up straight shows interest in the conversation, facing the person you are talking to will reinforce your spoken words.
- Proximity:** For small groups ensure you do not encroach upon anyone’s personal space, standing too close may make you seem threatening and make others feel uncomfortable.
- Paralinguistics:** Raising your voice will put others into a defensive mode, speak to others as equals and not as children.
- Humor:** While laughter can relieve stress and tension, humor must be used appropriately, when used at the wrong time it may be misinterpreted and negatively affect the conversation.

Adapted from the Teaching Tips Index at Honolulu Community College.

