

Factsheet

Skills Boost Topic 5 Communication Skills



Introduction

Being able to communicate effectively is an important skill not just limited to the workplace, it is also a skill that can be learnt and continually developed. So don't worry if you think your communication skills are holding you back there are plenty of ways to improve them. Communication skills cover many different topics; this guide offers simple tips for helping to improve interpersonal communications and is a good basic starting point to help you develop your skills.

Why is it important?

So much of what we do at work relies on being able to communicate with other people, from making simple requests to discussing complex and difficult issues and, being able to do this effectively helps to ensure that your views and opinions are heard and acted upon. This ultimately helps to ensure the job gets done with the understanding and support of the whole team.

Interpersonal Communication Skills: Tips

- Learn to listen. To communicate effectively making a point of listening to what the other person is saying is essential. This will help you to give considered and appropriate responses
- Make eye contact with the people you are talking to – if you find this difficult, looking at the bridge of the nose gives the impression that you are making eye contact and may feel more comfortable for you
- Use your body language to show you are listening – for example turn to face the person who is talking and keep your arms unfolded showing you are open to what they are saying

- Show an interest in the people you are communicating with, this will flatter them and make them more likely to want to listen to you - asking questions is a great way to show your interest in a person
- Adopt assertive behaviour (See Topic Guide 1) this will help ensure you communicate constructively
- Understand that people will have different points of view and be prepared to ask them about their views. Remember effective communication doesn't mean one person getting their view accepted at the expense of others, instead they can be used to arrive at workable compromises
- Try to be enthusiastic when you speak, this will make what you say come across as being interesting and worthy of consideration
- Provide yourself with feedback. When you've had a conversation think how it went, ask if you got your message across and whether you are happy with the result. If you think you could have listened more then save that as an action point for next time
- In a group don't feel you have to be the first to talk or say the most. Often waiting to speak last can work to your advantage.

Next steps

- Start making small changes to improve your communications
- Keep researching different communication techniques
- Listen more, think about what is being said before commenting
- Give yourself feedback and check your progress.

The Agile Nation project provides workplace support and development for women and businesses in the convergence area of Wales, to find out more visit www.agilenation.co.uk