

Communication Skills

Effective communication skills do not only include the ability to speak, but also to listen and accurately read body language.

Speaking Skills:

- **Speak clearly-** Use clear language and speak in the direction of your listener.
- **Be thoughtful-** Actively thinks of questions to ask your listener to engage him/her in the conversation. This will also allow you to more clearly understand your listener's opinions and thoughts.
- **Focus directly on the conversation-** Doing something else such as texting or typing communicates that you don't care enough about the discussion. This could affect the listener's responses and attitude.
- **Be concise-** Do not over explain.
- **Read body language-** If the person does not seem engaged or seems uncomfortable, suggest speaking at another time.

Listening Skills:

- **Make sure there is enough time to talk-** If you have a specific time slot, make sure the speaker knows so you can either reschedule or keep conversation within time constraints.
- **Get rid of distractions-** Plan to meet in a designated meeting space without disruptions.
- **Reiterate the conversation-** This is called "reflective listening". To do this, use phrases like "If I understand correctly...". This allows the listener to rephrase the information to make sure they understand while also allowing the speaker to clarify any misunderstandings.
- **Make sure you understand-** Ask questions. This allows for fewer problems later on.
- **Don't interrupt**
- **Pay attention**
- **Keep constant eye contact**

Effective Arguing

- **Manage anger or frustration-** Practice the "Five Second Rule". Wait five seconds before responding to something that you disagree with. This allows you to gather your thoughts and make sure that you won't say something you may regret later. Also, if your temper does flare, leave the conversation, count to 20, and go on a walk
- **Stay on task-** Do not bring up past issues or frustrations. Stick to the present issue.
- **Remember with whom you are arguing-** Make sure to respect the other person and not allow the disagreement to negatively affect your relationship.

Adapted from UC Davis Human Resources Department