

Unit 1 – Communications



Study Guide - Units

Introduction

The process of communication can encounter many barriers that need to be overcome to be successful in sending, receiving, and understanding the message. In their book *Business Communication: Process and Product*, Guffey, Rhodes and Rogin (2005, pp. 12-14 and 81-82) outline the steps of the communication process.

Communication Process

Step 1: Sender Has Idea

The person with whom the message originates (the sender) has an idea.

Step 2: Sender Encodes Idea in Message

The person with whom the message originates (the sender) converts the idea into words or gestures that will convey meaning.

Step 3: Message Travels Over Channel

The medium over which the message is physically transmitted is the channel. Channels include computer, telephone, letter, fax, and face-to-face delivery. Noise or disruptions can cause barriers to receiving the encoded message.

Step 4: Receiver Decodes Message

The individual for whom the message is intended is the receiver. Translating the message from its symbol form into meaning involves decoding. Only when the receiver understands the meaning intended by the sender does communication take place.

Step 5: Feedback Travels to Sender

The verbal and non-verbal responses of the receiver create feedback, a vital part of the communication process. Feedback helps the sender know that the message was received and understood.

Functions of Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication functions in at least five ways to help convey meaning.

- *To complement and illustrate:* Non-verbal messages can amplify, modify, or provide details for a verbal message.
- *To reinforce and accentuate:* Skilled speakers raise their voices to convey important ideas, but they whisper to suggest secrecy. A grimace forecasts painful news, while a big smile intensifies good news.
- *To replace and substitute:* Many gestures substitute for words: nodding your head for “yes,” giving a “V” for victory, and making a “thumbs up” sign for approval.
- *To control and regulate:* Non-verbal messages are important regulators in conversation. Shifts in eye contact, slight head movements, changes in posture, raising of eyebrows, nodding of the head, and voice inflection – all of these cues tell speakers when to continue, to repeat, to elaborate, to hurry up, or to finish.
- *To contradict:* To be sarcastic, a speaker will indicate various gestures that signal contradiction. For example, if your boss asks you to work overtime, you may say yes; however, you may sigh heavily, run your fingers through your hair, or rub your temples as if you have a headache.

This unit is separated into the following parts:

- Part 1: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications
- Part 2: Active Listening

- Part 3: Behavioural Styles
- Part 4: Feedback

Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- Define and identify the different types of verbal and non-verbal communications.
- Analyze examples of verbal and non-verbal communications.
- Define the concept of active listening.
- Identify criteria for good active listening.
- Practice active listening.
- Define the different types of personality models.
- Compare two personality models.
- Analyze examples using the two personality models.
- Define the term *feedback*.
- Determine how feedback is used in workplace settings.
- Examine a case study that involves feedback.

Unit 1 – Part 1: Verbal and Non-verbal Communications



Study Guide - Units

Discussion

As we communicate, we use both verbal and non-verbal forms to convey our message. Guffey, et al, in her book *Business Communications: Process and Product* (2005, p.p. 83-86), describes the various forms of non-verbal communication.

Eye contact: The eyes are considered to be the most accurate predictor of a speaker's true feelings. Good eye contact enables the message sender to determine whether a receiver is paying attention, showing respect, responding favourably, or feeling distress. From a receiver's perspective, good eye contact reveals the speaker's sincerity, confidence, and truthfulness.

Facial expression: The expression on a communicator's face can be almost as revealing of emotion as the eyes. Researchers estimate that the human face can display over 250,000 different expressions. In the workplace, maintaining a pleasant expression with frequent smiles promotes harmony.

Posture and gestures: An individual's general posture can convey anything from high status and self-confidence to shyness and submissiveness. In the workplace, a simple way to leave a good impression is to make sure that your upper body is aligned with the person to whom you're talking.

Time: How we structure and use time tells observers about our personality and attitudes. In the workplace, you can send positive non-verbal messages by being on time for meetings, and appointments, staying on task during meetings, and giving ample time to appropriate projects and individuals.

Space: How we arrange things in the space around us tells something about ourselves and our objectives. A team leader who

arranges chairs informally in a circle rather than in straight rows in a rectangular pattern conveys her desire for a more open, egalitarian exchange of ideas. A manager who creates an open office space with few partitions separating workers' desks seeks to encourage an unrestricted flow of communication and work among areas.

Territory: The distance between two people can convey different messages: a desire for intimacy, a lack of interest, or an attempt to increase or decrease domination. In the workplace, be aware of the territorial needs of others and don't invade their space.

Appearance of Business Documents: The way a letter, memo, or report looks can have either a positive or a negative effect on the receiver. For example, sending an e-mail message full of errors conveys a damaging non-verbal message.

Appearance of People: The way you look – your clothing, grooming, and posture – telegraphs an instant message about you. The current trend is toward one or more days per week of casual dress at work.

Learning Objectives

After completing this part, you should be able to do the following:

- Define and identify the different types of verbal and non-verbal communications.
- Analyze examples of verbal and non-verbal communications.

Resources

The following resources will be used for this part:

1. *Customer Service* (3rd Ed.) by Robert W. Lucas:

Chapter 3: “Positive Verbal Communication”



Resources

Chapter 4: “Non-verbal Communication in Customer Service”

2. This study guide pages, 1 -18.
3. The following websites:

Visual Thesaurus

http://www.visualthesaurus.com/?ad=shareasale&utm_source=shareasale&utm_medium=affiliate

Cinema Clock <http://www.cinmaclock.com/clock/que/Montreal-movie-trailers.html>

Alpha Mega Digital

http://www.alphaomegadigital.com/_galleries_art_design/fashion_gallery.asp

Popular Culture - Washington State University

<http://www.wsu.edu/~amerstu/pop/censor.html>

4. These online course Home page areas:

Study Guide – Units > Unit 1: Part 1> Verbal and Non-verbal Communications

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1- Part 1 > Resource List

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1- Part 1 > PowerPoint: Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Study Questions/ Discussions: Communications

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Foreign Movie Clip

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Interpersonal Communication

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Verbal Phrases

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Positive Communication

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Identifying Facial Expressions

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Movie Time

Study Guide - Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Activities: Verbal and Non-verbal Communications

Discussions > Communications

Glossary (located online and in the Study Guide)



Glossary

Glossary

Articulation:

- ⇒ Articulation is “also known as enunciation or pronunciation of words, articulation refers to the clarity of your word usage” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Attitudes:

- ⇒ “This is a concept in psychology. Attitudes are positive, negative or neutral views of an “attitude object”: i.e. a person, behaviour, or event” (Wikipedia).

Beliefs:

- ⇒ Belief is “usually defined as a conviction of the truth of a proposition without its verification; therefore a belief is a subjective mental interpretation based in perceptions, contemplation/reasoning, or communication” (Wikipedia).

Bias:

- ⇒ A bias is “a prejudice in a general or specific sense, usually in the sense of having a preference to one particular point of view or ideological perspective” (Wikipedia).

Body Language:

- ⇒ Body language is “the ways in which you sit, stand, gesture, position your body (face to face or at an angle), or use facial expressions can all send positive or negative messages” (Lucas, 2006, p. 76).

Channel:

- ⇒ “The method you choose to transmit your message (over the phone, in person, by fax, by modem, or by other means) is the channel” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Clusters:

- ⇒ “These clusters might be positive (smiling, open body posture, friendly touching) or negative (crossed arms, looking away as someone talks, or angry facial expressions or gestures)” (Lucas, 2006, p. 112 - 113).

Decoding:

- ⇒ Decoding “occurs as you or your customer converts messages received into familiar ideas by interpreting or assigning meaning. Depending on how well the message was encoded or whether filters interfere, the received message may not be the one originally sent” (Lucas, 2006, p. 63).

Education:

- ⇒ Education is “the process by which an individual is encouraged and enabled to develop fully his or her innate potential; it may also serve the purpose of equipping the individual with what is necessary to be a productive member of society. Through teaching and learning the individual acquires and develops knowledge, beliefs and skills” (Wikipedia).

Encoding:

- ⇒ Encoding occurs “as you evaluate what must be done to effectively put your message into a format that your customer will understand (language, symbols, and gestures are a few options). Failing to correctly determine your customer’s ability to decode

your message could lead to confusion and misunderstanding” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Environment:

⇒ “The environment (office, store, and group or individual setting) in which way you send or receive messages affects the effectiveness of your message” (Lucas, 2006, p. 63).

Environment Cues:

⇒ “The environment cues of the surroundings in which you work or service customers also send messages” (Lucas, 2006, p. 106).

Expectations:

⇒ “In the case of uncertainty, expectation is what is considered to be the most likely to happen. An expectation, which is a belief that is centered on the future, may or may not be realistic. A less advantageous result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment” (Wikipedia).

Filters:

⇒ Filters are “factors that distort or affect the messages you receive. They include, among other things, your attitude, interest, biases, expectations, education, beliefs, and values” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Gestures:

⇒ Gestures are “the use of the head, hands, arms, and shoulders to accentuate verbal messages adds colour, excitement, and enthusiasm to your communication” (Lucas, 2006, p. 99).

Hygiene:

⇒ “Effective hygiene (regular washing and combing of hair, bathing, brushing teeth, use of mouthwash and deodorant, and washing hands and cleaning fingernails) is basic to successful customer service” (Lucas, 2006, p. 103).

Interests:

- ⇒ Interests are “something that concerns, involves, draws the attention of, or arouses the curiosity of a person” (Infoplease).

Interferences:

- ⇒ “On the negative side, you can irritate someone through the use of too many vocal pauses or interferences” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Learning Styles:

- ⇒ “People process information in one of three ways – visually (seeing), aurally (hearing), or kinesthetically (touching). These are called learning styles” (Lucas, 2006, p. 70).

Message:

- ⇒ The message is “the idea or concept that you or your customers wish to convey” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Noise:

- ⇒ Noise “consists of physiological or psychological factors (your physical characteristics, level of attention, message clarity, loudness of message, or environmental factors) that interfere with the accurate reception of information” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Paralanguage:

- ⇒ Paralanguage is “a vocal effect such as ‘uh huh, I see, hmmm’ ” (Lucas, 2006, p. 99).

Pauses:

- ⇒ Pauses “in communication can be either positive or negative depending on how you use them. From a positive standpoint, they can be used to allow a customer to reflect on what you just said, to verbally punctuate a point made or a sentence (through intonation and inflection in the voice), or to indicate that you are waiting for a response” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Perception Checking:

- ⇒ Perception checking “involves stating the behaviour observed, giving one or two possible interpretations, and then asking for clarification of message meaning” (Lucas, 2006, p. 113).

Pitch:

- ⇒ Pitch is “changes in voice tone (either higher or lower) add vocal variety to messages and can dramatically affect interpretation of meaning” (Lucas, 2006, p. 100).

Rate of Speech:

- ⇒ “An average rate of speech for most adults in Western cultures is 125 to 150 words per minute (wpm)” (Lucas, 2006, p. 101).

Receiver:

- ⇒ “Initially, you may be the receiver of your customer’s message; however, once you offer feedback, you switch to the sender role” (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Semantics:

- ⇒ Semantics “has to do with choice of words. Although not non-verbal in nature, semantics is a crucial element of message delivery and interpretation” (Lucas, 2006, p. 103).

Sender:

- ⇒ “You take on the role of sender as you initiate a message with your customer. Conversely, when customers respond, they assume that role” (Lucas, 2006, p. 63).

Silence:

- ⇒ Silence is “a form of tacit communication that can be used in a number of ways, some more productive than others” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Spatial Cues:

- ⇒ “Each culture has its own proxemics (zones in which interpersonal interactions take place) or spatial cues for various situations” (Lucas, 2006, p. 104).

Values:

- ⇒ Values mean “relative worth, merit, or importance” (Infoplease).

Verbal Fillers:

- ⇒ Verbal fillers are “audible sounds (“uh,” “er,” “um,” “uh-huh” and are often used when you have doubts or are unsure of what you are saying, not being truthful, or nervous” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Vocal Cues:

- ⇒ Vocal cues, “that is, pitch, volume (loudness), rate, quality, and articulation and other attributes of verbal communication, can send non-verbal messages to customers” (Lucas, 2006, p. 100).

Voice Quality:

- ⇒ “The variations in your voice quality can help encourage customers to listen (for example, if your voice sounds pleasant and is accompanied by a smile) or discourage them (for example, if it is harsh-sounding), based on their perception of how your voice sounds” (Lucas, 2006, p. 102).

Volume:


- ⇒ “The range in which vocal messages are delivered is referred to as the degree of loudness or volume” (Lucas, 2006, p. 101).



Discussion

Study Questions/Discussions: “Communications”

These questions must be answered online on your course Home page under Discussions > Communications.



These questions can be discussed online in the discussion forum *Communications*.

As you study Part 1: “Verbal and Non-verbal Communications,” answer the following questions:

1. What is your definition of effective communication?
2. What does two-way communication involve?
3. What are all the elements of the interpersonal communication model?
4. What are some words and phrases used in negative communication? What phrases and words would you use to avoid negative communication?
5. What can you do to ensure positive communication?
6. What are the three ways that people process information? Give examples of each one.
7. How is non-verbal communication different from verbal communication?
8. What are body cues? What are vocal cues?
9. What role does gender play in non-verbal communication? How does culture affect non-verbal communication?
10. Why should you be aware of unproductive behaviours?
11. What are the strategies for improving non-verbal communication?
12. What are the advantages of customer-focused behaviour?

Practice: Interpersonal Communication

This practice can also be found online on your course Home page under Study Guide – Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Interpersonal Communication.

1. Study Figure 3.1: Interpersonal Communication Model located on page 64 in the *Customer Service* text. Identify each component and

explain why each one is important when communicating. What would happen if one of the components was removed? (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Post your responses in the online discussion forum *Communications*.

Practice: Verbal Phrases

This practice can also be found online on your course Home page under Study Guide – Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Verbal Phrases.

1. Locate the website: Visual Thesaurus http://www.visualthesaurus.com/?ad=shareasale&utm_source=shareasale&utm_medium=affiliate. Define the words below using the online Visual Thesaurus. Next, write a verbal phrase (negative or positive) that encompasses the meaning of each word.

- Helpful
- Accommodating
- Polite
- Impatient
- Aggressive
- Hostile

Post your responses in the online discussions forum *Communications*.

Practice: Positive Communication

This practice can also be found online on your course Home page under Study Guide – Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Positive Communication.

1. In 100 words, explain the concept: “A positive approach can produce positive results.” Post your responses in the online discussion forum *Communications*.

Practice: Identifying Facial Expressions

This practice can also be found online on your course Home page under Study Guide – Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Identifying Facial Expressions.

1. Refer to the *Customer Service* text and complete the practice “Work it Out 4.1: Facial Expressions” on page 98. Post your responses in the online discussion forum *Communications* (Lucas, 2006, p. 64).

Practice: Movie Time

This practice can also be found online on your course Home page under Study Guide – Units > Unit 1 – Part 1 > Practice: Movie Time.

1. Locate the following website Cinema Clock (<http://www.cinematiclock.com/clock/que/Montreal-movie-trailers.html>) and watch a foreign movie clip of your choice with attention to detail. Write a list of all the positive and negative non-verbal communication behaviours that are used by the actors in the movie. What types of messages are being sent and how do you know? Post your responses in the online discussion forum *Communications*.

Activities

Your instructor may ask you to complete any or all of the activities below. Some of these activities will be posted online in discussions, used for chat rooms or video conference, or submitted as assignments.

1. Read the following excerpt and answer the accompanying questions. Post your responses in the online discussion forum *Communications*.

Using positive communication is important when interacting with other people in the workplace, such as customers, clients, and colleagues. How and what you say can affect your relationships in the workplace.

It is 10:00 a.m. Jessica, an employee at Contemporary Clothing, opens the door for a client. Her name is Gloria. Jessica's manager, Linda, has not arrived yet.

"Hello. My name is Gloria. I am a sales representative for Mexx. I have an appointment with Linda," Gloria beams.

"I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait. Linda hasn't arrived yet," Jessica turns to walk away.

"Well, I suppose you could look at these colour swatches for the new line that I'm promoting..."

"Again, I'm sorry, but that's not my job."

"Linda said that if she wasn't here I could start showing her employee the new line."

"Linda never told me you were arriving. You must be mistaken," Jessica answers.

"Well..."

"Hold on while I give Linda a call."

While Jessica leaves to make the phone call, Gloria turns away and walks out the door.

- What are the words and phrases that Jessica should have avoided using while speaking to Gloria?
- If Jessica had chosen to use positive communication, what would she say? Re-write this scenario using positive phrases and words.

Hint: You can use the Visual Thesaurus for help.

- What are the consequences of Jessica's actions?
2. Refer to the *Customer Service* text and complete the “Collaborative Learning Activity” on page 88. Be prepared to role play the scenarios during the weekly online video conference.
 3. Verbal communication is also an important part of graphic design. You have the ability to send positive and/or negative messages globally. Choosing your words carefully in a face-to-face situation also applies to the words used in the world of design.
 - Locate the website Alpha Mega Digital (http://www.alphaomegadigital.com/galleries_art_design/fashion_gallery.asp) and click on the “Bernie” advertisement.
 - Analyze the advertisement and explain the message it conveys. Is it communicating a positive or negative message? How? Be prepared to discuss your analysis online in the weekly video conference.
 4. Everyone has heard of the expression: a picture is worth a thousand words. Sometimes an image or picture has more of an impact than words do.
 - Locate the website Popular Culture - Washington State University <http://www.wsu.edu/~amerstu/pop/censor.html>
 - What kind of non-verbal message is being sent in the advertisement?
 - Is the message powerful? How and why?
 - Can you turn the non-verbal message into words? What would those words be?

Be prepared to discuss your analysis online in the weekly computer video conference.

What's Next?

Now that you have studied verbal and non-verbal communications, Part 2: “Active Listening” focuses on the techniques of being a good listener.