



Effective Communication and the STAR Method

Techno Functional Soft Skills

You will learn how to improve your written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills.

What you will learn



At the core of the lesson

You will learn how to do the following:

- Improve your written, verbal, and nonverbal communication.
- Give effective presentations.
- Use the situation, task, actions, and results (STAR) method to describe and understand a professional experience.

Types of communication: Nonverbal communication

- Nonverbal communication is communication without the use of language.
- No agreement exists about the typical ratio of nonverbal communication to verbal communication, but it's generally accepted that most of communication is largely nonverbal.
- Thus, nonverbal communication is essential for building successful workplace relationships. Keep in mind that facial expression, posture, and tone of voice help determine how others understand your message.
- Consider the following when you're communicating:
 - **Congruence:** Make sure that your posture, facial expression, and tone match your verbal message. For example, if you're excited, you could express your excitement through gestures or facial expressions.

Congruence means sending the same message in both verbal communication and nonverbal communication.

Types of communication: Oral communication

- Oral communication is the use of speech to send messages.
- In a professional environment, most oral communication takes place in conversations between one or more team members.
- Thus, it is important to do the following:
 - Listen carefully and confirm whether you understood someone correctly.
 - Ask questions to get information and to show an interest in someone's work.
 - Show appreciation. Congratulate team members with their great ideas, or thank them for their help or input.

Oral communication is a form of verbal communication. It is the use of speech to send messages.

Types of communication: Written communication

- Written communication is sending messages in writing.
- The digital age transformed how people communicate professionally. Written communication is now the most common type of professional communication. Email messages, reports, contracts, websites, and instant messages are all types of written communication.
- The following are a few ways to improve your written communication skills:
 - Plan before you start writing. Determine what you want the reader to take away from your message, and keep that in mind as you write.
 - Be straightforward. Write your key point on the top of the document.
 - Less is more. The message should be clear by using only as many words as necessary.
 - Review before you send. Pay attention to content, grammar, and punctuation.

Written communication is a form of verbal communication. It means sending messages in writing.

Types of communication: Pair activity

What are dos and don'ts in professional communication?

Each type of communication has its own **etiquette**, or set of implied rules about what you can do and what you cannot do. For example, when you participate in an online meeting, you are expected to introduce yourself so that everyone knows who is in the meeting session.

In this activity:

- Work in pairs and write down two dos and two don'ts for the following communication types (you can use a search engine):
 - Online meeting
 - Phone call
 - Email
- Discuss your results briefly with the class.



Verbal communication: Giving effective presentations

Giving effective presentations

Giving a presentation can be approached as a process.

1. Plan your presentation.
 - Decide what your main topic is and what you want to say about it.
 - Make a list of key terms.
2. Write your presentation.
 - You can use an outline as a way to structure your writing.
3. Establish a presence.
 - Use your personality and body language to connect with your audience.

Planning your presentation

- Select a topic.
 - If possible, select a topic that's interesting both for the audience and for yourself. It will be much easier to deliver a presentation that the audience finds interesting.
- Analyze your audience.
 - Learn more about the audience that you'll be presenting to. It's a good idea to have information about the backgrounds and interests of the audience. In this way, you'll have an idea of what they might expect from your presentation.
- Define the objective of your presentation.
- Write the objective of your presentation in one sentence.
 - The objective must describe exactly what you want the audience to learn from your presentation.
- Use the objective statement as a way to maintain your focus as you research and develop the presentation.

Writing your presentation

- Start with an outline:
 - Introduction
 - Main body
 - » Point A
 - » Point B
 - » Point C
 - Conclusion
 - Questions and answers (Q and A)
- Say lines out loud as you write.
- Build in repetition of your core ideas.

Establishing a presence

- Confirm that all the required equipment works.
 - For example, your laptop, microphone, and projector
- Take a moment to breath and move around on stage.
 - Try to get comfortable with your position in front of the audience.
- Make eye contact with your audience.
- Present yourself with a loud and clear voice.
- Don't forget to smile!

Giving presentations:

Group activity

Technical presentation

- Each group will give a formal presentation on a technical subject that was introduced in Week 1 (for example, cloud computing).
- Criteria:
 - The presentation must contain correct information.
 - You will use PowerPoint or Keynote slides. Email the slides to your instructor.
 - The presentation will help the audience to increase their knowledge about the subject.
 - The presentation must be the result of group collaboration.
- Evaluation:
 - After each presentation, the class will give feedback on the group's presentation skills.



STAR method

What is the STAR method?

A tool to describe and understand professional experiences

- **Situation**
 - Describe the situation that you were in: for example, the second day in class while working on operating systems.
- **Task**
 - What goal were you working toward, or which task was given?
- **Actions**
 - What specific steps did you take, or what was your contribution? Focus on your input.
- **Results**
 - Describe the outcome of your actions. What happened?

Each experience in a class or in a professional environment is an opportunity to learn. Reflecting on experiences helps you to learn from them. The STAR method is a tool that helps you to reflect on and learn from experiences.

STAR method example

- **Situation:** As an AWS student, I was in class. The instructor gave us an assignment.
- **Task:** I needed to prepare and give a presentation about the basics of switching, routing, and using gateways. I was required to use slides, and the presentation needed to contain only correct and accurate information.
- **Actions:** First, I gathered information on my own. Then, I shared and compared information with my classmates. The next step was to create an outline of the presentation by using key terms. For each key term, I created a section in the presentation.
- **Results:** The presentation went well. I was able to describe the information that I prepared. I was also able to answer some questions from the teacher and rest of the class.

STAR method: Individual activity

**Describe a classroom experience
by using STAR**

Reflecting on how you worked on a task can help you understand how you can perform tasks more efficiently in the future.

In this activity:

- Use the STAR method to describe an experience that you had working on a task.
- Be prepared to present your experience.



Thank you



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