Communication Skills for Managers

AIA
Continuing
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Provider

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Questions related to specific materials, methods, and services will be addressed at the conclusion of this presentation.

Course Description

This course enables participants to use their knowledge of basic influencing skills to improve their communication based on a new understanding of their personality type. Each participant will learn techniques to improve their communication with co-workers and their supervisor. Each participant will develop a plan for improving their working relationship with their immediate supervisor. The course also involves interaction with other participants to facilitate management of work groups, leading meetings, communicating with groups, and working with delivery of both good and bad news.

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the impact of communication in the work environment
- Identify common management communication breakdowns
- Identify solutions to improve communications
- Apply what you have learned to your future communications

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Skills Identified

15%

Technical Skills

85%

Communication Skills
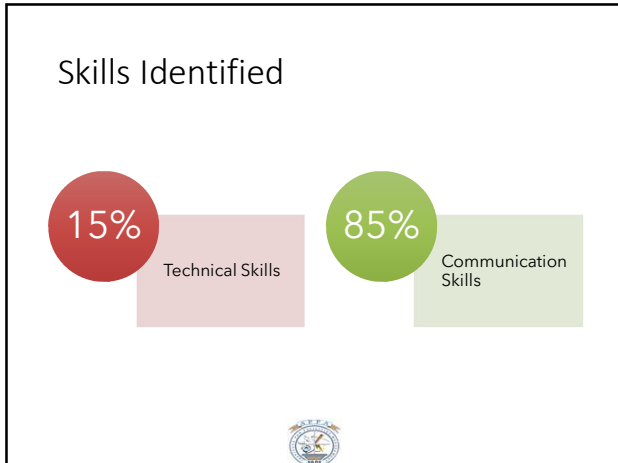
Value of Communication Skills

- Most important life skill
- Foundation for everything
- Primary reason for business success...or failure
- Live with it every day
- Lays foundation for understanding upon which to build a mutually respectful relationship

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Introductions

introduce yourself

- Name
- Primary work responsibility
- Share a communication issue you are experiencing

Why We Communicate

TO INFORM
to communicate knowledge, information acquaint, advise, brief, educate, enlighten, familiarize, illuminate, instruct, relate, teach, tell, warn update

TO INSPIRE
to stimulate, motivate, encourage, stir, instigate, enthuse, move, arouse

TO INFLUENCE
to leverage, power, authority, access, command, control, direct, dominate, force, guide, impact, lead, leverage, sway

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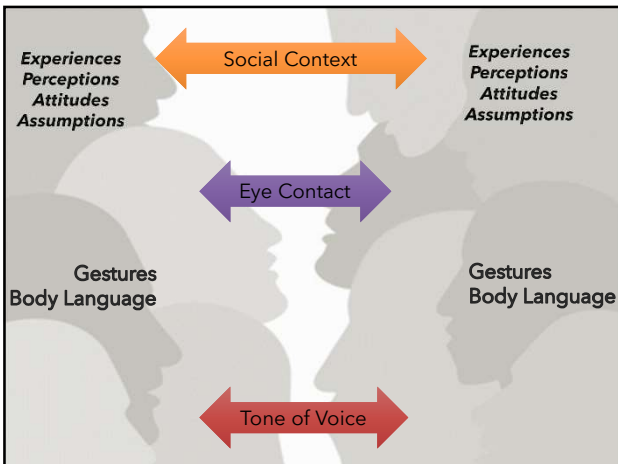**To Inform**

To impart information
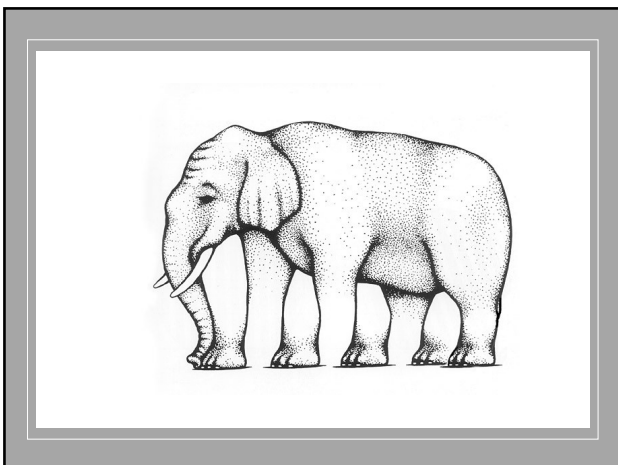To make someone aware of something

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To Inspire

To encourage somebody to greater effort, enthusiasm or creativity

To arouse a particular feeling in somebody
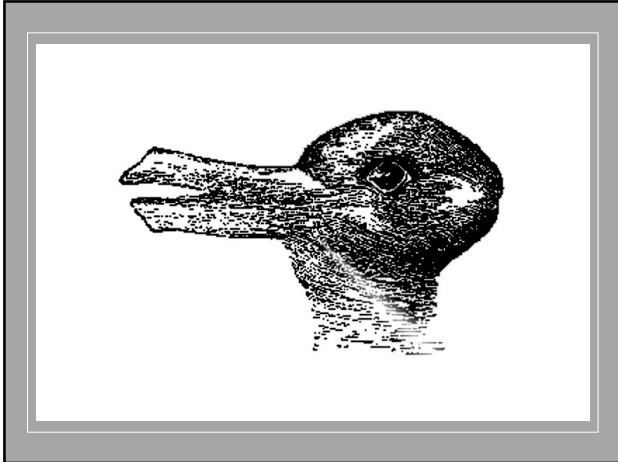
To stimulate somebody to do something

To Influence

To affect, control or manipulate something or someone

To change the development of such things as conduct, thoughts or decisions

To cause change

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Experiences Perceptions Attitudes Assumptions

Social Context

Experiences Perceptions Attitudes Assumptions

Eye Contact

Gestures Body Language

Gestures Body Language

Tone of Voice

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Your Reality

Each person has a different perspective

The brain filters reality through experience, beliefs, education and imprints a new reality

Each person's reality is different

Remember

Understanding someone's perception *does not* mean agreement

Don't try to convince the person their perception is wrong

Respect the other person's perception

Communication Methods

Match the form of communication with the person

Consider the best form for the message

Who needs the information?

What is the most effective method?

Is the information sensitive or complex?

Is the information confidential?

✥ Remember

Sensitive information should NEVER be sent via email

Sensitive information is best shared in person

Gauge your audience's knowledge of subject when selecting the method

Sharing complex information in person allows for questions for clarity

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Communication Methods
Most common in the workplace

Audio
- Phone call
- Voicemail
- Conference call

Visual
- Email
- Note
- Printed report

Kinesthetic
- Scheduled meeting
- Drop by visit
- Demonstration

Best Method

- Performance appraisal
- Department goals that affect the whole team
- Meeting time and place for a birthday lunch with 10 coworkers
- Notifying employees of departure of coworker
- Solving a problem with coworkers at different locations
- Letting someone know you stopped by
- Sharing details of a new product
- Detailed information requested by coworker
- Follow-up on details of phone conversation

Avoid Defensiveness

Stop and check	Stop and check your reaction
Listen	Listen objectively
Ask	Ask questions
Try	Try not to interrupt
Get	Get all the information
Remember	Remember perception is not necessarily the intention

Share Information

Shared knowledge is power

Sharing information fosters trust

Share what you know to avoid frustration of others

Remember

- Critical to efficiency
- Critical for success
- Morale of the organization
- Can affect the safety and well-being of others
- Pass on information to everyone who needs it

Be Direct

Sharing information clearly and in a timely manner

Be aware of your tone of voice and other nonverbal cues

Communicate in language everyone can understand

The Message

10% WORDS   **30% TONE OF VOICE**   **60% BODY LANGUAGE**

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XYZ Method

| X = The behavior involved | Y = Your feelings about the behavior | Z = The behavior you prefer |
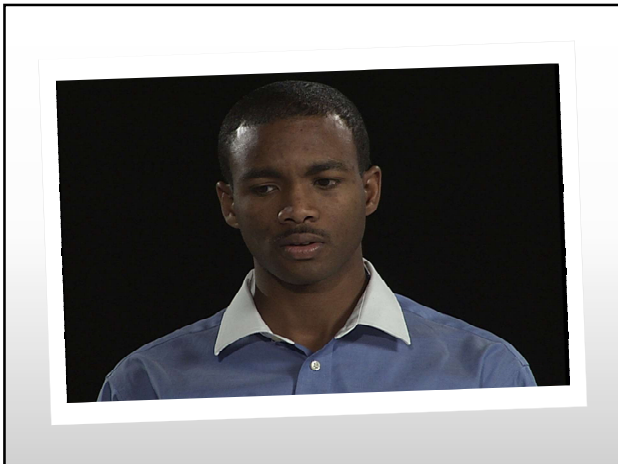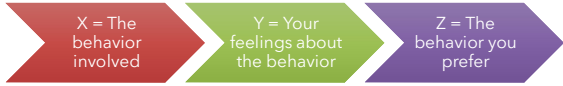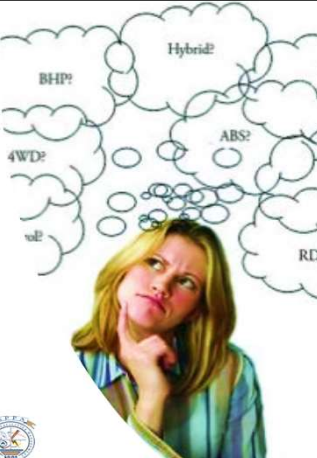
» *When you (X) it makes me feel (Y). Would you (Z) instead?*

Jargon

Type of shorthand between members of a particular group of people, often words that are meaningless outside of a certain context.

Hybrid?
BHP?
ABS?
4WD?
RD

Jargon Free

Understand
Use language others will understand

Avoid
Avoid overly technical words and phrases

Speak
Speak directly

Maintain Confidentiality

Stop
Stop the grapevine

Avoid
Avoid sharing gossip

Ask
Ask for confidentiality

Active Listening

Listening with a purpose

- to gain information
- obtain directions
- understand others
- solve problems
- share interest
- see how another person feels
- show support

Active Listening Techniques

Clarify	Clarify – what do you mean by…? *What do you mean when you say…?*
Reflect	Reflect – the feeling behind the words *You seem, happy, frustrated, confused…*
Paraphrase	Paraphrase – what they said in your own words *So what you are saying is…*
Check	Check for understanding – like paraphrasing but really checking for meaning *What I heard you say was… or Are you saying…?*

Listen

Set aside	**Focus on**	**Be**	**Seek**	**Make**	**Check**
Set aside internal dialogue	Focus on the other person	Be aware of tone of voice and body language	Seek understanding of feelings, emotions and words	Make listening noises	Check your interpretation of the message

Action Plan

»Think of a communication you will have soon when back at work. It can be something as simple as a one on one meeting, presentation or as complex as a large group meeting or formal presentation.

»What is your objective?

»What are those things you especially want to focus on to present yourself as effectively as possible?

In Review

Each person perceives a situation based on his reality	Choose the best communication method	Respond objectively, not defensively
Share information that affects the work of others	Be honest and professional in your communications	Don't share confidential information
Listen to fully understand what is being communicated		

Thank You!

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This concludes The American Institute of Architects Continuing Education Systems Course

How Good Am I at Sending a Message?

Directions: For each statement, circle one number from 1 to 5. A rating of 5 represents behavior you use regularly. A rating of 1 represents behavior used seldom if ever. The assessment is for you alone, be honest with yourself!

	Use regularly				*Use seldom if ever*
1. I think through my message objective and develop my thoughts before speaking.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I consider the demographic characteristics of the listener when framing a message.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I evaluate factors that will make my communication believable to my audience.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I think about any personal motivations of the listener to which I can appeal.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I choose a time, place and setup in which to communicate in order to carefully minimize distractions.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I think about my body language to make sure it supports the message content.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I observe the listener carefully for signs of in attention and negative reactions and adjust my message accordingly.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I ask open-information and open-ended questions to ensure that the listener heard the message in the way it was intended.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I think about my areas of greatest personal power and influence with the listener to utilize those in conveying the message.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I mentally note the major points I need to make and develop them in logical sequence for presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I consider the listener's level of subject knowledge and plan the message in line with that knowledge level.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I develop appropriate analogies and example to clarify the message.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I present one thought or idea completely before beginning another.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I seek periodic feedback from the receiver to ensure that the message is being heard and understood.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I consider my tone of voice and use volume and tone to emphasize key points of the message.	5	4	3	2	1

Total the numbers circled and write the sum in the space provided. *Total Score _____*

A score between 60-75 suggests that you approach communication situations well prepared to ensure that you message is heard. Scores between 46-59 are good, but you may want to examine specific areas where improvement could enhance your effectiveness. A score of 45 or below reflects some need to evaluate how you send messages and to identify specific skills needing improvement.

Communication Preferences

Directions: Answer the questions below about yourself and how you prefer to be communicated with based on your MBTI.

1. How could someone effectively teach you something or instruct you about something?

2. For what do you most want to be appreciated and/or recognized? How do you want this appreciation and/or recognition shown?

3. When someone wants you to change your behavior/ideas, how should they approach you so that you are likely to respond positively? What behaviors on the other person's part would most likely get a negative response from you?

4. In what ways do other people communicate that really bugs you?

When You Say Red, I Think Rose

Directions: Write the first thing that comes to mind when you read each of the following words.

1. Blue

    _____

2. Water

    _____

3. Man

    _____

4. Good

    _____

5. Information

    _____

6. Perception

    _____

7. Emotion

    _____

8. Work

    _____

9. Communicate

    _____

10. Listen

    _____

Choose the Method

Directions: For each of the following scenarios, choose the best communication method or methods.

Scenario	Method(s)
Performance Appraisal	
Department goals that affect the whole team	
Meeting time and place for a celebration lunch	
Notifying employees of the departure of a coworker	
Solving a problem with coworkers at different locations	
Letting someone know you stopped by	
Sharing details of a new process or service	
Detailed information requested by a coworker	
Follow-up details of a phone conversation	
Change in leadership in the organization	

Nonverbal Cues

Eye Contact

The eyes are the most powerful means of communication we possess. The power of the eyes is at its greatest, of course, when two people are looking directly at each other. This is usually called mutual gaze, or eye contact. Eye contact can be long-lasting or short in duration, direct or indirect, intermittent or continuous.

Rules of Eye Contact
- Too much eye contact is unsettling for most people. It is generally regarded as communicating superiority, lack of respect, a threat or a threatening attitude, or a wish to insult.

- Too little eye contact is interpreted as a communicator's not paying attention, being impolite, being insincere, showing dishonesty, or being shy. Withdrawing eye contact by lowering the eyes is usually taken as a signal of submission.

- A person will look at another person a lot when they are placed far apart; when they are discussing impersonal or easy topics; when one person is interested in the other and the other's reactions; when one person likes or loves the other; when one person is trying to dominate or influence the other; when one person is an extrovert; when one person is dependent on the other and the other has been unresponsive.

- A person will look at another person very little when they are placed close together; when they are discussing intimate or difficult topics; when one person is not interested in the other's reactions; when one does not like the other person; when one person is of higher status than the other; when one person is an introvert.

- People will communicate with each other most effectively if their interaction contains the amount of eye contact that they *both* find appropriate to the situation. Uses of Eye Contact Most uses of eye contact can be grouped into six categories. We establish eye contact to do the following:

  1. Seek information. We seek clues about whether someone is telling us the truth; whether someone likes us; whether the other person is paying attention to or understanding
  what we say; what a person's state of mind is.
  2. Show attention and interest. Our looking at another for longer than a few seconds shows our interest in them.
  3. Invite and control interaction. Eye contact is used in synchronizing conversation. Looking at another occurs more in listening than speaking. Eye contact signals the end of an utterance.
  4. Dominate, threaten, and influence others. Long, unflickering looks usually adversely affect communication.
  5. Provide feedback during speech. Both speaker and listener use eye contact to feed back mutual attention.
  6. Reveal attitudes. Aggression, shame, sorrow, excitement, anger, and other emotions exhibit individual patterns of eye contact.

Steps to Improve Eye Contact
- Become more observant. Pay more attention to where others are looking and for how long. Pay attention to pupil dilation. Dilated pupils equate to greater interest and attraction.

- Engage in more eye contact to promote greater liking and positive responses.

- On most occasions, a direct, open gaze is preferable to any hint of avoidance of eye contact or tendency to look quickly from one thing to another.

- Increase your sensitivity to the kinds and amounts of eye contact appropriate in different contexts.

Facial Expressions

The expressiveness of the face is second only to that of the eyes; therefore, people's emotional states and attitudes toward others can be clearly seen in their expressions. Often the face is the first part of a person we look at, and thus expressions are frequently used in greetings. Both facial expressions and head movements are powerful in controlling the type and amount of communication that takes place.

Given the number of muscles in the face, the range of facial expressions is very wide. Many subtleties in changes of expression exist, but research has shown that there are six principal facial expressions that people interpret consistently. These are happiness, sadness, disgust, anger, fear, and interest.

- *Smiles* - These are wide-ranging, but can be categorized as slight smiles, normal smiles, and broad smiles (including grins). Normally used as a greeting gesture and to indicate varying degrees of pleasure, amusement, and happiness, smiles can also show aggression, sarcasm, and other negative feelings.
- *Sadness* - No single expression typifies sadness, but usual indicators are lack of expression, downward turn of the corners of the mouth, a downward look, and sagging of the features.
- *Disgust* - Disgust is shown by narrowing of the eyes and a grimacing mouth. The nose will also be wrinkled up and the head turned aside.
- *Anger* - Anger is characterized by a steady gaze, frowning or scowling, and gritting of the teeth. Some people go pale when angry; others go red. The whole-body posture is tense.
- *Fear* - No single expression typifies this emotion, but fear may be shown in wide open eyes, an open mouth, or a general trembling affecting the face and the body. There may be paleness and perspiration.
- *Interest* - Interest is indicated by the "head cock" (head held at an angle), wider open eyes than normal, and a slightly open mouth. When a person is seated, his or her chin may be propped up by the fingers if listening attentively.

Head Movements

Appropriate head movements complement facial expressions and eye contact and can reinforce a message.

- *Head Nod* - A nod is the most obvious and frequently used head movement. Large nods (strong up and down movement) usually signify agreement, while slight nods typically indicate understanding or attentiveness. Studies have shown that head nods by a listener generate up to three or four times more speech from the speaker than normal. Nodding is also important to add emphasis to key phrases when speaking. Along with nods, sweeps to one side and chin thrusts are used as stressors when speaking. A directional nod can be used to point in situations where finger pointing would be rude.

- *Head Position* - The position of one's head can be interpreted to express an attitude. Holding the head high with a slight backward tilt is often interpreted as indicating a haughty or aggressive attitude. A lowered head usually signifies submissiveness, humility, or depression. A head tilt or head cock is used when listening to show interest or to gain attention. Studies have shown some gender differences in the use of head movements.

The tilted head in greeting and a lowered head are used more often by women than men. Men use the greeting nod more than women. Men also more commonly use the head swivel, whereby the head turns to look at something newly observed. Head movements can express attitudes and it may therefore be better, unless one wants to appear humble, to hold the head erect. This also encourages good posture, which itself conveys confidence and a positive attitude.

Gestures and Body Movements

It is the use of gestures to convey meaning that most people think of when they talk about "body language," and this category of body language permits the widest degree of expressiveness. On the other hand, many movements in this category are open to differing interpretation, based largely on one's cultural background and learning. There are a number of conventional gestures with almost universal meaning. Examples are shaking the fist in anger, clapping to signify approval, raising a hand to gain attention, and patting someone on the back in encouragement. Following are some general principles regarding gestures:

- Gestures become more deliberate and exaggerated with increasing distance. Indoor gestures are more controlled and subtle than those used outdoors.
- Gestures often differ greatly depending on the user's gender, age (adult vs. child), and social class.
- Work settings produce different gestures than leisure contexts.

Gestures that Influence Communication
- *Steepling* - In this gesture, fingertips are placed together in a prayer-like position, but with palms apart. This gesture signifies a feeling of confidence.

- *Gestural Echo* - In a conversational group, when one person uses a gesture, others will "echo" that gesture by using it later. This can indicate a feeling of identity with the speaker.

- *Gestural Synchrony* - When someone speaks, his or her bodily movements keep pace in a kind of dance with the rhythms of speech. Listeners' movements also dance to the same "tune" as the speaker's.

- *Amount of Movement* - Perceptions of drive and enthusiasm are related to amount of body movement. Research shows that active people with many nonverbal movements are described as warm, more casual, agreeable, and energetic. People using few movements are described as more logical, cold, and analytical.

- *Gestural Leakage* - People trying to conceal some attitude or information may "leak" their discomfort. An inexpressive face may be given away by a foot twitch or tap, which belies the feel in gs the speaker is trying to conceal. Leakage usually occurs in the lower half of the body, probably because people take more trouble to control facial expressions.

- *Leave-Taking Rituals* - Studies show that in the last minutes of an encounter, whoever seeks to end it will break eye contact, lean forward, and nod frequently. The peak of this activity occurs in the last fifteen seconds before the end of the conversation. Frustration will be experienced by that person if he or she is not released from the discussion, since the whole sequence must be repeated when again seeking to end the conversation.

- *Persuasive Gestures* - Open and positive gestures and body movements are more influential when seeking to persuade someone to your point of view. Experiments show that openness and confidence, as exemplified by uncrossed legs, unfolded and

open arms, palms-outward gestures, and the like, are more potent than folded arms and tightly crossed legs.

- *Gesture Similarity* - When two people in conversation use the same kind of gestures and movements, they will perceive themselves as being similar and will like each other better. Similarities in styles may provide a background of rapport that will facilitate better communications.

Overall, when using gestures, you should consider the context carefully to be sure the gesture is appropriate. Bear in mind that people from different parts of the world may understand a gesture to mean something very different from what you intend.

Posture and Stance

We each have a repertoire of postures that we characteristically use, though these repertoires are quite limited. It is possible for us to recognize people we know at a distance from the postures they typically use. Posture can be a clue to personality in that a person who typically holds his or her body erect often has a different temperament from one who slouches with rounded shoulders. Some factors to consider about posture follow:

- Walking with an erect posture will lead others to interact with you more and to respond with greater warmth and friendliness. Since this posture is commonly used by naturally dominant individuals, you may find your point of view accepted more readily.
- Posture observation is useful, particularly before an encounter begins, as it can guide you in determining what might be a productive approach toward another person. Postures have the advantage that they can be accurately observed at some distance (unlike facial expressions, for example). Assessing one's state of mind as hopeful or depressed, confident or shy can be a real asset.
- A relaxed attitude in an encounter is signaled by asymmetrical arm and leg positions, a sideways lean, loosely held hands, and a backward body lean. This posture is most frequently used when someone regards others present as equal or lower in status. Less relaxed postures are used when the others present are disliked. When people like each other, they tend to lean toward each other.
- Equality of status is often indicated by matching postures; that is, participants in an encounter show remarkable similarity in the postures they adopt. Conversely, there can be postural conflict, in which people deliberately adopt postures different from those assumed by others. This is usually done to emphasize differences and to place "distance" between one person and another.

Proximity and Orientation
How we use space when communicating has a direct impact on our interactions. How close we are to people and whether we are facing toward them or away can affect the way our message is perceived.

Four comfort zones have been identified:
- 0 to 1ft   **Intimate Zone** - people are touching or easily able to touch
- 1 to 4 ft   **Personal Zone** - people are able to shake hands or are at most arms' length away
- 4 to 10 ft   **Social Zone** - used in everyday encounters of a social or business nature
- 10+ ft   **Public Zone** - where interaction may or may not occur

Sometimes personal space is deliberately invaded by others. Such unwanted closeness is almost always perceived as threatening. When women are talking to one another, they will tend to stand closer and use a more direct orientation than will men who are talking together. The more direct the degree of orientation, the more attention is normally being paid. If an indirect orientation is used, this will usually mean less involvement in the conversation.

- People behave differently when standing rather than sitting. When standing, thought tends to result more readily in action, but is less responsive to new suggestions and a close examination of a topic. Decisions are made faster and with more vehemence when standing.
- Sitting side-by-side will foster a collaborative relationship. More competition between people will be encouraged by seating them facing each other. Seating at a right angle is encouraged in more formal, "cooperative" settings where the purpose is to obtain or give information and opinions, such as an interview.

In Summary

Directions: Circle true or false for each statement.

1. By improving your communication skills, you'll become more effective at work.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

2. When several people hear the same conversation, each person's perception will be the same.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

3. Understanding someone's perspective means agreeing with it.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

4. Email is always the best way to communicate since it takes little time to send and others can read it when they have time.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

5. When you find yourself responding defensively, you should listen for the objective content in the message and ask questions to make sure you understood what was said.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

6. The XYZ Method is a practical way to handle conflict.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

7. Your tone of voice and body language can send an entirely different message from the actual words you say.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

8. It's ok to share confidential information with unauthorized people if they are told it is confidential.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

9. Selective listening means paying attention only to the things that interest us.

   TRUE   **FALSE**

10. When "listening for understanding," you should think of the questions you want to ask the speaker while he is still talking so you'll be ready to respond.

   TRUE   **FALSE**