

Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Enhancing Communication Skills

April 4, 2023

A woman with dark, curly hair is smiling broadly and shaking hands with another person whose back is to the camera. The woman is wearing a purple blazer over a white shirt and a necklace. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor space.

Welcome!

Introduction



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People First HR is a leading provider of human resource solutions for Canadian businesses.

People First HR is a division of People Corporation, a national provider of group benefits and retirements services.

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A division of People Corporation





What is effective communication?

Effective communication is when the receiver interprets the sender's message in the same way the sender intends it.

Effective communication

- Effective interactions with employees, co-workers and the community require strong communication
- It's essential for employees and members of council to learn how to communicate effectively with each other and the public

Did You Know...

It takes less than 7 seconds to make a first impression



What triggers poor communication?

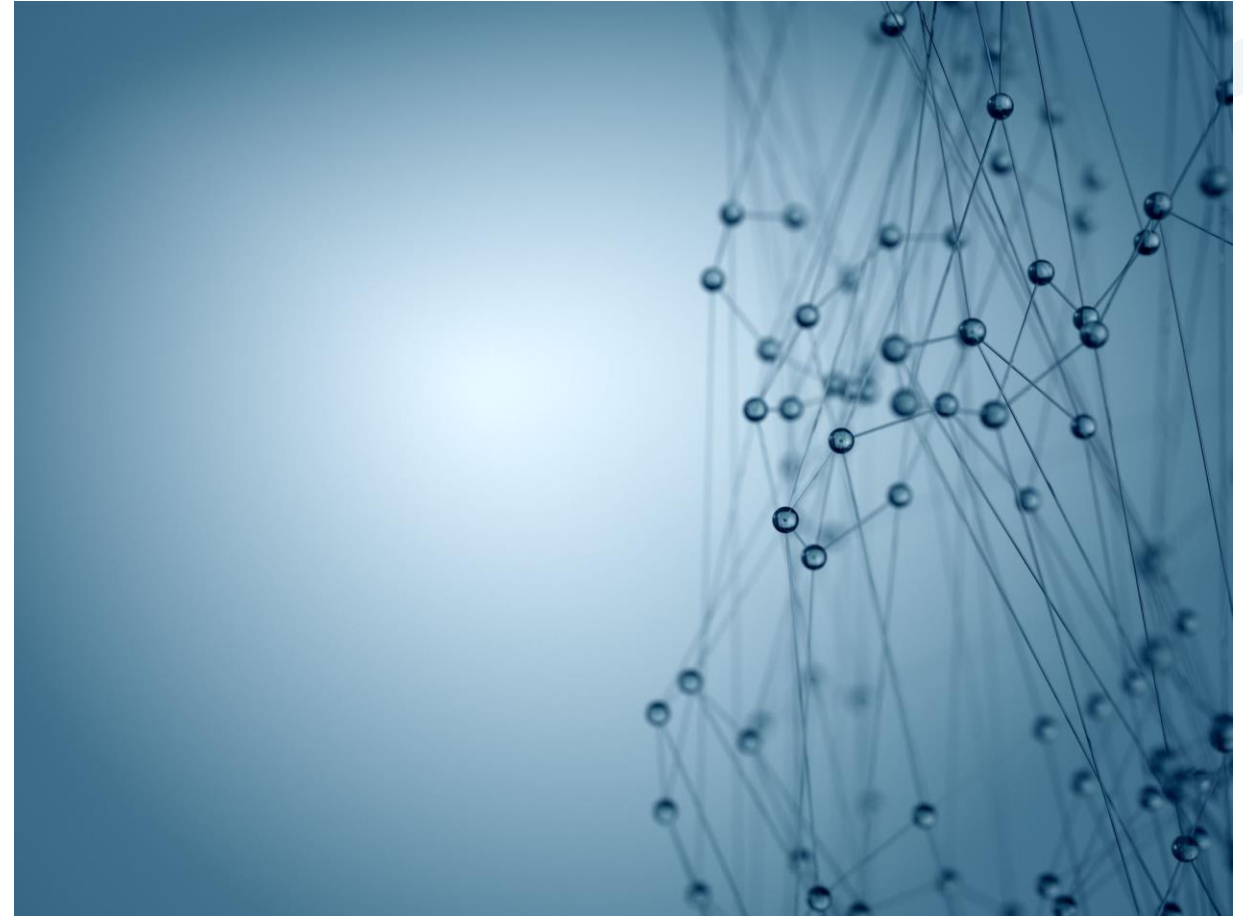
- Unclear language
- Using jargon, technical terms or slang
- Inappropriate body language
- Emotions
- Not listening



Connecting through effective
communication

Connecting with Community

- Local government is playing a bigger role as the go-to source for information, news and updates
- Many municipalities have had to shift how they communicate, activating social media, emails and websites
- Messaging matters – it's not just the information you deliver, it's how you deliver it



Communication fosters trust



Engage in clear
communication



Be credible



Listen



Demonstrate
empathy



Be mindful of
your tone &
body language



Engage in clear communication

When communicating with another person, be aware of your tone, language and body language



Allow the person to share their experience



Actively listen to what they are saying



Be curious – ask questions for clarification



Paraphrase




Discuss



Conclusion

Be credible

- Credibility in communication is comprised of:
 - Likeability of an individual
 - Competency
 - Self-awareness
 - Ability to manage expectations
 - Experience and qualifications



Credibility is more than having better qualifications than others, it's about having:

- Passion
- Honesty
- Integrity

Listen actively



Be curious - questions for clarification

Why do you think this is happening

What might be contributing to the situation

What is your preferred outcome

What do you think is at the root of the issue/problem

How is this affecting your municipality

What other information do you need



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Paraphrasing

This is the process of repeating what you heard using different words. Paraphrasing provides clarity and confirms your understanding of what is being said

Examples

- This is my understanding of your needs...
- What do you mean when you say...
- Is this what you mean...
- What I hear you saying is...
- If I understand what you are saying...



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Demonstrate empathy



- Empathy acknowledges feelings and shows you care
- Creates a safe space to share
- Develops trust and rapport

It's OK to say "I'm sorry"

- This acknowledges feelings
 - *"I'm so sorry that this has caused you so much frustration"*
- I'm sorry does have to imply fault
- Develops trust and rapport
- Helps resolve conflict

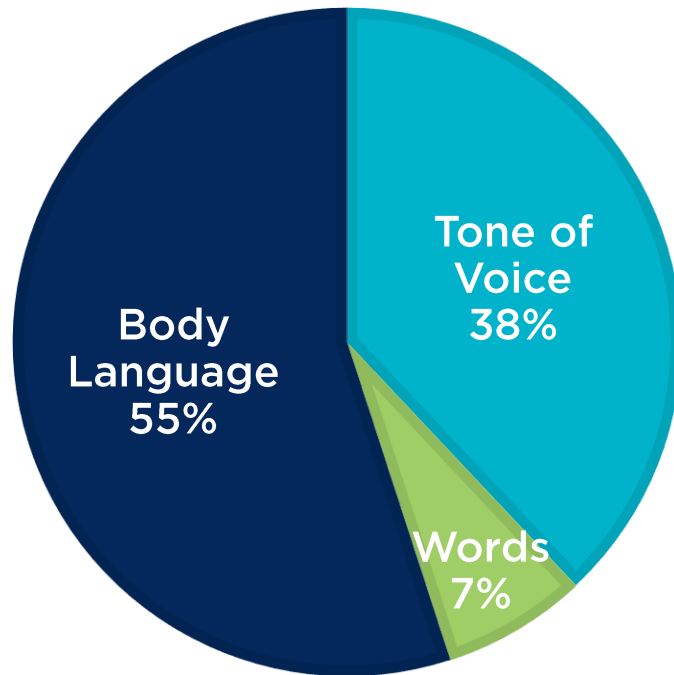


It's not what you say, it's how you say it

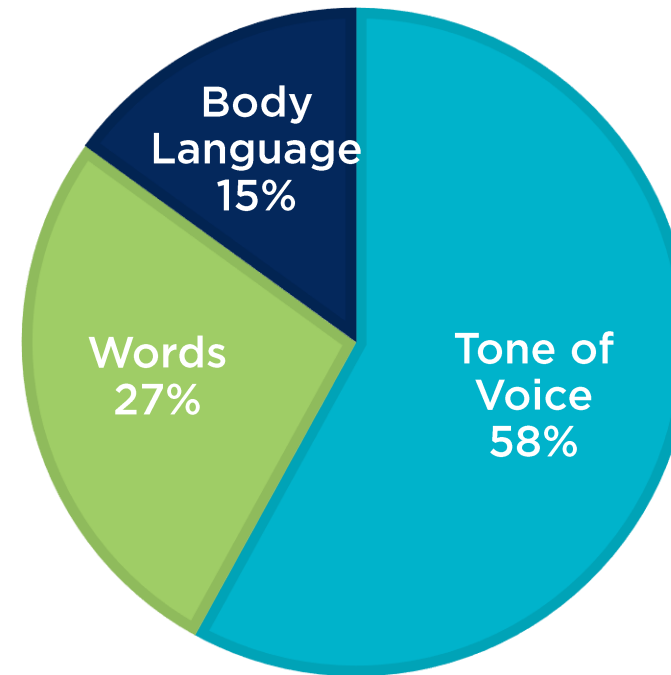


- Your tone conveys your emotions and thoughts
- Tone will clarify meaning of the words being spoken
- Think about how your tone can change the meaning/interpretation of the following:
 - “I’m fine”

Importance of tone & body language




Face to Face



Over the Phone

10% of conflict is
due to difference
of opinion.

90% is due to
delivery and
tone of voice.

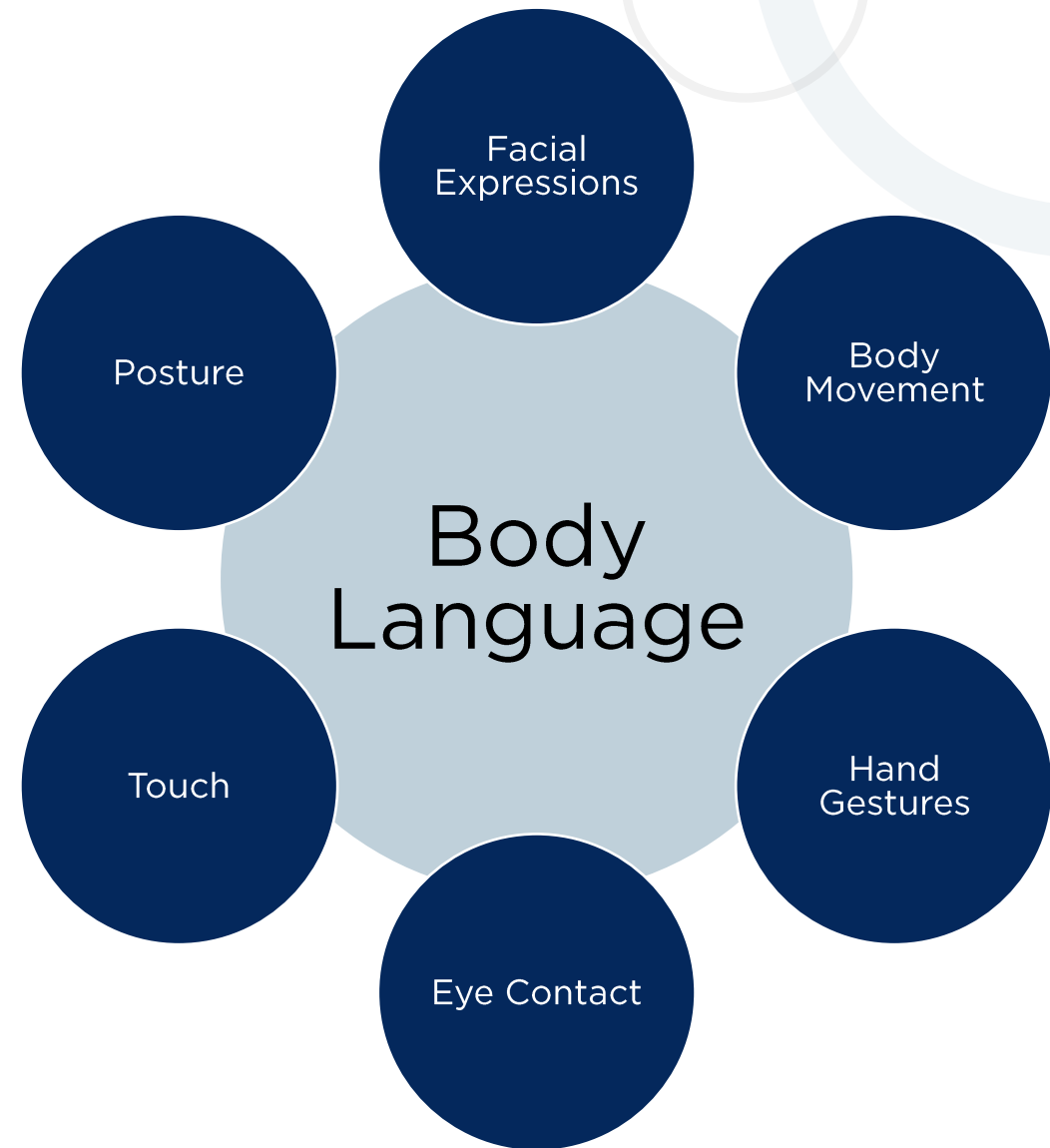


**It's not what
you say...**

(It's how you say it.)

Body language

- Positive body language conveys interest, care, and friendliness
- Negative body language conveys disinterest, boredom, and unhappiness
- Positive body language will ensure that your customers walk away with a positive impression of you and the company





Managing challenges in communication

Roadblocks in Communication

Assuming
information

Misinterpreting
words

Ineffective
listening

Distractions in
the
environment

Distractions
within you

Distractions
from the other
person

Differences in
our values &
beliefs

Differences in
culture

Attitudes &
perceptions

Words and
tone are not
aligned

Not ready to
resolve the
issue



External Barriers

- Consider the environment you are working in:
 - Is it noisy
 - Are there physical distractions
- Is the other person participating in the discussion?
- Is the other person taking out their frustrations on you?
- Are you understanding what is being asked?
- Are there language difficulties?
- Are you familiar with what they are talking about?



Internal Barriers

Being tired or not feeling well

Being distracted by what's happening for you personally

Emotional reactions to the situation

Biases

Jumping to conclusions

Multi-tasking



How to Respond When You Don't Know the Answer



Ask relevant questions and gather the facts



Advise that you need to do some additional research and will get back to them



If appropriate, let them know that you want to take some time to consider all the facts before responding to ensure that you are providing them with the best advice or answer



In complex situations, let them know that you have an experienced team that you would like to consult with



Always let the person know when they can expect a response from you



Other suggestions.....

Tips for Effective Communication

Keep it simple

Speak clearly

Don't be distracted

Listen for understanding

Tailor your message

Ask questions

Paraphrase

Clarify for understanding

Use basic language – avoid jargon

Take notes

Consider your non-verbal cues

A close-up photograph of a leaf, tinted with a blue color. The leaf's venation is clearly visible, showing a network of veins. There are several dark, irregular spots on the leaf, likely due to damage or disease. A dark blue rectangular box is positioned in the lower-left corner, containing the text "Questions?".

Questions?



Thank you!

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