

Tab C

Effective Communication

Effective Communication

An overview of barriers that block effective communication, simple tools that can be used to improve communication efforts, and the elements of effective communication.

Objectives for Better Communication

To understand the barriers that block effective communication:

- You will learn that different perceptions result from different experiences which can impede communication.
- You will learn that language usage can impede effective communication.
- You will learn how the environment in which you communicate affects your ability to communicate.

Objectives for Better Communication

- You will learn how proper listening skills will improve your communication efforts.
- You will learn how emotions impede communication and how those emotions can be managed.
- You will learn about the role of verbal and nonverbal communication factors.
- You will learn how competing priorities, information overload, and time pressures affect communication.

Objectives for Better Communication

- You will learn the elements of effective communication.
- You will learn how a thorough knowledge of the elements of effective communication can reduce communication barriers.

Effective Communication Barriers

- The influence of noise impedes effective communication.
- What is “noise”?
- Can noise be totally eliminated?

Different Perceptions

- The characteristics of culture create differential perceptions.
- Identify the cultures you belong to.
- No way to know all the cultural rules about people.
- Proper communication tools are the key.

Perceptions

- The role of compliance enforcement.
- Social attitudes toward government employees.
- Small businesses versus large businesses.

Language

- People who appear to speak the same language may not be communicating at all.
- Use an interpreter.
- Beware of operators using language as an excuse not to comply.
- Avoid jargon and slang.
- Use simple terminology whenever possible.

The Environment and Climate

- Communication may be hampered in a poor environment.
- You need to understand the potential environmental threats to your communication process.
- Can you identify some potential environmental threats?

The Reality of Compliance Enforcement.

- Regulators...
- .. engage in low-visibility discretionary decision making.
- .. must work within numerous laws, rules, and policies.
- .. must be aware of potential safety threats.
- .. are using authority which threatens those they regulate.

Solution

- Good rapport
- Professionalism
- Focus on the problem or complaint, not the persons involved.
- This means giving proper feedback.

Listening

- Listening well is a skill.
- Don't interrupt.
- Focus on the speaker.
- Maintain eye contact and nod affirmatively.
- Paraphrase what you have heard.
- Allow speaker to clarify meaning.

Emotionality

- Professionals do not react to emotional outbursts.
- Realize the potential for emotionality in your interactions.
- Understand why the operator is emotional.
- Don't take it personally.
- Create a win-win situation.

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Gain an understanding of your mannerisms and how they affect your message. Realize the potential for physical differences to impact your message. Be especially sensitive to gender issues.

Competing Priorities

- Operators will be more likely to comply if they feel the regulator sympathizes with them.
- Acknowledge they have other priorities besides compliance.
- Using pragmatic terms, explain how compliance will help them achieve all of their goals.

Information Overload

- Put yourself in the operator's place. What would you remember most from this interaction.
- Keep everything brief and to the point. Go over the most important facts and put it in writing before you leave.

Time Pressures

- Both you and the operators function within time pressures.
- If the operator is pushed for time, work within those parameters to get the job done.
- If you are pushed for time, reschedule if the operator wants more time with you.

Elements of Effective Communication

The basic structure of all communication interactions.

The Impact of the Regulator

- Understand the impact you have on the communication process.
- Identify your filtering system.
- What are your personal biases?

Know Your Audience

- What biases might your audience have about you?
- Reduce potential misperceptions.

Preparation

- Pretest your message in advance.
- Have a plan for all potential communication problems that might arise.
- Make a list of those problems along with solutions.

Feedback

- Get specific feedback if...
 - your message is important.
 - your explanation is complicated.
 - you receive non-verbal signals indicating the person may be confused.

Active Listening Exercise

- Objective: To test your ability to listen before speaking.
- Pair up in groups of two.
- One person will role play the inspector; the other will role play the operator.
- The inspector will ask a series of questions to the operator, who will provide answers.

Active Listening Exercise-continued

- Before the inspector asks the next question, he/she must first restate/rephrase the operator's previous answer.
- When you have completed this list of questions, switch roles.

Active Listening Exercise-questions

- Inspector:** "Hello, my name is _____. I work at _____ and am here to inspect your establishment to make sure the foods are safe. Do you have any questions?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)
- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "I noticed that you don't cover your soups and stews when storing them in the walk-in cooler. Can you tell me why?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)
- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "How long will it take to get the temperature back down to 40 degrees Fahrenheit?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)
- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "Can you explain how you cool the beef stew after it is prepared?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)

Active Listening Exercise-questions

- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "How have you been keeping track of times and temperatures?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)
- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "How do you know if something has gone wrong?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)
- Inspector:** (*Repeat/rephrase the operator's response before asking the following question*). "What do you do if something goes wrong and the foods are not cooling down?"
Operator: (*Answer question in your own words*)

Do you hear what I'm saying?

Site Activity: "Do you hear what I'm saying?"

You are a food safety inspector working at a local health department and are conducting a routine inspection of a Chinese restaurant. You observe one of the food employees cough in his hand and resume preparing vegetables for a stir-fry recipe without washing his hands. You decide to confront the operator and question him about handwashing practices. You ask several questions such as "When should you wash your hands? Where do you wash your hands? How do you wash your hands?" Each time the worker nods his head and speaks in broken English, mainly repeating back to you what you just said. You ask the operator if he understands you and he nods his head in agreement. You ask the operator if he doesn't understand you and he nods again in agreement. Then it dawns on you that the worker may not understand the English language. Besides the obvious language barrier, what other communication barriers might exist between you and the operator? How do you handle this situation?