Workplace Communication

Good communication is a key part of success in the workplace. However, for those who are new to the workforce, knowing how to communicate effectively can be challenging. Acceptable communication differs from company to company, but many aspects are universal. Here are a few tips to help you communicate effectively in the workplace.

Communication Works!

Listen - When you listen to others attentively it makes them feel good. It also makes for a deeper and more positive connection with others. In turn, you form an understanding and they will listen to you when it's your turn to speak. Poor listening happens often and results in misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Speak Clearly - Take a deep breath and remain positive when talking to people. Try to cut out the "ums," "uh-hmms" and "ahhs;" these make it difficult for people to understand what you're trying to communicate. Try to keep your voice steady and don't talk too quickly or too quietly. Be confident in what you're saying and others will feel your confidence too.

Be Receptive - Be open to what others are saying or offering. Often, people restrict the flow of ideas or communication because they're making too many assumptions or are being too quick to judge and criticize.

Have Intention - Ask yourself what your intention is before starting a project, going to a meeting, or speaking to someone. You can also ask others what their intentions are in similar situations. Knowing your intention will help you be more conscious of what you're doing or saying-- which means you'll be able to be more effective and skillful.

Be Genuine - Being genuine can include speaking honestly, expressing excitement or sadness when you feel like it, and being friendly. There is nothing wrong with saying, "no, I don't really agree with that," or "you know, I think you've changed my mind!" However, don't be rude. "I was just being honest" is not a good excuse for being harsh. Being genuine builds your confidence.

WOMEN WORK!
The National Network for Women's Employment

Communication Works! (cont.)

Proper Speech - When you're not exactly sure what kind of language is acceptable in the office, it is always safer to be more formal than not. Try not to use words like "ain't" and "y'all" or any others that might be acceptable with friends, but not in the workplace. Formality in speech should also be used in your e-mails and memos.

Learn When to Say No - Learn to work on your own goals. The art of saying no is a valuable thing. Often women are asked to "help out" with projects and tasks even when they will not get credit for their help. A key to avoiding this dilemma is to recognize which are important goals for you to accomplish and which are tasks that will not help you gain recognition for your work. Don't let others guilt-trip you into helping with sayings such as, "you'll be a team player;" think of yourself first. If you decide to help, you always have the right to say "O.K. I'll help this time, but next time I need help, I hope you'll be there for me."

For More Information

Communicate Clearly by Robert Heller and Tim Hindle

How to Say It for Women: Communicating Confidence and Power Using the Language of Success by Phyllis Mindell, Ed.D.

Mars and Venus in the Workplace: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting Results at Work by John Gray, Ph.D.

For a great article on workplace communication go to www.ehow.com and search "How to use appropriate business language"

For an interesting article on communication gaps between generations go to www.usatoday.com and search "Today's generations face new communication gaps"