Communication Tips

Communicating effectively with your colleagues minimises misunderstandings and maximises work efficiency. Effective communication also produces healthy working relationships and allows you and your colleagues to resolve issues in a collaborative manner. This will in turn create a more fun and less stressful work environment.

Here are some ways to communicate better with your colleagues at work:

**Listen actively**

Listening actively shows that you are interested in what your colleague has to say and that you respect them. Listen to them closely, orienting your body towards them, and look at them directly as they speak. While they are talking, do not interrupt them. You will only be able to understand what they are trying to say if you listen to them closely and wait for them to finish speaking before you reply. Then ask questions to clarify any issues you may have. Most importantly, do not email or text while someone’s talking to you.

**Speak with discretion and talk face to face**

Speaking with discretion prevents any misunderstandings with your colleagues. Face to face communication helps with building trust and openness, and it enables you to sense and understand someone’s viewpoint and feelings. Also talk face to face to resolve disagreements or fix complex problems, and use clear, friendly, and polite language.

**Offer constructive criticism**

When giving feedback, leave your personal feelings out of it and make sure your workmate fully understands what you are telling them. If someone did a great job, offer positive reinforcement, and also give them improvement tips without being mean or bossy.

**Build and earn trust**

For effective communication to occur, everyone must trust and respect each other. To build trust with your colleagues, it is important that you act consistently and with integrity. To earn their trust, communicate clearly, collaboratively, and confidentially with them while showing them respect. Clear and concise communication will allow your colleagues to understand and then trust you. As a result, there will be more cooperation and less conflict in the workplace. Your main objective for communicating with colleagues is to lay the foundations for trust.

**Get personal but do not be too casual**

Get to know your colleagues better by talking about your personal lives during breaks or after work. This is also a good way to build trust. However, it is important that you don’t get too casual in your conversations, especially in the office, as it might make the other person uncomfortable. Make sure that all communications, including your work emails, phone calls and meetings are professional, and avoid using offensive language in the office.

**Keep spoken and written communications short, simple, and direct**

Do not expect your colleague to listen to and read everything that you are trying to tell them because there’s just not enough hours in the day. Try to avoid giving them complex explanations and recommendations with the expectation they will understand everything straight away. It is best to keep your communications short, simple and direct.

Overall, when communicating with your colleagues you should maintain confidentiality, and treat them as you would like to be treated. It is also important to have open lines of communication between colleagues to better serve each other.