

Employability Skills Curriculum

Professional Communication



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Professional Communication
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Agenda for today's session

1. Getting started - how do we communicate?
2. Professional Communication
3. Writing Professionally
4. Conversations in the Workplace
5. Wrap up and reflection



Do Now

Can you think of three forms of communication that we use when we are speaking to somebody?

STRETCH:

How might your communication style change in different situations?

- Around your family
- Around your friends
- Around your school



01

Getting started



How do we communicate?

There are three ways in which we communicate. Which one is most effective?

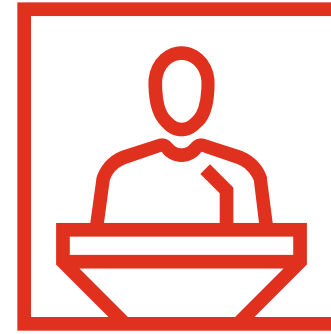
Tone of voice



Body language



What you say



How do we communicate?

There are three ways in which we communicate. Which one is most effective?

Tone of voice

38%



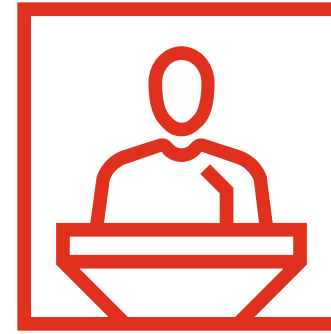
Body language

55%



What you say

7%



Can you think of any specific ways of communicating that are related to these three forms of communication? (1 minute)

How do we communicate?

With the advancement of technology, there are now more methods of communication than ever before. This means that identifying the most appropriate platform for communication can be tricky...

- Face to face conversations
- Video calls over platforms such as Zoom, Teams and Google Meet
- E-mails
- Chat messages or texts
- Phone calls
- Written letters
- Nonverbal communication

Activity: choosing the right method of communication

Match the situation to the method of communication that you would use

Asking a colleague who you know well if they would like to go for lunch

Reviewing a project with your manager

Asking a colleague to send you documents for a project

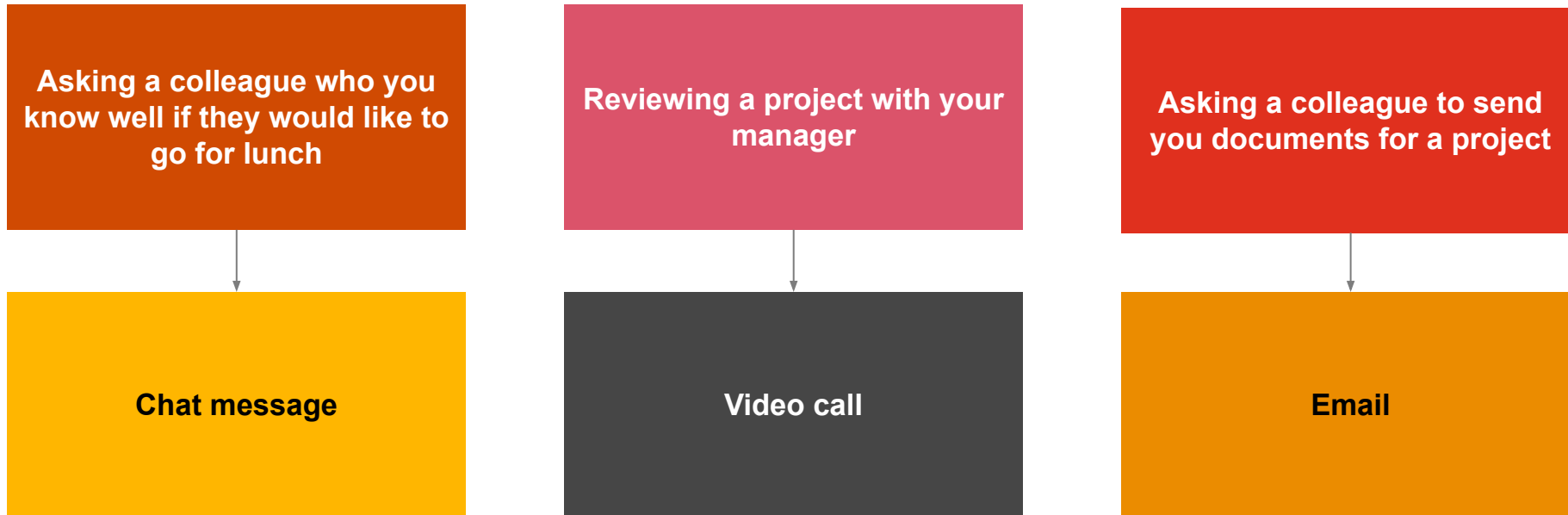
Video call

Email

Chat message

Activity: choosing the right method of communication

Match the situation to the method of communication that you would use



02

Professional Communication



Writing professionally

In today's world, writing emails forms a huge part of the working world.

Emails allow us to communicate quickly and efficiently with colleagues and other contacts around the world.

Emails are still a form of written communication, and so it is important to stick to the usual writing guidelines. However, they do tend to be less formal than a printed letter.



Writing professionally

How should you structure a professional email?

Email opening: Greet the recipient professionally and politely, for example:

“Good morning/afternoon, I hope you are well.”

Introduction: This paragraph should outline the context for your email, who you are and what you are emailing in regard to.

Main body: This should set out what you would like the email to accomplish, and provide the reader with all the necessary information, as well as what you would like them to do.

Conclusion: Summarise what you need from the reader, and let them know that they can get in touch with you if they require further clarification on your request.

Sign off: Sign off your email politely. Your email signature should contain some key information about you, for example you could include your name, your pronouns, your job title and your contact details.



Writing professionally

Points to think about when writing an email

01

Tone

Always think of the reader. It can be easy to come across as rude or unprofessional in an email, but people are unlikely to be offended if you are too formal.

02

Subject line

The subject line should provide clear information on the contents. It should not be too vague or include unnecessary capitalisation.

03

Email opening

How you open an email depends on your relationship with the person. Exclamation points may unintentionally communicate an angry or upset tone.

04

Main body

Try to be concise with your points. Do not include emoticons, as these are not generally acceptable in a business email. There should be appropriate introductory and concluding paragraph.

05

Signing off

Always finish with your full name and a proper sign off (such as Kind Regards or Best Wishes).

06

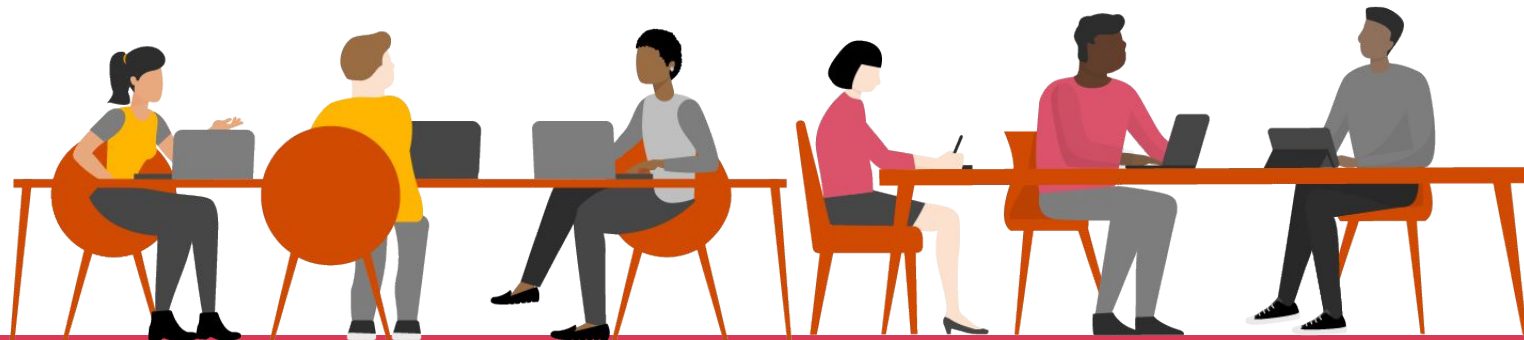
Check your spelling and grammar

You should take the same care with emails as you would with written letters. Using slang or shortened words, or missing out punctuation can look unprofessional.

Activity: practice time!

What makes a great email?

Imagine that you want to set up a meeting with a colleague to discuss the details of a project you are working on together. Write a brief but professional email to arrange the call.



Activity: practice time!

Example email:

To: simon.smith@joebloggs.com

Subject: Catch up

Dear Simon

I hope you are well. It was great to hear from you – thank you for your time.

Could we set up a meeting on this? Let me know when works best for you and we can arrange a call. It'd be great to discuss this in person, rather than by email.

If you have any further questions on this, don't hesitate to ask.

I look forward to speaking to you again.

Kind regards,

In pairs, discuss what you think makes this email effective. (2 minutes)

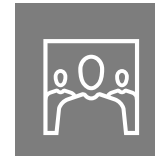
04

Workplace
conversations

Workplace conversations

- It has become easier to manage life without speaking to people, whether on the phone or in person - for example: chatbots, online FAQ pages, self-service checkouts.
- However, in the workplace, it is important that you feel comfortable and confident having conversations with not only your colleagues / team members but also people you may have never met or spoken to before.
- This is also an important skill when it comes to finding and applying for jobs.

Now, this is a chance for you to practise in a safe space!



Communicating professionally

Points to think about



Greeting

Think about how to begin the conversation. “Good Morning / Afternoon” might be more appropriate with someone you don’t know, whereas “Hi, how’s it going?” might be more appropriate if you are familiar with the person.



Building rapport

This means making a connection with someone else. Having a conversation with someone new can be stressful or awkward, so it is important to take time at the start of a conversation to build rapport before diving into the purpose of the conversation. You can build rapport by using “safe shared topics” for initial conversation. You should also consider your nonverbal communication (body language).



Tone and language

As with the greeting, consider the tone, language and level of formality required.



Purpose

This would form the main content of the conversation. Think about why you are speaking with this person and whether any particular topics need to be discussed.



Ending the conversation

Don’t end a conversation abruptly. Do you need to agree any actions or next steps? Say goodbye appropriately, again considering the relationship you have with the other person or people.



Activity: role play

One of the most important parts of communication is adapting to the environment you are in.

Work in pairs to role play the beginning of one of these three scenarios:

1. A 1:1 phone call with someone who you see regularly
2. A 1:1 phone call with someone who you have never met or spoken to before
3. A face to face meeting with someone who you have spoken to on the phone but never in person

For the phone calls, sit back to back.

When you are finished:

Discuss what you noted about how your style of communication changed. Did you alter your body language? Did you use different vocabulary?



05

Wrap up and
reflection

Wrap up

Every workplace will have a different style of communication, but key things to remember are:

- Be mindful of the situation: consider who you are speaking to, and how well you know them.
- Be aware of the impact that your body language and tone of voice may have on how you are perceived.
- Make sure that you are choosing the right forum for your communication.
- Be clear, concise, kind and polite.



Reflection

Reflect on the following questions

- What methods of communication are you most comfortable with?
- How do you adapt your communication style in different situations?
- What do you need to be aware of when communicating in person?



Thank you

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