

# Communication Skills

Being an effective communicator means having the ability to effectively give and receive information. There are three ways that people like to process information. Some people prefer a visual presentation. That is, they like to see things in writing. Others prefer to have it told to them (audio) and the third group of people prefer a hands on approach. When dealing with someone, try to determine their communication style.

## Written Communication

### Know your subject

Having a thorough understanding of what you want to write about will help you to clearly express your message. The message that you don't want the reader to receive is that you have no idea what you are talking about.

### Know your reader

Understand that your reader may have a different way and level of understanding than you. By ignoring this, you may leave out information that is critical to your reader comprehending what you are trying to say.

### Organize your thoughts

Take some time to ask yourself:

- *What am I trying to say?*
- *Did I say it clearly in a sentence or two?*
- *Are my ideas presented in a logical order?*
- *Did I leave something out?*
- *What questions will my reader ask now?*

## Listening Skills & Audio Communication

If you are communicating in person, the same general principles will apply. However, you will also have to consider your listening skills. Are you an active listener?

Being an active listener means not only hearing what someone is saying to you, but also taking the time to understand what is being said and how it is being said. Following are some guidelines to help you improve your listening skills:

- Try to eliminate or minimize any distractions.
- Listen to what the speaker is saying in terms of facts and ideas.

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- Try to hear the underlying message.
- Take a look at the speaker's body language to see if there are any hidden signals.
- Be aware of your body language or biases.
- Try to put yourself in the speaker's shoes and try not to judge what the person is saying.

## For More Information

**Internet:** [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

**Books:** Writing That Works

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