210: Understand how to communicate with others within building services engineering  
**Handout 9: Effective communication**

**Learning outcome**

The learner will:

1. know how to communicate with others in the building services industry.

**Assessment criteria**

The learner can:

3.2 define methods of effective communication for people with:

* physical disabilities
* learning difficulties
* language differences:
  + dialects
  + accents
  + foreign and second language issues.

**Effective communication**

**Communication strategies**

You should always think beforehand about the kind of information that a customer may require. Good communication is crucial to completing a task safely and efficiently. Your communication method may need to be adapted for certain individuals or groups.

The key thing is to make sure that both parties completely understand each other!

**Physical disabilities**

If a customer has a hearing impairment, you may need to:

* use written notes and drawings
* use more leaflets, manufacturers’ literature
* use technology, if available (computer, telephone amplifier).

If a customer has a visual impairment, you may need to:

* give more verbal detail
* describe diagrams and instructions
* inform the person of their surroundings (dangers, who is in the room).

**Learning difficulties**

If a customer has a special learning difficulty, you may need to:

* make sure the responsible person is present to hear the details as well
* keep information short and relevant
* use visual aids.

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| **Language differences**  In today’s multicultural society, more people deal with customers whose first language may not be English, or who may have a strong accent or dialect.   * **Accent**: The way people pronounce words. * **Dialect**: The combination of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.   When communicating with a customer whose first language is not English, you may need to: |  |

* speak clearly – avoid slang
* use shorter sentences
* ask questions to make sure that they have understood
* use diagrams and visual aids
* in some cases use an interpreter or another family member.

The same goes for people who have a strong accent or dialect.