

## Session 3 – Communication Handout

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Employees should strive to be good communicators who are skilled in listening and speaking. Good communication fosters knowledge and awareness that help to prevent accidents and maintain safe workplaces. All employees must treat each other with respect and maintain a collaborative work environment. A true cooperative workplace is one that is without unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind and provides equal opportunities for all.

As a new worker you will spend a lot of time listening to instructors, supervisors, co-workers, and mentors. It is important that you learn to listen carefully and not just hear what they are saying. Listening requires concentration and blocking out distracters, such as cell phones, nearby conversations, people walking by, and any thoughts about anything other than the conversation.

Listening is a communication process and, to be successful, it is an active process. You must be an *active participant* in this communication process. Listening requires concentration and energy. Your brain is actively working while the speaker is talking. Our thought speed is much faster than our speech speed, allowing us to work on the message being sent to us. You will be putting the message into your own words so you can tell the speaker what you have heard to make sure you have understood the real meaning. This may seem to take more time, but being certain of the message before taking action actually saves time when re-work is avoided.

### ***Good Listening Skills Make Workers More Productive***

The ability to listen carefully will allow you to:

- Understand what the boss expects
- Understand what your co-workers need
- Get along better with your boss, co-workers, and company customers
- Show commitment to the goals of the boss and the team
- Work better in a team environment
- Resolve problems with your boss, co-workers, and company customers
- Provide information needed by your boss, co-workers, and company customers

The better you are at listening, the more people will listen to you. Co-workers will have more confidence in someone who is a good listener. They feel confident that you are getting the right message and will do the job right.

### ***Listen Well***

Using the following tips will show the speaker you are paying attention. While you may in fact be able to listen while looking out the window, it looks like you are not listening.

- Look the speaker in the eye
- Don't interrupt the speaker
- Don't move around
- Nod your head to show you understand
- Concentrate on what you need to get from the conversation or instructions
- Repeat instructions and ask clarifying questions when the speaker has finished

### ***Work on the Barriers to Listening***

Make sure the following things don't get in the way of your listening.

- Negative thoughts or attitudes about the speaker
- Language differences or accents
- Noise
- Worry, fear, or anger
- Watching other activity in the area
- Thinking of something else instead of the message

It's hard work to keep these barriers from interfering with the listening task. Concentrate on the message and repeat or paraphrase the message in your mind to help your concentration.

### ***Sending Messages***

When you have something to say or instructions to provide, state your message as briefly and succinctly as possible. Listening to a rambling, unorganized speaker is tedious and discouraging. Rambling explanations are confusing to the listener and the message loses its meaning, relevance, and impact. Use this opportunity to help the listener understand your perspective and point of view. Choose words to make your message as clear as possible, avoiding jargon and unnecessary, tangential information. Rehearse to get it right before you start talking. Don't use words that can be interpreted as critical or demeaning.

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