

# Communication Skills for Workplace Success

BY  
**ALISON DOYLE**

Updated on March 13, 2021

Catherine Song / The Balance

The ability to communicate effectively with superiors, colleagues, and staff is essential, no matter what industry you work in. Workers in the digital age must know how to effectively convey and receive messages in person as well as via phone, email, and social media.

These [communication skills](#) will help you get hired, land promotions, and be a success throughout your career.

## Top 10 Communication Skills

Want to stand out from the competition? These are some of the top communication skills that recruiters and hiring managers want to see in your [resume](#) and [cover letter](#). Highlight these skills and [demonstrate them during job interviews](#), and you'll make a solid first impression. Continue to develop these skills once you're hired, and you'll impress your boss, teammates, and clients.

### 1. Listening

Being a good listener is one of the best ways to be a good communicator. No one likes communicating with someone who cares only about putting in her two cents and does not take the time to listen to the other person. If you're not a good listener, it's going to be hard to comprehend what you're being asked to do.

Take the time to [practice active listening](#). Active listening involves paying close attention to what the other person is saying, asking clarifying questions, and rephrasing what the

person says to ensure understanding ("So, what you're saying is..."). Through active listening, you can better understand what the other person is trying to say, and can respond appropriately.

## 2. Nonverbal Communication

Your **body language**, eye contact, hand gestures, and tone of voice all color the message you are trying to convey.

A relaxed, open stance (arms open, legs relaxed), and a friendly tone will make you appear approachable and will encourage others to speak openly with you.

Eye contact is also important; you want to look the person in the eye to demonstrate that you are focused on them and the conversation. (However, be sure not to stare at the person, which can make him or her uncomfortable.)

Also, pay attention to other people's **nonverbal signals** while you are talking. Often, nonverbal cues convey how a person is really feeling. For example, if the person is not looking you in the eye, he or she might be uncomfortable or hiding the truth.

## 3. Clarity and Concision

Good **verbal communication** means saying just enough—don't talk too much or too little. Try to convey your message in as few words as possible. Say what you want clearly and directly, whether you're speaking to someone in person, on the phone, or via email. If you ramble on, your listener will either tune you out or will be unsure of exactly what you want.

Think about what you want to say before you say it. This will help you to avoid talking excessively or confusing your audience.

## 4. Friendliness

Through a friendly tone, a personal question, or simply a smile, you will encourage your co-workers to engage in open and honest communication with you. It's important to [be polite in all your workplace communications](#).

This is important in both face-to-face and written communication. When you can, personalize your emails to co-workers and/or employees – a quick "I hope you all had a good weekend" at the start of an email can personalize a message and make the recipient feel more appreciated.

## 5. Confidence

It is important to be confident in your interactions with others. Confidence shows your co-workers that you believe in what you're saying and will follow through.

Exuding confidence can be as simple as making eye contact or using a [firm but friendly tone](#). Avoid making statements sound like questions. Of course, be careful not to sound arrogant or aggressive. Be sure you are always listening to and empathizing with the other person.

## 6. Empathy

Using phrases as simple as "I understand where you are coming from" demonstrate that you have been listening to the other person and respect their opinions. [Active listening](#) can help you tune in to what your conversational partner is thinking and feeling, which will, in turn, make it easier to display empathy.

Even when you disagree with an employer, co-worker, or employee, it is important for you to understand and respect their point of view.

## 7. Open-Mindedness

A good communicator should enter into any conversation with a flexible, open mind. Be open to listening to and understanding the other person's point of view, rather than simply getting your message across.

By being willing to enter into a dialogue, even with people with whom you disagree, you will be able to have more honest, productive conversations.

## 8. Respect

People will be more open to communicating with you if you convey respect for them and their ideas. Simple actions like using a person's name, making eye contact, and actively listening when a person speaks will make the person feel appreciated. On the phone, avoid distractions and stay focused on the conversation.

Convey respect through email by [taking the time to edit your message](#). If you send a sloppily written, confusing email, the recipient will think that you do not respect her enough to think through your communication with her.

## 9. Feedback

Being able to give and receive feedback appropriately is an important communication skill. Managers and supervisors should continuously look for ways to provide employees with constructive feedback, be it through email, phone calls, or weekly status updates.

Giving feedback involves giving praise as well – something as simple as saying "good job" or "thanks for taking care of that" to an employee can greatly increase motivation.

Similarly, you should be able to accept and even encourage feedback from others. Listen to the feedback you are given, ask clarifying questions if you are unsure of the issue, and make efforts to implement the feedback.

## 10. Picking the Right Medium

An important communication skill is to simply know what form of communication to use. For example, some serious conversations (layoffs, resignation, changes in salary, etc.) are almost always best done in person.

You should also think about the person with whom you wish to speak. If they are a very busy person (such as your boss, perhaps), you might want to convey your [message through email](#). People will appreciate your thoughtful means of communication and will be more likely to respond positively to you.