

### SUMMARY

Nonverbal communication is the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless (mostly visual) cues between people. Nonverbal communication is sometimes mistakenly referred to as body language, but nonverbal communication encompasses much more, such as use of voice, touch, distance and physical environments/appearance. Even speech contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, and speaking style, as well as underlying features such as rhythm, intonation, and stress. Likewise, written texts have nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the physical layout of a page.

*Importance* of nonverbal communication: Nonverbal communication represents two-thirds of all communication. Studies have concluded that your body language is responsible for 55% of the impression you make on the other person, how you speak makes 38% and balance seven per cent only is through verbal communication or words. First encounters or interactions with another person strongly affect a person's perception. When the other person or group is absorbing the message, they are focused on the entire environment around them, meaning the other person uses all five senses in the interaction: 83% sight, 11% hearing, 3% smell, 2% touch and 1% taste.

*Components* of nonverbal communication include Gestures, Eye Contact, Touching, Distance, Use of Time, Physical Appearance, and Clothing

*Gestures* or Kinesics is an important part of non-verbal communication behavior. The movement of the body, or separate parts, conveys many specific meanings and the interpretations may be culture bound. As many movements are carried out at a subconscious or at least a low-awareness level, kinesics movements carry a significant risk of being misinterpreted, especially, in an intercultural communications situation.

Studies reveal that 50% of this first impression comes from non-verbal communication which includes *Eye Contact* (Oculesics). Only 7% of comes from words - that we actually say. There are three levels of eye contact: Direct eye contact; Indirect eye contact and Duration of eye contact. Emotions and their associated eye behaviors: Anxiety - wetness or moisture in the eyes; Anger - eyes glaring and wide open; Boredom - eyes not focused, or focused on something else; Disgust - rapid turning away of eyes; Happiness - "glittery" look to eyes, wrinkled at the sides; Sadness - tears in eyes, looking downward (also possible sleepless appearance and Desire - eyes wide, dilation of pupils etc..

On the other hand eye behaviors reflect emotions like eyes up means person is thinking. Avoiding eye contact, or looking down, can be a sign of submission or fear. Looking away from the person to whom one is speaking could be a sign of disinterest. Staring at a person's lips can indicate that someone wants to kiss another person. Blinking can also be the result of a person feeling greater levels of stress. Closing the eyes serves to shut out the world. It can be a reaction to fear or embarrassment. Eye moisture - Tears obviously indicate sadness, but moisture also has a more practical purpose to wash and clean the eyes. Damp eyes can be suppressed crying or an expression of extreme happiness or laughter. People can typically tell individuals who are angry from those who are nervous from those who are confident by what they do with their eyes.

Acceptable levels of *touching* (Haptics) vary from one culture to another. In India normally people greet with folded hands and urbanized men shake hands. Haptic communication is a form of nonverbal communication and the way by which people and other animals communicate via touching. Managers should know the effectiveness of using touch while communicating to subordinates, but need to be cautious and understand how touch can be misunderstood. While working with others and using touch to communicate, a manager needs to be aware of each person's touch tolerance. It is believed that a person in power is more likely to touch a subordinate, but the subordinate is not free to touch in kind.

*Distance* (Proxemics) can be defined as "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture". A person's personal space is carried with them everywhere they go. It is the most inviolate form of territory. It is proved that physical proximity enhances peoples' ability to work together.

*Use of Time* (Chronemics) is the study of the use of time in nonverbal communication. The way we perceive time, structure our time and react to time is a powerful communication tool, and helps set the stage for the communication process. The use of time can affect lifestyles, daily agendas, speed of speech, movements and how long people are willing to listen.

Monochronic and Polychronic time systems are two systems commonly used to refer time and its influence on society. A monochronic time system means that things are done one at a time and time is segmented into precise, small units. Under this system time is scheduled, arranged and managed. A polychronic time system is a system where several things can be done at once, and a more fluid approach is taken to scheduling time. Unlike Americans and most northern and western European cultures, Latin American, Asian and Arabic cultures use the polychronic system of time.

Your *physical appearance* always contributes towards how people perceive you. Neatly combed hair, ironed clothes and a lively smile will always carry more weight than words. While selecting clothes, appropriateness for the occasion is essential; the formality of the occasion, the time of the day, the season, the cultural background of the people who will be present, and conventions of your own organization should provide you good guidance.

*Paralanguage* is a component of meta-communication that may modify or nuance meaning, or convey emotion, such as prosody, pitch, volume, intonation etc. It is sometimes defined as relating to no phonemic properties only. Paralanguage may be expressed consciously or unconsciously. A message may be made more or less coherent by adjusting its expressive presentation. Silence and long pauses too can be very effective means of nonverbal communication. Please remember this is not a negative absence of speech, but a deliberate positive withdrawal or suspension of speech. On many occasions a pause at correct juncture is more effective than wild gestures or table-thumping. Keeping silent, holding one's peace and deliberately not responding while having a confident and peaceful expression on the face, is a sign of strength and power.

*Written communication* can be enhanced by using various symbols and graphics. Even the font size selected, margins allowed or spacing of written communication can add to or reduce the value of communication. Drawings, pictures, symbols or pictographs often convey a message succinctly which hundreds of words may not be able to convey. Plus such visuals are universally understood, more easily remembered and make an immediate impact as they are easy to 'take-in'; digest. Usually processes are effectively conveyed using diagrams rather than words.

Graphs or charts help people understand data quickly. Whether you want to make a comparison, show a relationship, or highlight a trend, they help your audience "see" what you are talking about. The trouble is there are so many different types of charts and graphs that it is difficult to know which one to choose. A line graph compares two variables say sales of vehicles by types over a period of say four years. It allows a comparison and since it reflects the trend it also allows you to predict possible future results. A pie chart is a circular diagram that shows % or share of say each company in total market. Flow charts are used to indicate procedures in which alternative actions have to be taken depending on the result of the previous step.

Maps convey geographical information like transport routes, climatic conditions, distribution of population etc.

Signs and signals are other non-verbal means to communicate / express 😊 Smile or 🖐️  
Direction or 🔥 Heat etc.

**The End**

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