



**CONNECTIONS**  
EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

# Effective Business Communication



Communication plays a fundamental role in every aspect of business and is one of the most in-demand skills among employers. Effective business communication includes everything from strong public speaking to professionally written business reports and emails. Communicating with style is a skill that will set you apart from other job applicants and impress potential employers.

This workshop will cover:

- **What is Effective Communication?**
- **Non-Verbal Communication**
- **Verbal Communication**

# What is Effective Communication?

**Effective communication** is defined as verbal speech or other methods of relaying information that get a point across. It is one of the most in-demand skills today.

Organizations with employees who can communicate effectively, have a spike in productivity of up to 25%. Consequently, companies who hire employees with effective communication skills are 3.5 times more likely to outperform their competitors. Further, strong business communication skills within a company produces higher employee engagement, resulting in a 19.2% growth in operating income over a 12-month period.

### There are 7 C's of Effective Communication:

1. **Completeness** – Include all information and explanations necessary to thoroughly explain your point.
2. **Concreteness** – Provide a clear message with factual material (e.g. research data and figures).
3. **Courtesy** – Approach communication in a friendly and courteous manner.
4. **Correctness** – Grammar and correct use of language is a critical element of effective communication.
5. **Clarity** – Use plain language, explicitness, short sentences and concrete words.
6. **Consideration** – Always consider your audience by tailoring your message to them.
7. **Conciseness** – Be consistent and use supporting information.

Every person has a unique style of communicating with one another. In order to be an effective communicator, it is important to understand your own style of communication as well as other styles. Understanding the different styles of communication will assist you in successfully delivering your message.

Take the Communication Styles Test next to find out what **YOUR** style of communication is.

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## Communication Styles Assessment

Below are a series of statements. Make a choice between A or B. Circle whichever statement best describes how you see yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, but you must answer each question.

When you are finished, add up the totals at the bottom to determine which communication style fits you the most and which style fits you the least.

		<u>A Style</u>	<u>PR Style</u>	<u>PE Style</u>	<u>I Style</u>
1	a. When faced with a choice, I like to act quickly	A			
	b. I deal with problems in a systematic way		B		
2	a. I believe that teams are more effective than individuals			A	
	b. I enjoy innovation very much				B
3	a. I am more interested in the future than in the past				A
	b. I enjoy working with people			B	
4	a. I like to attend well-organized group meetings		A		
	b. Deadlines are important for me	B			
5	a. I cannot stand procrastination	A			
	b. I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used		B		
6	a. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others			A	
	b. I am always looking for new possibilities				B
7	a. I want to set up my own objectives	A			
	b. When I start something, I go through until the end		B		
8	a. I basically try to understand other people's emotions			A	
	b. I do challenge people around me				B
9	a. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance	A			
	b. I find the step-by-step approach very effective		B		
10	a. I think I am good at reading people			A	
	b. I like creative problem solving				B
11	a. I extrapolate and project all the time				A
	b. I am sensitive to others' needs			B	
12	a. Planning is the key to success		A		
	b. I become impatient with long deliberations	B			
13	a. I am cool under pressure		A		
	b. I value experience very much	B			
14	a. I listen to people			A	
	b. People say I am a fast thinker				B

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15	a. Cooperation is a key word for me			A	
	b. I use logical methods to test alternatives		B		
16	a. I like to handle several projects at the same time	A			
	b. I always question myself				B
17	a. I learn by doing	A			
	b. I believe that my head rules my heart		B		
18	a. I can predict how others may react to a certain action			A	
	b. I do not like details				B
19	a. Analysis should always precede action		A		
	b. I am able to assess the climate of a group			B	
20	a. I have a tendency to start things and not finish them up				A
	b. I perceive myself as decisive	B			
21	a. I search for challenging tasks	A			
	b. I rely on observation and data		B		
22	a. I can express my feelings openly			A	
	b. I like to design new projects				B
23	a. I enjoy reading very much				A
	b. I perceive myself as a facilitator			B	
24	a. I like to focus on one issue at a time		A		
	b. I like to achieve	B			
25	a. I enjoy learning about others			A	
	b. I like variety	B			
26	a. Facts speak for themselves		A		
	b. I use my imagination as much as possible				B
27	a. I am impatient with long, slow assignments	A			
	b. My mind never stops working				B
28	a. Key decisions have to be made in a cautious way		A		
	b. I strongly believe that people need each other to get work done			B	
29	a. I usually make decisions without thinking too much	A			
	b. Emotions create problems		B		
30	a. I like to be liked by others			A	
	b. I can put two and two together very quickly				B
Total					

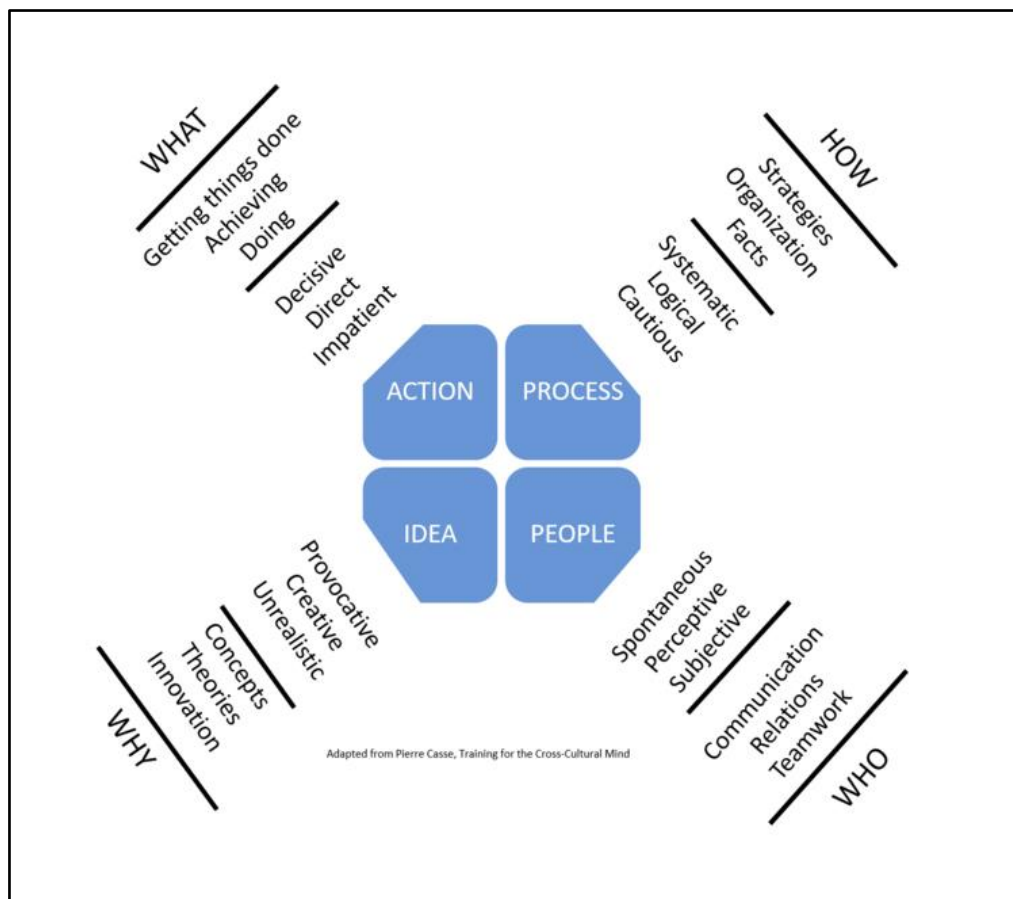
1. Predominant Style \_\_\_\_\_

3. Minor Style \_\_\_\_\_

2. Secondary Style \_\_\_\_\_

4. Minor Style \_\_\_\_\_

# Communication Styles



## Action (A-style)

- Gets things done
- Direct
- Impatient
- Decisive
- Focuses on Efficiency

## Process (PR-style)

- Systematic
- Logical
- Strategic
- Procedures and Facts Oriented

## People (PE-style)

- Spontaneous
- People Oriented
- Empathetic
- Perceptive
- Focuses on Communication and Working as a Team

## Idea (I-style)

- Provocative
- Charismatic
- Innovative
- Creative
- Focuses on Improvements

# Non-Verbal Communication

## Writing a Business E-mail

The most common form of nonverbal communication in most businesses is email. Every day, 269 billion emails are sent, and that number is projected to increase steadily over the next few years. Knowing how to write and format emails in a business environment is a critical aspect of a successful job search.

There are seven important elements of writing an effective email:

1. **Subject** – Concisely convey the reason for your email.
2. **Greeting** (salutation) – Always include a greeting. It should be personable, but professional. If you are not on a first name basis with the recipient, use their title: Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc.
3. **Font style** – Make sure that the font style and size is consistent throughout email. Avoid ornate, playful or colored fonts as these may distract your recipient from your message. Avoid overusing bold and italics as well since this can make your message appear cluttered. Do not write in all capital letters, because this can come across as angry, overexcited and unprofessional.
4. **Length** – Your email should be specific and concise, conveying your message without wasting time. People tend to skim long emails, so it is best to only include essential information to ensure the recipient gets all the information they need.
5. **Spelling and Grammar** – Review and edit your email carefully before sending. Use spell check and make sure the verbiage is grammatically correct. Do not use slang or jargon.
6. **Closing** – End your email with a brief “Thank you” or similar closing, and then your name.
7. **Signature** - Most email accounts allow you to create a signature with your name, title, and contact information. This is a great way to increase the professionalism of your message.

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**Email Errors:** Review the email below. Note the errors you find and how they can be corrected to make the email more professional.

Send	To...	Alma Ubina;
	Cc...	
	Bcc...	Rachel Cueva; Ana Ruiz;
	Subject	i need informatin about what we are doing and when and who is going to do what

Hey!!!

I AM WUNDERING WHAT IS GOING AND AND WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO NEXT!!!

I have some ideas about this project and really thing that they are some GREAT ideas! I hope you do TOO!!!!

I have attached my proposal for you to take a look at and hope that you will give me your thoughts!!!!

I think that we should take this project to the next level and want everyone to get onboard with it!!!!

If you want to talk about my ideas, GIVE ME A CALL!!

I know you are going to love them!!!! All right, talk at you soon!!!! Brenda 😊

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Did You Find Them All?

1. When you copy the email to other recipients, use the CC line, *not* the BCC line. It is only best to use the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) line when sending an email to a large number of recipients so that everyone cannot see each other's email addresses.
2. The subject line should be concise and clearly convey what the email message is about. Keep your audience in mind and what action you want them to take. Capitalize the subject line as you would a title, beginning everything except for minor words with capital letters.
3. Begin your email with a professional greeting. If you replying to an email, you should begin with a line of thanks. State your purpose and add any closing remarks, ending the email with a closing statement.
4. Pay extra attention when proofreading, especially to the subject line. Read your email out loud to yourself as your ears can sometimes catch things your eyes don't notice.
5. Be intentional and specific with your punctuation. Try not to over-use any exclamation marks when writing the email.
6. Avoid writing in all capital letters. Using all capital letters is the equivalent to shouting at someone in a face-to-face conversation.
7. Don't forget to attach your documents. A common mistake is to inform the recipient that you are attaching a document and forgetting to attach it before you send it.
8. Do not use emoji's in business communications. They communicate a lack of professionalism to your audience.
9. Create a professional signature line that is added to all of your emails. This will make your emails appear more legitimate and professional. Your email signature is the digital equivalent of your business card and should be formatted well with professional imagery.



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## Business Letters

A business letter is very similar to an email but is usually more formal.

General accepted format includes:

1. **Sender's information**
2. **Date** - Place the date in between the sender's and recipient's information.
3. **Recipient's information**
  - Name
  - Title
  - Address
4. **Greeting** – use professional titles and only use their first name if you are on a first name basis
5. **Body** -

**Business Letter Format**

Company, Inc.  
123 Alphabet Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90002

15 October 2016

Mr. John Doe  
Customer Service Representative  
Widgets Galore, Inc.  
987 Widget Street  
Miami, Florida 33111

Dear Mr. Doe:

I am writing you concerning a recent purchase of widgets. Approximately two weeks ago, on October 1, I ordered a total of 50 widgets for Company, Inc. via the Widgets Galore client webpage. I received an email notification two days later confirming the receipt of payment and the shipment of the widgets. According to your website, shipments should reach their destination within 3-5 business days of being sent, but I have yet to receive the widgets. Do you have any information on what may have happened to delay the shipment or where the shipment is currently?

I have worked with Widgets Galore, Inc. in the past and have the greatest confidence in your products and customer service. We need the shipment of widgets soon, however, and I hoped you might be able to provide me with an idea of when I can expect them. Thank you in advance for any help you might be able to offer.

Sincerely,

Sam Brown  
Vice President of Company, Inc.  
555-555-5555  
s.brown@companyinc.com

- In the first paragraph, write an opening and the purpose of the letter, remembering to be as concise as possible.
  - In the second paragraph, use examples to stress or underline your point. Concrete and real examples are always better than hypothetical situations.
  - In the final paragraph, briefly summarize your purpose in writing the letter and suggest how you may want to proceed further.
6. **Closing** - Similar to an email, you will want to close the letter with a simple "Thank you" or "Sincerely."
  7. **Signature** – Include your name, title, phone number, and email.

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## Business Report

A **business report** is a written document that assists a business in making decisions. The main purpose of a business report is to make data that is relevant to the company easily available to the audience.

When writing a business report, you typically analyze a situation and apply business theories to suggest ways of improving that situation. Generally, there are multiple ways of solving issues, with various costs and benefits to the organization. Those costs and benefits should be identified and evaluated within your report.

A template-based business report generally includes the follow elements:

- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Body (Discussion)
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- References

Writing a business report allows you to:

- Examine available and potential solutions to a problem, situation, or issue
- Demonstrate your analytical, reasoning and evaluation skills in determining possible solutions and outcomes
- Provide recommendations for future actions
- Show clear and concise communication skills

There are three types of business reports: **Informational**, **Analytical**, and **Research**.

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**Informational:** When you need to report information without opinion, suggestion or action, an **Informational Business Report** is often the best option. The point of this type of business report is simply to share relevant information on a subject.

### Coast Community College District District Information Technology Annual Report 2013-14 October 28, 2014

This first District Information Technology (District IT) annual report provides an overview of projects, activities and accomplishments in 2013-14 and planned key projects for 2014-15. Our primary goal in District IT is to provide the best level of service and leverage technology to support and enhance instruction, student services and operations across the district.

#### **Purposes of IT Reorganization**

The reorganization of IT became effective July 1, 2013. As stated in documents provided during the analysis that led to the reorganization, a number of activities related to achieving the purposes and benefits of the reorganization have taken place in 2013-14 with others taking place in 2014-15 and 2015-16. The full implementation of all stated purposes and benefits was understood will take three to four years.

This reorganization took into account the extremely dynamic nature of Information Technology, the need for flexibility, responsiveness and adaptability for the future and effective and efficient service to the students, employees and community served by CCCD and its three colleges.

The purposes of the reorganization are to:

- improve services to our students, employees and community
- increase agility, performance, effectiveness and efficiency of our information technology services and best position our IT organization to be responsive and proactive to the ever changing IT landscape and expectations from our students
- reduce costs, where feasible and appropriate
- best utilize our human, technical and financial resources
- thrive in a competitive environment

The major premise of this reorganization was that information technology is a key to CCCD's success now and in the future. And while technology is a means not an end, it is undeniable that the pervasive nature of technology throughout the entire organization has made agile, state-of-the-art, effective and efficient technology a must for any successful organization including CCCD.

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**Analytical:** When you need to assess opportunities, solve a problem or make a business decision, then an **Analytical Business Report** may be the best option. An Analytical Business Report offers both facts and data as well as explanations and conclusions. As an example, this type of report would be helpful to a business which is interested in the results of their advertising activities.



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**Research:** A **Research Business Report** may be used for making decisions about new products and services, and generally includes a topic and all details about that topic including relevant facts and statistics.

Market research report: Environmental monitoring and software use by oil palm growers

### Executive summary

Market research conducted by ZSL between February and April 2012 indicates that current environmental monitoring of HCV areas within oil palm plantations is limited and so too is the use of basic software to store and analyse data. This research reflects current criticism of the RSPO by NGO groups and the media, who argue that membership reporting requirements, especially with regard to environmental monitoring and management, are inadequate. Monitoring is widely seen as a necessary part of successful management however there is little capacity at growers level to develop standardised monitoring protocols and limited scientifically robust evaluation of management practices.

Despite the availability of environmental monitoring software designed specifically for the agricultural sector, usage amongst palm oil growers is virtually non-existent. This can be attributed to limited knowledge of the software systems available and a lack of technical and financial capacity to make use of them. A practical, easy to use and comprehensive software programme for data storage, analysis and output would improve monitoring, analysis and reporting. It would also encourage communication and integrated management within companies, enabling better management practices. Scientifically rigorous data analysis that produced clear, reliable outputs would also improve reporting and provide growers with a format for communicating their progress, thereby generating positive publicity and increasing demand for CSPO.

The market research conducted for this report, via semi structured interviews and questionnaires, recommends that to successfully deliver the monitoring protocol and software so as to ensure uptake and usage amongst oil palm growers, software developers should:

- Provide a modular software package, which offers a basic database and analysis tool and subsequent add-ons for more sophisticated and complex data entry and analysis.
- Provide a software programme that produces clear, informative outputs for senior management including GIS maps, graphics and numerical data as well as prescriptive HCV management recommendations.
- Provide monitoring and software training to field and sustainability teams as well as training in interpreting outputs for management.
- Training must be phased, allowing companies to progressively build capacity and move from basic monitoring to more sophisticated monitoring and analysis.
- Limit the costs of monitoring training and software support.

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## Business Presentation

**Business Presentations** are often used by companies to share information about products, services or practices with employees, managers, executives, and sometimes customers.

The **4 P's** of an effective business presentation:

1. **Plan:** Planning is a crucial step to your presentation success! Organize the sequence of topics from start to finish. Include key ideas and remember to adapt the information to your audience. Analyze your audience: Who will they be? What information do they already have? What are their interests?
2. **Prepare:** What is the objective of your presentation? Gather the information you will need and research topics that require additional explanation and/or elaboration.
  - Remember **KISS** – (Keep It Short & Simple) Keeping the presentation short and simple allows you to focus on the topic. The longer and more complex the presentation, the more confusing it can be for your audience.
  - Ensure the flow of information is fluid and logical. Your speech should contain three distinct parts – (1) Opening, (2) Body, and (3) Conclusion.
  - Familiarize yourself with the venue, including the size, arrangement of seating, where you will speak, lighting and/or distractions. This will allow you to feel more comfortable and your presentation to run smoother.
3. **Practice:** Remember “Practice Makes Perfect!” The more you practice, the more confident and relaxed you will feel. When you are relaxed and enjoying yourself, your audience will mirror that, feeling relaxed and being more actively engaged.
  - Dry-runs are meant to help you eliminate any mistakes. Practice in front of friends/family, a mirror, or a camera to feel more prepared and comfortable.

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4. **Present:** Before you present, consider distributing an agenda or handout to your audience so they know what to expect and provide them some place to jot down notes or write questions.
  - Inject storytelling to your presentation to add depth and cultivate connections with your audience. Leverage visuals, such as a PowerPoint slide deck, flip chart, whiteboard, smart board, and even supplemental handout materials. Your audience is more likely to be engaged and will better remember the key points of your presentation.
  - Make your material digestible in chunks, using speaking techniques such as inflection and/or tone to emphasize key points.
  - Insert a few opportunities for questions or even a short discussion with your audience. This will evoke further engagement with the presentation.

## Verbal Communication

### How to Leave a Professional Voice Mail Message

Prior to leaving a voicemail, take a few minutes to practice. Write a short script making note of key word of what you will say.



- Speak slowly and clearly to ensure the recipient understands your message in its entirety. Speak naturally, leaving a message that is in a logical and progressive order.
- Introduce yourself, by including your full name and phone number.
- Leave details, reminding the recipient of the purpose for your call in one brief sentence.
- Leave a message that is short and concise, indicating what you need, if you would like a call back, a reply via email, or an in person meeting.
- Remember to repeat your contact info at the end of your message.

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## Conference Calls

A conference call is an audio meeting, which you join using a telephone from anywhere. This technology links multiple telephone lines into one call. Nowadays, employees often interact and collaborate via conference calls because some team members are located in various locations (e.g., different state, across the nation, international, or even remotely).

### Benefits:

- Conference calls can save time and money since everyone can phone in from wherever they are currently located.
- Conference calls do not require travel time.
- Conference calls do not require travel expenses, such as air fare, hotel rooms and car rentals.

### Best Practices:

1. Keep track of dates and times for scheduled conference calls. Plan accordingly so you are not late to the call. Make sure to keep phone and pin numbers available.
2. Dial in to the conference call a few minutes early in order to avoid being late. This is also helpful just in case you run into a problem connecting.
3. Make sure to mute your phone when you are not speaking. Keeping your phone on mute when you are not speaking will help to avoid distracting sounds and noises in the background.
4. Always state your name before speaking. Since participants are unable to see each other, it is very helpful for everyone to know who is speaking.
5. Be prepared to discuss the topic at hand. Conference calls are most productive when everyone is prepared with discussion and questions prior to the call.
6. Try to avoid any small talk or subject matter that is not relevant to the topic at hand. This will keep the conference call productive and time effective.



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## Face-to-Face Meetings

Although communication tools like Skype, chat, and email are becoming popular ways of communicating, face-to-face meetings are still advantageous. In face to face meetings, it is easier to build rapport, accurately gauge someone's moods, desires, and hesitations and have a more personable conversation. Face-to-face meetings can also be more efficient than back and forth emails since miscommunication is less likely.

Here are some considerations when you have a face-to-face meeting:



1. **Preparation is key** - Make sure you are prepared for the meeting by knowing what you will discuss, and being prepared for any questions or concerns that might arise.



2. **Timing** - Make sure you are on time, as being late is very unprofessional and sets a bad tone for the meeting.



3. **Look your best** - Appearance is a key element in making a good first impression. Make sure you are groomed and dressed well.



4. **First Impression** - First impressions are formed within the first few seconds of meeting someone and once the impression is made, it can be very hard to shake that perception. Focus on the first minute of the meeting and make it go as well as possible.



5. **Interpersonal skills** - Interpersonal skills or tactics are used to interact with others effectively. During your meeting you will want to maintain eye contact, as this shows confidence and poise. You will also want to maintain good posture as this also makes you appear more confident. Nod, smile and visibly react to your prospect's comments as this will make them feel comfortable being with you.



6. **Conversation** - Even if you in a face-to-face meeting for business, take a couple minutes to have some light conversation. This type of interaction can build rapport and make the other person have positive feelings toward you. Try to focus on finding commonalities which you can discuss rather than everyday small talk.



7. **Listen** - One of the most important things you can do during a face-to-face meeting is effective listening. Letting others talk keeps them engaged and makes them feel more comfortable. People generally like talking about themselves, so by allowing them to do so, helps make them comfortable and more receptive of what you have to say.

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## Video Conferencing

The infographic features a black header with the text 'VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR SUCCESS' in blue and white. To the right, an orange box contains a headset icon with '63M' and the text '63 MILLION PEOPLE MAKE VIDEO CALLS ON A REGULAR BASIS'. Below this is a blue section with a checkmark icon and the text 'WHY VIDEO CONFERENCING MAKES SENSE'. Five icons represent benefits: a person with a headset, a clock, a screen, a folder, and a presentation board. At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'Improved communication, increased productivity and better relations.'

**VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR SUCCESS**

63 MILLION PEOPLE MAKE VIDEO CALLS ON A REGULAR BASIS

WHY VIDEO CONFERENCING MAKES SENSE

- MORE PERSONAL**  
make an impression
- SAVE TIME**  
no travel
- SCREEN SHARE**  
and data share
- RECORD AND ARCHIVE**  
communications for future reference
- GIVE PRESENTATIONS**  
use visual props

Improved communication, increased productivity and better relations.

Video conferencing (also known as online meetings) allows people to have meaningful and virtual face-to-face meetings without having to travel to each other's locations.

Some of the advantages include:

1. **Reduced travel time** – There is no need to set up travel arrangements or spend time driving to a different location for the meeting.
2. **Increased attendance** – Since everybody can attend the meeting regardless of their location, attendance is more convenient for more people.
3. **Improves communication** - Video conferencing restores many of the non-verbal cues, like body language, which can be missed in a conference call. Since non-verbal communication constitutes about two-thirds of communication between people, video conference is more effective than conference calls.
4. **Helps employee retention** – Video conferencing allows the use of multiple senses, which heightens concentration levels and allows participants to absorb more information. Including viewable objects and meaningful visual aids makes it easier for participants to stay focused while also gaining their interest.

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5. **Connects teams** - Video sessions help eliminate the miscommunication that often occurs during the exchange of ideas over the phone. Emotionless audio calls can leave room for different interpretations and people may misread the purpose of an important point. Video conferencing solves this because people are able to grasp unspoken elements.
6. **Increases productivity** - Conference calls come with their own set of issues that can be alleviated by video conferencing. The interactivity of group collaboration and document sharing greatly increases productivity. Video conferencing is reported to save a minimum of two hours a week.

### General Tips

- Make sure you are punctual and connect a few minutes before the video conference is scheduled to begin.
- Introduce yourself so everyone knows who you are and remember the names of everyone else introducing themselves.
- Knowing your material well will help you avoid “ums” and mumbling.
- Don't interrupt other speakers.
- Don't have side conversations during the meeting. A good rule to follow is: If you wouldn't do it in an actual face-to-face meeting, don't do it during a video conference.
- Dress appropriately, as if the video conference is an “in-office” meeting.

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## Video Setup Tips

- **Speak Clearly:** Speak clearly and naturally making sure to enunciate.
- **Be Prepared:** Check your internet connection in advance and have all of your materials prepared and at hand.
- **Eliminate Distractions:** Sounds on your phone, or typing on a keyboard can be distracting for other participants. Be aware of distracting background noises.
- **Watch What You Wear:** Bold patterns and reflective jewelry can be distracting to the other viewers.
- **Let There Be Light:** Ensure that the direction and strength of the lighting looks flattering on your face. Watch out for shadows under your eyes, which may give you a negative look.
- **Stabilize the Camera:** Place your camera on a hard and stable surface, which is directly in line with your face.

## Body Language Tips

- **Body Language:** Remember that 93% of our communication is nonverbal.
- **Eye Contact:** 80% of the time you should be looking directly at the camera.
- **Lean into the Conversation:** Leaning forward signals concentration, interest, concern, acceptance, and approval.
- **Relax:** Relaxed arms and open palms suggests honesty, acceptance, and a desire to negotiate.
- **Show Your Hands:** Make sure your upper body is in view so participants can see your hand gestures.
- **Smile:** Smiling when you speak focuses the attention on you and decreases possible tension.

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