

# Communication



## *The Essential Workplace Skill*

*Presented by:*

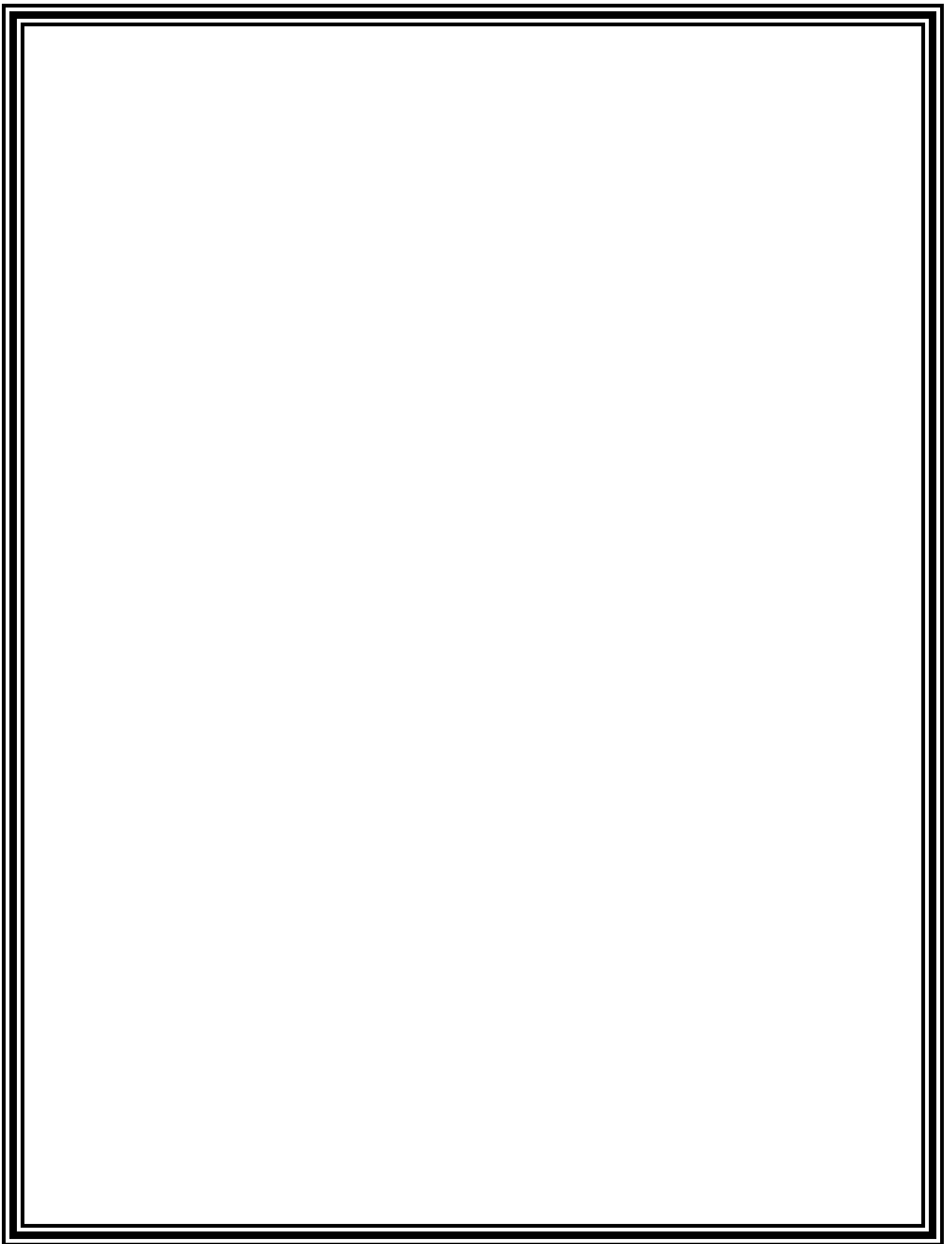
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# **COMMUNICATION - THE ESSENTIAL WORKPLACE SKILL**

## **I. COMMUNICATION - What is it?**

- A. A basic definition of communication is a transfer of information.
- B. Communication begins in infancy as we react to our surroundings and attempt to let our needs be known.
- C. All of our senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - are involved in the communication process.

## **II. COMMUNICATION - The unending process**

- A. We are constantly bombarded by communication in such forms as signs along our drive to work, radio and TV programs, casual conversations, and looking at a friend's vacation photos.
- B. Most of the communication we receive is not important and can be ignored or quickly forgotten.
- C. Certain communication, however, plays an extremely important role in our lives and must be understood and heeded.

## **III. COMMUNICATION - The key to progress**

- A. All progress is based on the ability to communicate.
- B. In the workplace, the major activities of planning, organizing, directing, goal setting, progress evaluation, and problem solving are all based on our ability to communicate.

## **IV. COMMUNICATION - The process**

- A. Three elements are involved in our daily communication with others - someone to send a message, a message, and someone to receive the message.
- B. The fact that all three elements are in place does not necessarily mean that effective communication has occurred.
- C. Effective communication only occurs when the message the sender intended to send is exactly the same message received by the person to whom it was sent.
- D. If we want to get the results we expect in the workplace, it is essential that we practice the rules of effective communication.
- E. Many factors can have a significant bearing on how effectively we communicate.

## **V. PRECISION AND CLARITY - The essential elements of effective communication**

- A. Precision means saying exactly what you intend to say.
- B. Clarity means saying it in such a way that it will be easily understood by the person for whom the message is intended.

- C. Precision and clarity overlap in many areas and it is possible to be precise without being clear in a communication.

**VI. PRECISION - Saying what you mean**

- A. Using a word when we are not fully sure of its meaning can often affect the clarity of our communication and, in some cases, lead to a few surprises.
- B. Using words or phrases with vague meanings (such as mature, lazy, attitude, and as soon as possible) also erode precision in communication.
- C. Leaving messages open to personal interpretation is another factor which breaks down precision.

**VII. CLARITY - Do they understand what you said**

- A. For effective communication, it is essential to use words with which the listener is familiar.
- B. Professional or workplace “jargon” should not be used unless you are sure your listener knows what it means.
- C. Awkward or complex sentence structure frequently confuses the message of communication.
- D. When using pronouns, be sure it is clear as to whom the pronoun is referring.

**VIII. DANGLING COMMUNICATION - A good way to start rumors**

- A. A “dangling communication” hints at something but does not provide full information.
- B. Dangling communications can be very dangerous in the workplace because they tend to lead to rumors and rumors almost always lean toward the “bad” side.

**IX. UNINTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION - What message are you really sending**

- A. We quite often change the message we intend to send because of unintentional messages which are being sent.
- B. Such things as facial expression, body language, tone of voice, inflection, and physical surroundings can have a definite impact on the messages we send.
- C. Awareness and control of these “unintentional” messages can strongly reinforce the message we intend to send.

**X. FEEDBACK - The insurance policy of communication**

- A. To help ensure effective communication, feedback should be part of the communication process.
- B. Feedback has two purposes - to make sure the message you intended to send was received and to make sure the message you received was the one intended by the sender.
- C. A good supervisor will encourage feedback from employees and provide feedback to others.

## **XI. LISTENING - The flip side of communication**

- A. Being a good message receiver - a good listener - is just as important for the effective supervisor as being a good message sender.
- B. Many problems are avoided by the supervisor who actively listens to his or her employees.
- C. A supervisor needs to be aware of and control the following barriers to effective listening:
  - 1. Lack of interest in the subject;
  - 2. Distractions;
  - 3. Attitude toward the subject or person;
  - 4. Defensiveness; and
  - 5. Evaluation and judgment.

## **XII. COMMUNICATION CREDIBILITY - Establishing effective lines of communication**

- A. If communication is to be an effective tool for a supervisor, it is important for the supervisor to establish “communication credibility” - a belief in the communication process on the part of the employees.
- B. The following list provides tips that will help a supervisor establish communication credibility.
  - 1. Always be honest with your employees.
  - 2. Give employees any information they want as long as releasing it will not be detrimental to the county. Avoid the “need to know” syndrome.
  - 3. Only make promises that you are able to keep and that you intend to keep.
  - 4. Don’t be afraid to use two phrases - “I was wrong” and “You were right”.
  - 5. Respect the ideas and opinions of your staff. Never make fun of an idea presented by one of your employees.
  - 6. Actively seek advice from your employees.
  - 7. Be sure your employees get credit for their accomplishments. Never claim an employee’s idea or plan is yours.
  - 8. In reprimanding an employee, always concentrate on the undesirable behavior. Never attack an employee’s personality or question his or her motives.
  - 9. Encourage your employees to ask questions and see that their questions are answered.
  - 10. Make your self available to employees.
  - 11. If an employee wants to talk with you and you are not free at the time, make an appointment with the employee and keep that appointment.
  - 12. When talking with an employee, try to do so at a time and place that will minimize distractions.
  - 13. When listening to an employee, listen actively and take notes if necessary.
  - 14. Be aware of and control unintentional messages you may be sending.

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