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EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS. STYLES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Effective business communication skills are vital to successful co-worker and customer interactions. Speakers must learn to articulate their message in a way the listener can understand, delivering it in a manner that is consistent with the message itself. Serious issues are best delivered in a serious tone, but with regard to the known or potential reaction of the listener. The reaction of the listener to both good or bad news can be directly controlled by the speaker, as long as the word choice and delivery are carefully considered. One part of effective speaking is knowing your listeners and how they may react, or delivering your message in a generic fashion if the listeners are not known.

Active listening is practiced by both the speaker and listener in effective communication. Active listening on the listener's part involves eye contact, nods,

gestures and brief comments to show understanding. On the speaker's part, these gestures and comments are clues to the listener's reaction and comprehension. If the listener seems confused, the speaker may re-evaluate the wording or delivery of the message, and listeners must take it upon themselves to ask questions, validate what is being said and provide input if necessary.

Questions asked by both the speaker and listener must be of the open-ended type – those that cannot be answered by a yes or no. Open-ended questions encourage further communication, dialogue and understanding, and can help all involved in the conversation to further investigate and clarify the message.

In the modern business world, people communicate by text, phone, email, written correspondence and verbal communication. In effective communication, you must choose the communication method best suited for the message. Businesspeople who are articulate speakers may not be articulate writers, so the message in email and written correspondence can sometimes be misconstrued. The same goes for writers who can craft detailed communications in written form, but choke when it comes to verbalizing.

Learning to be eloquent with all forms of communication methods may not be the easiest task, but the effective communicator knows her limitations and chooses the medium to match the message.

The four widely accepted business communication styles are impromptu, memorized, manuscript and extemporaneous. Each style of business communication has certain distinguishing qualities that differentiate it from the other business communication styles. The presenters of each style of speaking usually possess an adequate amount of information to communicate successfully to the audience.

Impromptu style of business communication is basically speaking at the spur of the moment or delivering a speech without full preparation of a formal outline or manuscript. Impromptu speaking is spontaneous, and the speaker improvises a persuasive or informative presentation to business colleagues. Successful impromptu speakers are very familiar about the topic of the speech, and these speakers are able deliver an impromptu speech strategically and professionally.

Manuscript speaking is the opposite of impromptu speaking, and therefore the details of the speech are planned in advance. A manuscript speech is based on a well-prepared manuscript, and the speech is typically read from the full manuscript. The manuscript style of business communication is prevalent among politicians, chief executive officers and newscasters because of the widespread impact of the speech on its listeners. Most manuscript speeches become a part of official records and official proceedings. However, at times, presenters of manuscript speeches may fail to develop full interaction with the audience because of the lack eye contact and the inability to develop a conversational connection with the audience.

The extemporaneous style involves a well-prepared conversational type speech. Unlike the manuscript style, extemporaneous speakers tend to maintain eye contact and invite feedback from the audience. The basics of the speech are usually memorized; however, the speaker can refer to notes or an outline while speaking. Therefore, the manner and disposition of speech may slightly differ from the speech preparation, because the speaker is not reading the full speech from notes or a manuscript.

The memorized style of speech is rehearsed in advance by the speaker. The speaker delivers the speech without any notes. A memorized speech is effective when the speaker engages the audience and maintains eye contact with the audience.

Whether the speech is prepared in advanced or composed within a short period of time, the communication of the speech will be successful when the speaker has expert knowledge in the topic or performs valuable research to obtain a sufficient amount of information to communicate an effective speech to the audience.