

# Communication Skills

## Personal Communication Skills

# Non-verbal Communication

When you are trying to understand a communication *words are only part of the story*. To analyse it properly *you need to see and feel what is being said as well*.

- Only 7% of meaning is in the words spoken.
- 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said).
- 55% is in facial expression.

(source: Albert Mehrabian)

# Non-Verbal Communication

So, you need to consider

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Interpersonal distance
- Touch
- Body orientation and posture
- Hand and other gestures
- Your appearance

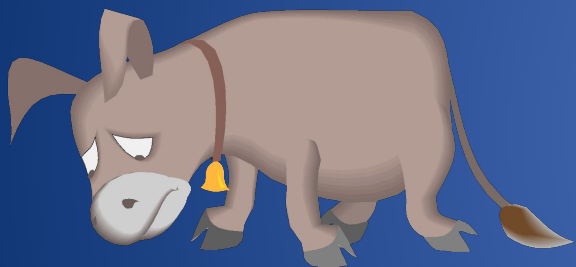


# Facial Expressions



These usually convey emotions.  
There are 6 Universal emotions

- Surprise
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anger
- Happiness
- Disgust



# Eye contact



- Eye contact shows interest/attraction
- Look more frequently when we're interested
- Staring can be un-nerving.

# Inter-personal Distance

The “bubble” we like to have around us.

- How close do you feel comfortable standing to someone else?
- What do distances mean?





# Inter-personal distance

Generally speaking, the comfort zones of the average Westerner are as follows:

- Intimate zone – partners & family ( up to 45 cm)
- Personal zone – friends and group discussions (45cm to 1.2m – about an arm's length)
- Social zone – acquaintances and new groups (1.2m to 2.4m)
- Public zone – unknown people and large audiences (2.4m upwards)

# Inter-personal distance

- Circumstances may sometimes lead to changes in this (e.g. living and working in urban areas)
- If we are forced to be closer than this e.g. lifts, trains, etc., we tend to use other methods to increase the distance e.g. turning away, avoiding eye contact, etc.



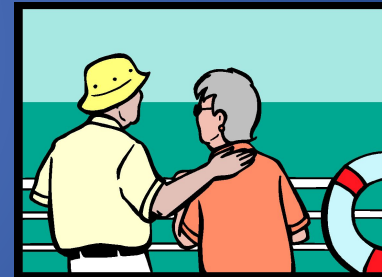
# Body Orientation and Postures

- We turn to people we are interested in.
- We turn away from those we dislike or aren't interested in



Can indicate

- Aggression
- Defensiveness
- Interest
- Tension
- And so on



# Hand and other gestures



- Can give more emphasis to what is said
- Examples: head nodding, moving your hands when you give directions
- Some are universal, but
- Some are culture dependent
- Not all are polite!

# Para-language

Includes:

- Pitch
- Stress
- Timing
- Pauses
- Emotional tone of voice
- Accent
- Speech errors (um, err)
- Speed of speech
- Interruptions
- Fast speech often indicates anxiety
- Slow speech is often assumed to mean low levels of intelligence
- Interruptions are usually natural, but can be forced (butting in) and there are gender differences



# Appearance

We make instant judgements based on appearance – this process is known as Impression Formation



An informal or untidy appearance will give people the impression you are informal in your work aspects of life (Implicit Personality Theory)



So, dress accordingly. You can start smart and become casual, but not the reverse!

# In summary...

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Interpersonal distance
- Touch
- Body orientation and posture
- Hand and other gestures
- Your appearance
- And words of course!
- We usually do all this naturally
- Think about these if things aren't going according to plan
- Fake it if you have to!

Will all make a difference to your communication

# Active Listening



# Active Listening

- Accurately listening to what is being said, and
- showing we're paying attention to what is being said

# How do we show we're listening during a conversation?

- In pairs, write down at least 3 things which you think makes a good listener.
- Each pair will say what their favourite one is, and together we will create a Top Ten list



# Effective Questioning

Techniques you can use to make sure you're a good listener

- Use open questions - they get results
- Open questions minimise the temptation to make assumptions
- To understand more precisely what the speaker wants to tell you
- Reflecting what the person has said can also help

# Open Questions

They begin with:-

- Who - were you working with?
- What - are you going to do about that?
- Where - exactly did this happen?
- When - do you think you could do this?
- How - do you think this happened?
- Why - is that important to you?
- Which - would you prefer?

# Effective Questioning

Reflection is a useful technique

- It allows the speaker to keep talking when you have no specific question to ask, or as an encouragement when the speaker is shy or nervous.
- Reflection is where you repeat the statement just made by the speaker, as a question. For example:

Speaker: “ Then I went over to check it was working...”

Questioner: “You went over to check it was working...?”

# Effective Questioning

## Closed Questions

- A closed question, at the extreme, is one which can only be answered "Yes" or "No".
- Closed questions are useful if you want to check out specific pieces of information, or to check if you have something correct.



And now to practice this...

# In summary

- Listen carefully
- Look like you're listening
- Try to use open questions
- Be careful about interrupting
- Remember Active listeners spend 70% of their time listening and only 30% of their time talking