Unit 401: Effective communication in business
Handout 4: Benefits of different types of communication

The benefits and disadvantages of each communication type will depend entirely on the specific situation or context in which the communication type is being used. (This analysis is not exhaustive.)

Communication type	Benefits	Disadvantages
Verbal	• Fast, so useful for obtaining very recent information and less time taken to communicate the message • Can facilitate the transmission of information between people • May be simple to use and pleasant to engage • Less paperwork • Can enable instant information sharing and decisions • More efficient than other methods in terms of volume of information communicated and speed of reply • Sometimes easier to get a point across verbally	• Nothing to confirm the communication actually happened - in case one party goes back on their word • Only useful between individuals who trust each other • Over a period of time, forgetfulness may jeopardise the information communicated • Increased risk of miscommunication • Can't communicate over distance without additional resources
Non-verbal (excluding sign language, e.g. BSL)	• Can help you communicate with someone who cannot hear • Can add clarity and emphasis to verbal communication • Helps communication in places where you have to avoid talking loudly • Enables hidden communication without others around you being aware • Enables communication when a person is too far away from you to hear (for example, gesturing)	• Long conversations of this type are often difficult to maintain • Non-verbal communication varies from culture to culture • Increased risk of misunderstanding • Particulars of messages using non-verbal communication cannot always be discussed in detail • Can be difficult to understand and may require a lot of repetition • Cannot be easily used as a public tool for communication. • Perceived as being less influential • Cannot be used in every environment

	• Generally brief • Can be used to help communicate with people who don't understand your language	• Not everybody may choose to communicate or accept communication through non-verbal channels
Written	• Communicates to multiple recipients at the same time • In most cases, avoids misunderstanding • Permanent record until destroyed • Can be understood over a period of time (at leisure) • Does not require an immediate response to be effective • Not forgotten over time (durability) • Great detail can be communicated	• May take time to reach the recipient • May be retained and 'held against' the originator • No feedback until after whole of message has been conveyed • Unable to adjust communication according to feedback • Lengthy process to add explanations if requested • Requires well developed, specific skills (reading and writing) by both sender and recipient • May require more time than other methods to communicate the same information
Visual	• Useful for engaging individuals or groups in uninspiring situations • Can convey a great deal of information in a single image • May be tailored to suit different audiences and situations • Effective at communicating emotions	• Not always suitable for visually impaired recipients • The image may confuse the message • Multiple images may confuse the recipient • May be readily misinterpreted by unintended audience • May require patience from the recipient to receive the whole message