



Asking the right questions

Asking the right question is key to effective communication. Use these different types of questions as tools that help you produce different results.

Fact questions involve data. They gather information: who, what, where, how much?

- i.e. *“What kind of computer equipment are you now using?”*
“How much training did staff receive at the start?”

Opinion questions seek subjective information about opinions, feelings, values, and beliefs. They help you understand views and usually contain words like “think” or “feel.”

- i.e. *“How do you feel about the effectiveness of the new equipment?”*
“Do you think the staff felt they received enough training?”

Say-more questions can reveal more about what the participants are saying. They encourage the speaker to provide more details.

- i.e. *“Tell me more?” “Can you elaborate on that?”*
“Can you be more specific?”

Best/worst or pro/con questions establish opportunities. They let you test the outer limits of participants’ wants and needs.

- i.e. *“What is the best thing about receiving a new computer?”*
“What is the worst thing about the new equipment?”

The "other guy" or third-party questions divulge thoughts in an indirect manner. These help people express sensitive information.

- i.e. *“Some people find that computer training is too time-consuming. How does that sound to you?”*
“There is some concern about overly autocratic managers in many factories. Can you relate to that concern?”

“Crystal ball” or “blue sky” questions help remove barriers and explore true desires. This helps people set their sights on excellence.

- i.e. *“If time and money were no obstacle, what sort of a computer system would you design for the department/”*



Types of Communication

Passive: *Not fully participating or contributing*

- ✓ Not asking questions
- ✓ Going with the flow
- ✓ Stating desires vs. needs
- ✓ Sarcasm – being flip with others
- ✓ Not bothering to share information- people won't read/understand it anyway.
- ✓ Avoiding expressing your opinions or feelings

Aggressive: *Being overly demanding and controlling. "If you don't like it, tough."*

- ✓ Always right/feels superior
- ✓ Interrupts others
- ✓ Talks over others
- ✓ Critical
- ✓ Disrespectful
- ✓ Puts others down

Direct/Proactive: What is direct or pro-active communication?

making the effort to communicate even if the other person does not.

- ✓ It means WE make the effort to communicate, even if the other person does not.
- ✓ We use "I Statements" to communicate what we feel, need, want clearly, appropriately and respectfully.
- ✓ And it means working on our own inter-personal communication skills.
- ✓ We use appropriate tone and volume to communicate

Examples of (direct) pro-active communication:

- ✓ Meet with your neighbors, one to one, to learn their concerns and get to know them as people.
- ✓ Make a phone call, inviting a member to a meeting.
- ✓ Develop your own interpersonal communication skills. (Communication is 2/3 listening, 1/3 talking.)

- ✓ Learn to respond. Don't just react.
- ✓ Call someone up when there's something bothering you or something you don't understand. Don't wait until the next meeting to bring up your question/concern.
- ✓ Explain budget to members at annual/special meetings- hold information sessions.
- ✓ Hold coffee house meetings – open forum- pick a topic, invite ROC-NH staff to assist in planning, as needed.

Open and honest communication (a.k.a communicating ethically)

DO	DON'T
Reject gossip.	Don't spread rumors before you investigate the facts.
Reject negative talking about others and/or the co-op.	Don't speak negatively about others and/or the co-op.
Be clear about what you need.	Don't be vague in your communications.
Ask permission before sharing someone's personal information or story.	Don't tell other people's stories. Just because they told you does not mean you can tell others.
Double-check and ask for clarification.	Don't assume you understand exactly what the others are saying.
Pay attention to your non-verbal communication cues.	Don't ignore your non-verbal communication cues.
Be respectful even when others are not.	Don't jump right into a conversation gone awry and fuel the fire.
Take responsibility for your actions. Apologize when needed.	Don't avoid others when you know you have not communicated ethically.
Share important information with others.	Don't create in and out groups by being secretive and holding back information.
Include everyone in the conversation.	Don't assume that if others are not participating in the conversation that they don't have anything to say.
Include people with disabilities, who are hard of hearing, who are elderly, and those who speak English as a second language.	Don't exclude others who are different than you in the conversation.
Listen for what others are trying to say. Shut off the voice inside of your head which is preparing your next statement.	Don't prepare what you are going to say while the other person is still speaking.
Speak respectfully to others.	Don't use inappropriate language.
If you have something to say to another person, say it directly to him or her.	Don't talk behind someone's back.
Watch your body language.	Don't ignore the importance of using positive body language cues.
Assume the other person is growing and learning too. We all make mistakes, so give others leeway when it's appropriate.	Don't assume that others are proficient communicators and close your mind to allowing mistakes.
Choose an appropriate setting and time for your discussion.	Don't think through the appropriate time and/or place for important conversations.
Avoid interrupting.	Don't blurt out your opinion; assume <i>you</i> are right and that your point is more valid than others'.



Additional Resources – Communication

Please note: If you would prefer this document electronically so you that you can click on the links instead of searching or typing them in, please email us and we'll send it!

History Channel – Secrets of Body Language – this is a 90-minute video

(Link below, or search www.google.com for History Channel Secrets of Body Language)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dW9ztSUGY_Q

Dealing With Difficult People vs. Them Dealing With You! – Dr. Bill Crawford, PhD.

4 short videos: Search www.YouTube.com for “Dr. Bill Crawford Dealing with Difficult People Vs Them Dealing with You”, or visit:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgnAY_eXYbI (After you click on this first one, the other 3 in the series will be off on the right.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h7cmuRLwME>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-AJviZ8Itk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM4u26KbEA8>

Effective Communication in the Workplace (can be relevant to Co-op Boards as well and discusses email etiquette, meeting etiquette and speaker phone abuse)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM4u26KbEA8>



Understanding nonverbal communication

Speaker's nonverbal cues:

Vocal intonation:

- ✓ Pitch, tone, inflection, volume
- ✓ Rhythm, timing
- ✓ Silence
- ✓ Personal space
- ✓ Posture, body position
- ✓ Head movements
- ✓ Eye movement, eye contact
- ✓ Facial expressions
- ✓ Fidgeting, yawning
- ✓ Touching

Body language:

Listener's nonverbal cues:

Possible signs of boredom:

- ✓ Slouching in seat
- ✓ Fidgeting, yawning
- ✓ Staring out window
- ✓ Neutral expression
- ✓ Closed posture
- ✓ Drifting attention
- ✓ Slow to respond
- ✓ Neutral or "slurred" speech

Possible signs of frustration:

- ✓ Rubbing forehead with hair or hand
- ✓ Tense, worried expression
- ✓ Throwing hands up in the air

Possible signs of agreement or enthusiasm:

- ✓ Leaning towards speaker
- ✓ Making eye contact
- ✓ Touching speaker's arm or hand
- ✓ Nodding head
- ✓ Relaxed, open posture
- ✓ Smiling or laughing
- ✓ Faster speech
- ✓ Higher pitch

Possible signs of evaluation

- ✓ Chewing on eyeglass frames
- ✓ Thoughtful, intense expression